CHAPTER 11
HOME GOVERNMENT LOBBYING

Lobbying of our own governments or home government approaches is an important part of many of AI's campaigns. Lobbying is often associated with quiet words behind closed doors, but this is just one technique. It is usually necessary to use many other campaigning methods to persuade a government to listen seriously to those quiet words and to take the desired action.

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Why approaching home governments is important

Approaching your own government is important because:

- governments have power;
- politicians lead as well as follow public opinion;
- governments can influence other governments;
- governments compose and decide the actions of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs);
- governments can strengthen international standards and mechanisms to protect human rights;
- governments can change legislation and practice, for example by abolishing the death penalty.

Much of AI's campaigning is about persuasion and building up the pressure for change. Letters from AI's individual members to foreign governments are one way of showing international concern. The raising of the concern by your foreign, defence or trade ministries with their counterparts in other countries is another.

The principal overall objective of AI's home government approaches is to ensure that the protection and promotion of human rights becomes a key component of international relations in a consistent, principled and effective way. This objective needs to be reflected in Section lobbying and campaigning programs.

Home government lobbying is also an essential component of AI's domestically focused campaigning for ratification of human rights treaties, for abolition of the death penalty, and for upholding the rights of asylum-seekers.

Internationally, AI's home government lobbying seeks to persuade governments to integrate human rights objectives into:

- their relationships with other countries (bilateral relations);
- their involvement in IGOs (multilateral relations);
- domestic policies through action on the death penalty, human rights education, etc.

Developing a strategy

The following principal objective of a human rights campaigning program should be standard to all AI Sections: **to ensure that the protection and promotion of human rights becomes a key component of the government's international relations**.

This objective requires that:

- the government adopts comprehensive human rights policies encompassing the human rights dimensions of multilateral and bilateral international relations;
- the Section establishes a home government approaches program to ensure a minimum degree of access to government to solicit support for action on individual cases, countries and issues in concert with other governments.

What this will mean in practice in different Sections will vary considerably. Some might focus only on

Effective action

Lobbying home governments to support AI's recommendations is one of the most effective ways AI can generate effective action on behalf of victims of human rights violations.

AI

⇓

home government

⇓

target government

⇓

prisoner of conscience released

Send the right messenger to reach the right target with the right message.

Universal lobbying

Lobbying by smaller Sections, very often with less influential governments, is as important as AI's lobbying by larger Sections.

- It is damaging both to AI's mission and to the wider human rights movement if only a few governments are vocal and active on human rights.
- In many international governmental forums, including the UN General Assembly, each state has one vote.
- Small countries often take or support selected key initiatives which they might take on as "their" issue.
- Small states often have at least temporary powers, such as when they host major conferences or chair intergovernmental organizations.

TIP

In governmental systems where representatives are elected by, and accountable to, constituents or a geographical electorate, action from AI members in these areas is likely to be most effective.

Creating a lobbying strategy

one or two international issues which are high priority for AI and where the government could play a useful role and where there is some chance of success.

Research and analysis

The starting point for developing strategies is research and analysis of the situation you are in, the problems you are trying to overcome, the opportunities you may be able to take advantage of, and the resources you have available.

This will need to be done in relation to specific campaigns. It also needs to be done on a more general level to provide a longer-term strategic framework for individual lobbying initiatives.

In AI's experience, the most effective approaches to government take place in an environment where it is possible to establish positive long-term relationships with individuals and institutions, even where major disagreements persist.

Governments may be willing to listen to AI for a number of reasons, but for this to happen AI must be seen as a respected and credible organization. Developing an effective home government approaches program may therefore include a review of the way AI is perceived in your society. This respect and credibility can be based on a number of factors:

- the reflection of AI's mandate in international standards;
- the reliability of AI's information and relevance of AI's recommendations;
- the size and activity of AI's membership;
- the support for AI from across the political spectrum and from many organizations;
- the consistency and balance of AI's work on many different countries;
- knowledge and trust of individuals involved.

