

CLOSING SESSION

Next Steps

Gail Bingham, RESOLVE, provided the following information regarding the use of meeting outputs and the project process moving forward:

- A list of participants will be available by July 6, 2009.
- A summary of the meeting will be prepared and will be made available in early August.
- Work groups will be stood up by late August.
- The comment sheets will be compiled and transcribed.
- Work groups will use materials resulting from this meeting as input when deciding where to start and what issues to consider.
- The Leadership Council will also take this input, along with input from the work groups.
- The nomination process is open following the meeting from June 26, 2009 to July 20, 2009 .
- Work group co-chairs will decide on membership based on the criteria of including a balance of perspectives.

Concluding Remarks

Co-chairs Dr. Frumkin and Ms. Witherspoon concluded the meeting with brief remarks.

Dr. Frumkin's Final Remarks

Dr. Frumkin commented on the richness of the entire day and reflected on the meeting in three phases. The first phase included talks from agency leaders, all of whom expressed a real willingness to collaborate with other agencies to avoid redundancy and identify gaps. He acknowledged the great opportunity this commitment to working together presents for the *National Conversation*. The second phase consisted of the plenary discussion which Dr. Frumkin characterized as a conversation about accountability to communities. Meeting attendees with extensive experience at the community level expressed their frustration about insufficient progress around issues and sites of importance to them. Dr. Frumkin expressed his appreciation for the people who led the discussion in this direction. He then commented on the issue of trust, noting the importance of acknowledging past errors when seeking to build trust. Dr. Frumkin acknowledged that ATSDR has not always done things as well as they might have and reiterated that one reason for being at this meeting is to learn how to improve. Another way to build trust is to listen to people's concerns. Dr. Frumkin committed to planning a series of visits to communities around the country and stated that other leaders in his agency will plan visits as well. A third way to build trust is to identify solutions, which the breakout sessions began to consider in the third phase. He explained that identifying solutions might be the best way to gain trust, and that this is what the entire process seeks to do. In recommending solutions, Dr. Frumkin expressed the importance of determining the steps that need to be taken and identifying the actors who are in a position to make these things happen. He said that we need to be strategic about what a given government agency can deliver and then call on agencies to do their best work and to collaborate with other agencies to deliver the best services. In response to the question of the *National Conversation's* intended audience, Dr. Frumkin said this project seeks to reach all actors who are in a position to implement a recommendation generated by the project.

Dr. Frumkin concluded by pledging that the federal agencies are ready to listen and to build bridges that have not been there before, and that his agency – and likely others – is willing to be accountable to communities in better ways than they have been before, which includes identifying past mistakes and

correcting them. He confirmed the need for concrete solutions in order for agencies to serve as well as possible, both at the policy and at the community level, and he thanked participants for their time.

Ms. Witherspoon's Final Remarks

Ms. Witherspoon emphasized the theme of action, which was raised at several points throughout the day as the project's ultimate purpose. She attested to the interest of all *National Conversation* participants and leaders in action and results, and pointed out that while this project will last for the next 18 months, in some instances we will not wait until the project concludes before taking action.

Ms. Witherspoon reminded meeting participants that this event is only the very beginning of the project and that substantive work would begin when the work groups are formed. She encouraged attendees to stay connected with the process and thanked them for their time.