

Setting up a negotiating agenda



- Categorizing:** subdividing topics into logical categories.
- Clustering:** placing topics under a common theme or denominator.
- Fractionalizing:** dividing complex themes into sub-issues that are easier to review and deal with.
- Classifying:** arranging issues, determining an order to discuss themes.

A rule of thumb for classifying interests and issues to be discussed is:

- if it is necessary to (re)establish communication between parties, begin with an icebreaker topic. For example, find a topic which is neutral or positive for all the parties (see the hint below);
- if feasible, start with the blocking issue (II-8), (see below) and then continue with interests. Rule of thumb for the order of raising interests for discussion (II-7):
 1. mutual interests;
 2. differing but reconcilable interests;
 3. differing but apparently irreconcilable interests.
- within a category, start with uncomplicated issues, then address more difficult topics.