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REPORT

# Exploring Reporting and Interactive Dialogue Options for NPT Disarmament Obligations

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# Acronyms and Abbreviations

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| <b>APMBC</b>   | Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention                 |
| <b>FATF</b>    | Financial Action Task Force                        |
| <b>HRC</b>     | Human Rights Council                               |
| <b>ICBL</b>    | International Campaign to Ban Landmines            |
| <b>MSP</b>     | Meeting of States Parties                          |
| <b>NNWS</b>    | Non-nuclear-weapon States                          |
| <b>NPT</b>     | Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons |
| <b>NWS</b>     | Nuclear-weapon States                              |
| <b>PREPCOM</b> | NPT Preparatory Committee                          |
| <b>REVCON</b>  | NPT Review Conference                              |
| <b>TPRM</b>    | WTO Trade Policy Review Mechanism                  |
| <b>UNODA</b>   | United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs      |
| <b>UPR</b>     | HCR Universal Periodic Review                      |
| <b>WTO</b>     | World Trade Organization                           |

# Executive Summary

Transparency can play an important role in building confidence in international agreements, including in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Several nuclear-weapon States (NWS) have provided information regarding their obligations under article VI of the NPT and related commitments, including those outlined in the 2010 NPT Action Plan. However, limited progress in disarmament has led to growing calls for the NWS to demonstrate greater transparency and accountability in fulfilling these obligations and commitments. Various proposals have outlined how this might be achieved and what information should be provided by the NWS—including suggestions to promote interactive discussions on the substance of NWS reports.

There is, however, less clarity around the options regarding the format and process of interactive discussion. To address this gap, this report provides States with options to consider in developing a mechanism for interactive dialogue in the NPT review cycle. The report achieves this through a review of models of interactive discussion on national reporting in other issue areas, including the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) implementation of article 7; the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) mutual evaluation mechanism; the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council (HRC); and the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM).

These models vary in terms of their frequency and focus, procedures, report authors, processes of interactive dialogue, institutional support and participation. A summary of some of the features in these models is outlined below.

The NPT review cycle presents unique dynamics and sensitivities and, unlike other comparable undertakings, lacks a central implementing body. As such, replicating other approaches to interactive dialogue is not practical. Moreover, several NWS will have concerns over, among other things, the scope of and participants in any interactive dialogue. Nonetheless, valuable insights and options can be drawn from approaches in other issue areas. Building on these precedents, this report outlines options for NPT States Parties to consider.

One option draws on practices from the APMBC and other multilateral forums that use lunchtime side events to support interactive dialogue. Under this approach, a 1.5-hour side event would be held at each stage of the NPT review cycle. The NWS would prepare reports as the basis for discussion, to be submitted to the Chair or President of the relevant Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) or Review Conference (RevCon) at least six weeks in advance. The report would be made publicly available in advance and uploaded to the meeting website for transparency. A trusted external expert would moderate each side event, which would follow a four-part structure beginning with moderator's introduction, then presentations from NWS, interactive Q&A with officials and civil society and closing remarks from NWS, including possible next steps related to article VI obligations and commitments. After the event, both the NWS reports and a recording of the side event would be made publicly available.

|  | APMBC   | FATF  | HRC UPR   | WTO TPRM   |
|--|---|---|---|--|
| <b>Frequency of review</b>                         | Annually  | Every 6 to 10 years   | Every 4.5 years   | Every 2, 4 or 6 years  |
| <b>Focus of the review</b>                         | Measures to prohibit and destroy anti-personnel mines   | Measures to combat money laundering   | National human rights records and activities  | Trade policy   |
| <b>Report procedures/ guidelines</b>               | Detailed art. 7 reporting guidelines  | Detailed, systematic methodology for mutual evaluations                       | Agreed guidelines for the preparation of information  | Guidelines for reports   |
| <b>Primary report authors</b>                      | State under review  | FATF assessment team with input from States and private sector                | UPR Working Group (with reporting from State, IOs and civil society)  | WTO Secretariat Trade Policy Review Division                   |
| <b>Interactive dialogue</b>                        | Reports discussed at annual Meetings of States Parties  | Reports discussed during FATF plenary over a 3–4-hour period                  | Reports discussed during 3.5 hours of the UPR Working Group and HRC plenary   | Reports discussed over two days of Trade Policy Review meeting |
| <b>Civil society or other non-State actor role</b> | Civil society observe Meetings of States Parties and can submit questions and comments, including through side events | Private sector actors participate in mutual evaluations during country visits | Non-State actors submit written information, observe HRC plenary, and can speak at report adoption                      | No direct participation  |
| <b>Key publicly available outputs</b>              | National reports, and Meeting summaries and statements, including from NGOs and civil society                         | In-depth national Mutual Evaluation Reports                                   | National reports, summary of stakeholders' submissions, report of the UPR Working Group and a matrix of recommendations | National Report, Secretariat Report and Chair's Summary        |

A second option draws on the UPR model used by the HRC. In this approach, each NWS would participate in a three-hour plenary session, held twice per NPT review cycle—once at the second PrepCom and again at the RevCon. In this model, each NWS could submit a national report to the Chair or President at least eight weeks in advance. The report would be made publicly available in advance and uploaded to the meeting website. NPT States Parties would be invited to submit written questions and comments four weeks before the session. These would be thematically organized by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) based on agreed guidelines. The session would be facilitated by the Chair/President or a designated official, with support from UNODA, and could follow this structure: opening remarks by the Chair/President, NWS presentations, presentation of collated questions/comments, initial NWS responses, interactive discussion with the remaining time equally distributed among those States that wish to speak, and NWS closing remarks responding to additional input and outlining next steps in relation to article VI obligations and commitments. After the session, the national reports, collated submissions, and a factual summary of the dialogue would be made publicly available.

A third option draws on practices from mechanisms such as the FATF. In this model, the report would be produced by a small, representative team of credible independent experts selected and coordinated by UNODA. The report would be developed in consultation with the State under review and made publicly available in advance through the meeting website. Each NWS would produce a written response to the expert report. To support structured dialogue, NPT States would be invited to submit written questions and comments four weeks in advance. UNODA would then collate and thematically organize these submissions into a single document, which would be shared with the NWS under review at least two weeks before the interactive plenary discussion. The interactive dialogue as envisaged in this option would take place once per NPT review cycle over two plenary sessions during the third PrepCom. Facilitated by the Chair or a designated official, the first plenary session could begin with opening remarks from the Chair, followed by an expert summary presentation of each report. Subsequently, the Chair would present the collated questions/comments before the NWS respond to both the expert report and the questions/comments. The second plenary session would focus on an interactive Q&A, before concluding with closing remarks from the NWS, ideally including forward-looking plans regarding article VI obligations and related commitments for the next review cycle. After the meeting, the following materials would be made publicly available: the expert-authored country report, the NWS written response, the UNODA compilation of questions/comments, and a factual summary of the plenary session.

In the current geopolitical context, ambitious efforts to embed interactive reporting in the NPT cycle will be extremely difficult given the extent of mistrust and geopolitical tensions. Moreover, some States will have significant concerns over the process and participants in any interactive dialogue mechanism, as well as the risks of sharing proliferation-sensitive information. Nonetheless, building on past and ongoing initiatives, NPT States Parties could do more in this area, perhaps initially through voluntary participation in independently moderated side events that include a forward-looking focus on future steps to fulfil article VI obligations and commitments. These events would seek to build confidence in the idea of interactive dialogue.



