



News In Review

A collection of NGO views on the NPT PrepCom 2002

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NPT PrepCom- Looking towards 2005

Yesterday morning brought to an end the discussion of the cluster 3 issues. Themes running the discussion on cluster 3 included funding for the IAEA, non-compliance concerns, disposal of nuclear waste, physical protection of nuclear materials and dangers of nuclear terrorism, and further development of "peaceful uses" of nuclear energy, such as in the medical, agricultural and environmental realm. Several countries also spoke of the need for further ratifications of the Additional Protocols.

The afternoon session, a plenary session on Issue 7 "Organization of Works of the Preparatory Committee" was open for the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to observe. The first few items were of a procedural nature:

- The Chair of Prepcom II (April 28 - May 9, 2003), will be the Ambassador Laszlo Molner, from Hungary.
- The next Review Conference is tentatively scheduled for 2-27 May, 2005, in New York (to be reconfirmed at a later session).
- The Secretary General of the United Nations will be requested to propose an official to serve as Secretary General for the Review Conference, in consultation with the PrepCom, and to be reconfirmed at the outset of the Review Conference.

Following these "housekeeping" points, the Canadian delegation made two interventions on the organization of PrepComs. NGOs support and appreciate both of these interventions, the first on the subject of the 12th step from the 2000 Review Conference Final Document on the issue of regular reporting, and the second on enhancing participation of NGOs in the NPT review process.

On the issue of reporting, Canada proposed to host informal consultations on the scope, frequency and format of national reports to the Conference. These

consultations would take place sometime before the next PrepCom, most likely in Geneva. The informal meeting would be open to all States parties, and the results of the consultations could take form as a working paper for the PrepCom II next year. This is an excellent proposal as an approach to discuss this delicate subject of reporting, an issue which nearly brought the PrepCom to be "indefinitely suspended" half-way through. NGOs hope to be further involved in the discussions with party states on this issue, and would welcome the opportunity to participate in these consultations.

Several countries following this intervention spoke in reaction to the Canadian initiative. Fully supporting the idea were the following countries: Germany, Japan, Norway, Switzerland, Ghana, Austria, Italy, Thailand, Iran, Indonesia, Republic of Korea, Netherlands, and Mexico. Those supporting the idea "in principle" included Belgium and Egypt on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, which will make a formal response on Friday. The United Kingdom did not appear to be in full support in principle, and said it would further reflect on the proposal. Fully opposed to the idea were the countries France and United States.

On the issue of enhanced NGO participation, Canada's intervention focused on the need to develop ways to optimize NGO's participation and noted that Canada will develop a Working Paper for the next PrepCom as a step towards new arrangements for 2005.

Reactions to this proposal were diverse, to be expected. In full support were the delegations of Netherlands, Mexico (will also develop its own proposals), Norway, New Zealand, South Africa and Germany.

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Other views expressed included France, which mentioned that it hoped to continue interactions with NGOs, but did not elaborate on what context. Sierra Leone called for more informal interaction with NGOs, but added that perhaps the existing rules did not need to be altered. United States clearly expressed opposition to any change to rules which would enhance the role of NGOs in the NPT review process.

NGOs have noted that at least one member of the Canadian delegation has been present at every single NGO event during this PrepCom, and their interest has been appreciated. The enhanced participation of NGOs in international fora such as the NPT is an issue that NGOs have long been exploring and advocating. The first 2002 edition of UNIDIR's Disarmament Forum focuses on this very subject. For excerpts, see the UNIDIR website: <http://www.unog.ch/UNIDIR>.

There were two other themes worth mentioning from the statements in this plenary. First, the desire for increased interactive discussions, rather than lengthy, formal statements, was expressed both by South Africa and Iran. Second, Japan mentioned the need for the NPT to establish a permanent organ to ensure implementation of the Treaty's obligations.

As the NPT PrepCom is closing today, there will be formal statements made in response to the Chairman's factual summary, which was released last night (near 9pm).

The Chairman has clearly stated that this is not a negotiated document, and will not be open for negotiations after it is tabled. Today, the Committee procedural report will be adopted, and his summary will be annexed to that document.

This is the first of a series of PrepComs leading up to the Review Conference in 2005, and therefore, time remains to build more extensively on the work of this PrepCom to realize real progress for 2005.