In developing a long-term government approaches program, and in relation to particular issues where the government may be reluctant to take action, it will be necessary to highlight these factors through public campaigning activities as well as through behind-the-scenes lobbying.

The aim of a home government approaches strategy should be to identify:

- the role and potential of your government to act on AI's concerns internationally and domestically;
- the influences in your society on your government's foreign and

Why have a lobbying strategy?

- It allows best use of limited resources.
- It gives coherence to our work and ensures consistency and impartiality.
- It enables us to identify successes and mistakes.
- It improves our ability to respond flexibly.

Why governments might act on human rights

In preparing a lobbying strategy it can be useful to consider why your government might be willing to act on human rights. The reasons might include the following:

- personal commitment of particular ministers or officials;
- the government takes formal commitments to international agreements seriously;
- government self-interest, as a good human rights record might promote economic or other advancement;
- the government is sensitive to its international image and wants to be seen as a good citizen of the global community;
- there are opportunities for playing a role in international organizations;
- there is pride in national values which accord with international human rights values.

It is usually harder to overturn a position that people have committed themselves to than to influence the original decision.

relevant domestic policy;

- possible directions for getting human rights more thoroughly integrated into foreign, trade and other policy;
- how your government works (who AI should be lobbying and how).

QUESTIONS

Has your government signed and ratified all basic international human rights treaties? (*Amnesty International Report* includes most countries' ratifications.)

Has your government made explicit policy statements and commitments in relation to international human rights issues?

Is there parliamentary scrutiny or other official monitoring mechanisms on government policy?

Are there any mechanisms for independent scrutiny of the links between human rights and foreign/trade/defence policy? Who is responsible for these mechanisms? Do they take submissions?

Are there any formal mechanisms for AI and other human rights organizations to input into policy generally and in relation to specific countries or issues?

Does your government have particular military, economic or cultural links with other countries that may give it influence? Which are these countries? What are the sources of influence within these countries?

In which IGO bodies is your government represented? Is it represented on the UN Commission on Human Rights, UN Security Council, the World Bank, regional IGOs?

Who should AI lobby? Which ministers, departments and interest groups are involved in the formulation of foreign (or other relevant) policy generally and in relation to specific countries or issues? Does AI have good access to these people?

Who is responsible for foreign policy within political parties?

Is the media influential on foreign or trade policy? Is the media more influential in relation to some countries or issues than others? Is some media more influential on policy than others? Are some journalists more influential on policy than others?

How important to foreign policy and practice (generally and on specific countries) is public opinion expressed in opinion polls,

Reviewing objectives

Lobbying, as with other campaigning, operates within certain parameters, such as a government's trade, foreign or regional security policy. Sometimes, AI or others may be able to change these parameters through campaigning. On other occasions, AI will not be able to. In these circumstances AI must review its lobbying objectives to ensure they are realistic given the parameters – or be clear on the reasons for proceeding if they are unrealistic.

letter-writing to particular politicians or officials, letters to the media, street protests, etc?

Are particular individuals, such as judges, academics, writers or television personalities, likely to have greater influence on policy than other people?

How is the ministry of foreign affairs organized? Are there specialists on particular countries and themes? Is AI in direct contact with them?

Is there an institutional policy-making body on human rights in international relations, such as a human rights unit? Is AI in direct contact with them?

Is there specific legislation on the human rights considerations of military or economic links, or MSP transfers?

Is there a wider constituency of support for integrating human rights into foreign policy, such as other NGOs?

Do staff members of the foreign affairs ministry and other relevant government departments receive human rights training?

Does the government have, or have a commitment to developing, human rights strategies on particular countries?

Specify objectives

The overall objective of an AI lobbying program is to ensure that the protection and promotion of human rights becomes a key component of the government's international relations (and relevant domestic policy). Depending on how far this objective is from being achieved, other shorter-term objectives need to be set based on your analysis of the current situation.