However, voluntary participation—particularly unreciprocated participation—is unlikely to satisfy calls for greater transparency and accountability on the part of the NWS. As such, in the run up to the Review Conference, NPT States could collectively develop proposals for a more systematic mechanism for interactive dialogue using formal sessions in the review cycle, beginning with the first PrepCom of the next cycle. As with approaches applied in other issue areas, this will take time to refine and there are many variables to consider around the substance, frequency, duration, participation, process and outcomes related to interactive dialogue. The models applied elsewhere can inform such a process through which NPT States Parties could build confidence in future disarmament processes and ensure the sustained credibility of the NPT.



# Introduction

There is long-standing and growing support for nuclear-weapon States (NWS) to enhance transparency and accountability regarding their fulfilment of obligations under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and related commitments, particularly the 2010 Action Plan. Various proposals have been put forward on how to achieve this, including revitalizing reporting processes within the NPT review cycle and fostering interactive dialogue on the substance of NWS reports. However, there is less clarity on the specific formats and processes for reporting and engagement.

This report presents options for strengthening transparency and accountability under the NPT through interactive dialogue within the review cycle. The report begins by outlining the role of transparency and accountability in arms control and disarmament, with a focus on the NPT. It then provides a short overview of the evolution of discussion on these issues within the NPT framework. Following this, the report reviews transparency and accountability models from other domains, including:

- ▶ the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) implementation of article 7 on transparency matters;
- ▶ the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) mutual evaluation mechanism;
- ▶ the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the Human Rights Council (HRC); and
- ▶ the World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM).

A comparative analysis of these mechanisms—covering their objectives, processes, timelines, outcomes, strengths and limitations—helps to inform potential options for interactive dialogue in the NPT review cycle. The final section presents some reflections on integrating interactive dialogue around national reporting into the ongoing work of the NPT.

## Transparency and Accountability in Arms Control and Disarmament

The text of the NPT does not explicitly refer to transparency. However, transparency—along with verification and irreversibility—remains a fundamental principle underpinning the implementation of the NPT.<sup>1</sup> Transparency is required to fulfil article III, which requires non-nuclear-weapon States (NNWS) to accept safeguards negotiated with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the body responsible for monitoring compliance with these obligations. Transparency is also necessary in order for all NPT States Parties to fulfil article VI obligations – including “to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament”.<sup>2</sup>

In order to foster confidence and promote accountability, NPT States Parties have called for greater transparency regarding the implementation of obligations and commitments by NWS. As outlined below, in the past, some NWS have been responsive to these calls, submitting article VI-related reports; participating in interactive exchanges; and unilaterally provided information on stocks of weapon-usable fissile materials, data on arsenals of nuclear weapons, and ceilings on the total number of nuclear weapons in their arsenal.<sup>3</sup>

There will, of course, always be limits to transparency around nuclear weapons issues. To varying degrees, the NWS tend to incorporate deliberate ambiguity into their nuclear doctrines.<sup>4</sup> Transparency can be especially difficult for States with relatively smaller arsenals, where greater openness may undermine deterrence or strategic stability. Additionally, practical constraints—particularly concerning the disclosure of proliferation-sensitive information—pose significant challenges.<sup>5</sup>

However, regular and systematic reporting by all NWS on the fulfilment of their article VI obligations and related commitments has been limited, diminishing confidence in the NPT.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the lack of meaningful opportunities to discuss transparency reports undermines the extent to which the NWS

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1 As indicated in the 64-point action plan from the 2010 Review Conference under which States Parties committed to the principle of transparency, together with the principles of irreversibility and verifiability. See actions 2 and 19.

2 See <https://disarmament.unoda.org/wmd/nuclear/npt/text>

3 National Nuclear Security Administration. *The United States Plutonium Balance, 1944-2009. An Update of Plutonium: The First 50 Years, DOE/DP-0137, February 1996*, US Department of Energy, 2012, <https://fissilematerials.org/library/doi12.pdf>; National Nuclear Security Administration Office of the Administrator for Defense Programs. *Highly Enriched Uranium: Striking a Balance. A Historical Report on the United States Highly Enriched Uranium Production, Acquisition, and Utilization Activities from 1945 Through September 30, 1996*, US Department of Energy, 2001, <http://fissilematerials.org/library/doi01.pdf>; National Nuclear Security Administration. *Transparency in the U.S. Nuclear Weapons Stockpile*, U.S. Department of Energy, 2024, <https://www.energy.gov/nnsa/transparency-us-nuclear-weapons-stockpile>; “Speech of the President of the Republic on the Defense and Deterrence Strategy”, Élysée, 7 February 2020, <https://www.elysee.fr/en/emmanuel-macron/2020/02/07/speech-of-the-president-of-the-republic-on-the-defense-and-deterrence-strategy>

4 See United Kingdom. “Transparency and Nuclear Disarmament”, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.42, 21 December 2021, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2020/WP.42>

5 Austria noted that the need to protect sensitive information from malicious use by terrorists, criminals and non-State actors needs to be borne in mind, in the context of the public disclosure of information related to nuclear weapon programmes and activities. See Austria. “Measures to reduce the breadth of risks associated with nuclear weapons and measures to avoid increasing this risk”, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.60, 29 June 2022, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2020/WP.60>

6 See NPT/CONF.2020/WP.42.

can share the steps taken so far, increase awareness, address concerns, and be held accountable for fulfilling their disarmament obligations and commitments under the NPT. These factors have had a corrosive effect on the NPT.

## The Evolution of Transparency and Accountability in the NPT Context

The outcome of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference included the adoption of a set of Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. This document stated that “the full realization and effective implementation of article VI” required the pursuit by NWS of “systematic and progressive efforts to reduce nuclear weapons globally, with the ultimate goals of eliminating those weapons”.<sup>7</sup>

At the 2000 NPT Review Conference, States agreed on a series of practical steps for the systematic and progressive efforts to implement article VI. These steps included a commitment to “Increased transparency by the nuclear-weapon States with regard to the nuclear weapons capabilities and the implementation of agreements pursuant to article VI”; and, under step 12, a commitment to “Regular reports, within the framework of the strengthened review process for the Non-Proliferation Treaty”.<sup>8</sup>

The Final Document of the 2010 Review Conference produced an “Action Plan on Nuclear Disarmament” comprising 64 specific actions.<sup>9</sup> Several of these actions relate to transparency and accountability, particularly actions 5, 20, and 21. These actions respectively call on NWS to: “further enhance transparency and increase mutual confidence”, “submit regular reports”, and “agree as soon as possible on a standard reporting form and determine appropriate reporting intervals for voluntarily providing standardized information”.<sup>10</sup>

Action 21 is particularly notable as it introduced a mechanism for enhanced transparency among the NWS. All five NWS duly submitted reports—in 2014, 2015 and 2021<sup>11</sup>—in some form, which were, at least in the case of the 2014 and 2015 reports, made available in a United Nations repository of NWS-

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7 NPT 1995 Review Conference, Final Document (Part I), 1995, [https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.1995/32\(PartI\)](https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.1995/32(PartI))

8 NPT 2000 Review Conference, Final Document (Parts I and II), 2000, step 9, p. 15, [https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2000/28\(Parts I and II\)](https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2000/28(PartsIandII))

9 See Tim Caughley, *Transparency in the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime*, UNIDIR, 2012, <https://unidir.org/files/publication/pdfs/transparency-in-the-nuclear-non-proliferation-regime-385.pdf>

10 For example, under Action 2, the Conference resolves that “All States parties commit to apply the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to the implementation of their treaty obligations”. See NPT 2010 Review Conference, Final Document (Vol. I), 2010, p. 20, [https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2010/50\(Vol.I\)](https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2010/50(Vol.I))

