

IV: How can momentum be built in the run up to 2005?

Next, the Roundtable discussed the need to build and maintain momentum for reporting. Growing participation was considered necessary not only to encourage additional States parties to report, but also to convince many States parties to continue reporting. The increase between 2002 and 2003 in the number of States parties reporting was promising, but states need to see that reporting is producing significant results. Otherwise, the number of States parties reporting may begin to decline.

A variety of explanations for the failure of many States parties to report were discussed. In addition to the reasons already noted (resource issues and a perceived lack of information to report), it was suggested that some States parties may feel that they only need to report to Review Conferences, and states would have to be convinced otherwise. Other States parties it was suggested, may be waiting for a more formal system to be established, after which they would be willing to participate. Others were likely to report only after it became evident that a large number of States parties were submitting reports. In this regard, even submitting duplicate or non-identical reports with minor updates would be worth doing.

Participants asked how the commitment of the NWS to reporting might be increased and how the total number of States parties reporting might be increased.

World Bank participants asked one participant to recommend that Canada and/or other States parties provide modest technical assistance to other States parties to help them in the preparation of reports. Would this be seen by such states as too intrusive? It was noted that sufficient money might not be available for significant efforts in this regard. But it might be possible to organize a workshop on possible content and formats at the First Committee. Such a meeting could be put together at low cost.

In addition, Canada (and/or other States parties) could write to all States parties with suggestions on how to prepare a report - perhaps in the form of a question-and-answer document. One participant warned against calling such a document a "reporting guide", however, commenting that there has been great resistance to such a document with respect to the small arms issue. Still, it would be useful to provide suggestions to States parties on what they should say in reports. Canada could prepare a working paper, or a pre-working paper document, to share ideas on how to proceed. A comprehensive explanation of one possible approach would certainly be welcomed. To be most useful, such a paper should be produced in good time - late this year or early next year.

It was noted that Canada was already looking at options for a third Canadian working paper on reporting for submission to the 2004 PrepCom (which is supposed to produce recommendations for the 2005 NPT/C). Canada's previous working paper had laid out a variety of views in a fairly non-committal manner. It was suggested that the next working paper should have a clear Canadian point of view, spelling out Canada's preferred approach. Many