These objectives could be:

- developing public debate about foreign policy and human rights;
- developing contact with elected representatives and political parties on international human rights issues;
- establishment of an annual independent review of government action on human rights;
- access to, and good working relationships with, key officials in the human rights unit of the foreign affairs ministry;
- access to and influence with the minister of foreign affairs, president and/or prime minister;
- agreement of the foreign affairs ministry to take up and act on each case that AI brings to its attention;
- taking the lead role on a particular country/human rights issue in international organizations.

Whatever your objectives, you should seek to make your progress towards achieving them measurable so that you can evaluate your strategy and work.

How to achieve the objectives

Once you are clear on what you want to achieve, the next step is to decide on the best way of achieving it.

- **Who do you need to take action?** The foreign minister/president, etc?
- **Who or what is likely to influence them?** Advice from their officials or department? Influence of party colleagues or particular committees or organizations? Independent experts? Editorial and news coverage in the media? Public pressure through letter-writing?
- **Who or what might oppose the action you seek?** Bureaucratic resistance to new initiatives? Particular officials/departments? Other interests, such as political, economic or military? How can you make this opposition ineffective?
- **How important is timing?** What are the constraints on timing? Will key individuals/bodies have to be committed to a position by a certain date? Are there deadlines for public submissions before decisions are made?

Action

The implementation of your strategy is likely to include producing the right documentation, preparing for and following up meetings, preparing membership materials, etc. Practical advice on materials, lobbying by letter and meeting follows below.

Monitoring and evaluation

When preparing strategies include ways that you can monitor your progress and evaluate the outcome of the strategy. This means making sure that the objectives set are specific and measurable.

One of the advantages of an overall lobbying program is that it makes it much more likely that you will have early or earlier notice of issues that are relevant to AI. This increases the possibility for influencing outcomes. Another is that relationships and credibility will already be established with those needing lobbying.

Campaigning methods

It is to AI's advantage if no more energy or resources are needed to get government action than a telephone call or a meeting. There are, however, a range of campaigning techniques that will be necessary and effective to use at different times.

AI will normally need to play both the "insider" role (lobbying in the corridors of power), and the "outsider" role (publicly and vocally calling on a government to change its policies and actions). Politicians and civil servants will often imply that public campaigning could be counter-productive. However, the capacity of AI to mobilize public pressure and our commitment to speak out on human rights are the basis of our credibility as lobbyists.

Even where the relationship between AI and the government is constructive and the government is committed to action on human rights, there will inevitably be occasions when they are reluctant to take the necessary action. In these circumstances a telephone call or meeting will not be enough. A range of techniques will then be necessary to push the government to do what it would prefer to avoid.

Which methods are effective will depend on the system of government and how the system works at different times.

All AI structures should get used to influencing their own government's foreign affairs, including in relation to IGOs, early on in their work. Even if a Section is not yet able to develop a structured home government lobbying program, it can still influence its government through these other campaigning techniques that have been described. Influencing your home government, including on IGO issues, should become part of the day-to-day work of all levels of the movement.

Membership action

Governments are generally responsive to pressure from the community. AI must therefore develop a strategy to involve them effectively and provide them with the resources to act.

- Organize letter-writing by AI groups and other members to targeted members of the government or elected representatives on selected issues.
- Make sure AI groups seek meetings with their elected representatives to convey concern as constituents. Target particular influential representatives and members of the government.
- Hold campaigning events such as public meetings and protests in the constituency/home area of elected representatives.
- Ensure AI groups do outreach to persuade others in the community to support AI's position. Ask religious organizations, women's organizations and others to write letters, sign a short statement, distribute petitions, etc.
- Ask AI groups to write to the media.
- Involve the membership in public protests inside or outside important government meetings.

"AI representatives could tell many stories of freak events, chance meetings or casual remarks over lunch that had as much impact as a carefully planned lobbying action."
Helena Cook, former director of LIOP at the IS

IGO work is campaigning work. IGO work is not mysterious. Like much of AI's work it aims to change the rhetoric, policies and actions of states. What distinguishes it is that it targets states as members of IGOs. Like other campaigning, IGO work uses a range of techniques to influence governments including grass-roots public campaigning, mass letter writing and media work. The additional layer is the home government lobbying work Sections do and the advocacy work the IS does directly at IGO fora.