11 See China. “Implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons”, NPT/CONF.2020/41, 16 November 2021, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2020/41>; France. “National report”, NPT/CONF.2020/42, 10 December 2021, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2020/42>; Russian Federation. “National report”, NPT/CONF.2020/17/Rev.1, 19 March 2021, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2020/17/Rev.1>; United Kingdom. “National report”, NPT/CONF.2020/33, 5 November 2021, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2020/33>; United States. “Actions 5, 20 and 21 of the action plan of the 2010 Review Conference”, NPT/CONF.2020/47, 27 December 2021, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2020/47>

provided information.<sup>12</sup> However, there was significant variation in the content and scope of the national reports submitted.<sup>13</sup>

Accordingly, in the lead-up to and during the 2022 NPT Review Conference, many States across regional groups—including both NWS and NNWS—emphasized the importance of transparency,<sup>14</sup> with several specifying the key areas where greater transparency is needed.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, several working papers, including papers submitted by some NWS, have endorsed the integration of transparency-related reports into the NPT review process<sup>16</sup> by means of setting time aside to discuss national reports in the Preparatory Committee and Review Conference and holding “informal discussions on their national reports with interested States Parties and civil society”.<sup>17</sup>

The 2022 NPT Review Conference ultimately failed to achieve consensus on a final document. Nonetheless, it helped to refine thinking around transparency and accountability and sustained interest in embedding reporting systems within the review cycle at appropriate intervals. Momentum around transparency has subsequently been further advanced by the NPT working group established by the 2022 Review Conference to strengthen the review process. This group engaged in extensive discussions on transparency and accountability, gaining increasing support among NPT States Parties, including some NWS, for strengthening transparency.

Several proposals have emerged on standardized reporting<sup>18</sup> and structured dialogue on NWS reporting related to the implementation of article VI obligations and related commitments.<sup>19</sup> However, not all States

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12 See <https://disarmament.unoda.org/wmd/nuclear/repository>

13 Thomas Markram and Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova. “Further Strengthening the NPT Review Process: Reflections and Recommendations”, Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation and James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, May 2023, <https://vcdnp.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/NPT-SRP-paper-full-with-covers.pdf>

14 For example, the Non-Aligned Movement called for “further enhancing transparency and increasing mutual confidence” and “accountability” of the NWS through concrete “actions on nuclear disarmament with established deadlines, and through their reporting on their implementation of this obligation to the Review Conferences until the goal of total elimination is achieved”, to be done so in a structured manner to allow for constructive engagement with those reports. See Group of Non-Aligned States. “Nuclear disarmament”, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.20, 22 November 2021, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2020/WP.20>

15 See NPT/CONF.2020/WP.42; Group of Non-Aligned States. “Possible elements of consensus”, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.75, 26 August 2022, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2020/WP.75>

16 For example, in 2022 France, the United Kingdom, and the United States stated the commitment “to transparency of nuclear policy, doctrine, and budgeting, including public sharing of information on modernization plans and nuclear deterrence goals, and encourage other States to do likewise”. See France, United Kingdom, and United States. “Principles and responsible practices for Nuclear Weapon States”, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.70, 29 July 2022, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2020/WP.70>

17 See NPT/CONF.2020/WP.42. See also Japan. “Working paper”, NPT/CONF.2020/WP.45, 22 December 2021, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2020/WP.45>

18 See European Union. “Enhancing transparency and accountability in the implementation of Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons obligations and commitments”, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.II/WP.6, 24 May 2024, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2026/PC.II/WP.6>; Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative. “Enhancing transparency for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and strengthening the review process for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons”, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.18, 29 June 2023, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.18>

19 See NPT/CONF.2026/PC.II/WP.6 ; United States, “Strengthening the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons review process”, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.II/WP.4, 22 May 2024, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2026/PC.II/WP.4> ; Ireland, New Zealand and Switzerland. “Transparency and improved monitoring of the implementation of article VI”, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.1/WP.6, 13 June 2023, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2026/PC.1/WP.6>

necessarily support enhancing NWS transparency. Some NWS have stressed the importance of equal reporting requirements for all NPT States Parties and have indicated opposition to the involvement of civil society or expert panels.<sup>20</sup> Other NWS have expressed concerns over the disparities in policies and nuclear arsenals<sup>21</sup> and have emphasized the need to consider reporting by NNWS under a nuclear umbrella.<sup>22</sup>

The NPT working group was ultimately unable to achieve consensus—for reasons largely unrelated to transparency and accountability. Nonetheless, the Chair’s working paper emerging from that discussion includes a recommendation for an interactive dialogue on reports within the NPT review cycle.<sup>23</sup> Recommendation 19 states: “Discussion of reports should take place in an interactive format that allows for questions to be raised and clarifications to be sought regarding the content of national reports”. It further specifies a timeline, requiring national reports to be submitted three months before the relevant meeting and questions to NWS to be submitted one month in advance.<sup>24</sup>

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20 William C. Potter. “Behind the Scenes: How Not to Negotiate an Enhanced NPT Review Process”, Arms Control Association, October 2023, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2023-10/features/behind-scenes-how-not-to-negotiate-enhanced-npt-review-process>

21 NPT 2024 Preparatory Committee. “Summary Record of the 17th Meeting”, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.II/SR.17, 29 August 2024, p. 10, paras. 54–55, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2026/PC.II/SR.17>

22 China. “Remarks by H.E. Ambassador Li Song at the meeting of Working Group on Further Strengthening the Review Process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons”, 24 July 2023. [https://docs-library.unoda.org/NPT/WG-China-Remarks\\_by\\_H.E.\\_Ambassador\\_LI\\_Song.pdf](https://docs-library.unoda.org/NPT/WG-China-Remarks_by_H.E._Ambassador_LI_Song.pdf)

23 Chair of the working group on further strengthening the review process of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. “Recommendations to the Preparatory Committee”, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.34, 2 Aug. 2023, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.34>

24 See NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.34.



2000 NPT Review Conference, New York.  
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# Existing Models For Transparency And Accountability

As demonstrated in the brief history of transparency and accountability discussions within the NPT context, momentum has built around interactive dialogue. Additionally, concrete ideas have begun to emerge from various discussions on this issue. However, the specifics of how this process could function remains unclear.

To address this gap, this section provides a critical overview of different approaches to accountability and transparency in other issue areas—focusing specifically on reporting and interactive dialogue. These include the APMBC article 7 transparency reports, the FATF mutual evaluation mechanism, the UPR of the HRC, and the WTO Trade Review Policy Mechanism.

## Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Article 7 Transparency Reports<sup>25</sup>

Under article 7 (transparency measures) of the APMBC, the 164 States Parties are obliged to provide annual reports on activities over the course of the year including legal, administrative and other

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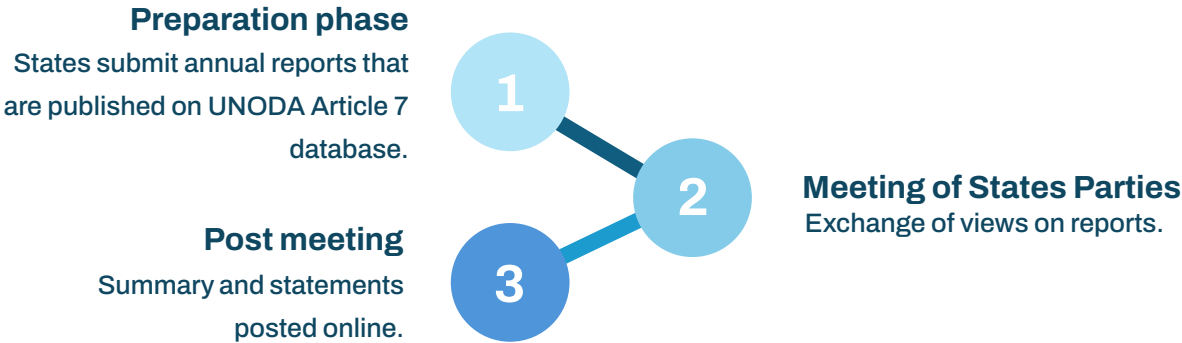
25 The authors would like to thank Theò Bajon and Ruben Nicolin from UNIDIR's Conventional Arms and Ammunition for input to this section of the paper.

measures taken to prevent and suppress prohibited activities; stockpiled or transferred anti-personnel mines; and measures undertaken in support of victim assistance.<sup>26</sup> These annual reports combined with the interactive element, provide an overview of the Convention’s implementation status, can build confidence in the Convention, and help identify achievements and areas for improvement.

