Initial recommendations by the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) on inclusion in the TPNW intersessional process

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This paper gives initial recommendations on steps that co-chairs of the TPNW intersessional working groups could take towards developing inclusivity in its work. It focuses on steps that would facilitate effective civil society coordination by ICAN to ensure constructive contributions to the groups’ meetings and work.

Inclusivity

In the Vienna Action Plan, states parties committed, across their work to implement the treaty, to work in a spirit of inclusivity, cooperation and transparency; to cooperate closely with stakeholders including ICAN, academia, affected communities and other civil society; to integrate gender considerations across their work; and to “facilitate the active participation of relevant stakeholders and take into account the different needs of people in affected communities and indigenous people” (actions 39-42).

In their work to implement articles 6 and 7 on victim assistance, environmental remediation and international and assistance they committed specifically (in action 19) to:

- “engage with relevant stakeholders, including international organizations, civil society, affected communities, indigenous peoples, and youth, and work cooperatively to advance the effective and sustainable implementation of articles 6 and 7” and, in particular,
- “closely consult with, actively involve, and disseminate information to, affected communities at all stages of the victim assistance and environmental remediation process”

ICAN is ready to assist states parties towards fulfilling these commitments. We welcome further discussion with states parties on how we could best provide this support. We also welcome the co-chairs continuing commitment to including civil society in their work.

Planning to facilitate coordination and inclusion

ICAN will plan to encourage and coordinate the participation of individuals from civil society from our networks in the work of the informal working groups, including people we work alongside from affected communities and the other stakeholder groups mentioned in the Vienna Action Plan.

In order to do this most effectively we suggest that the co-chairs:
• **Develop and share a schedule of their work and meetings for the year ahead**, for consultation with states parties and others. This should indicate the general topics to be discussed at each meeting, or any written submissions sought. When finalized, they should share this schedule (with the specific dates of meetings) with civil society. This will help facilitate preparation for participation by those with relevant expertise, and coordination amongst civil society to make the most effective contribution to discussions. ICAN will support this preparation and coordination by disseminating information and coordinating before meetings within our networks.

• **Take organizational steps to facilitate the participation of individuals from affected communities and indigenous peoples in particular.** For example:
  ○ The co-chairs should ensure that opportunities to contribute are shared well in advance – at least **four weeks ahead** - to ensure outreach and preparation time. This will be especially important when states parties wish to receive particular briefings from these stakeholders, or to consult these communities in particular. When they do so, states parties should be clear on the purpose of each consultation to the implementation work that they are doing, and be clear about what they are asking from affected communities.
  ○ Alongside openness to the participation of affected communities and indigenous peoples in relevant meetings in general, the co-chairs could also consider holding a specific meeting or meetings at which to give more space to their contributions.
  ○ They should also be open to the forms of contribution that are preferred by these stakeholders, and consult them on this.
  ○ States parties should consider the Protocols for Seeking Nuclear Truth with Integrity developed by the Nuclear Truth Project (submitted as NGO working paper 23 to the first Meeting of States Parties) when considering calling on affected communities and indigenous peoples for specific contributions. They should also consider consulting with people from affected communities on how they could best be included in processes.
  ○ Working group co-chairs may consider extending formal invitations to Indigenous Peoples to attend and participate in working group meetings or hold separate consultations with Indigenous leaders, particularly those representing communities affected by nuclear weapons activities.

ICAN can provide support in this general area by coordinating with organizations and individuals from affected communities and Indigenous Peoples within our networks.

• **Consider holding separate, additional consultation meetings with civil society** if the co-chairs consider such meetings would help in efficiently gathering relevant expertise and views for the working group’s work.

• **Share agendas and other modalities for meetings at least two weeks in advance** to support coordination amongst civil society, and ensure that civil society has the latest information on progress on the topics under discussion, what contributions would be helpful from our side, how and when we are able to contribute, and how much time we will have to do so. ICAN will hold preparation and coordination meetings with our
network at least two weeks before each meeting of the working group to which civil society is invited

- **Ensure meetings are as accessible as possible** by using effective hybrid formats when they are held in person and providing for virtual interventions, as well as considering how to facilitate translation of meetings and meeting materials.

As well as taking steps to facilitate the inclusion of diverse stakeholders in the work and meetings of the working group, which ICAN can assist with through civil society coordination as described above, we also recommend that the co-chairs give space on the agenda of the meetings of the working group meetings to discuss and reflect on measures states parties have taken (including nationally) to facilitate inclusion, particularly of affected communities.