A sample strategy objective: abolishing the death penalty

SCENARIO 1

Who do you need to convince to take action? The Constitutional Court.

Who or what is likely to convince them? Legal arguments connected to provisions of the constitution and international standards. Individual judges, lawyers' organizations, particular politicians, international concern/pressure.

Who or what are the people/factors that might oppose the action you seek? Police association, some judges, some politicians, media/public opinion.

Timing? The Constitutional Court has outlined a process for accepting submissions from experts and NGOs by a certain date.

Possible strategy: Provide a submission including arguments using international standards. Identify key judges, politicians and lawyers' organizations and persuade them to make private or public representations to the Constitutional Court. Seek action from judges and lawyers internationally. Arrange for supportive editorial comment if public opinion becomes hostile. If the police's position is likely to become a threat, try and identify serving or retired high-ranking officers to put the abolitionist argument.

SCENARIO 2

Who do you need to convince to take action? Parliament (a majority of members).

Who or what is likely to convince them? Party policy, the issue being defined as one of individual conscience and personal responsibility, community attitudes, respected organizations, religious leaders, individual judges, lawyers' organizations, international concern/pressure.

Who or what are the people/factors or influences that might oppose the action you seek? Police Association, some judges, fear of crime, media/public opinion.

Timing? Parliament is scheduled to vote on abolition in six weeks time.

Possible strategy: Either seek commitment of political parties to abolition or for a vote based on individual conscience. Identify those members of parliament for and against and those most likely to change their mind. Focus action on those most likely to change their position. If public opinion is hostile to abolition either change this (if this is a realistic objective) or define the issue as one where public opinion should not be a deciding factor. Get individual groups to write to and meet with targeted individual members of parliament.

The media

The media may offer opportunities for influencing the government. Many organizations will go to the media if unable to achieve their objectives through meetings and other methods. The media can be useful for setting agendas and redefining issues. It can also be a way of putting pressure on the government to state its position for the public record.

It is easy, however, to overrate the influence of the media. Their attention span is often short, whereas the process of government policy formulation is usually quite lengthy. Many media outlets are primarily interested in conflict as they see this as more interesting to their audience. In these circumstances issues can become oversimplified and positions stereotyped, sometimes in a way that is unhelpful to AI's cause. Having good relationships with journalists can help to overcome this problem.

Media releases, background briefings, feature articles and opinion pieces are all techniques that can be used (for further details, see Chapter 9).

Outreach

Outreach is another technique that can be useful when governments are resistant to acting on AI concerns. Identify those organizations that are most likely to influence the government and persuade them to lobby the government in support of AI's concerns.

Also identify other organizations that may share AI's concerns on issues/countries as well as broader concerns and work with them. Some AI Sections participate as observers on coordinating committees of human rights organizations. These committees can come up with common objectives and strategies in relation to different governments.

Governments will expect AI and other human rights NGOs to argue a certain line. Mobilizing women's organizations, religious groups, trade unions or business leaders can have greater impact because it indicates that the issue is of much broader concern.

Holding governments to account

Transparency and accountability are key overall objectives for AI with regard to foreign policy and human rights. In various countries AI and other human rights activists have campaigned for institutional reforms that would place human rights higher up on the government policy agenda and that would involve NGOs and the wider community more substantially in consultation and scrutiny of policy. Some examples are given below:

Reviews of bilateral relationships
In some countries the legislature can hold public inquiries into bilateral relations with other countries. Submissions from members of the public and from interested organizations (including AI) can raise human rights, concerns about aspects of the relationship (including MSP transfers), suggest steps for raising or pursuing particular human rights issues through different parts of the bilateral relationship, etc. Such inquiries might be an objective of lobbying, provide a further opportunity for lobbying and in themselves be a way of a government raising the concerns.