### Process

The APMBC reporting process follows an annual cycle. States Parties to the APMBC are required to submit completed electronic reports to the Secretary-General by April 30 each year. States Parties are offered training for the reporting as well as guidance on reporting.<sup>27</sup> Subsequently, these reports are then published on the article 7 database of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA),<sup>28</sup> allowing several months for review and scrutiny before the annual Meeting of States Parties (MSP).

Figure 1. APMBC Reporting Process



26 The substance required is the following: data to be supplied includes an account of national implementation measures (including legal and administrative); numbers and types of stockpiled landmines; the locations of mined areas; the numbers and types of mines retained for permitted purposes (development and training in mine detection, clearance and destruction techniques); details of the destruction of mines and decommissioning of production facilities; status of mine destruction programmes; the numbers and types of mines destroyed; the technical characteristics of all mines produced; and measures undertaken to warn populations of mined areas. See APMBC 2015 Meeting of the States Parties. “Guide to Reporting”, APLC/MSP.14/2015/WP.2, 28 December 2015, <https://docs.un.org/en/APLC/MSP.14/2015/WP.2>

27 APMBC Committee on Cooperative Compliance. “Draft Preliminary Observations”, 2024, <https://www.apminebanconvention.org/APMBC-DOCUMENTS/Meetings/2024/IM24.pdf>

28 UNIDIR and VERTIC. *Coming to Terms with Security: A Handbook on Verification and Compliance*, UNIDIR, 2003, <https://unidir.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/coming-to-terms-with-security-a-handbook-on-verification-and-compliance-en-554.pdf>



## Interactive element

A recurring agenda item at the annual MSP, typically held in November or December, focuses on transparency and the exchange of information. This segment generally begins with the President presenting an update on these topics, followed by an exchange of views among participants, including questions and comments from the floor. Additionally, elements of article 7 reports are discussed under multiple agenda items, with many States providing updates on anti-personnel mine destruction, international cooperation, and overall compliance with the APMBC.

Notably, according to the rules of procedure, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining hold observer status. While they cannot participate in decision-making,<sup>29</sup> observers like the ICBL play an active role in MSPs, often providing rigorous assessments of State activities based on article 7 reports. Moreover, civil society bodies also convene side events during MSPs—these include forthright delegate briefings from the ICBL on the annual Landmine Monitor covering “mine ban policy, use, production, trade, and stockpiling”.<sup>30</sup>

## Outputs

The APMBC article 7 reporting process generates three key outputs that are publicly available: national transparency reports, short online summaries of the MSP proceedings, and statements organized by agenda item, including from civil society.

## Strengths and limitations

The mandatory annual reporting requirement under article 7 has evolved over time.<sup>31</sup> In its current form, the process fosters transparency, while public access to these reports and the interactive dialogue at the MSP provide a route through which participating States can be held to account by both the community of States and civil society. The latter has proved important with the ICBL and Mine Action Review analysing article 7 reports and other sources to provide an overview of State performance.<sup>32</sup> This complements official State-to-State engagement and can play a significant role in fostering compliance with the APMBC, whether through norm internalization or as a strategic decision to avoid international scrutiny and criticism. In terms of limitations, several major global powers remain outside the Treaty,

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29 APMBC 2007 Meeting of the States Parties. “Rules of Procedure”. APLC/MSP.8/2007/5\*, 27 August 2007, p. 7, <https://docs.un.org/en/APLC/MSP.8/2007/5>

30 APMBC 2023 Meeting of the States Parties. “Programme of Side Events”, 2023, <https://www.apminebanconvention.org/APMBC-DOCUMENTS/Meetings/2023/21MSP-Side-Events.pdf>

31 APMBC 2024 Review Conference. “Measures to ensure compliance, best practices for implementing the Convention”, APLC/CONF/2024/7, 23 October 2024, <https://docs.un.org/en/APLC/CONF/2024/7>

32 See <https://www.mineactionreview.org/country>

exempting them from reporting requirements. Combined with low levels of reporting, this can limit the value of the reporting process. Additionally, the APMBBC relies heavily on self-reporting, thus obtaining reliable and accurate information can be challenging in the absence of State-submitted reports.<sup>33</sup>

## Financial Action Task Force Mutual Evaluations

The FATF was established in 1989 to “examine and develop measures to combat money laundering”.<sup>34</sup> As an international trans-governmental network currently comprised of 39 Members,<sup>35</sup> the FATF identifies trends in money laundering techniques and evaluates actions taken at both the national and international levels to prevent money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing.

A key component of the FATF’s work is the mutual evaluation process—peer review reports produced by a FATF-appointed team of experts using a rigorous and detailed methodology designed to ensure consistency.<sup>36</sup> These mutual evaluation reports provide a qualitative assessment of a State’s performance in relation to the 40 FATF recommendations, identify actions required for compliance with FATF standards, and assign ratings to reviewed States.<sup>37</sup>

### Process

The process for developing mutual evaluations is outlined in figure 2 and takes up to 18 months to complete.<sup>38</sup> It begins with the selection of expert assessors—typically experts from government agencies, international organizations and regional bodies who are trained by the FATF—who conduct a review of a State’s compliance with FATF standards. This iterative process involves multiple phases of drafting and review, including input from the State under evaluation.<sup>39</sup> The review process includes on-site visits, where assessors engage with public and private sector actors in the State under evaluation to gain a comprehensive understanding of how measures are implemented in practice. The process culminates in the assessors presenting the draft report to the FATF plenary, which is held three times a year.

Once adopted, the FATF Secretariat determines the level of follow-up required based on final ratings and sets a reporting timeline. If consensus on the report’s contents is not reached, the assessors, the assessed State, and the FATF Secretariat collaborate on revisions. If significant changes are necessary, the plenary may either adopt the report with amendments, subject to post-plenary quality and consistency review, or postpone the adoption for further discussion.

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33 Kjell Erling Kjellman. “Norms, persuasion and practice: landmine Monitor and civil society”, *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 24:5, 2003, pp. 955–965, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0143659032000132957>

34 See <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/the-fatf/history-of-the-fatf.html>

35 See <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/countries/fatf.html>

36 See <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/publications/mutualevaluations>

37 Louis De Koker. “Editorial: FATF greylisting: Time to revisit the approach”, *Journal of Money Laundering Control*, vol. 27:4, pp. 621–624, <https://doi.org/10.1108/JMLC-07-2024-206>

38 See <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/topics/mutual-evaluations.html>

39 See <https://fatfplatform.org/get-involved/engaging-in-mutual-evaluation-process>

Figure 2. FATF Mutual Evaluation Process<sup>40</sup>



**Interactive element**

The FATF plenary process occurs three times a year—typically in February, June, and October—over three-day sessions. These meetings address various issues, including the review of two or three mutual evaluation reports, which are circulated to all delegations six weeks in advance of the plenary “along with reviewers’ comments, assessed country’s views and assessment team responses”.<sup>41</sup>

The discussion of these reports during plenaries usually lasts three to four hours. The process begins with the assessment team presenting key findings, followed by a brief opening statement from the assessed State. The plenary then examines critical issues identified by the Evaluations and Compliance Group, including the “key recommended actions roadmap”, with additional topics considered as time permits.<sup>42</sup>

40 See <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/publications/mutualevaluations>  
 41 Financial Action Task Force. *Procedures for the FATF AML/CFT/CPF Mutual Evaluations, Follow-Up and ICRG*, October 2024, p. 57, <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/methodology/Assessment-Follow-Up-ICRG-Procedures-2022.pdf>  
 42 Ibid., p. 29.

