

United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) Conference for States of Latin America and the Caribbean – Seizing the opportunities, reducing the risks

In La Paz, Bolivia

Opening Address by Ambassador Sacha Sergio Llorentty Soliz

Chair of the Committee Established Pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004)

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Committee established pursuant to UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), I would like to warmly welcome everybody here today in La Paz. I am especially pleased to welcome you in Bolivia, which is my home country. I would also like to express our gratitude for the support provided for this Conference by the Group of Experts assisting the work of 1540 Committee, the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs for their administrative support and for financial support from the United Nations Trust Fund for Global and Regional Disarmament Activities with contributions from the Governments of Norway and Spain.

I am very happy to see so many participants today and I would like to express our appreciation to the representatives of States and organizations that travelled not only far, but also high up to be present here. Your presence at this conference is a tribute to the significance of the topic under discussion, United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

Resolution 1540 (2004) is a vital element in the global architecture to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, their means of delivery and related materials to non-State actors, including terrorists, but also should be considered as a starting point for cooperation to ensure that States have appropriate and effective legislation and enforcement measures in place. We should not forget that without cooperation it would be impossible to address the issue of proliferation at a global level. If effectively implemented universally, resolution 1540 (2004) is key to preventing the humanitarian, political, economic and environmental catastrophe that would result from the use of these weapons by non-State actors. It is clear that this is not simply a theoretical possibility.

Further, flowing from the outcome of the 2016 Comprehensive Review of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) over the previous five years, resolution 2325 (2016) was adopted unanimously on 15 December 2016. This resolution not only reinforces the obligations under resolution 1540 (2004), but also, amongst other matters, calls upon States to take into account

developments in the evolving nature of the risk of proliferation, and the rapid advances in science and technology, in their implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

An overwhelming majority of States have demonstrated their commitment to resolution 1540, and through their reporting to the 1540 Committee have provided valuable information on the measures they have taken, or plan to take, to comply with their obligations under the resolution. It is worthy of note that to date 181 countries – more than 90% of all UN Member States - have submitted initial reports.

While reporting is important, what also matters is the effectiveness of the practical steps taken at the national level to implement the resolution. One helpful step in this regard is for States to develop voluntary National Implementation Action Plans (NAP) as encouraged by Operative Paragraph 5 of resolution 2325 (2016). This process also helps to identify actions to close any gaps and vulnerabilities in legislation, regulations and national control frameworks, and to identify areas where assistance may be required.

Exchanges and sharing of information by Member States constitutes one of the Committee's core activities. The Member States are in the best position to identify effective national practices and to share them with the 1540 Committee and other partners. As one example, the Committee had an opportunity to hear about the peer review meetings between Chile and Colombia, held in each country respectively in 2017, in relation to the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). This was the third peer review to take place globally and the first in the Western hemisphere. The discussions highlighted the value of the peer review process for promoting Member States' confidence in sharing information about the challenges of implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and generating ideas about effective national implementation practices.

One of the priority areas the Committee is focused on is improving the system of assistance to facilitate Member States' capacity to implement their 1540 obligations. In particular, the Committee seeks to match assistance requests from States with offers from States or international, regional or subregional organisations in a position to provide assistance. By doing so, an assisting State or organisation can respond effectively to requests for assistance. Pending assistance requests can be found on the 1540 homepage. The Committee stands ready to add new programmes or information on available assistance to its website.

The Committee and its Group of Experts have maintained the momentum of outreach events in the course of fulfilling the Committee's Programme of Work. A top priority is direct engagement with States through visits and national roundtables, at their invitation. In the course of this process increased use has been made of the support that can be offered by regional organisations, including the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs and its regional centers.

We have also intensified our engagement with international organisations whose mandates are directly related to resolution 1540 (2004) such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the Biological

Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit (BWC-ISU), the UN Office for Drugs and Crime, Interpol, the World Customs Organisation (WCO), as well as those bodies that support related Committees such as the Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate.

A special effort is being made to engage parliamentarians through, for example, the Interparliamentary Union. Effective implementation is more than simply ensuring that legislation or regulations are in place. Among other things, it also requires active engagement between the State and relevant sectors of the Society, including industry, academia and professional associations. An effective partnership between States and industry is also vital to successful non-proliferation efforts.

Globalization, rapid advances in science and technology, and the continuously evolving trade environment hold potential benefits for humanity – but also new risks, including with respect to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors, which may require States to adapt existing measures or to introduce new ones. There is a need for many sensitive materials to be produced, used, stored and transported under strict safe and secure standards as required by resolution 1540 (2004) without inhibiting legitimate use and commerce. Given the global nature of the challenge, no State is exempt from the need to implement effective measures to prevent such proliferation.

I should stress that implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) is the responsibility of States. In the case of Latin America and the Caribbean, all States have renounced nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. However, nuclear power plants, research reactors and other related facilities operate in some States in the region; chemical plants and biological laboratories exist, to a varying extent in all States; while many States are either suppliers or transit or transshipment areas for a variety of related materials, equipment and technology. In this regard, relevant control authorities of States can play a crucial role, especially, in the safe and secure handling of nuclear, chemical and biological materials.

This Conference in La Paz is intended to look for effective responses to threats in a way that responds to the specificities of the Latin American and Caribbean region. The conference will provide an opportunity to exchange views and effective practices on the handling of nuclear, chemical and biological materials with a view to strengthening the region's implementation of accounting, securing and physical protection obligations under resolution 1540 (2004).

The agenda for the next two days underlines that participants will have the opportunity to discuss in detail various aspects and issues related to the effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). Sharing effective practices among States is a very important aspect of events such as this and I would encourage all participants to engage actively in the discussions, which would allow all to share experiences and to take stock of the lessons learnt.

The Committee, with the support of its Group of Experts, stands ready to cooperate with and, upon request, facilitate assistance to States with their 1540 implementation efforts in order to contribute to achieving our common objective of preventing the catastrophic use of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors.

I wish you fruitful deliberations during this important Conference.

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