Annual reviews of human rights action
The Australian Parliament has established an annual review of human rights action by the government to which public submissions are invited and for which public hearings are held for concerned NGOs. Some governments also organize one-off reviews of foreign policy, as did the Irish Government in the mid-1990s.

Parliamentary AI groups
Some Sections have established AI groups among members of parliament as a way of increasing AI's lobbying status and power. It was at the request of such a group in the Australian Federal Parliament that the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs committed itself to act on every UA issued by AI. Inquiries from the AI parliamentary group are often able to get a quicker and more substantive response than standard inquiries.

Human rights units
In response to lobbying by AI and others, a number of governments have established human rights units within their foreign affairs departments. The role of these units varies but might be:

- to provide advice to foreign ministers on human rights issues and to recommend action on particular countries/issues;
- to provide human rights training and information to diplomatic staff and other foreign affairs personnel;
- to ask diplomats to raise cases or issues and take other action;
- to review and report on a country's human rights situation and to advise on strategies for improvement;
- to advise on the reform and strengthening of international human rights mechanisms.

Apart from specific initiatives, the establishment of such a unit can be an effective strategy for trying to institutionalize human rights within a

Making the choice

July: AI reviews and evaluates recent (March) session of Commission on Human Rights. Selects countries and issues to pursue at next session.

September: IS sends out initial indication of priority countries and themes for next session of the Commission.

October: Section discusses issues/countries with the government. Government indicates willingness to support a draft declaration that AI is supporting and its reluctance to support action on a particular country. Section gives feedback to IS.

November: IS and Section consult. IS has information that other countries are willing to support the Declaration and to push for action on a particular country. Section and IS decide whether to focus on support for Declaration or to also lobby harder to overcome government resistance to action on the particular country.

government bureaucracy – and of creating an **internal lobby** for human rights action. In this way longer-term policy may be partly protected from the vicissitudes of political change. Human rights work can also be seen as beneficial to the professional status of individual foreign affairs staff. However, it can also lead to the compartmentalization of human rights into one unit of a department where it may be isolated and ineffectual in influencing broader change.

Practicalities of lobbying

The process of informing and persuading those with power or influence to act to protect and promote human rights involves a number of techniques. You may decide you need to use membership action, the influence of third parties and media publicity, or you might simply have a chat with the foreign minister over a cup of coffee. In the long-term, success also depends on:

- **Quality:** this involves the use of reliable information, proof of arguments, and realistic proposals for solving the problem.
- **Treatment:** This means staying open and friendly, keeping emotions low, fulfilling promises, and providing some lasting service.

Ingredients of successful lobbying

- Clear focus of effort
- Clear and achievable objectives
- Credibility of the organization
- Credible and reliable information and message
- Access to target groups
- Current information
- Subject expertise
- Professional presentation
- Resources
- Timing

Selecting the issues

Whether lobbying is focused on an important event such as the UN Commission on Human Rights or on longer-term objectives, AI is likely to have many more human rights concerns than it is able to raise at one meeting or over a period of time. To be effective it is necessary to choose a small number of issues and focus effort on them. The following criteria can help this selection process:

- IS documents list the main concerns which we can raise with our home government and for particular meetings should list priority countries (these circulars also indicate which Sections in particular should lobby their governments).

- Is your home government in a position to influence human rights situations in other countries and actions by IGOs?

- The long-term lobbying strategy of your Section and the need for consistency and balance. For example, it is advisable not to allow one single, perhaps controversial issue to dominate.

- The Section's expertise. You will probably be more effective if you concentrate on countries/themes on which you have expertise within the Section or through helpful contacts.

Letters

In general, individual letters are not usually a very effective way of lobbying. However, they can open up a dialogue or supplement other lobbying.

- **Structure of letter:** state what you basically want, try to win them over to your objective, show them how to achieve it, and point out the benefit to them of doing so.
- **Information:** find out the addressee's exact name, title and how to address them. Refer to their position of influence.
- **Make the letter personal:** use full names, tell them who you are and sign letters by hand.
- **Keep it short:** use short sentences and include no more details than necessary.