## Outputs

The FATF publishes mutual evaluations that provide an in-depth analysis of a State's implementation measures. However, detailed deliberations among FATF members remain confidential and individual statements by States in the FATF plenary are not typically published verbatim. Outcomes—such as a State's placement on the 'greylist' or 'blacklist'—are publicly announced.<sup>43</sup>

## Strengths and limitations

FATF mutual evaluations provide a robust and systematic assessment of a State's measures to combat money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing. They serve as a benchmark for States to gauge progress and to help elevate global standards in these areas. Moreover, FATF reports are forthright, and poor performance in these evaluations carries significant reputational risks, potentially leading to financial consequences. The FATF methodology has taken time to refine. Additionally, mutual evaluations are resource-intensive and require 18 months to complete.<sup>44</sup>

## Human Rights Council Universal Periodic Review

The Universal Periodic Review (UPR) of the HRC provides a systematic assessment of the human rights records of all 193 Member States. The UPR was established as a mechanism of the HRC, through General Assembly resolution 60/251 in March 2006, with detailed guidance on the UPR process developed and finalized later in June 2007 through HRC resolution 5/1.<sup>45</sup> The UPR enables States to report regularly on the steps they have taken to improve human rights, address challenges, and implement international obligations. Additionally, the UPR fosters dialogue, facilitates the sharing of best practices, and encourages international cooperation to enhance human rights worldwide.<sup>46</sup>

The UPR operates on a four-and-a-half-year cycle over which time all Member States undergo a peer-review. The UPR Working Group conducts these reviews in three annual sessions, assessing 14 States per session, resulting in 42 reviews per year. The review process concludes with the adoption by the Council plenary of the outcome of the review, prior to which the State under review is expected to communicate its positions on all recommendations it received during the review.<sup>47</sup>

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43 See <https://www.fatf-gafi.org/publications/mutualevaluations>

44 Ibid.

45 See General Assembly. "Report of the Human Rights Council", A/62/53, 2007, chp. IV.A, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/62/53>

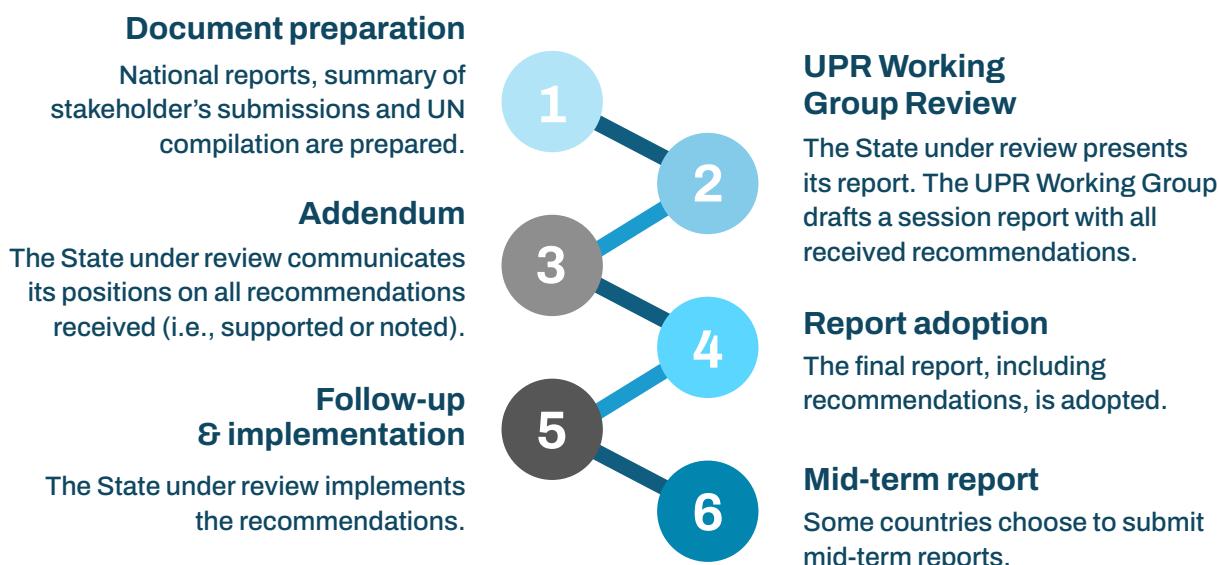
46 See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/basic-facts>

47 See <https://upr-info.org/en/get-involved/states/take-action>

## Process

The UPR follows a structured cycle of review, reporting, and follow-up to assess States' human rights commitments. The UPR Working Group, consisting of the 47 members of the HRC, conducts the review; however, all Member States can participate in the discussion and dialogue with the State under review. A so-called 'troika'—a group of three States selected by lottery following the election of Council members in the General Assembly—acts as rapporteur for each review.<sup>48</sup>

Figure 3. UPR Process



The review process consists of three key phases. In the pre-review stage, three essential documents are prepared: a) a National Report compiled by the State under review, following general guidelines; b) a 10-page document prepared by the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), summarizing information from treaty bodies, State observations, and other United Nations sources; and c) a compilation of credible and reliable information from civil society, regional organizations, and human rights groups. These materials must be submitted at least six weeks before the review to allow time for translation into all official United Nations languages.<sup>49</sup> During the UPR Working Group review phase, the State under review presents its report and engages in interactive discussions with other Member States (see below for details). Subsequently, the State then submits an addendum responding to recommendations received during the review (by supporting or noting each recommendation), before the HRC formally adopts the UPR outcome document.

In the post-review phase, recommendations are implemented, and their implementation is monitored. States may voluntarily submit a mid-term report to provide updates on progress before the next review cycle, during which implementation continues. If a State persistently fails to cooperate with the UPR, the HRC can decide on appropriate actions.<sup>50</sup>

48 See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/basic-facts>

49 See A/62/53.

50 See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/cycles-upr>

## Interactive element

The interactive dialogue within the UPR takes place in two stages. The first stage occurs during one of the three annual Working Group meetings. Each of these two-week sessions reviews 14 States, with each State allotted 3.5 hours for its review.<sup>51</sup> The process begins with the State under review presenting its national report and addressing selected questions and comments received (70 minutes). The remaining time is equally distributed among other States, providing time for comments, questions, and—most importantly—recommendations to the State under review.

The State under review is then obliged to respond to the recommendations, indicating if they either accept or note the recommendations. The outcome of this UPR process is then adopted by the HRC in plenary some three months later; after the UPR review, within a final one-hour session at the HRC plenary under agenda Item 6, initiating the implementation phase for the accepted recommendations. All recommendations received, and the corresponding position of the State under review are clustered in a user-friendly matrix by the Secretariat and placed on OHCHR website.

## Outputs

Each State review generates several outputs, including a national report, a compilation of United Nations information, a summary of stakeholder’s submissions, the report of the Working Group and its addendum, a summary of the item 6 proceedings of the HRC, and a matrix of recommendations. Webcasts of the State reviews, the adoption of the Working Group report, and the HRC plenary session are made publicly available.

