

IX. CONSULTATIONS, CO-OPERATION AND FACT-FINDING

1. State Parties shall consult and co-operate, directly among themselves, or through the Consultative Committee or other appropriate international procedures, including procedures within the framework of the United Nations and in accordance with its Charter, on any matter which may be raised relating to the objectives or the implementation of the provisions of this Convention.

2. States Parties to the Convention shall make every possible effort to clarify and resolve, through exchange of information and consultations among them, any matter which may cause doubt about compliance with this Convention, or which gives rise to concerns about a related matter which may be considered ambiguous. [A Party which receives a request from another Party for clarification of any matter which the requesting Party believes causes such doubts or concerns shall provide the requesting Party, within ... days of the request, with information sufficient to answer the doubts or concerns raised along with an explanation on how the information provided resolves the matter.] Nothing in this Convention affects the right of any two or more States Parties to this Convention to arrange by mutual consent for inspections or any other procedures among themselves to clarify and resolve any matter which may cause doubts about compliance or gives rise to concerns about a related matter which may be considered ambiguous. Such arrangements shall not affect the rights and obligations of any State Party under other provisions of this Convention.

Procedure for requesting clarification

3. A State Party shall have the right to request the Executive Council to assist in clarifying any situation which may be considered ambiguous or which gives rise to doubts about the compliance of another State Party with the Convention. The Executive Council shall provide appropriate information and data in its possession relevant to the situation which can dispel such doubts, whilst [taking every precaution in] protecting commercial and industrial secrets and other confidential information coming to its knowledge in the implementation of the Convention.

4. A State Party shall have the right to request the Executive Council to obtain clarification from another State Party on any situation which may be considered ambiguous or which gives rise to doubts about its compliance with the Convention. In such a case, the following shall apply:

(a) The Executive Council shall forward the request for clarification to the State Party concerned within [24 hours] of its receipt.

(b) The requested State Party shall provide the clarification to the Executive Council within [seven days] of the receipt of the request.

(c) The Executive Council shall forward the clarification to the requesting State Party within [24 hours] of its receipt.

(d) In the event that the requesting State Party deems the clarification to be inadequate, it may request the Executive Council to obtain from the requested State Party further clarification.