Difficult questions

Despite the expertise of your delegation and your preparations, you might be asked questions that are awkward or that you are unable to answer on the spot. The following responses may help:

"*I don't know, but I can find out and let you know...*"

"*Yes, but...*"

Change the subject: "*I don't think we should be talking about what criminals deserve but about how a civilized society should treat its citizens...*"

Shift the burden of proof to the questioner: "*So why do you think that...*"

Use your expert subject knowledge to give facts.

Appeal to common interests or a common sense of humanity.

- **Make it inviting to the eye:** use an attractive lay out, left-aligned rather than justified, and no more than five lines a paragraph.
- **Explain:** be careful not to assume knowledge – use clear language.
- **Give lists:** summarize to five items using bullet points to attract the eye.
- **Use polite tone:** offensive remarks will send the letter into the rubbish bin.
- **Keep them reading:** refer to their assumed interest, address possible fears or reservations and use positive language.
- **Ask for activity:** appeal to their readiness to help, give recommendations, tell them what you see as the next "step" and announce more information/telephone calls/visits.
- **Copy to superior:** this might increase the chance of a response.

Telephone contacts

- **First contact:** announce by letter your planned telephone call, explore name/setting/situation of target person.
- **Secretaries:** make friends with them, remember their name, ask them for help.
- **Prepare yourself:** draw up an outline of intended call – the points you want to make – your maximum and minimum goals, the intended flow of conversation, possible objections and how to overcome them, and have supporting material to hand if you need it.
- **Get their attention:** you will have 45 seconds to catch their interest – tell them who you are, engage them by asking questions, design your message accordingly, be open and enthusiastic about what you want.
- **Take notes:** write down the decisions, useful information for improving your tactics next time, and the best calling hours.
- **Talk in warm and polite tones:** create a pleasant atmosphere.
- **Be positive**: do not use negative formulations, making it easier to say "yes" than "no".
- **With difficult contacts**: start with a recommendation from someone they know, ask why they are not interested, ask if they know someone who would be.
- **Close with some agreement**: summarize what they will do, what you will do and the next steps.
- **Afterwards:** send a letter of thanks and confirmation of outcomes.

Lobbying through meetings

Holding a meeting is one of the central activities of all types of lobbying. A typical meeting with home government representatives lasts no more than one hour. To make this meeting effective, you need to:

⇨prepare thoroughly before the meeting;

⇨make sure your goals are clear throughout the meeting;

⇨ not raise too many issues –

Sections should ask themselves whether it is necessary and possible to have material, or at least a summary, translated into another language.

know the one or two most important messages you want to convey, especially if you have a short meeting;

➪ take appropriate actions to follow up the meeting.

Preparing for meetings:

The secret of a good meeting is careful preparation, thinking about what the "worst case scenario" is and how to deal with it, and rehearsal.

PLANNING A MEETING

Who is responsible for preparing the meeting?
Name this person.

Find out about the people you are going to meet.
Have they met AI before? On what issue? What was the outcome? Are they AI members? Does an AI member know any of the people personally? If there has already been a meeting, who was there? Read the notes of the meeting. What roles do the people you are meeting have and what is the scope of their authority? What action can they take? Is there anything in their background or do they have any particular interests that may be relevant? If the person is a politician, then obtain his/her political biography. Has he/she been engaged in any special campaigns/actions? Does he/she have contact with other organizations? Has he/she ever spoken publicly about human rights, about refugees and asylum? Has he/she contacts with foreign countries?

Plan the meeting
What is the meeting for? Is it an introductory meeting with a new minister? The letter asking the person for a meeting should include concrete items you want to discuss and a preferred date. Provide any necessary supporting documents. Set up an AI delegation: Section director, chairperson, member of a co-group?

Choose a delegation and assign roles
In lobbying it is usually important for AI's delegation to consist of at least two, but not usually more than three members. This allows for:

➪ notes to be taken for a subsequent formal record and confirmation of outcomes;

➪ a number of different issues to be raised by the different participants and different expertise to be brought to bear;

➪ difficult situations to be handled with greater confidence.