## Strengths and limitations

The UPR is a cooperative mechanism based on a series of principles including the use of objective and reliable information, interactive dialogue and “the equal treatment of all States”.<sup>52</sup> The process helps to identify areas where technical assistance is needed,<sup>53</sup> while the review process promotes self-evaluation with the aim of strengthening national commitments to human rights improvements. The

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51 The procedures allocate three minutes of speaking time to Member States and two minutes to observer States, provided all speakers can be accommodated within the allotted three hours and thirty minutes. If this is not feasible, speaking time is uniformly reduced to two minutes for all. If further reduction is necessary, the available time is distributed equitably among all registered delegations to ensure each speaker can participate. The speaker list remains open from Monday to Thursday, with delegations arranged alphabetically by State name in English. On the Friday before the session, the President, in the presence of the Bureau, randomly selects the first speaker, after which the list proceeds sequentially. Delegations are informed of their speaking order and allocated time that same afternoon. Time limits are strictly enforced, and microphones are disabled for speakers exceeding their allotment. To ensure key messages are conveyed, speakers are encouraged to prioritize essential points. Delegations may exchange positions on the speaker list by mutual agreement. See General Assembly, “Decisions adopted by the Human Rights Council”, A/HRC/DEC/17/119, 19 July 2011, <https://docs.un.org/en/A/HRC/DEC/17/119>

52 See General Assembly. “Report of the Human Rights Council”, A/62/53, 2007, chp. IV.A, annex B.1.3(c), <https://docs.un.org/en/A/62/53>

53 Edward McMahon. “The Universal Periodic Review: A work in Progress”, 2012, Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, pp. 24–25, <https://library.fes.de/09297.pdf>

universal and public nature of the process seeks to foster meaningful dialogue between governments and civil society in order to enhance transparency and accountability. However, financial constraints can hinder effective participation for which a UPR Voluntary Fund for Participation was established.<sup>54</sup> Additionally, there may be some overlaps with the scheduling of the reviews by treaty bodies, reducing the overall effectiveness of the review process.<sup>55</sup>

## World Trade Organization Trade Policy Review Mechanism

The WTO Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM) was established in 1989. It has subsequently evolved as a mechanism to evaluate WTO Member's trade practices, enhance transparency, and facilitate smooth operation of the multilateral trading system.<sup>56</sup> The TPRM applies to all WTO members, with review frequency based on trade volume, with Members typically undergoing review every two, four, or six years.<sup>57</sup>

### Process

Each review begins with the circulation of key documents: a policy statement from the Member under review and a WTO Secretariat report analysing its trade policies in a broader economic context. These documents, which are made public on the first day of the review meeting, must be distributed at least five weeks before the review meeting (see below) under the standard timeline (or eight weeks under the alternative timeline). By the end of 2019, the Trade Policy Review Body had conducted 501 reviews across 389 meetings, covering 157 out of 164 WTO Members.<sup>58</sup>

The State report and WTO Secretariat report are released on the first day of the review meeting, while meeting minutes and a compilation of Members' questions and answers are published approximately six weeks after the meeting.<sup>59</sup> Members submit written questions in advance—at least two weeks before the review or five weeks under the alternative timeline—which are organized around key themes of relevance to the discussion.

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54 See <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/voluntary-funds-intro>

55 Valentina Carraro. "Overlapping institutions in the UN human rights system: Mutually strengthening or undermining?", *Journal of Human Rights*, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14754835.2025.2456827>

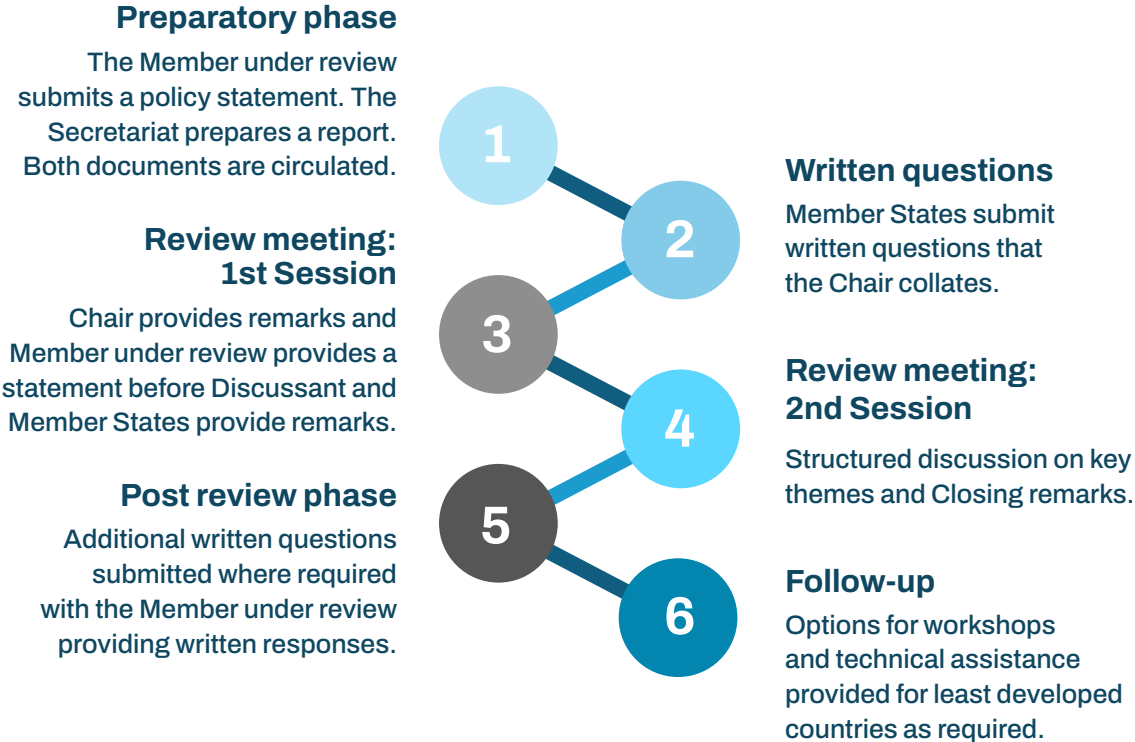
56 WTO Analytical Index. "Trade Policy Review Mechanism – Paragraph A (Practice)", World Trade Organization, 2020, [https://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/publications\\_e/ai17\\_e/tpm\\_para\\_oth.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/publications_e/ai17_e/tpm_para_oth.pdf)

57 See [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/tp\\_e/tp\\_int\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tp_e/tp_int_e.htm)

58 "Trade Policy Review Mechanism – Paragraph C (Practice)". World Trade Organization, 2020, [https://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/publications\\_e/ai17\\_e/tpm\\_par\\_c\\_oth.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/publications_e/ai17_e/tpm_par_c_oth.pdf)

59 See [https://www.wto.org/english/tratop\\_e/tp\\_e/tp\\_e.htm](https://www.wto.org/english/tratop_e/tp_e/tp_e.htm)

**Figure 4. TPRM Process**



**Interactive element**

Interactive dialogue within the TPRM takes place over two half-day sessions with a one-day interval. The first session begins with the Chairperson’s introductory remarks, which highlight key issues and developments in the Member under review. This is followed by an initial statement from the Member under review, which usually provides a comprehensive overview of relevant policies and highlights any developments since the completion of the WTO Secretariat and Government reports. A Discussant and other Members then provide comments. Statements from the floor are restricted to seven minutes, and participation is open to all Members.

The second session begins with a statement from the Member under review, organized around key themes identified in consultation with the Chairperson, the Discussant, and the WTO Secretariat. These themes, derived from Members’ submitted questions and first-session statements, are compiled into a revised list of main points and circulated before the session to ensure a focused discussion. Any unanswered questions at the end of the session must be addressed in writing within one month, with some flexibility for Members facing an exceptionally high volume of inquiries. Some Members may request follow-up workshops to discuss outcomes and technical assistance needs.<sup>60</sup>

60 WTO Analytical Index. “Trade Policy Review Mechanism – Paragraph C (Practice)”, World Trade Organization, 2020, [https://www.wto.org/english/res\\_e/publications\\_e/ai17\\_e/tprm\\_parc\\_oth.pdf](https://www.wto.org/english/res_e/publications_e/ai17_e/tprm_parc_oth.pdf)



## Outputs

The Government report, the WTO Secretariat report, and the Chairperson's summary of the discussion are published on the WTO website and made publicly available. Individual Members' statements and criticisms are usually published verbatim and key points are reflected in the summary.

