

Information Note¹

- Event:** INTERPOL African Regional Biosecurity Workshop- Operation S³OMMET
- Organizer:** International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), in cooperation with the Ethiopian Federal Police
- Date and Venue:** 22-26 September 2014, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
- Participants:** *States:* Cameroon, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.
- Speakers:* US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), US Sandia National Laboratories, International Federation for Biosafety Associations (IFBA), Connecting Organizations for Regional Disease Surveillance (CORDS), and 1540 Committee Group of Experts.
- Other:* African Biological Safety Association (as observer).

1. **Objectives of Participation of 1540 expert:**

- To give a presentation as requested by INTERPOL on the full 1540 obligations with an emphasis on legislation and regulation requirements, especially in relation to the Biosafety and biosecurity in participating African States.
- To follow up, as appropriate, with participating officials on 1540 issues, in particular on reporting, designating points of contacts and National Implementation Action Plans.
- To explore synergies and facilitate future cooperation with INTERPOL.

2. **Background**

- Following a meeting between the Chair of the 1540 Committee and the President of the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL), Ms Mireille Ballestrazzi, in May 2013 an undertaking was given to include resolution 1540 (2004) issues in INTERPOL training courses.
- This workshop is the fourth of a series of regional events INTERPOL conducted in 2014 under the heading of “Operation S³ OMMET”, which focuses on the Safe, Secure, Surveillance of Microbiological Materials and Emerging Technologies. The aim of Operation S³ OMMET is to introduce and/or enhance the safety and security of biological materials in regions where it is most needed.
- So far the 1540 experts have participated in three regional events with a focus on chemical security in Georgia, Poland and Thailand and in one workshop in Tajikistan with a focus on developing training, national plans and measures to counter the smuggling of nuclear materials.

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

3. **Assessment**

The workshop included 50 participants from regional countries working in the fields of biosafety and biosecurity, including public health and law enforcement officials, academia, scientific and research community. By the end of the course, participants gained knowledge of different types of biological agents, the need for biosafety and biosecurity procedures, the ability to identify triggers and indicators of a significant disease outbreak, describe the process of disease surveillance, identify key prevention measures associated with biosecurity and biosafety and recognise the need for interagency communication and gap analysis to facilitate future capacity building. By the end of the workshop the participants were able to recognise the international requirements for legislation and regulation in the field of biosafety and biosecurity, including the obligations under resolution 1540 (2004), and many of them, identified gaps in their capacity to legislate and in enforcement in their own countries. The participants were divided into national groups each with a team leader on each of the three days and presented with case studies with which to deal with different events presented to them to stimulate active discussions between the various agencies represented in responding to the biological incidents.

4. **Additional comments**

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