



**Revitalisation of the Kathmandu Process;  
High-level roundtable on the implementation of Security Council  
resolution 1540**

Mr KIM Won-soo  
High Representative for Disarmament Affairs  
United Nations



Kathmandu, Nepal,  
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## **High-level roundtable on the implementation of**

### **Security Council resolution 1540**

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Kim Won-soo, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs

Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat, Foreign Minister of Nepal

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I would like to express my gratitude to Foreign Minister Mahat and the Government of Nepal for their hospitality and partnership as the host nation of our UN Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific.

The UN Office for Disarmament Affairs is delighted to be back in Kathmandu, something we just celebrated at the opening of our new office.

I would also like to thank those participants who have travelled from across the region to be here.

Today is an historic achievement – the revitalisation of the Kathmandu Process after a fourteen year hiatus.

The Kathmandu Process was begun in the late 1980s as a regional dialogue to promote disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation issues in Asia, and to build confidence and foster common understanding of these issues.

The process was halted in 2002, but its importance was never forgotten. The annual General Assembly resolution on the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, adopted by consensus, has consistently recognised the importance of the Kathmandu Process for the development of the practice of region-wide security and disarmament dialogue.

This importance has not abated in the last fourteen years. It has only grown.

The Asia-Pacific region is exceptionally diverse. It is home to the world's biggest countries and the smallest. It is a region of economic dynamism but one that is also beset by historical enmity. It is home to nuclear-armed States but also countries wracked by armed violence. As this region becomes increasingly integrated into global affairs, it cannot insulate itself from global problems. These include climate change, global pandemics, natural disasters, and the emerging nexus between the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and global terrorism.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

The prevention of non-state actors, including terrorists, acquiring weapons of mass destruction is among the most important tasks entrusted to the international community.

It is a threat that is becoming increasingly real. We see this in reported plans to attack nuclear power plants in Belgium, the alleged use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, and repeated attempts to acquire biological weapons in Africa.

For twelve years, UN Security Council resolution 1540 has addressed a critical gap in WMD non-proliferation by targeting non-state actors. It has become – in the words of Secretary-General Ban – an important component of the global security architecture.

However, the security environment in 2004 was very different. There is now an urgent requirement to make sure 1540 remains fit for purpose in 2016 and beyond.

As many of you know, a Comprehensive Review of resolution 1540 is due to deliver its findings in December. I am hopeful that the review will address some key gaps in the regime.

First, on preventing a biological attack, the Review could encourage stronger measures related to accounting for and securing biological material. This lags behind chemical and nuclear measures.

Second, on radiological threats, the resolution's preamble recognises this material needs effective accounting and security measures. By adopting operative language on radiological sources, the Review could strengthen protection against an attack such as a dirty bomb.

Third, a capacity gap in national implementation needs to be addressed. States' needs must be better matched with donor expertise and funds.

Fourth, it is an opportunity to think through the implications of emerging technology such as unmanned vehicles and artificial intelligence that can multiply the consequences of WMD use. The international community cannot afford to lag behind the technological curve.

As a hub of international commerce, comprehensive implementation of Resolution 1540 by Asia-Pacific States contributes to global effectiveness. The resolution is only as effective as its implementation. I count on States of the region to step up their efforts in this regard.

Regional efforts should focus on assisting those countries that need to strengthen their national capacity, including through development of national action plans. States could focus on the identification of future capacity building needs and consider how best to match those needs.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I briefly mentioned the pressing need to strengthen Resolution 1540 to prevent a biological attack. There is also an urgent requirement to strengthen the international community's ability to respond in the event of such an attack.

We have all witnessed the damage caused by a natural outbreak of a biological pathogen. The 2014 MERS outbreak in this region demonstrated the global ramifications. The consequences of a deliberate release targeted to cause maximum infection would be devastating.

The Biological Weapons Conventional Review Conference is currently being held in Geneva. When it entered into force in 1975, the BWC was the first treaty to outlaw an entire category of WMD. Yet its institutional base is weak. There is no biological-related entity similar to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons or the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Global response capabilities in the event of a biological incident are unclear and untested. Such an incident would certainly become a complex international health and humanitarian emergency, disrupting law and order.

The BWC Review Conference presents an opportunity to invert this situation and commence the process of building a robust response capability that takes into account the multifaceted nature of a biological incident.

For example, Article VII of the BWC obliges States parties to provide assistance in the case of a biological weapons attack. However, there are no established state-to-state coordination mechanisms, let alone multilateral ones. The Review Conference could discuss how to strengthen Article VII, including how to coordinate with the UN and the World Health Organisation (WHO) in case of a biological attack.

Resolution 1540 and BWC are two vital tools at our disposal to counter the risks of a biological incident. They are two sides of the same coin. But we cannot wait until it is too late. The consequences of inaction will be much greater than the costs of acting now.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Once again, it is a pleasure to open the revitalised Kathmandu Process. I wish you the best for fruitful discussions.

I thank you so much.