

Information Note¹

Mission: Participation of Mr Andrew Horton, 1540 Committee Expert, in the Stakeholder Workshop on National Implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in Mauritius.

Date and Venue: Port Louis, Mauritius, 10-11 June 2025

Organizers: United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Mauritius

Background:

In a letter dated 5 March 2025 addressed to the Chair of the 1540 Committee, the Chief of BWC Implementation Support Unit, Mr. Daniel Feakes, invited the 1540 Committee to nominate an Expert of the 1540 Committee to participate in the Stakeholder Workshop on National Implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention to be held from 10 to 11 June 2025 in Port Louis, Mauritius.

The main objectives of the workshop were:

- To enhance the knowledge of stakeholders on rights and obligations under the BWC;
- To review Mauritius' existing national legislative framework and explore opportunities to strengthen legislation and address identified gaps;
- To explore the role of the National Contact Point in the BWC implementation process and identify opportunities to improve multisectoral coordination;
- To review strategic trade controls and opportunities to integrate control lists into existing legislative and regulatory frameworks;
- To review biosafety and biosecurity legislative and regulatory frameworks; and
- To provide an opportunity for stakeholders to exchange views, experiences and good practices on national implementation of the BWC.

The Expert of the 1540 Committee was invited to deliver a presentation concerning resolution 1540 (2004)'s obligations under OP3, regarding export and border controls on related materials.

This Workshop was of relevance to resolution 1540 (2004) and subsequent resolutions as follows:

- Resolution 1540 (2004) recognizes that most States have undertaken binding legal obligations under treaties to which they are parties, or have made other commitments aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, and have taken effective measures to account for, secure and physically protect sensitive materials.

¹ For information – not an official report. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the 1540 Committee or of the organizers or participants in the event.

- Under operative paragraph 2 of resolution 1540 (2004), States are obliged to adopt and enforce appropriate and effective laws prohibiting such activities by non-State actors on their territories.
- Operative paragraph 3 of resolution 1540 (2004) requires States to take and enforce effective measures to establish domestic controls to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons and their means of delivery, including by establishing appropriate controls over related materials. This includes measures to account for and secure such items in production, use, storage or transport; effective physical protection measures; effective border controls and law enforcement efforts; national export and trans-shipment controls over such items, including appropriate laws and regulations to control export, transit, trans-shipment and re-export and controls on providing funds and services related to such export and trans-shipment such as financing, and transporting that would contribute to proliferation, as well as end-user controls; and criminal or civil penalties for violations of such export control laws and regulations.
- Operative paragraph 12 of resolution 2663 (2022) reiterates the Security Council's decision that the 1540 Committee shall continue to intensify its efforts to promote the full implementation by all States of resolution 1540 (2004) ... noting the need for more attention on: enforcement measures; measures relating to biological, chemical and nuclear weapons; accounting for and securing related materials; and national export and transshipment controls.
- Furthermore, operative paragraph 25 of resolution 2663 (2022) requests the 1540 Committee to continue to organize and participate in outreach events on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) at..., as appropriate, national level, including, as appropriate, inviting parliamentarians..., and promote the refinement of these outreach efforts to focus on specific thematic and regional issues related to implementation.

Highlights

The two-day workshop was hosted by the Government of the Republic of Mauritius with support from the Governments of Canada, Italy and the United Kingdom, under the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. The workshop brought together representatives from various departments and agencies of the Mauritian Government to discuss legislative and administrative implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention, and also relevant obligations under resolution 1540, specifically in regard to export controls and other measures, with respect to biological weapons related material.

The workshop was opened by regional representatives of the High Commissions of Canada and the United Kingdom, and the United Nations Resident Coordinator for Mauritius and Seychelles, as well as the Minister of Health and Wellbeing (who's department has responsibility for the implementation of the BWC).

The workshop was divided into five sessions, featuring presentations by experts from UNODA, the European Union's Partner-to-Partner (P2P) Global Project on Dual-Use Trade Controls, South African Council for the Non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the UNSCR 1540 (2004) Group of Experts. There were also presentations from members of national authorities and agencies, including the Ministry of Health and Wellbeing, the Central Health Laboratory, and the Ministry of

Agro-Industry, Food Security, Blue Economy and Fisheries. Other participants from the Mauritian Government included the Mauritian Police, National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre, Attorney General's Office, Ministry of Commerce and Consumer Protection, and the Mauritius Revenue Authority.

The first and second sessions were focused on the BWC, the role of National Points of Contact and national legislative implementation. The third session was focused on export controls, transfers and licencing. This session included the presentation on resolution 1540 (2004) and covered:

- The obligations under resolution 1540 (2004), with specific reference to OP3 (c) & (d), as they relate to biological weapons and related materials.
- The relationships between resolution 1540 (2004) and the BWC.
- The requirements of resolution 1540 (2004), regarding national reporting and the use of national matrix to support the work of the 1540 Committee.
- This session also allowed for mention of the readiness of the 1540 Committee to provide necessary support to Mauritius in updating their national report, and support through matchmaking with possible providers of assistance.

There were further presentations by experts from the EU P2P, covering both the legal aspects of implementing export controls, and the usefulness of adopting export control lists. There was also a presentation by the South African Council for the Non-proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction regarding the South African system. Following these presentations there was an opportunity for discussion, within the Committee's mandate, on the status of implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) by Mauritius regarding the various relevant obligations under OP3 (c) & (d), as they relate more broadly to biological, chemical and nuclear weapons, means of their delivery and related materials.

The remaining two sessions covered the topics of Biosafety and Biosecurity, well as a summary and next steps discussion.

Additional comments

For further information, please contact the 1540 Committee Experts by e-mail at 1540experts@un.org