

Civil Society Stakes and Responsibilities in Preventing the Misuse of Biology and Biotechnology

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Presentation Outline

- Definition: civil society
- Relationship between BTWC & civil society
- Role of civil society
- Relevant stakeholders
- ISS experience
- Challenges and a way forward

Definition: civil society

- Research institutes
- Professional associations
- Scientific community
- Activist groups
- Others

Relationship between BTWC & civil society

- CSOs concerned after 2001 failure of Protocol negotiations
- Small (increasing) number of African CSOs focus on BW issues
- NGOs attend BTWC States Parties & Expert meetings – statements
- ISU mandate – network with NGOs

Role of civil society

- Observe
- Comment
- Raise-awareness
- Information-sharing
- Network
- Capacity-building
- Lobbying
- Advocacy

Relevant stakeholders

- Regional/sub-regional organisations (AU/SADC/EAC)
- Governments
- Scientific community
- Academic institutions
- Other CSOs

ISS experience

- Project – Africa & the threat of WMD:
 - *commenced mid-2007*
- Project objectives:
 - *Assess*
 - *Build*
 - *Motivate*
 - *Increase scope*

WMD Project Events: 2007

- APB Meeting Nairobi – African Legislation
- Co-host BWPP Workshop Nairobi – Building Stakeholdership
- Experts Workshop Cape Town – bio-educational module
- AMP Workshop Cape Town – UNSC 1540 & Chemical and Biological Weapons Control in Africa

WMD Project Events: 2008

- March: Promoting biosecurity and biosafety - Kampala
- March/April: 2nd International Forum on Biosecurity – Budapest
- May: Biosecurity workshop – Johannesburg
- June: Building stakeholdership in Malawi - Lilongwe

Challenges

- Biological weapon threat is seen as a “Western” & abstract issue
- CSO concerns lie elsewhere – development issues etc.
- Interest in bio-issues is difficult to sustain
- Limited resources to fund research on issue & attend workshops/meetings

A way forward

- Renewed focus on awareness-raising – workshops, seminars, field trips etc.
- Increased attendance at key bio-related events (BTWC SP meetings – make statements)
- Build networks, engage with relevant stakeholders, especially governments.
- Build networking relationship with ISU
- Publicise information – through networks, websites, etc.
- Follow-up – keep momentum going