It may be, for example, that a senior staff member/volunteer and a country specialist attend the meeting so that there is expertise on AI generally as well as on the specific country/issue. The roles for different delegation members include:

➪ delegation leader, who introduces the other members of the delegation, acts as chair, outlines proposed structure of talk, acts as general overall spokesperson and sums up at the end of the meeting;

➪ specialist member, who addresses AI's specific concerns and desired actions;

➪ AI member, who can talk about AI's position more generally (important to do at the beginning in first meetings) and take notes.

Prepare the meeting
Be clear on what the objective of the meeting is and what action outcomes you want. Set up detailed list of themes for the meeting and distribute it to the delegation. The delegation should meet before the meeting and prepare together (who says what, who introduces AI generally, who speaks about the concerns, etc). Clarify what documentation you will need to take and to leave with them. Rehearse the meeting. This can help to refine arguments, clarify delegates' roles and help to anticipate questions or problems that may arise.

The effective meeting:
Assuming that you have been able to arrange a meeting at the right time with the right person, the effectiveness of

Active listening

Listening
- concentration
- understand without judgment
- discover personal interest
- move along without exerting pressure

Active
- ask questions
- give feedback to signal understanding
- show any real interest and give positive support

your lobbying depends on presenting your case effectively. To do so, you need to consider both the materials and documentation you use and the way you run the meeting.

CHECKLIST

EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

- Have a clear, achievable goal.
- Decide who is going to say what.
- Plan for different kinds of responses.
- Dress appropriately: showing knowledge of dress codes increases trust.
- Sit comfortably, be relaxed.
- Maintain eye contact if appropriate.
- Keep a positive atmosphere: listen actively and show interest in and understanding of their point of view.
- State your case precisely.
- Make your request for help explicit.
- Keep the discussion on track: summarize progress, dare to interrupt and let yourself be interrupted.
- Deal confidently with questions.
- Check what you have agreed before leaving.

Documentation:

Decide the length/detail of materials versus the likelihood of them being read. Decide the best time to send materials. If you send them too far in advance, they will be forgotten, but if they arrive too close to the meeting, there will be no time to study them. Do not assume that anything will be read in advance. Bring a second copy (or sufficient copies) of everything to the meeting.

CHECKLIST

AFTER THE MEETING

- Who is responsible for action after the meeting? Name a person.
- Send a letter thanking the person for the meeting, mentioning the promises he/she made.
- Make a written report of the meeting for your AI records. Distribute the report to everyone within AI who may be interested.
- Give feeback to the IS.
- After a while, call the person again and ask if they have kept their promises.

Structures for lobbying

Most Sections will not make a big distinction between lobbying their own government about domestic issues, about bilateral country issues, or issues in the context of IGO work. Indeed, it is important that there is a good overall coordination of lobbying and integration with campaigning.

Within the IS, most lobbying requests will come from the regional programs with regard to specific countries or from the Legal and International Organizations Program (LIOP) in relation to IGO work. The Campaigning and Crisis Response (CCR) program is responsible for the overall coordination of our action calendar and takes the lead with regard to theme campaigns, MSP work, and work on economic relations and human rights.The Research and Mandate Program (RMP) takes the lead on refugee work.

LIOP is the principal contact point for IGO coordinators and others who coordinate campaigning on IGO issues. Other IS programs also lead initiatives on certain regional IGOs or themes. While IGO coordinators should guide lobbying and other campaigning on IGO issues, Section press officers and campaign coordinators will need to understand the basics of IGO work and work very closely with IGO

coordinators. Country coordinators and specialist networks, such as lawyers' groups, should learn about IGO work and be able to lead IGO campaigning in their area of expertise.

At the Section level there are almost as many structural models as there are structures. The outline below is intended to provide only a guide to the functions of such a home government approaches program and the resources it might need in order to function.

Creating a lobbying working group:

- One or two people at the start.
- Identify core roles.
- Identify what administrative support you need.
- Identify what training is needed.
- Identify outside resources and expertise.
- Work with the IS to identify suitable actions (do not try to do everything at first).
- Ensure regular feedback from IS to Sections and from Sections to IS.