## Strengths and limitations

The TPRM has several strengths that enhance its role in global trade governance. Facilitating open discussion on trade policy concerns helps to improve trade relations between States,<sup>61</sup> builds confidence in a rules-based system, and fosters a consultative approach that allows States to clarify their policies.<sup>62</sup> However, scholars suggest the TPRM faces several issues, including the uneven participation of WTO Members<sup>63</sup> and limitations in follow-up procedures.<sup>64</sup>

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61 David J. Kuenzel, "Do trade flows respond to nudges? Evidence from the WTO's Trade Policy Review Mechanism", *Review of International Economics*, vol. 27:3, 2019, p. 760, <https://doi.org/10.1111/roie.12394>

62 Arunabha Ghosh, "Developing countries in the WTO trade policy review mechanism", *World Trade Review*, vol. 9:3, 2010, pp. 449–453, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1474745610000261>

63 Jan Karlas and Michal Parížek, "The Process Performance of the WTO Trade Policy Review Mechanism: Peer-Reviewing Reconsidered", *Global Policy*, vol. 10:3, 2019, p. 382, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1758-5899.12672>

64 Arunabha Ghosh, "Developing countries in the WTO trade policy review mechanism", pp. 449–453.



2010 NPT Review Conference, New York  
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# Options for Reporting and Interactive Dialogue in the NPT

As the preceding sections illustrate, a range of approaches in other issue areas exists for enhancing transparency and fostering greater accountability through reporting and interactive dialogue. These processes vary across several key dimensions, including:

- ▶ **Authorship of reports and inputs** – Reports and other inputs to the interactive dialogue can be drafted by States, international organizations (IO), or civil society actors. In some cases, such as the UPR process, multiple documents are used to inform the interactive dialogue process.
- ▶ **Guidelines for reporting** – The degree of standardization, specificity, and mandatory requirements differ across mechanisms. Some frameworks, such as the FATF mutual evaluation process, have developed detailed methodologies for report development, whereas others rely on more general reporting guidelines.
- ▶ **Frequency of reporting and interactive dialogue** – Reporting cycles vary significantly, ranging from annual reporting in the APMBBC to four and a half years in the UPR process, to intervals of up to 10 years in the FATF mutual evaluation process.
- ▶ **Duration of interactive dialogue** – Discussion formats also differ. The APMBBC employs a dispersed dialogue approach, where discussions on any State can occur at several segments of an MSP. In contrast, the HRC and FATF allocate 3–4 hours for dedicated sessions, while the WTO conducts two half-day sessions with a one-day interval between.
- ▶ **Format of interactive dialogue** – The sequencing and organization of discussions vary. For instance, in the UPR, questions and comments are collated by office holders to ensure a structured and orderly flow of debate.

- ▶ **Participation of civil society and non-State actors** – Some frameworks, such as the APMBC, allow direct input from civil society, while others, like the FATF and the UPR, engage private sector actors and civil society respectively in parts of the review process. Mechanisms such as the TPRM do not involve non-State actor participation.
- ▶ **Outputs** – The extent and nature of outputs from these processes varies. The key output from the FATF process is the in-depth national Mutual Evaluation Reports. The UPR process, in contrast, produces a range of outputs that are publicly available including a matrix of recommendations, a national report, a compilation of United Nations information, a summary of stakeholder information, a list of questions submitted in advance to the State under review as well as a report of the meeting and webcast materials.
- ▶ **Follow-up mechanisms** – The extent of follow-up also varies. Some reporting processes lack formal follow-up mechanisms, some include the option of voluntary mid-point reviews, and yet others produce concrete recommendations that the State under review must respond to. In the case of the FATF, a rating system is applied to assess compliance and progress.

Approaches to transparency and accountability through reporting and interactive dialogue used in other contexts cannot simply be replicated within the NPT review cycle. Unlike mechanisms such as those described in this report, the NPT lacks a dedicated, well-resourced implementation organization to oversee and support such processes. More importantly, issues related to nuclear weapons are highly sensitive, and practical constraints exist on sharing proliferation-sensitive information, making transparency efforts particularly challenging.<sup>65</sup>

Nonetheless, understanding these variables can help to shape the development of an interactive dialogue mechanism within the NPT. Based on these considerations, three options are outlined below for embedding such dialogue within the NPT review cycle. Each option offers distinct strengths and limitations and is intended to serve as food for thought for States exploring a broader package of measures to strengthen transparency and accountability.

## Option 1 – Annual Panel Discussion

One option is to draw on practices of the APMBC and other multilateral forums that use side events to facilitate interactive dialogue. Under this approach, a 1.5-hour side event would be held during each NPT review cycle—one at each of the three Preparatory Committee (PrepCom) meetings and a fourth at the Review Conference (RevCon).

The NWS could prepare a report to serve as the basis for these discussions. These reports could cover information areas previously identified as areas of interest, including disarmament efforts, the implementation of article VI obligations and commitments, as well as information areas that the NWS have previously proposed for inclusion in national reporting, such as general data on the size

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<sup>65</sup> Austria noted that the need to protect sensitive information from malicious use by terrorists, criminals and non-State actors needs to be borne in mind, in the context of the public disclosure of information related to nuclear weapon programmes and activities. See NPT/CONF.2020/WP.60.

of their nuclear warhead stockpiles, the types of delivery systems employed, and the State's nuclear doctrine and policy.<sup>66</sup> Reports would be submitted to the Chair or President of the respective PrepCom or RevCon at least six weeks in advance and made available for all interested actors on the meeting website for transparency.

A trusted and credible external expert could be appointed to moderate each side event. This expert would work closely with the NWS that agree to participate in advance to prepare an agenda for the opening segment of the event. Each side event could follow a four-part structure:

1. Introduction by the moderator
2. Pre-agreed Q&A on national reports with participating NWS
3. Open Q&A session involving both officials and civil society
4. Closing remarks by the NWS, addressing questions raised and outlining next steps related to article VI obligations and commitments

Following the event, both the NWS reports and a recording of the side event would be made publicly available.

In the current geopolitical context, encouraging the NWS to engage voluntarily in a transparency exercise with no guarantee of reciprocity remains a challenge, and it is likely that not all NWS would engage in such a process. However, some NWS have previously indicated support for, have undertaken, or are undertaking some form of interactive discussion on their reports.<sup>67</sup>

For the participating NWS, an independently moderated event could provide an opportunity to show leadership, identify activities undertaken and demonstrate accountability for the implementation of Treaty obligations and other commitments, while also clarifying understandings related to their respective policies and potentially identifying next steps that could be revisited in future events.

Such a process could serve as a modest first step towards greater engagement on the part of NWS in reporting and interactive dialogue on article VI obligations and commitments, help refine enhanced transparency and reporting processes,<sup>68</sup> and foster “habits of dialogue”<sup>69</sup> among States that can be strengthened over time. The inclusion of forward-looking questions on next steps towards the fulfilment of article VI obligations and commitments and obligations also provides potential for follow-up and continuity in discussions.

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66 See NPT/CONF.2020/WP.42.

