DRAFT REPORT OUTLINE FOR WG12: NUCLEAR DIALOGUES

The final report for WG12 may cover the issues indicated below. This is not an exhaustive outline, and it may be edited. Please read through and consider which of the topic or issues you would like to contribute to, and send your comments and suggestions to:

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The goal is to have the draft report finished by mid January 2009, so please send your contribution as soon as possible.

Background

Global nuclear energy capacity is currently over 350 gigawatts, with over 400 nuclear power reactors operating in 30 countries. The United States (over 100), France (approximately 60) and Japan (over 50), account for over half of these reactors. Coal and hydroelectric power still dominate the electricity market, with about 40 and 20 percent shares, respectively, of world electricity generation. Nuclear energy accounts for about 15 percent of that supply, and gas and oil produce about 25 percent. Renewable energy accounts for less than 2 percent. States that use nuclear energy to provide a significant portion of their electricity include Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Hungary, Japan, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Korea, Sweden, and Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Asia is the global region with the fastest annual growth in energy demand and countries in the region face increasing pressure to articulate their energy policies. Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam are all considering adopting nuclear energy. And there are other countries in the region already using nuclear energy, including China, DPR Korea, India, Japan, Pakistan and Republic of Korea. As the international focus on climate change intensifies, the environmental and social ethics of all energy choices need be considered holistically. WG12 is not intended to duplicate the numerous meetings being held on energy and environment, but to open up ethical and value questions that have often been neglected, and to depoliticize discussions on environmental ethics to produce substantive cross-cultural outputs that will be relevant for long-term policy making within each nation.

Objectives

The basic objectives of WG12 are:

- To frame the debate in an ethical framework by identifying and clarifying the values at stake and providing ethical reasons for alternative choices; and

- To identify areas for further research and consideration and different policy options.
Issues

WG12 may achieve the above by considering the following issues:

- **Issue dependence.** Can we separate the debate on nuclear proliferation from that of nuclear energy? How does one issue affect the other?

- **Nuclear energy versus other energy sources.** What are the relative costs and benefits of using nuclear energy versus other “clean energy” alternatives such as wind and solar energy? Aspects such as safety, practicality, price, waste, and security can be considered.

- **Marketing nuclear energy generation.** There is much discussion on the role of marketing in promoting nuclear power station-building. Is there an appropriate role of marketing in promoting nuclear power? What should that role be?

- **Complexity of nuclear technology.** Nuclear technology is complex, and such complexity may be conducive to “technological colonialism” and lack of transparency because political power becomes highly concentrated. What is an appropriate level of political power concentration? What should the role of the public be in decisions regarding nuclear energy? What level of information access (because of its highly technical nature) should be available to the public?

- **Nuclear energy generation safety.** How “safe” are nuclear energy generators? What is considered a “safe” level in this context? How “safe” is nuclear energy in comparison to other energy sources? How “safe” is the newer generation of nuclear reactors in comparison to their predecessors? Should a “safety factor” be integrated into nuclear energy decisions and prices?

- **Social justice.** Many developing countries, such as India and China, need more energy to lower poverty levels. Is it fair to stop them despite disadvantages of nuclear energy generation? (This section will focus on particular issues of nuclear energy technology that are not dealt with in the general report on energy equity of Working Group 7)

- **Nuclear technology and international relations.** The role of nuclear energy and international relations/politics is a complex one. What are most important ethical issues in this context? What does an ethical analysis for these issues look like?

- **Nuclear waste.** Nuclear waste is major component of any consideration of nuclear energy. Is there a moral responsibility for uranium-producing countries, such as Canada and Australia, to take back nuclear waste? What intergenerational ethical issues are presented through nuclear waste consideration?

N.B. We are also looking for case studies from the Asia-Pacific region related to any of the issues listed above.