The Role of Civil Society in Building Awareness - Engaging Critical Actors
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This presentation will talk about the role of civil society in space security and give an overview of the different parts that civil society and in particular NGOs play in promoting and enhancing space security. In the security area, states have remained the principal actors: disarmament and security initiatives have been among the least "penetrated" area by NGOs in comparison to human rights, environment, migration and other international issues. The nature "national security" has made it harder for people to get involved, despite the fact that NGOs potentially have a large role to play in the process of building understanding, political awareness and will, and create a better environment for discussion of security issues.

First we need to look at the question of what civil society is. There is a broad range of "civil society" actors that undertake activities at different levels to influence national, regional and global policy-making. But who is considered to be civil society or an NGO? There are many different types actors in civil society, some well-known examples are: academia, scientists, activist groups, consumers and consumer organizations, foundations, trade unions, policy institutions, and the business sector.

This broad range of actors means that civil society does not all speak with the same voice. There is a huge difference between the commercial interest, the activist interest, and the scientific interest for example. A good example of this diversity are the UN meetings on small arms and arms trade, where the community of NGOs and civil society range from the so-called "gun lobby" to women's organizations that work with prevention of rape in warfare. It is also important to remember that all NGOs and civil society have individual interests and objectives, and that they are funded by individuals, members of organizations, industry, governments, foundations and so on, which have their own interests and agendas.

So why does civil society and NGOs matter?

There is growing recognition among many governments that the relationship between NGOs and governments is becoming more important, even in traditional state-centric areas such as the military and national security. NGOs can contribute with a whole range of assets that can facilitate progress and creating more public support for issues. During the last 50 years, NGOs and civil society have developed and changed in nature. The number of actors has increased; the range of types of organization has spread; there has been a spread of involvement and capacity to communicate and organize; and there are increased partnership with governments and international organizations.

So, what roles can civil society and NGOs play in contributing to enhancing space security?

Generate public awareness and campaigning.

• Civil society can help place a topic on the international agenda and demand action from governments. This can take place at a national, regional and global level and assist in creating so called "political will".

• Examples in disarmament and international security areas; civil society generated a lot of awareness of the effects of nuclear testing in the 50s/60s; the humanitarian effects of landmines, explosive remnants of war, arms trade treaty and cluster munitions in the 90s and 00s.

• In space, there is a greater need for making the public aware of the importance of space technologies and our dependence on space, which civil society should assist with.

"Reframing" issues.

• NGOs and civil society have managed to reframe traditional military security issues to instead be defined by its humanitarian dimensions, as with the case of anti-personnel mines, or by its social and developmental impact for small arms and arms trade.

• For space, civil society can promote a change from the traditional military aspect of space security to instead focus on its implications for human security and development.

Developing and changing "norms" of state behavior.

• The landmine "ban" and "mine action principles" supported by ICBL have shifted the "norm" on the usage of these weapons, just as the cluster munitions coalition assisted in a shift towards norm against the use of cluster munitions. Civil society is currently assisting in the need for stronger "codes of conduct" on biotechnology.

• Through raising awareness and campaigning, civil society can assist in developing a norm for behavior in space, such as refraining from debris-creating actions in space, or promoting a moratorium on ASAT tests in absence of any formal agreement.

Lobbying and Advocacy.

• This has been a traditional role for NGOs, primarily at the national level, but increasingly on a transnational and international level.

• While the formal role of NGOs in multilateral security frameworks is very limited, NGOs actively lobby diplomats on security policy issues.

• Examples: The regular "presence" by Greenpeace in Geneva was a key influence on the CD in the negotiation of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty,

• Oxfam and Amnesty activists lobbied effectively to get a resolution on the ATT passed in General Assembly in 2006.

• Civil society could play a crucial role in expressing the raised awareness in the multilateral foras where space is discussed, such as COPUOS and the CD.

Research and Expert Advice

• Expertise provided by NGOs--think tanks, research institutions, etc.--to governments and international organizations is increasingly important

• Civil society experts advise governments on technical dimensions of issues, bringing new research to discussions, analysing impacts of policies, etc.

• Example: Role of Small Arms Survey in advising governments and others on various dimensions of the small arms issue.

- Another great example is UNIDIR and Secure World Foundation, which have greatly contributed to enhancing knowledge about space security in Geneva.
- Space is a highly technical topic and expertise from civil society can assist diplomats and decision-maker to have a better understanding of the issues at the negotiating table.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Actor Behaviour
- Civil society and NGOs can assist in creating a set of monitoring and assessment products that can facilitate implementation and evaluation of behavior of states and their commitments.
- Examples: The Landmine Monitor has become the *de facto* monitoring regime for the Mine Ban Treaty, and monitors and reports on states parties implementation of and compliance with the treaty.
- Reaching Critical Will monitors and reports from UN disarmament negotiations, making it possible to follow the negotiations from a distance and be aware of what a specific government is saying on many issues.
- The Space Security Index. It's an annual, comprehensive, and integrated assessment of space security. It provides background information and in-depth analysis on the key space security trends and developments of eight indicators of space security. The Space Security Index is informed by the views of over 130 space experts from 17 countries in the civil, commercial, and military space sectors

Interlocutor and facilitator of encounter
- Civil society can provide meeting space around security issues when governments cannot. It can facilitate diplomatic awareness raising; agenda-building; agreement implementation and promote "off-the-record" encounters.
- Examples: The Geneva Forum and UNIDIR
- Secure World Foundation.

Filling the gaps
- NGOs look for the "gaps" that states and international organizations are unable to fill and seek to complement them.
- Examples:
- Geneva Call has sought to find a way to hold non-state armed groups accountable to international law on the use of anti-personnel landmines
- Small Arms Survey was "invented" because there was no adequate global body specializing in small arms issues at a time when this area was becoming of increasing political importance
- Reaching Critical Will saw the lack of transparency at the UN system on disarmament negotiations and was created to enhance the information flow.
- At times when the CD cannot negotiate or the international community is deadlocked, civil society can contribute by creating the missing forums for cross-institutional or cross-regional discussions on space, just like the one we're doing today.

There are of course limits to the role of civil society. First of all, these roles and actors do not apply to all parts of the world to the same degree. Civil society, in particular international NGOs, foundations, businesses, and scientists/academics are heavily dominated by western countries and receive its funding from many western

governments. This is not always a problem, but highlights what I said in the beginning, civil society rarely speak with one voice and does not always represent the global community in a way we'd like to think we do. There are issues with transparency and accountability. Who is paying for this? Who is this organization representing? What are their goals? Civil society represents interests just as much as states doo.

But despite these limits, engaging and allowing participation of civil society still provides states with useful benefits. While some parts of civil society contribute in many ways, the many different roles are usually played by different actors at different levels and times. All these different roles should be pursued together; in order to create a wide community of actors engaged.

So what does this mean for space? The view on threats in space has changed through the years and so have the actions taken to meet these kinds of threats and the interaction between actors. In order to fully tackle these threats, states must involve a whole range of actors, such as international organizations, commercial actors, scientists, academics and NGOs. As threats in space can have a set of interconnected causes, any measures to manage such threats must act in an interconnected way, where NGOs potentially have a large role to play in the process of building understanding, political will and creating the right environment for moving forward on space security issues.