

## **VIDEO MESSAGE TO THE 139<sup>TH</sup> ASSEMBLY OF THE INTER-PARLIAMENTARY UNION**

Honourable Chairperson,  
Members of Parliament,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Committee established pursuant to UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Mr Martin Chungong, for the invitation to address this 139<sup>th</sup> Assembly. Regrettably, due to other pressing commitments in New York, I am unable to be with you in person today.

This Assembly will discuss major issues that feature high on the global agenda and consider the role of Parliaments in this regard. We therefore appreciate the opportunity to address the Assembly on UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and its continued importance and relevance in curbing the threat posed by the proliferation of biological, chemical and nuclear weapons, as well as their means of delivery to and by non-State actors, including terrorists.

I wish to commend the IPU for its continued commitment to strengthening the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). This resolution remains a vital component of the global non-proliferation architecture, filling important gaps in relation to the scope of other international instruments, inasmuch as it concerns non-State actors, and requires States to maintain or adopt effective controls over materials related to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their delivery systems. As such, the resolution complements the global non-proliferation regime and does not replace existing norms or alter the rights and obligations of States Parties under existing international instruments such as the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC), the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

One of the key obligations under resolution 1540 (2004) is for States to adopt and enforce appropriate and effective laws to prohibit any non-State actor from manufacturing, acquiring, possessing, developing, transporting, transferring or using nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, in particular for terrorist purposes, as well as attempts to engage in any such activities, to participate in them as an accomplice or to assist or finance them. The adoption of such appropriate and effective laws is particularly relevant to the mandate of Members of Parliament.

As you are aware, the potential effects of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons proliferation to and by non-State actors, including their use for terrorist acts, could have catastrophic humanitarian, economic and environmental consequences. Regrettably, the recently reported use of chemical weapons by non-State actors in some parts of the world, and the continued prevalence of illicit trafficking and other unauthorized activities and events involving nuclear, chemical and biological weapons related materials outside of regulatory control, illustrate that this is not merely a theoretical possibility. In addition, globalization and rapid advances in science and new emerging technologies have also led to additional complexities and risks, including with respect to non-State actor access to materials and technologies that can be used for both legitimate and proliferation purposes.

Given the global nature of these challenges, no State can argue that it is somehow insulated from such threats and that it consequently has no need to adopt appropriate and effective measures. However, national authorities cannot achieve non-proliferation objectives by acting alone and close co-operation between States, and co-ordination with relevant international, regional and sub-regional organisations is required, as recognized in UN Security Council resolution 2325 (2016). Effective implementation also requires active engagement between the State and relevant national actors, including industry, academia and professional associations. This is an area where Members of Parliament have an important role, particularly in raising awareness of the threat posed by the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons to and by non-State actors and in building partnerships with all relevant actors at a national level.

Since its adoption in 2004, significant progress has been made towards the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). While the resolution 2325 (2016) recognises that the full and effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) is a long-term task that will require continuous efforts at national, regional and international levels, it also calls upon States that have not yet presented a first report – on the steps they have taken or intend to take to implement the resolution – to submit such a report without delay. It is my hope that Members of Parliament of the remaining 12 non-reporting States will encourage the submission of the outstanding reports.

While there is no “one-size-fits-all” approach to effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) given the unique circumstances prevailing in each State, much can be achieved through the sharing of experiences. I therefore hope that the discussions this week will allow Members of Parliament to exchange views and share experiences in their national implementation efforts.

The 1540 Committee, with the support of its Group of Experts, remains ready to cooperate with and, upon request, facilitate assistance to States with their 1540 implementation efforts which would contribute to achieving our common objective of preventing the catastrophic use of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons by non-State actors.

I wish you fruitful discussions and a successful conclusion of this Assembly.