

technological possibilities grow. Verification regimes themselves, where possible, should seek for new funding possibilities, including foundations and commercial spin-offs.

Techniques and technologies

The extent to which the latest and most appropriate techniques and technologies can be used in multilateral verification systems is, perhaps surprisingly, often controversial. To begin with, there is always a trade-off between effectiveness and cost. States parties will naturally want to keep the costs of verification as low as possible, while still giving the verification system the requisite degree of credibility.

Another difficulty is that verification technology can be so specialised that it must be researched and developed by verification bodies themselves: no commercial company will invest in research for such a limited market and potentially low profit. This can be a heavy burden on verification organisations, although creative partnerships with universities and less commercially-driven organisations should be possible.

National technical and technological incapacity for self-monitoring and for implementing treaty commitments is also a major issue in many regimes. Many developing countries, especially in Africa, and those that used to be part of the Soviet empire, struggle to report on their own compliance with international treaties and to adopt national implementation measures.

As a multilateral verification technique, on-site inspections have come a long way. There are now bodies of professional on-site inspectors, detailed protocols, procedures and technologies for on-site inspections, and a useful corpus of experience in making them effective. UNSCOM and UNMOVIC vastly increased our experience of the power and challenges of OSIs. The difficulties that the CTBTO is facing in reaching agreement on its OSI manual indicate, however, the sensitivities surrounding on-site inspections and the need for an educational process about them.

Use of information

One of the most pleasing verification developments in recent years has been the realization that multilateral verification organizations can and should use the vast array of open source material to their advantage. Commercial satellite imagery and the internet are just the most obvious of the new information tools available.

Similarly, the use of information provided by states from their national technical means (NTM) is a significant development. The experience of UNMOVIC, however, should be a warning for the standing verification bodies. The intelligence information provided to UNMOVIC and the IAEA about Iraq was late and much of it was of dubious character. While there are clearly enormous difficulties in states obtaining credible information from closed, autocratic regimes through NTM, those states that are able to provide NTM-derived information should be more honest and transparent in doing so.