The BTWC 8th Review Conference

Political dynamics and opportunities for African states

Dr Jean Pascal Zanders

Assistance and capacity-building in the context of UN Security Council Resolution 1540, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation

Seminar organised by the African Union and the Institute for Security Studies (Pretoria)

Addis Ababa, 9 December 2016
BTWC 8th RevCon: Major disappointment

- **Final document agreed**
  - No work programme for the next Intersessional Period (ISP)
  - Meetings of Experts (MX) deleted

- **Agreement in principle on annual Meetings of States Parties (MSP), but no substance**
  - To be determined in December 2017 (hopefully)
  - However, MSP has no decision-making authority ...
Primary causes

• Iran refused all compromises
  • Sought to return to legally binding measures using the 1996 negotiation mandate for the Ad Hoc Group (AHG)
  • Believed that States Parties were getting too comfortable with ISP process, as evidenced by
    • Proposals to create open-ended working groups
    • Creeping institutionalisation of the (temporary) Implementation Support Unit in function of new tasks and responsibilities (instead of a formal international organisation)
  • Insistence on full implementation of Article X
    • As a method of overcoming unilateral sanctions against it
    • Therefore wholesale rejection of current and proposed initiatives under Article X

• Tensions between Russia and the West
  • Even though compromises were possible (and probably agreed)

• All taken by surprise
  • Nobody expected Iran to refuse all compromises in end stage
  • In final compromise efforts for work programme, everybody insisted on reinserting own pet projects
African RevCon participation

2011

2016

Status
Present
African Working Papers

2011 – 0 PC + 29 WP

- African SP: 2
- National WP: 21
- NAM: 4
- Cross-regional: 2

2016 – 39 PC + 44 WP

- African SP: 8
- National WP: 30
- NAM: 5
- Cross-regional: 5

WP and WP PC categories are represented.
A time for opportunities ...?

• **Everything is open now**
  - Future structure of meetings
  - Topics

• **The period gives Africa time to articulate its specific interests**
  - Time for familiarisation in detail with the BTWC
  - Time for national and (sub)-regional capacity building
  - Time to catch-up with implementation requirements and standards

• **Opportunities for coordination**
  - Regional efforts at enhancing BTWC implementation
  - Setting up and participation in (sub-)regional exercises in building confidence in compliance
  - Stimulation of participation in cross-regional initiatives and exercises
  - Enhance communication skills between capitals and delegations in Geneva
  - Development of processes to prepare and submit position and working papers
    - National
    - Regional
    - Cross-regional
  - Have African countries speak out on their interests at BTWC meetings
  - Create an African Union caucus in Geneva to update and coordinate positions at meetings
  - Train African delegates to participate in end-game negotiations
THE TRENCH

Recalling where science, industry and military art converged
Challenging entrenched positions

www.the-trench.org

E-mail

jpzanders@the-trench.org