IWG LNCV

REPORT ON THE G8GP-IWG CONFERENCE ON:

"The Global Partnership Process and the International Working Group
Engagement and Cooperation with the Scientific Community for Global Security"

By the IWG Executive Secretariat

November 16-17, 2011

Palace Hotel

Como, Italy

Organized by

International Working Group (IWG)

Landau Network Centro Volta (LNCV), Como, Italy

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PRELIMINARY REMARKS

This event was held under the auspices of the International Working Group (IWG) on 16th and 17th November 2011to enable the Global Partnership (GP) community to further discuss issues related to the future direction of the GP, particularly in relation to scientist engagement. The conference organised by the International Working Group – Landau Network Centro Volta (IWG-LNCV), was structured around a series of formal presentations and associated discussions, together with breakout group debates focused around a small number of key questions designed to assist workshop participants in reaching a consensus on practical next steps.

KEY THEMES AND OUTCOMES

The conference discussions focused on how the GP community could work more closely with the scientific community to enhance the effectiveness of future initiatives on scientist engagement - collaboration. A key theme throughout was the emphasis on practical measures that could be implemented now that the GP was moving away from addressing Cold War challenges in Former Soviet Union countries, to ones that were global in character, often knowledge based and therefore intangible to measure and address with conventional instruments, and involve a range of new stakeholders and technologies. It was also recognised that science itself was changing, and while overwhelmingly beneficial, these changes required increased dialogue with scientists themselves to help shape future policy and find practical and workable solutions to address valid security concerns which do not stifle scientific endeavour. It was recognised that the growth in interest in biotechnology and the nuclear renaissance would lead to a significant increase in the number of scientists and engineers with CBRN expertise and the associated access to CBRN material. It was therefore essential that appropriate education, training and professional development formed a fundamental part of future engagement activities with the scientific community. It was recognised that no one organisation could address the potential problem of misuse of CBRN expertise and material and the international community needed to find ways of working more effectively to do this – using a range of instruments to do so. A key factor was the importance of effective communication and outreach – both for ensuring all interested parties were aware of the totality of the work underway in different programmes, and for ensuring lessons learnt were widely promoted to enhance, and reinforce best practice. Raising awareness of the considerable portfolio of work underway and planned on collaboration with scientists to promote professional responsibility was

seen as a key task for the GP for the next few years, so all could benefit from a lessons learnt approach.

Both the main conference discussions and the debates stimulated by the breakout group discussions, emphasised that the GP had a key role for coordinating and facilitating future initiatives on engagement with the scientific community. There was a strong consensus that the GP given its political clout could become an effective hub to coordinate engagement activities, especially in facilitating new partner states to join and influencing new actors to contribute to the debate such as the national science academies, relevant non government associations and industry bodies, such as the World Nuclear Association. Many also saw the GP framework also providing an important platform for international bodies such as the IAEA, WHO, OPCW, BTWC to provide guidance on CBRN priorities and initiatives being taken forward by the GP community. The US announced at the workshop that they would be involving international organisations and a range of non-government organisations in a number of the GP discussions under their presidency of the G8 during 2012.

The strong involvement of the scientific community at the Como event highlighted the value of approaching a number of CBRN security concerns from a different perspective. An example of this was the fact that for many countries their priorities were not necessarily security focused, but on issues such as public health or on a secure and safe energy supply, which were more of direct concern to their populations than security. Addressing such priorities through disease prevention initiatives which also embraced laboratory best practice with respect to safety and security, and assistance in establishing best practice with respect to nuclear regulations, education etc, were seen as more likely to be successful and importantly, sustainable in the long term.

The challenges of constructing effective metrics for scientist engagement initiatives was discussed throughout the sessions of the workshop. Most felt that engagement, outreach, educational and professional development initiatives require different approaches to previous GP programmes focused, as they were, on constructing sizeable facilities for securing or destroying CBRN materials, or provision of equipment for physical protection projects. A good deal of future GP work would be focused on "intangibles". It was recognised that under this new paradigm, not everything needed to be measured and metrics need to be proportional to the size and type of projects implemented. In many cases a "narrative based assessment" may suffice or evidence that states had shown a commitment and evidence of implementing international codes of conduct and UN conventions, etc. It was also made clear in the discussions that transparency in approach was also likely to be evidence of a commitment to address the issues, combined with a willingness to promote activities effectively.

The conference had the opportunity to discuss the use of the "Centres of Excellence concept" for enhancing coordination of best practice and strengthening networks within countries and regions. While most of these were at the early stage of implementation, it was recognised they could have an effective role in bringing scientists and policy makers together to help prioritise needs and options for project delivery, once established clear coordination mechanisms. The discussions also emphasised the value of "champions" in countries to drive implementation and sustainable development. A consistent theme was also the importance of working through existing channels and build wherever possible on the considerable resources already allocated to threat reduction work. Examples presented at the conference were the significant resources allocated by the IAEA on nuclear security education, and now being rolled out through the International Nuclear Security Education Network (INSEN) and on the outreach programs on CWs via the work of the OPCW.

The value of the IWG as a neutral forum for discussion and debate was strongly endorsed by many at the conference especially the opportunities it presented to help shape future coordination and collaborative activities. The participants pointed out that this IWG conference, likely to all the other IWG meetings, provided a forum for the agenda of the 2012 GP to be presented, and thus identified at an early stage the opportunities for future collaboration on a range of CBRN priority activities.