



“The Way Forward”, P5 Process Rapporteur
Sebastian Brixey-Williams, Co-Director, BASIC
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Merci, Emmanuelle.

I’m very grateful to have the opportunity to speak to you all today, and I would like to extend my special thanks to Benjamin and Emmanuelle and their colleagues at FRS, as well as the Government of France, for their work to include non-governmental voices in this process, and for inviting me to rapporteur on the subject of ‘the way forward’ for the P5 Process

The 20 or so civil society members present at our meeting last week had a constructive discussion about the future of the P5 Process, making a number of recommendations regarding process and participation in the lead up to future Principals Meetings.

So, I’ll structure my report back around two themes: participation and the P5 Process’ agenda.

Participation

To start with the topic of participation, there was broad agreement that more opportunities should be created for both NNWS and civil society actors to interact substantively with the P5 Process.

Such opportunities would move beyond simply ‘de-briefing’ or providing information about the P5’s discussions to NNWS and civil society, by instead creating a space for meaningful and ongoing ‘two-way’ exchange, including on challenging and potentially uncomfortable issues.

In particular, there seemed to me to be an appetite for a more structured approach to dialogue between the P5 Process and the Stockholm Initiative, although the CEND initiative and the NPDI were also mentioned.

The benefit of the SI is that it represents a truly diverse group of NNWS, all of whom are NPT members, and it has a lot of political energy behind it. The reaffirmation of its role by the newly-elected government in Germany last week is a positive sign that the Stockholm Initiative will, and should, continue.

Some participants described wanting a 'fluid' relationship between the track 1, 1.5 and 2 levels, such that if issues are proving too difficult for the main discussion or P5 workloads are too overwhelmed, track 2 civil society dialogues could temporarily take up certain discussions. This would encourage multi-stakeholderism to a fuller extent.

A cross-cutting dimension here is the role of next generation thinkers, whose inclusion was mentioned in the context of the 2019 Youth, Non-Proliferation and Disarmament resolution at the UN First Committee. The 2020 London P5 Principals Meeting held a distinct open half-day conference at Kings College London, where next generation thinkers were able to present their perspectives, both to one another and to senior leaders in the audience who were attending the main conference.

But seemingly nothing like this seems to have happened in Paris, either in-person or virtually, which is a great shame – or at least we weren't aware of it. The United States as the next President of the process is therefore encouraged to engage meaningfully with diverse next generation perspectives, *especially* from less represented communities, perhaps through a structured process that produces policy recommendations from the next generation that can be studied and discussed directly by the P5 Process.

Any civil society engagement is only possible, however, with the guaranteed supply of funding from the President of the conference. Although such funding is in the interests of the President, and indeed the whole process, at present this means that the civil society dimension is dependent on the whim of that year's President, which will always carry a risk that it could fall through one year. With that in mind the participants recommend greater institutionalising of the

civil society dimension, which may include considering more resilient approaches to civil society funding, such as the establishment of a stable civil society fund funded by all five of the P5.

P5 Agenda

With respect to the P5's agenda moving forward, several issues were raised.

As a general point, one participant made a plea that each successive Presidency should aim to maintain as much of the agenda of the last Presidency as they can, in order to ensure that each round has the maximum chance to build on the last.

Moreover, it was noted that the P5 agenda is already quite full and that capacity issues are important to consider. Overloading the process would lower its overall effectiveness, and we should resist the temptation to try to put every challenging question onto the P5 Process' agenda.

Nevertheless, multiple civil society members questioned the absence of the CTBT on the P5's agenda, particularly in light of the presence of the FMCT. There was some disappointment that after the CTBT was dropped from the process under the last US Administration, that it has not yet been restored to the agenda by the new US administration, to ensure it is not forgotten even though the chances of having it ratified by the US Senate at the moment are slim.

Moreover, the accusations that have taken place over the past few years that certain NWS have undertaken sub-critical tests has revealed a lack of shared agreement on what constitutes a test under the self-declared testing moratoriums. This is therefore a testing-related issue that the P5 Process could seek to resolve that falls short of CTBT signature, ratification and entry into force.

Participants recommended a dual approach: a statement confirming and further detailing the moratoriums, and further financial and political support for the CTBTO. This reaffirms the recommendations made by KCL and the ELN in London last year.

At another point the absence of the TPNW on the agenda was highlighted. This will be the first P5 Process Principals meeting where the TPNW has entered into force.

In the interests of ensuring that it does not complicate either the P5 meeting or the NPT Rev Con, civil society asks the P5 to take a more relaxed, live-and-let-live, less-politically charged attitude towards the TPNW. It is possible to maintain the legal position of a 'persistent objector', in order to ensure that the Treaty's provisions do not become binding on non-signatories, while maintaining total civility and respect for alternative perspectives and the choices of those who *do* elect to be bound by the Treaty.

Finally, the group heard the proposal that the P5 Process have a conversation amongst themselves about their responsibilities in relation to nuclear weapons and towards one another. This could help build mutual confidence, by developing a shared understanding of why each P5 member possesses nuclear weapons and the limits of what they consider to be responsible behaviour, and from these discussions, new risk reducing norms might crystallise. Such a discussion could take place within a new risk reduction working group, if that comes into being.

There is no forum better placed than the P5 Process to reverse the trend towards distrust, strategic competition, arms racing, and mutual insecurity.

With that in mind, I wish the representatives from the P5 gathered in Paris today and tomorrow a constructive dialogue, one that prioritises strengthening strategic trust and agreement on your shared special responsibilities as possessors of nuclear weapons. You can be assured of the assistance of civil society wherever we are able to aid your discussions.

Thank you Mr/Ms Chair