

## ***Practical Contributions of Civil Society to National Implementation and Regional Cooperation***

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Representatives. It is a great honour to be invited to participate in this round-table discussion initiative. As you said in your introduction this morning, there are three key themes: **synergy, inclusiveness and transparency** – and it will not surprise you to know that a major theme of my response to the topic for this round-table on “*Practical Contributions of Civil Society to National Implementation and Regional Cooperation*” can be summarized as **inclusiveness**. As the screen kept telling us again and again this morning, we must move **from adjacency to synergy**.

2. What can Civil Society do? First, it needs to be recognized that Civil Society is a **partner** and that the **goals** of the Civil Society are a safer world for all free from the threat of biological and toxin weapons. Civil Society wants to see a strengthened BTWC regime and effective implementation in all countries around the world.

3. However, as a partnership with government, the greatest effect can be achieved in concert – **together**. Government and Civil Society need to work out **together** how best to improve the implementation of the Convention and to strengthen its effectiveness nationally.

4. A fundamental lesson that is emerging from the efforts of Civil Society (Dando & Rappert) is that the life sciences community around the world in all States Parties do **not** know about the BTWC and its prohibitions. National implementation **cannot** succeed unless the community that is most involved is aware of the obligations and prohibitions that are enshrined in national implementation measures, and of their **implications** for individuals at **all** levels in terms of personal and professional responsibilities.

5. Civil Society can help to ensure that government addresses the problems of national implementation in the round – the life sciences community is constrained by many issues of which implementation of the BTWC is but one. Other issues are health and safety requirements, Good Manufacturing Practice, transfer controls both nationally and internationally, and regulations for genetically modified organisms. An **integrated comprehensive approach** is the key for success.

6. Civil Society recognises that a global effective strengthened BTWC regime is the objective – and that this requires that national implementation within States Parties are harmonised and are all brought up to a common high standard. Civil Society can help to ensure that national implementation enacted within individual States Parties are compared and can in a **constructive** way suggest where more needs to be done within individual States Parties, within regions and globally. Civil Society can make a valuable contribution as they can compare national implementation within States Parties and within regions – something that States Parties are usually unwilling to do.

7. As a concrete example, let us consider this year’s topic of

*(i) Ways and means to enhance national implementation, including enforcement of national legislation, strengthening of national institutions and coordination among national law enforcement institutions.*

It is evident the mandate of the Implementation Support Unit as agreed at the Sixth Review Conference is encapsulated in the following paragraph:

5. *Taking into account the importance of providing administrative support to meetings agreed by the Review Conference as well as comprehensive implementation and universalization of the Convention and the exchange of confidence-building measures, the Conference decides that an “Implementation Support Unit” (ISU) shall be established... [Emphasis added]*

Consequently, the ISU has four **continuing** tasks – administrative support to the meetings, comprehensive implementation, universalization and the exchange of confidence-building measures.

8. Comprehensive implementation is a continuing task. It is also evident from the experience of the Chemical Weapons Convention – the international treaty of most relevance to this Convention – that national implementation requires sustained attention. To that end, we would suggest that this Meeting should agree that progress on comprehensive implementation should be monitored in the years to come by using some simple indicators such as:

- a. the number of States Parties who have identified their national points of contact to the ISU
- b. the number of States Parties that have adopted national implementing measures
- c. the number of States Parties who have supplied a copy of the text of such implementing legislation and national measures to the ISU
- d. A very simple analysis of the text received

The overall aim should be a simple tabulation with no more than 6 or 7 numbers that would enable the States Parties **collectively** to appreciate progress over the next few years.

9. Civil Society can also contribute by analysing the issues that need to be addressed by the States Parties to the BTWC whether collectively or individually and proposing practical and effective ideas and solutions. An example is the Harvard-Sussex draft criminalization convention that would complement the prohibitions of the BTWC and the CWC and strengthen the overall regime. These proposed ideas and solutions can be adopted, modified as appropriate and taken forward by the States Parties.

10. Civil Society working in partnership with Government has **responsibilities** to work **constructively** towards the common goal and to resist the temptation to seek a quick headline by adopting a critical approach. Both Civil Society and Government need to recognise that the other has limited resources and that the best use of these can be made by working together **synergistically** so that together they are far more effective than working separately.

11. Whilst Civil Society can seek to raise awareness in the life sciences community, such efforts need to be complimented by government actions that demonstrate to the life sciences community that the issue is an important one to government. **All** branches of government – not just the foreign ministries or the trade ministries but also the health, agriculture and environmental and **education** ministries – need to demonstrate that they are aware of and regard the issue as an important one for peace and security.

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