- NGOs strongly urge the NPT party states not to allow a roll-back the successes of this Treaty to pre-2000 achievements, as several of the nuclear weapons states have attempted to do at this PrepCom.
- NGOs call for the establishment of a meaningful and standardized reporting mechanism for every PrepCom and Review Conference, to promote transparency and accountability.
- NGOs look forward to the process of increasing NGO access and to enhancing participation in the NPT meetings, a mutually benefiting arrangement between civil society and the NPT party state governments which can only strengthen the NPT review process.

Emily Schroeder

Reaching Critical Will

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom



Illustration: Laurence Clark. Courtesy of the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington, New Zealand.

Who's Who - Jayantha Dhanapala

Under-Secretary General for Disarmament Affairs, United Nations

1. What is your Assessment of the first PrepCom of the 2005 Review Conference that concludes today?

We have begun the preparatory process for 2005 on an auspicious note despite the very difficult political climate. We were fortunate in that we had an excellent Chairman in Ambassador Henrik Salander of Sweden who had prepared himself over several weeks and had conducted wide-ranging consultations in New York, Geneva and capitals. We were also not under the usual stress or pressure to produce a Final Document to be adopted by consensus at the end. Nevertheless we did have a near disaster in the first week and it seemed at a certain stage that the meeting would go down the same chute as the BWC Review Conference. Wiser counsel prevailed and we must thank the delegations concerned for the compromise reached and the friends of the Chair- Ambassador Westdal and Lindt- who helped craft the compromise. We have had a good discussion and adopted a number of procedural decisions but the deep-seated problems will return unless the political situation improves globally.

2. What must be done before the Second PrepCom next year?

First we need to have a good agreement on nuclear disarmament come out of the Moscow Summit in May this year with deep cuts in nuclear arsenals that are legally binding, irreversible and verifiable. That will be crucial. We need also to see progress in the restoration of full compliance with the NPT of the two parties mentioned at the First PrepCom. Many other steps need to be taken on the substantive side such as implementing the thirteen steps of the 2000 Final Document, more state parties joining the IAEA Additional Protocol etc. on the procedural side now that we have identified the Chairman of the Second PrepCom we must expedite selection of the Chairman of the Third PrepCom and, if possible, the President of the 2005 Review Conference. The earlier these decisions are taken the better because it gives these office-bearers time to prepare themselves and to work together as a team. I know from my experience how important that is for conference management.

3. How do you evaluate the role played by NGOs?

For the first time we had the presentations of NGOs in the body of the meeting and some very good presentations were made. Interactive sessions went on in the margins of the conference and with more than 6- NGOs present there was a great deal of good material distributed and separate sessions with delegations. DDA did its share in helping NGOs. More needs to be done to expand the role of NGOs in NPT meetings conferences and in disarmament for a generally. I have been a strong critic of the hypocrisy of member states who uphold NGO rights in human rights for a only to black them in disarmament while others encourage NGOs in nuclear disarmament but discourage them in small arms issues. We need to be consistent and ensure that civil society is involved equitably in all for a of the UN and in treaty regimes. I am glad that Canada is taking an initiative in this.

Quote of the Day

(Mexico, 18 April 2002)

"The statements and working papers made and circulated by non-governmental organizations are proof of the usefulness of the mutually enriching exchanges between States and civil society in the nuclear disarmament process. My delegation is convinced that new formulas ought to be explored to improve the participation of non-governmental organizations in the review process of the Treaty, so that civil society may have a better understanding of the concerns of governments, and, at the same time, the States parties can benefit from their contributions. "

What's On: Last Day

Friday, April 19th, 2002

* "Into the Future: what should we be trying to do before the next NPT PrepCom?" Discussion with Rebecca Johnson of Acronym Institute (UK) and Ernie Regehr, of Project Ploughshares (Canada). 1:15pm, Conference Room D. Facilitated by the NGO Committee on Disarmament.

Note from the Editor:

Thank you to all of the delegations and NGOs for their constructive and positive contributions and feedback to the News In Review.

Many thanks to the Chairman, Ambassador Salander, for his skillful efforts in keeping the lines of communication open between himself and the NGO community throughout the whole process. His hard work and sense of fairness is admired and appreciated by the NGOs.

Special thanks to Brian Rawson of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNW) in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for his wonderful cartoons.

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