Policy Making

Highlights in 2015

Adoption of biennial budgeting and a multiyear funding modality
Decision on the procedures for appointments of the officers of the subsidiary bodies of the Commission
Appointment of a new Chairperson of Working Group A

The plenary body of the Commission, which is composed of all States Signatories, provides political guidance and oversight to the Secretariat. The plenary is assisted by two Working Groups, Working Group A (WGA) and Working Group B (WGB).

WGA deals with budgetary and administrative matters, while WGB considers technical issues related to the Treaty. Both submit proposals and recommendations for consideration and adoption by the plenary meeting of the Commission.

In addition, an Advisory Group of qualified experts serves in a supporting role, advising the Commission, through WGA, on financial, budgetary and associated administrative matters.
Meetings in 2015

The Commission and its subsidiary bodies each met in two regular sessions in 2015. There were also joint meetings of WGA and WGB on 20 March and 31 August.

Among the major issues addressed by the Commission during 2015 were promotion of the Treaty; procedures for appointment of the Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of WGA and WGB; introducing biennial budgeting; multiyear funding; preparation for the twentieth anniversary of the Treaty and the Commission; and progress in completion of the IMS.

The Commission also appointed Ambassador Adnan Othman (Malaysia) as the new Chairperson of WGA for a term of three years starting from 1 January 2016.

Supporting the Commission and Its Subsidiary Bodies

The Secretariat is the body that executes the decisions adopted by the Commission. It is multinational in composition: its staff is recruited from States Signatories on as wide a geographical basis as possible. The Secretariat provides substantive and organizational support for the meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies and in the periods between sessions, thus facilitating the decision making process.

With tasks ranging from organizing conference facilities and arranging interpretation and translation to drafting official documents of the various sessions, planning the annual schedule of sessions, and providing substantive and procedural advice to the Chairpersons, the Secretariat is a vital element in the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

Virtual Working Environment

Through the Experts Communication System (ECS), the Commission provides a virtual working environment for those unable to attend its regular meetings. Using state of the art technology, the ECS records and transmits the proceedings of each official plenary meeting live around the globe. Meetings are then archived for reference purposes. In addition, the ECS distributes supporting documents for each session to States Signatories, and alerts participants of new documents by email.

With the adoption of a new, more interactive and collaborative method of work by WGB, the ECS has become even more important as a tool for continuous and inclusive discussion among States Signatories and experts on complex scientific and technical issues related to the verification regime.

As part of the virtual paper approach, through which the
Commission is seeking to limit its output of printed documentation, the Secretariat provided a ‘print on demand’ service at all sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. In place of supplying printed copies of all documents to each participant, this service enables delegates to print copies of those documents that they require directly from their computers and mobile devices during the meetings.

Information System on Progress in Fulfilling the Mandate of the Treaty

The Information System with Hyperlinks on Tasks Assigned by the Resolution Establishing the Preparatory Commission (ISTHAR) monitors progress made in meeting the mandate of the Treaty, the Resolution establishing the Commission, and the guidance of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. It uses hyperlinks to the official documentation of the Commission to provide up to date information on the tasks that remain to be completed in preparing for the establishment of the CTBTO at entry into force and the first session of the Conference of the States Parties.

The ISTHAR interface is integrated into the Commission’s single sign-on infrastructure and is available to all users of the ECS.

The project has supported a total of 29 participants, including 7 female experts, since its inception. The participants came from 8 States in Africa (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Niger, South Africa, Tunisia), 1 in Eastern Europe (Albania), 7 in Latin America and the Caribbean (Bolivia, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru), 5 in the Middle East and South Asia (Kyrgyzstan, Jordan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Yemen), and 8 in South East Asia, the Pacific and the Far East (Indonesia, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Samoa, Thailand, Vanuatu and Viet Nam). Eight of these are least developed countries.

The most recent voluntary contributions received from China, Norway, the Netherlands, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the EU were used to finance the project in 2015, and part of these funds will be carried over to 2016. The Commission continues to seek additional voluntary contributions to ensure the financial sustainability of the project.