Bilateral action on human rights by governments

Diplomatic protocol, inertia and established practice can restrict the willingness of governments and their officials to take action on behalf of the human rights of individual citizens in other states. In practice these constraints can and have been broken down by political will, individual initiative and imagination. Lobbying and other campaigning by AI can help to provide all these.

Below is a list of some of the things that AI knows governments have done in relation to international action on human rights. You may want to refer to some of these when meeting your government.

Urgent Actions

In response to lobbying, the foreign affairs ministry of at least one government has given a commitment to act on each UA issued by AI. In countries where an embassy exists, embassy staff are requested to make inquiries and make concerns known to the government concerned. Where no embassy exists, other diplomatic channels are used. Any information learned is passed back to the foreign affairs ministry, which then feeds this information back to AI.

Meeting local human rights NGOs and activists

Governments can signal their commitment to human rights by meeting local human rights organizations and activists. This should only be encouraged if there is no risk that it would put the activists in danger. These meetings can be held at the homes or offices of these NGOs/activists or at the embassy.

Formally inviting human rights NGOs and activists to attend official receptions or dinners at the embassy can:

- help to build the legitimacy of human rights activism;
- offer some protection to those at risk by demonstrating the international interest in them;
- ensure that the embassy staff are kept informed about human rights developments, trends and opinions in the country.

Attending meetings and other NGO events

Diplomatic staff can attend meetings and other events to show an interest in the work of human rights NGOs. In some circumstances it can also act as a deterrent against physical attacks or harassment of activists.

Making diplomats responsible

Lobbying can seek to make sure that human rights work is integrated as one responsibility of the work of diplomats. This may mean:

- receiving a briefing from AI and other human rights NGOs before leaving the country to take up a post;

- reporting back to the home government on human rights developments and violations;
- advising on strategies to improve respect for human rights;
- knowing what action is likely to be most effective in individual cases, for example whether particular government ministers are responsible and how they may be influenced;
- dedicating specific embassy staff to human rights.

Special visitors programs

Some governments have a special visitors program where international visitors are invited to the country as the personal (official) guest of the foreign minister. Visitors on these programs can include human rights activists from different countries.

A formal program for such a visit may include meetings with other government officials and human rights organizations that may be in a position to offer material, moral or other forms of support.

Media work associated with these visits may help to increase media and community understanding and action on the human rights situation in the visitor's home country. Such visits can help to give activists an international stature that provides a degree of safety.

Practical and material support

Some governments provide funding or other material support for human rights organizations or bodies in other countries. As a matter of policy AI does not identify specific individuals or organizations that it believes should receive support, but it does lobby home governments to have a human rights strategy that includes the strengthening of human rights movements in other countries.

Aid consortiums

AI lobbies governments to raise human rights issues in the course of discussions on development or economic assistance between provider and receiver governments. Some governments have used their position as a provider of aid or assistance as a lever for human rights change by imposing particular human rights conditions, or simply suspending aid until elections are held, for example.

Legislation on MSP transfers

AI has pressed governments to pass legislation to control military, security and police (MSP) transfers to try and ensure that these transfers do not contribute to human rights violations. The most effective legislation:

- applies to government transfers as well as those of private companies;
- enforces transparency – such as documentation allowing for independent scrutiny of transfers.

Bilateral representations

In formal diplomatic channels direct government-to-government concerns are made through respective foreign affairs ministries.

Concerns are expressed either through the ambassador in the target country seeking a meeting with the government, or through the foreign minister requesting a meeting with the ambassador stationed in her/his country. According to diplomatic protocol, the latter is normally only done where there is an issue of serious concern in the relationship.

In particularly serious cases, governments can recall their ambassadors temporarily – and suspend diplomatic relations.

Increasingly, bilateral relationships exist through a range of different government departments or ministries, including trade, culture and defence. These contacts also provide important opportunities for representations to be made.