

to prepare responses for submission at the conference. This procedure would work best of course, if the reports of these States parties were themselves available well before the conference.

It was noted that States parties have already begun to use reports in an interactive way to a limited extent during PrepCom. No comments were made on the reports submitted in 2002, but in 2003, a number of States parties asked questions based on the reports (or other documents) submitted. Sweden, for example, posed a series of significant questions on the US and Russian statement on the Moscow Treaty, such as how was the 2012 date for reductions decided? Why is the date not earlier? And is the possibility of making the planned reductions irreversible under consideration? It remains to be seen where, when, and to what extent responses to such questions will be provided. Two of the NWS had told the last PrepCom that they were not able to answer all the questions that had been asked of them, stating that they would consider these questions and respond later, possibly in another forum. Participants wondered what it would mean for the review process if questions asked multilaterally were answered bilaterally. How would answers be reported back to the other States parties?

Another issue discussed was whether States parties are using the reports in any way outside the review process framework. The answer to this question is not yet clear. The Canadian government has begun looking at how reports could be addressed in the course of its other diplomatic activities, but participants did not know whether other States parties were also doing this.

Encouraging participation

Participants noted that it was important to encourage more NWS to submit formal reports that could become part of the record. Thailand, for example, had stated its support for efforts to promote a culture of accountability, submitted a formal report in 2002, and promised to report in 2003, but in the end it did not submit a 2003 report. It would be useful to encourage States parties that made oral statements at the PrepCom to distribute those statements (or at least the sections relevant to reporting) in writing as formal documents. Canada had already encouraged some States parties to do this at the last PrepCom, with some success. It also was noted that timeliness is important: some reports had been submitted so late that the PrepCom was over by the time they were translated and distributed. In other cases, States parties were supportive of reporting, but were reluctant to take on an onerous job. Bangladesh (which did not submit a formal report) was one such example. This highlighted the importance of keeping the reporting task manageable.

Making reports available

Participants commented that it was important to make all reports and other documents from the PrepCom and Review Conferences widely available, posting them on an official website and maintaining an official archive.