

Preparatory Committee for the 2026 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

11 August 2023
English
Original: French

First session

Vienna, 31 July–11 August 2023

Enhancing dialogue on national implementation reports

Working paper submitted by France

The framework for the strengthened review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is based on the regular publication of reports, which are key instruments to enable the Review Conferences to assess “the results of the period they are reviewing, including the implementation of undertakings of the States Parties under the Treaty”.¹

While all States parties to the Treaty have made a commitment to submit reports on a regular basis, in line with the “13 practical steps”² set out in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference and the “action plan”³ contained in the Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference, the link between that commitment and the implementation of article VI of the Treaty and paragraph 4 (c) of the 1995 decision entitled “Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament” justifies regular, open and in-depth discussions between Treaty stakeholders on the national implementation reports submitted by nuclear-weapon States. Such discussions would help to develop a more focused, action-oriented approach to the implementation of the Treaty, and would support an interactive and serious dialogue among States parties beyond the mere delivery of national statements.

To that end, a twofold approach could be adopted. Firstly, a dedicated forum for discussion and review of national implementation reports submitted by States parties, with a special focus on the reports submitted by nuclear-weapon States, could be established as part of Treaty Review Conferences. Secondly, the third preparatory

¹ Paragraph 7 of the 1995 decision entitled “Strengthening the review process for the Treaty”.

² 12. Regular reports, within the framework of the strengthened review process for the Non-Proliferation Treaty, by all States parties on the implementation of article VI and paragraph 4 (c) of the 1995 Decision on “Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament”, and recalling the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 8 July 1996.

³ Action 20: States parties should submit regular reports, within the framework of the strengthened review process for the Treaty, on the implementation of the present action plan, as well as of article VI, paragraph 4 (c), of the 1995 decision entitled “Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament”, and the practical steps agreed to in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference, and recalling the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice of 8 July 1996.



committee of the review cycle could organize an interactive and open dialogue on the expected content and substance of national reports in advance of the Conference to which they are to be submitted.

Under that approach, the emphasis would be on the quality of the reports as platforms for ongoing dialogue, rather than on the submission of interim national reports throughout the review cycle, an option which would: (i) be unrealistic, in view of the resources required for both the preparation and the review of a larger number of reports, and (ii) not allow for a deeper dialogue between the States parties with regard to the implementation of the Treaty.

1. Establishing a peer review of national implementation reports submitted by nuclear-weapon States

The collective commitment to submitting national reports currently falls short of its objectives in the absence of dedicated, structured discussions at the Review Conferences. These documents should provide essential information needed for the implementation of the Treaty, thus contributing effectively to the work undertaken both ahead of and following the Conference. The national implementation reports should also provide a solid foundation for a serious and fact-based dialogue between the States parties.

In the light of the linkages between the implementation of article VI of the Treaty and the preparation of reports under previous commitments, discussions on the reports of nuclear-weapon States should also be systematic, and not be entirely dependent on the willingness of those States to engage with the other Treaty stakeholders.⁴

Accordingly, and in order to ensure that the commitment to submit reports on a regular basis helps in fact to strengthen the review cycle, **Review Conferences should systematically include two specific sessions, one dedicated to the review of national implementation reports submitted by nuclear-weapon States, and the other dedicated to the review of reports submitted by non-nuclear-weapon States.** To ensure solidarity and a focused dialogue, civil society should participate in both sessions along with all States parties to the Treaty.

2. Maintaining dialogue throughout the process of preparing national implementation reports

The sessions of the third Preparatory Committee of the Treaty should also serve as a platform for discussions on expectations, priorities and information that should be reflected in the national reports of nuclear-weapon States. **To that end, a dedicated session could be held during the sessions of the third Preparatory Committee to allow States parties, and in particular nuclear-weapon States, to consult with and receive the views of civil society and other States parties to the Treaty ahead of the preparation and submission of their national implementation reports.**

⁴ At the last Review Conference, only three nuclear-weapon States offered the opportunity, during their side events, for discussion with other States parties and with civil society on the fulfilment of their obligations under the Treaty, in particular article VI, and other related commitments.