

CBRN Risk Mitigation in the context of Combatting Terrorism

Organised by **the UN Group of Friends of CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance**
and **United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI)**

29 September 2016, 15h00-18h00, CR 8, United Nations Headquarters, New York

Concept paper

The threat posed by chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials and weapons are at the top of the international security agenda, as stated by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 66/282 (2012) in reviewing the United Nations Global Counter Terrorism Strategy. Relevant stakeholders, including policy makers, scientists, academics and civil servants within the international community continually examine the significance and varying origins of this threat and acknowledge that managing CBRN risks is an increasingly difficult and complex challenge.

It is also becoming increasingly evident that an effective strategy to mitigate CBRN risks of criminal, accidental or natural origin requires a very high level of co-operation and co-ordination both between different national agencies and among countries and International and Regional Organizations. It entails the application of a holistic approach through which all stakeholders, while operating autonomously, can establish common goals; identify and manage resources to achieve these goals; clearly allocate responsibilities and tasks; elaborate functioning channels of communication; create a security culture based on common learning; and ensure that lessons learnt are incorporated and absorbed throughout the whole system.



An excellent example of such a holistic approach is the European Union CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative, funded by the European Commission and implemented by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission. The

Initiative, which started in 2010, is putting in place a framework for cooperation and coordination across all levels of government and amongst international partners, such as IAEA, OPCW, BWC ISU, 1540 Committee, WHO and others. The Initiative also facilitates regional cooperation in order to enhance CBRN capabilities.

The resulting network is currently present in more than 50 countries across the globe, grouped in eight geographic regions, namely: the African Atlantic Façade; Central Asia; Eastern and Central Africa; the Gulf Cooperation Countries; the Middle East; North Africa and Sahel; South East Asia; and South East and Eastern Europe. The establishment of regional Centres of Excellence is a cornerstone of these activities. These centres, referred to as Regional

A High Level Side-event at the 71st Session of the First Committee of United Nations General Assembly

Secretariats, offer a coherent and comprehensive approach, covering legal, regulatory, enforcement and technical issues. Algeria, Georgia, Jordan, Kenya, Morocco, the Philippines, the United Arab Emirates, and Uzbekistan have taken the leadership in hosting Regional Secretariats in charge of coordinating activities at the regional level.

One of the most important results of the initiative is the production of National Action Plans for CBRN risk mitigation, which is leading to improved CBRN risk awareness. The CBRN National Action Plan is a unique document produced by the CBRN National Teams of the Partner Countries in coordination with relevant international organizations. The plan articulates a national vision of safety and security and identifies a consolidated set of priorities to strengthen national CBRN capacity.

The CBRN National Action Plan also aims to ensure that donors' efforts are in line with countries' needs and expectations to reinforce their capability to counteract risks such as terrorism, industrial accidents and natural disasters impacting CBRN materials.

The United Nations Group of Friends of CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance

With the aim to address and promote various CBRN related topics at the United Nations, the Governments of Georgia, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of the Philippines have established the UN Group of Friends of CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance. The UN Group of Friends of CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance-is a consultation and dialogue forum aimed at integrating the CBRN component in the international security architecture, sensitizing states on the importance of mitigating CBRN risks, and foster regional cooperation on CBRN challenges.

The UN Group of Friends will also promote activities aimed at building capacity and developing capabilities between and among partner States and relevant state stakeholders, and promoting best practices. It will draw stakeholders' attention to the importance of bringing on-board relevant international and regional organizations, promote the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and subsequent relevant resolutions.

The side-event is aimed at enhancing awareness of the current and possible future CBRN related threats, including terrorism. Technological developments in particular will be taken into account. Improving global capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to CBRN related threats by conducting activities that strengthen the procedures, and interoperability of relevant international mechanisms will be addressed by the participants of the side event.

The side event will, in this context, showcase how the best practices developed by the European Union CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative, as promoted and enhanced by the United Nations Group of Friends of CBRN Risk Mitigation and Security Governance, can serve as a model for adopting best practices in other areas of security governance.