Working Group 5: Public Participation in national implementation of international agreements

First question: Added value

Public participation brings to earth big issues and makes them accessible to the general public
Increases accountability
Promotes transparency
Makes possible the identification of leaderships
The more one lets the public participate, the more stable the government
By involving civil society you give form to political will
Provides opportunities to identify synergies
Creates commitment
Allows for diversity of ideas
Fosters cooperative solutions
Promotes public ownership which ensures sustainability

Second question: Challenges

Legislation is necessary, especially to regulate the implementation of the “right to know”
Its time consuming for different actors to get to know each other and trust one another
Money is needed for the process
Attitude against involving the public (not giving guidance but listening to the public and coming to a consensus solution)
Diverse perceptions among the public
Identification of stakeholders
Ensuring the incorporation of public recommendations
Lack of feedback to public from the discussions
Difficulties in ensuring public participation at all government levels

Third question: Measures

Designing Public Participation protocols (it involves a long planning process that leads to a written document that includes feedback loops granting a feedback to the public involved).
Building capacity for process as well as the content
Granting the participation of local/municipal levels
Information must flow
Designing a formal structure to facilitate the informal consultation e.g. formation of a desk for public groups
Enacting legislation that ensures public participation
Forming networks of civil societies interested in chemical issues