

Defining Success at the First Review Conference:

Advancing Articles 6 and 7 of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Executive Summary

The First Review Conference (RevCon) of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW) will set the benchmarks for how success is understood in future review cycles. This brief argues that implementations of Articles 6 and 7, focused on victim assistance, environmental remediation and international cooperation, will be a key test of the treaty's progress. Their implementation will indicate whether the treaty functions solely as a prohibitive instrument, or as a framework for positive justice. An overemphasis on procedural outcomes risks deferring meaningful implementation. To ensure the treaty delivers meaningful impact, States Parties should:

- **Clarify shared responsibility:** Establish how responsibility for funding and implementation is distributed with a shared definition of Articles 6 and 7 obligations.
- **Prioritise ambitious durable mechanisms:** Ensure implementation frameworks endure beyond immediate milestones and funding cycles.
- **Define and measure implementation success:** Adopt outcome-oriented benchmarks to ensure tangible and meaningful progress is prioritised over procedural compliance.
- **Ensure affected communities can participate meaningfully:** Give affected communities a decisive role in shaping implementation priorities and decision-making.

Why the First RevCon Matters

The First RevCon of the TPNW will do more than assess progress to date; it will play a formative role in shaping the treaty's institutional and political trajectory. Early review cycles often establish precedents, governance practices, and expectations regarding what meaningful implementation means and requires. Decisions taken at this stage will influence how success is defined in future cycles and whether the treaty becomes associated primarily with procedural outcomes or with tangible outcomes that improve people's everyday lives. If success is understood primarily in procedural terms such as the adoption of a consensus outcome document (as is the case for review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty), this risks narrowing the treaty's transformative humanitarian potential.

The RevCon is also a moment of institutional consolidation. Observers and potential future States Parties will look to the RevCon for indications of the treaty's credibility and political momentum. If tangible steps are taken to operationalise key obligations, particularly under Articles 6 and 7, the treaty can reinforce its legitimacy as both a prohibition instrument and a framework for justice. If, however, progress is framed largely in terms of continued discussion and future processes, there is a risk that procedural benchmarks become entrenched as the primary measure of success. The First RevCon therefore represents a pivotal opportunity to set durable expectations for implementation and to consolidate the treaty's long-term legitimacy.

Articles 6 and 7: Defining Meaningful Implementation

Articles 6 and 7 require States Parties to provide victim assistance, undertake environmental remediation, and cooperate internationally to address the consequences of nuclear weapons use and testing. These are not symbolic provisions. The First Review Conference must treat implementation of these articles as a priority. Unlike the treaty's prohibitions, which are immediately binding, Articles 6 and 7 require institutional decisions, financial commitments and structured cooperation.

Continued reliance on feasibility assessments or open-ended discussions risks signalling that implementation can be deferred indefinitely. Over time, this would weaken expectations and narrow the treaty's ambition. By contrast, establishing operational frameworks, clarifying shared responsibilities, and adopting a practical roadmap would demonstrate that the treaty delivers tangible outcomes for affected communities. The credibility of the First Review Conference will therefore depend not on procedural outputs, but on whether it advances concrete implementation of Articles 6 and 7 with clear parameters of what future success could look like.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1

Structure and share responsibility

States Parties should use the First RevCon to clarify how responsibility for implementing Articles 6 and 7 is distributed. This includes funding, institutional support, and long-term commitments, while ensuring (where possible) that implementation arrangements do not preclude accession by other states. States Parties should agree on a shared definition of implementation and a practical roadmap to guide collective action.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Prioritise ambitious and durable implementation

Implementation of Articles 6 and 7 should be treated as a long-term, 'living' commitment. Mechanisms established at the First RevCon must be designed to endure beyond immediate milestones, funding cycles and political fluctuations, ensuring sustained delivery of victim assistance and environmental remediation. Clear and formalised reporting will be crucial for shared learning and collaboration between States Parties implementing Articles 6 and 7.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Define and measure success

The First RevCon must set clear, outcome-oriented benchmarks for Articles 6 and 7. Procedural measures alone, such as reporting frameworks or feasibility discussions, should not define success. Indicators should track tangible improvements for affected communities and be informed by their assessments, ensuring that the treaty's humanitarian commitments translate into real-world impact on people's lives.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Collaborate with affected communities

States Parties should ensure that affected communities hold meaningful authority and ownership in decision-making on Articles 6 and 7. Participation should be based on lived experiences rather than resource access. States parties must ensure that priorities, resource allocation and evaluations reflect the needs and contexts of those directly impacted. Without this, participatory mechanisms risk being purely symbolic and further harming the communities they are set up to assist.