Dear Friends and Colleagues,

This is my first quarterly message since I assumed the Chair of the 1540 Committee on 1 January this year. I am glad to say that the Committee agreed on a Programme of Work effective from 1 February to 2017 to 31 January 2018 (S/2017/126). This programme draws upon the outcomes of the Comprehensive Review (S/2016/1038), resolution 2325 adopted on 15 December 2016 (2325 (2016)) and the Committee’s Annual Review for 2016 (S/2016/1127). In particular the Committee intends to build on the momentum imparted by the reinforcing resolution 2325 (2016) through the Committee’s Programme of Work. In the programme the Committee agreed that it “should continue to intensify its efforts to promote the full implementation by all States of resolution 1540 (2004) …”.

On 16 March, on behalf of the Committee, I briefed the Security Council on our work. There I said that, in accordance with operative paragraph 11 of the resolution 2325 (2016), there is a need to develop an approach to implementation and reporting that takes into account the specificity of States, inter alia, with respect to their ability to manufacture and export related materials, with a view to prioritising efforts and resources where they are most needed without affecting the need for comprehensive implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). The best way to achieve this is by taking full advantage of direct interactions with Member States, because, as is acknowledged by the Committee, experience shows that this is the best way to achieve substantive and measurable results with regard to effective implementation of the resolution. As I also mentioned when briefing the Security Council, despite the generally impressive reporting record, there are still 16 States that have yet to make a first report on the measures they have taken to implement the obligations under the resolution. The Committee would welcome the support of Member States and regional organisations in reaching out to these non-reporting States to encourage and assist them, as needed, in reporting to the Committee.

In accordance with the paragraph 29 of resolution 2325 (2016) that requested “the 1540 Committee to continue to organize and participate in outreach events on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) at the international, regional, subregional, and, as appropriate, national level …”, the Committee conducted a number of outreach activities, which so far this year represented substantive steps towards achieving the objectives the Committee set for itself in 2017. For example in regard to direct interaction with States, members of the Group of Experts have visited El Salvador and Tajikistan (in cooperation with a CTED visit), as well as a meeting with Kyrgyzstan at OSCE Headquarters in Vienna, where they engaged national stakeholders on, among other things, the development and implementation of voluntary 1540 National Implementation Action Plans. On regional engagement, in Asia the Experts participated in the Asian Senior Level Talks on Non-
Proliferation in Tokyo; in a regional seminar on 1540 implementation in Islamabad, Pakistan for States in Central, East, South and South-East Asia; and the ASEAN Regional Forum’s Inter-Sessional meeting on Non-Proliferation and Disarmament in New Zealand.

With regard to thematic events, the Experts participated in events in Bratislava, Slovakia and Ghana on nuclear security issues; in Paris for a plenary meeting of the Financial Action Task Force; and in Japan on export controls at the XXIV Asian Export Control Seminar. On the subject of assistance, an Expert participated in a Global Partnership Working Group meeting in Rome to encourage the partner countries to support the 1540 assistance mechanism – in particular at this meeting to respond to requests for assistance from African countries. With regard to outreach to industry, an Expert participated in a meeting in Beijing that was designed to promote company internal compliance plans to help ensure compliance with resolution 1540 obligations.

In order to achieve efficiency of participation of Experts in outreach activities, in identifying most relevant of them to the implementation of resolution 1540, due regard was paid to focusing on responding to invitations for activities covering specific thematic and regional issues related to implementation, including those related to the direct assistance of the Committee to States (such as visits to States and national round tables). This participation contributed to a process of improvement of implementation of the resolution in the Member States concerned.

As called for in the Committee’s 2017 Programme of Work, I participated in an engagement with parliamentarians. In this instance, in St. Petersburg in the Russian Federation, I was invited to address a combined gathering of the Parliamentary Assemblies of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). I also took the opportunity, while in the Russian Federation to call at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow to discuss resolution 1540 matters.

Looking ahead there is a substantial programme of events and activities to achieve the objectives set out in the Committee’s ambitious Programme of Work for this year. Our plans include further direct engagement with States, by invitation, global and regional events in partnership with international organisations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, a training course for national 1540 Points of Contact and outreach to industry including the “Wiesbaden Process”. I also look forward to the Committee’s engagement with regional organisations in support of our objectives such as the African Union, the Organisation of American States and the OSCE.

Within the Committee itself our Working Groups are engaged in improving our management of data on implementation, making the 1540 assistance system more effective, engaging our partners in international and regional organisations and improving our electronic and other means of outreach.

On behalf of the Committee I must offer thanks to those additional States that have recently contributed funds to the United Nations Trust Fund for Global and Regional Disarmament for the support of resolution 1540 implementation. Canada, Germany, Japan, Spain and Sweden have
joined the list of contributors. These contributions are vital to the achievement of substantive progress in achieving a world safer from the use of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors.

As we move ahead, as opportunities arise, I look forward to engaging with the wider 1540 family around the world to gain insights and ideas to help advance the cause of more effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).