

and 2003 reporting, no approach has yet become the de facto standard. According to one participant's breakdown, however, 18 of the 38 formal reports submitted in 2003 used the third approach, addressing a broad range of treaty-related topics.

All Roundtable participants who expressed an opinion were in favour of the broad approach to reporting. The 13 Steps represent the agenda of most States parties at present, but priorities will change as new items come up; it would not be wise to restrict reporting to the 13 Steps. It also would not make sense to be constantly tinkering with the mandate. It was suggested that States parties probably should not attempt to change the 2000 agenda at the 2005 HPTRC. It might be desirable, however, to seek agreement that the existing reporting mandate should be understood in its broadest context to include all aspects of the Treaty. In any case, States parties should be encouraged to interpret the reporting requirement in that light. Whether such reporting preceded them by theme or Article by Article was considered a less important question.

Information categories

Participants also discussed the general categories of information that States parties might be encouraged to report, working from the six categories outlined in the background document (reproduced on page 6** above). It was suggested that the most useful and sought after information was in the middle four categories: information on national nuclear holdings and domestic, descriptive, or disarmament policies; initiatives and programs; identification of advocacy and diplomatic priorities; and information on agreements reached and commitments undertaken. The other categories were considered less important. General assessments of developments and trends (category 1) were characterized as mainly historical comments that had a legitimate place in national statements during the review process but might be less useful in formal reports on Treaty implementation, where it would be better to press for concrete content. Some participants agreed that declarations of compliance with the Treaty or aspects of it (category 2) were also largely rhetorical, and fairly meaningless in the absence of concrete information. Others argued that such declarations can be useful. There is no agreement among States parties on the extent that might constitute compliance with Article VI, short of complete nuclear disarmament, but compliance with other Treaty articles is a little more straightforward, and declarations in this respect could be tantamount to reporting that certain actions had or had not been taken.

Participants agreed that States parties should be encouraged to provide specific, concrete information and to focus on recent actions and developments. Reports are not the place for rhetoric or statements of general intentions. Instead of declaring support for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, for example, a State party should declare its specific intent to ratify the Treaty within a certain time period or "in due course" (which might be as specific as states were willing to be on future activities). Or a State party might report that "last year our country urged the IAEA to do X, Y, and Z on this and that occasion," i.e. focusing on what the state did, rather than what the state said. It was suggested that such reports also could include accounts of informal discussions or initiatives being explored by States parties. Such efforts have the potential to lead to formal processes, and their inclusion would give States parties new things to report.