Consideration by the Chair of the 2019 Meeting of States Parties on methodological issues in view of the Ninth Review Conference.

The 2017 Meeting of States Parties established an intersessional programme for the period 2018-2020. The meetings of experts resulted in extremely rich debates, proposing many courses of action for the adoption of "effective measures" with a view to "strengthening the implementation of all articles of the Convention in order to better respond to current challenges" (paragraphs 19 b and 19 c BWC/MSP/2017/6).

The question now arises, midway through the intersessional programme, as to how to define a methodology for the Ninth Review Conference to be in the best possible conditions to benefit from these discussions and, if necessary, to decide by consensus whether decisions should be taken to strengthen the implementation of the various articles of the Convention.

1 - From the Presidency's standpoint, a number of methodological errors should be avoided:

- **Not establishing continuity between the three years of the intersessional programme.** Even if repetitions are inevitable, it is important not to seek to reproduce each year similar proposals, which create confusion as to the objective sought, but rather to deepen if necessary existing proposals by referring explicitly to them (by mentioning the number of the previous working document for example) in order to clear up any misunderstanding.

- **Working in silos.** The ISP defines precisely the issues to be addressed in each meeting of experts. However, practice shows that many synergies exist and that issues often overlap. It would be therefore important to consolidate - as it was the case in 2019 - a group composed of the 6 Chairpersons, whose role would be to synthesize expert work and identify areas of convergence. It is important to strive for gender balance while appointing Chairs.

- **Continuing to work in a confrontational logic.** Many proposals to operationalize the Convention emanating from countries belonging to different regional groups overlap or have strong similarities.

- **Not enhancing the value of the meeting of States Parties (4 days),** the financial cost and environmental footprint of which would be outrageous if the MSP was to prove unproductive in substance.

2 - It is important to have conceptual tools available to optimize the chances of achieving this. To this end, it is necessary:

- To be able to have a simple mapping of the various proposals expressed by the experts; in this sense, the aide-memoire proposed by the presidents of the 2019 intersessional phase can be one effective mean of providing a complete overview of the proposals. This checklist is intended to be updated in 2020 and should be available for transmission to the Review Conference. It is important that this checklist remains concise and that the proposals are easily understandable. It is up to the group of
Presidents to ensure that the proposals are operational in nature, which means that they are not too vague or reflecting a merely political stance.

- **to better link MXP with MSP.** The Meeting of States Parties should be able to examine the quality of the MXP discussions. The Chairperson of the meetings of experts must be able to report on the work undertaken. States Parties should be able to have in-depth discussions to create a common understanding of experts' proposals and their potential added value. It would seem desirable that approximately half of the MSP duration is devoted to reviewing MX discussions.

- **Work in continuity** by encouraging the three 2018-2019-2020 Chairs of the Meetings of States Parties to form a “troika”. It could be helpful that one presidency transmits to the incoming presidency a letter, copied to all States Parties, reporting on work undertaken and highlighting the key proposals which are most likely to enjoy consensus.

- Establish **regular consultations** with the Chairs of the Meetings of Experts and the Chairperson of the Meeting of States Parties. The quality of ISP implementation will depend heavily on the fluidity of exchanges between the 6 presidents, whose cooperation is essential.

- Do not prejudge of the political potential of each proposal. It should be up to the Review Conference Preparatory Committee to establish, for each proposal, a gradation of the potential for consensus.

Finally, it is important to recall that any progress in this forum can only be achieved through transparency and inclusiveness.