67 See NPT/CONF.2020/WP.70.

68 Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Egypt, Fiji, Germany, Guatemala, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kiribati, Luxembourg, Malaysia, Malta, Mexico, Netherlands (Kingdom of), Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Singapore, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Türkiye, United Arab Emirates, Vanuatu and my own country New Zealand. “Joint Statement on behalf of a Group of States: NPT Transparency & Accountability”, 2 August 2024, [https://docs-library.unoda.org/NPT/CONF.2026/PC.II/Joint\\_Statement.pdf](https://docs-library.unoda.org/NPT/CONF.2026/PC.II/Joint_Statement.pdf)

69 NPT 2024 Preparatory Committee. “Towards 2026: Reflections of the Chair of the 2024 session of the Preparatory Committee”, 2 August 2024, para. 10, <https://docs.un.org/en/NPT/CONF.2026/PC.II/WP.43>

## Option 2 – Self-reporting and Interactive NPT Plenary

A second option could draw from the UPR process of the HRC. In this model, each NWS would participate in an interactive dialogue during a three-hour plenary session, held twice per NPT review cycle—once at the second PrepCom and again at the RevCon.

Each NWS would submit a national report that forms the basis for discussion. These reports could be structured using a standardized reporting template and focusing on the reporting areas identified in the working paper submitted by the Chair of the working group on further strengthening the review process of the NPT.<sup>70</sup> These reports would be submitted to the Chair or President of the PrepCom or RevCon at least eight weeks in advance and uploaded to the publicly accessible meeting website.

Additionally, NPT States Parties would be invited to submit questions and comments on the reports at least four weeks before the session. Based on these inputs, UNODA could prepare a second input document, organizing the submitted questions and comments into thematic categories according to agreed guidelines. This document would be designed to facilitate the smooth flow of the interactive discussion and to avoid duplication of questions. The document would be shared with the NWS under review at least two weeks before the interactive dialogue.

The Chair/President, or their designated official, would facilitate the plenary session with support from UNODA. The session itself would follow the following structure:

1. Opening remarks by the Chair/President
2. NWS presentations
3. Presentation of collated questions and comments
4. Initial NWS responses to collated questions and comments
5. Interactive discussion with participating States
6. Closing responses from NWS addressing additional comments and questions and outlining potential next steps
7. Closing remarks from the Chair/President

Following the session, the national reports, collated submissions, and a factual summary of the plenary dialogue would be made publicly available.

This model draws on established precedents and aligns more closely with some proposals raised during the current review cycle. It could offer a systematic and structured platform for transparent, interactive dialogue and reporting on steps towards fulfilling article VI obligations. However, successful implementation would require extensive preparation, including agreement on procedural modalities, enhanced resources for UNODA, and strong engagement from all NWS. Given that similar mechanisms in other areas took time to develop, States advocating for transparency, accountability, and dialogue may consider how elements of this approach could be refined and integrated into a broader package of measures leading up to the next RevCon and beyond.

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<sup>70</sup> See NPT/CONF.2026/PC.I/WP.34.

## Option 3 – IO-led Reporting and Interactive Dialogue Process

A third option could draw on practices from mechanisms such as the FATF mutual evaluation, the TPRM, and the UPR. In this model, the report would be produced by a small, representative team of credible independent experts, selected and coordinated by UNODA. Such a step presents several financial, logistical and political challenges; however, some States have proposed the establishment of an independent publication on NPT reporting,<sup>71</sup> and at least one NWS has undertaken consultations on its reporting with civil society.<sup>72</sup> Some experts have also suggested that third parties could prepare professionally researched material to serve as a “common starting point for a substantive discussion of implementation of past commitments”.<sup>73</sup>

In this model, the expert team would prepare a report on each NWS, focused on agreed areas of information discussed in past NPT sessions. Not all the relevant information will necessarily be available, although there is considerable information publicly available. Moreover, reports would be produced, as far as possible, in consultation with the State under review and guided by a detailed methodology developed by States Parties. The report would be made available in advance and uploaded to the meeting website. Each NWS would also provide a written response to the expert report, which would then inform the interactive discussion. To support structured dialogue, States Parties would be invited to submit written questions and comments four weeks in advance. UNODA would collate and thematically organize these submissions into a single document to be shared with the NWS under review at least two weeks ahead of the interactive plenary discussion.

The interactive plenary discussion would take place once per NPT review cycle, during the plenary sessions of the third PrepCom, and would consist of two sessions totalling six hours. Facilitated by the Chair or their designated official, with support from UNODA, the dialogue could follow the following phases:

1. Opening remarks by the Chair
2. Expert summary presentation of each report
3. Presentation of collated questions/comments by the Chair
4. NWS responses to both the expert report and questions/comments
5. Interactive Q&A
6. NWS closing remarks and forward-looking plans for the next review cycle
7. Chair’s closing remarks

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71 Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Initiative. “Enhancing transparency for nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation and strengthening accountability in the review process for the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons”, NPT/CONF.2026/PC.II/WP.32, 2 July 2024, <https://undocs.org/en/NPT/CONF.2026/PC.II/WP.32>

72 United Kingdom. “National Report of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, pursuant to Actions 5, 20 and 21 of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons”, 2021, <https://gov.uk/UK-national-report>

73 Thomas Markram and Gaukhar Mukhatzhanova, “Further Strengthening the NPT Review Process: Reactions and Recommendations”; See NPT/CONF.2026/PC.II/WP.34.

After the meeting, the following materials would be made publicly available: the expert-authored report, the NWS written response, the UNODA compilation of questions/comments, and a summary of the plenary session.

This option draws on established practices aimed at promoting transparency and accountability in other domains. However, applying an external, expert-led reporting model to NPT processes would be extremely challenging under current political and institutional conditions. It would require broad agreement on the parameters for expert selection and the report methodology. It would also necessitate detailed modalities for conducting and structuring the dialogue. Such a process would also entail a significant increase in UNODA resources, including funding for expert training and participation in development of the report protocol.



# Reflections

Transparency is a core principle of the NPT, and ensuring accountability for the implementation of Treaty obligations and additional commitments—including those under articles III and VI—remains crucial for building collective confidence in the Treaty and its implementation by all States Parties. While the NWS have taken constructive steps to demonstrate transparency in the past, NPT-related decisions since the 1995 Review and Extension Conference, as well as in statements and working papers from a significant number of States across regional groups suggest more needs to be done.

There are multiple pathways to enhancing transparency and accountability through interactive discussion. The three options outlined above offer valuable food for thought, but several additional elements could be integrated to enhance their effectiveness. For instance, Option 2 could be strengthened by incorporating written input from civil society actors, duly compiled by UNODA. Likewise, the expert-authored reports proposed in Option 3 could be broadened in scope to include all NPT States Parties. Additionally, the concept of voluntary side events in Option 1 could be combined with the other options to serve as a voluntary follow-up mechanism, fostering continued dialogue and accountability. No single approach will be perfect at first, and it will take time to refine processes and cultivate habits of cooperation. As such, and without prejudice to future decisions, States should take steps now to establish mechanisms that promote both reporting and interactive engagement.

Given current geopolitical tensions, along with hesitancy among some NWS regarding transparency and accountability, more ambitious models—such as embedding transparency into the review cycle through external expert reporting and interactive discussion—are unlikely to gain traction in the near term. However, other options might stimulate engagement among the NPT States Parties, capitalizing on the commitment in 2022 of some NWS to transparency around “nuclear policy, doctrine, and budgeting, including public sharing of information on modernization plans and nuclear deterrence goals”.<sup>74</sup>

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74 See NPT/CONF.2020/WP.70.



A practical starting point could be regular, informal, independently moderated panels within the RevCon cycle, with the aim of progressing towards more systematic and ambitious steps in the medium term. Such an approach could help to address long-standing calls for greater transparency and accountability regarding NWS arsenals and measures taken to fulfil article VI disarmament obligations and related commitments. In doing so, this initiative would contribute to bolstering the NPT review cycle process and strengthening trust in the Treaty's implementation in the interests of all its Parties.

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