

PROCEDURAL ISSUES

ISSUE: The major issue relates to the voting procedures for the Conference and NGO participation.

BACKGROUND:

NAM had argued for consensus on voting while WEOG wanted, at a minimum, the possibility that final texts could be adopted by a two-thirds vote. On the final day of the last meeting, a compromise was reached on Rule 34. The rule provides that the Conference shall conduct its work and take decisions in accordance with Article 8 of the Convention. Article 8 of the Convention provides that amendments to the Convention and Protocols shall be adopted in the same manner as the original Convention. However, due to a similar impasse at the Conference leading to the Convention, no rules on decision-making were adopted at that time. As the Convention was in fact adopted by consensus, the NAM will argue that Rule 34 means consensus. WEOG, if necessary, will argue that a vote could have been called at any time during the original Conference but was simply not required.

With respect to the issue of NGO participation, a compromise was reached in which it was agreed that NGOs will be allowed to attend public sessions of both the Plenary and Main committees (including Protocol II committee) but will be entitled to speak only at the Main committee.

CANADIAN POSITION:

With respect to voting, we do not wish to explicitly state that the Conference will operate on the basis of consensus as this may be used by NAM to gain concessions in areas in which we have a strong interest, such as scope or verification.

We support the position taken with respect to the participation of NGOs in the meetings.

POSITIONS OF OTHER MAJOR PLAYERS/GROUPS ON THE ISSUE:

As noted above.

LIKELY AREAS OF COMPROMISE:

This will be determined at the Conference.