

OPENING STATEMENT BY MR DOVYDAS ŠPOKAUSKAS, 1540 COMMITTEE MEMBER FROM THE  
PERMANENT MISSION OF LITHUANIA, AT THE JOINT MEETING OF THE 1540 NATIONAL  
STAKEHOLDERS OF MALAWI, 6 AUGUST 2014

Check against Delivery

Distinguished participants,

On behalf of the Committee established pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), I wish to express my sincere gratitude for the invitation by the Government of Malawi to visit your beautiful country and to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for its dedicated efforts in organising this visit.

Malawi's commitment to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, demonstrated, among others, through its adherence to various international legally binding instruments and implementation of relevant domestic laws and enforcement measures, is recognised and welcomed.

I am honoured to participate in this visit together with the members of the Group of Experts, and in particular to spend the next two days with the 1540 national stakeholders of Malawi in exchanging views, sharing experiences, lessons learned and effective practices in implementing the resolution. I sincerely hope that these exchanges will facilitate the submission by Malawi of its first 1540 report.

Distinguished participants,

By unanimously adopting resolution 1540 in 2004, the Security Council addressed the threat posed to international peace and security of non-State actors that may acquire, develop, transfer, or use nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and their means of delivery, in particular for terrorist purposes. There is no doubt that the proliferation of these weapons could have catastrophic global humanitarian, economic and political consequences. As these non-state actors do not respect borders, all elements of the global non-proliferation system must be constantly reinforced.

To facilitate the implementation of the resolution the Committee actively engages in dialogue with States, including through visits to States at their invitation.

This visit by the 1540 Committee and its group of experts is the fifth undertaken in the African Continent, and follows the constructive and successful visits to Burkina Faso, Republic of the Congo, Madagascar and Niger. The Committee was also invited by, and undertook visits to Albania, Bangladesh, Grenada, Republic of Korea, Trinidad and Tobago and the United States of America.

Distinguished participants,

During the next two days we will analyse the obligations contained in the resolution in the context of the implementation efforts of Malawi. Therefore, it is opportune to briefly recall the key binding obligations on the resolution 1540 (2004):

First, to refrain from providing any form of support to non-State actors regarding nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery;

Second, to adopt, and importantly, enforce appropriate legislation that prohibits non-State actors from engaging in any proliferation-related activities in these weapons, and;

Third, to establish domestic controls to prevent nuclear, chemical and biological weapons proliferation, including by establishing appropriate controls over related materials.

While the resolution clearly spells out the obligations, States decide how they are implemented, in accordance with their own legal, regulatory and control systems.

The presence here today of so many national 1540 stakeholders, demonstrates that these obligations cover a broad range of issues, such as export controls, proliferation financing, transshipment, physical protection, border controls, and accounting. As they impact on different governmental departments, full and effective implementation will require continued coordinated actions at different levels, with the participation of all relevant national stakeholders.

Distinguished participants,

Let me now focus on two important elements of implementing resolution 1540: national reporting, and cooperation and assistance.

The Security Council calls upon all States to submit national reports on steps they have taken or intend to take to implement resolution 1540 (2004). States are also advised to notify about their points of contact and to share relevant effective practices.

The information that States provide to the Committee on their 1540 implementation efforts is of immense importance. It provides the basis upon which the Committee can conduct dialogue with States on their implementation of the resolution, including on facilitating assistance.

It is reassuring that 172 States have reported to the Committee on their implementation efforts. The Committee strongly encourages the remaining 21 States to submit their first reports as soon as possible.

The Committee is eager to work with these States to facilitate the submission of their first reports. In this regard, three workshops were held in Africa to exchange information on the value of 1540 reporting. It is encouraging that the participation of Malawi in one of these workshops resulted in the invitation to the Committee to visit Malawi and to assist with your 1540 report.

Distinguished participants,

The Committee recognises that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a global challenge that requires cooperation among States and across regions. In this regard, the Committee also serves as a focal point to share effective practices and promote cooperation with and among international, regional, and sub-regional organizations.

The Committee cooperates closely with the African Union (AU) to promote the implementation of the resolution in Africa. This cooperation was strengthened following the decision by the AU Assembly in 2013 that requested “the (AU) Commission to take the necessary steps, in cooperation with the 1540 Committee and all other stakeholders, to further promote and enhance the implementation of resolution 1540 in Africa.”

On 30 April 2014, the AU Commission stated, and I quote: “Since its adoption, resolution 1540 (2004) has become an important component of the global security architecture. The Commission’s efforts in promoting its effective implementation further seek to ensure that it is also an instrument for realizing and enhancing regional and international cooperation in law enforcement and the

peaceful application of nuclear, chemical and biological science and technology for the development of the continent”.

Furthermore, the Security Council recognises that some States may require assistance in implementing the resolution. The Committee, in implementing its mandate, serves as a clearinghouse to facilitate matchmaking between requests for, and offers of assistance for capacity building. Such assistance requests could, for example, extend to the legal and regulatory areas.

An example of 1540 related assistance is the funding of this meeting through the United Nations Trust Fund for Global and Regional Disarmament Activities, administered by the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, as well as the involvement of the UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC) in arranging this event.

Distinguished participants,

We are celebrating the 10th anniversary of the resolution 1540 (2004). On 28 April 2014, the day of the anniversary of the adoption of the resolution, the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, in a special message, appealed “to all States and other key actors to intensify their efforts to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction as the safety and security of everyone is at stake.”

The Security Council held an Open Debate on the resolution on 7 May 2014. During the debate more than sixty countries expressed their support and commitment to the effective implementation of the resolution and recognised that there is more work to be done.

The Security Council unanimously adopted the Presidential Statement that, “calls upon all States to step up their efforts to implement resolution 1540 [...] with a view to achieving full implementation of the resolution by 2021”. Also, the statement emphasised “the need for the Committee to coordinate its non-proliferation work with other international, regional and sub-regional organizations”.

In conclusion, on behalf of the Committee, please be assured of our commitment to support Malawi’s efforts to implement resolution 1540 (2004). I am looking forward to the lively and result-oriented discussions in the next two days.

I thank you.