



THE METO PROJECT

FOR A ZONE FREE OF WMD IN THE MIDDLE EAST

February 2019 Q1 Newsletter

Dear Friends,

We hope this message finds you well and we are very happy to give you an update on the work of the METO Project since November 2018 and our plans for 2019.

November was a very intense time for the Core Team members as we were involved in several meetings: in Jordan at the Amman Security Colloquium and Nuclear Forum; in Tel-Aviv, Israel with diplomats and former Israeli officials on the issue of nuclear disarmament and the benefits arising from the WMD Free Zone for regional stability and security; and in The Hague, Holland at the Chemical Weapon Convention Review Conference. Each one of these events was an opportunity to raise awareness of the METO Project, to go deeper into the themes raised and to bring creativity to discussions on the WMD Free Zone.

Currently, the Draft Treaty is undergoing a further round of revisions and we expect this to be completed by the end of March and sent round for further comment.

In terms of activities for 2019, we are in the process of organising a new series of roundtables, some of which will be held online in order to reduce costs and, more importantly, resolve the issues of visas which have plagued our efforts at organising roundtables in the past. The Core Team have been experimenting with a new communication system called Zoom, which is proving to be very effective for running meetings. Not only is the stability much better than with other systems such as skype, it also has a number of functions which lend it to being used in the context of professional conferences. The system has security features whereby participants have to enter using a password and we believe that if we work in good faith, we can organise virtual conferences under the Chatham House Rule. Further information regarding these roundtables will be coming soon. One possibility we are currently pursuing is to hold a roundtable in the UN Buffer Zone in Cyprus. In April, we will meet with people there in order to look at the logistics for a roundtable in the second half of 2019.

By the time of the NPT PrepCom we expect to have our website up and running, and in the meantime we want to take the opportunity to encourage anyone who feels so inspired, to write an op-ed for us on the subject of the WMD Free Zone. All submissions will be published by our media partner, Pressenza International Press Agency and on our website. We want to encourage out-of-the-box thinking, because the last NPT Review Conference failed to come to a consensus, and the situation in the Middle East was blamed for this failure. We are very keen that this shouldn't be repeated but for this we need to get creative and show that progress can be made by the RevCon in 2020.

Furthermore, for anyone who expects to be in New York for the NPT PrepCom, we would be glad to hear from you as we are planning to organise a side event in those days.

We are now working very hard on coalition building, outreach to governments in the run up to the 2020 NPT RevCon and on fundraising. If you have any ideas on how we can do this effectively or contacts we could reach out to it would be a great support to our work.

With our very best wishes,

The METO Project, Core Team

P.S. If you no longer wish to receive our updates, please let reply to this address and we'll remove you from our database