

Statement by
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Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the
Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and
Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction

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Distinguished Chair, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of Ambassador Roman Oyarzun Marchesi of Spain, the Chair of the 1540 Committee, I wish to thank you for the invitation extended to the 1540 Committee to participate in the Meeting of States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC).

At the outset allow me to warmly welcome the tradition of closer collaboration between the 1540 Committee as a United Nations Security Council's subsidiary body and the BWC with a view toward sharing knowledge, views, and effective practices toward our common goals of mitigating increasing threats to international peace and security posed by biological and toxin weapon.

United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the BWC complement and reinforce each other. Through resolution 1540 (2004), States have been called upon to renew and fulfill their commitment to multilateral cooperation within the BWC framework as an important means of pursuing and achieving their common objectives in the area of non-proliferation and of promoting international cooperation for peaceful purposes. States have also been called upon to promote the universal adoption and full implementation of BWC, and, where necessary, its strengthening.

In its turn, the Final Declaration of BWC States Parties at the 7th Review Conference noted – I quote - that “information provided to the United Nations by States in accordance with Resolution 1540 may provide a useful resource for States Parties in fulfilling their obligations under the Article 4”obligations. Such information, be it in the form of national reports or voluntary national

implementation action plans, also complements the BWC confidence building measures. Taken together, resolution 1540 (2004), BWC and CWC constitute a multi-layered system of preventing the use of disease or poison as weapons by constraining attempts to acquire or manufacture them. This helps strengthen the safety and security measures for biological weapons-related materials, that is of those materials, equipment and technology covered by BWC and CWC, or included on national control lists, which could be used for the design, development, production or use of chemical and biological weapons and their means of delivery.

Last year we marked the tenth anniversary of resolution 1540 (2004). The Security Council convened an open debate in May 2014 with regard to this important milestone in the work of the 1540 Committee. States have been reminded of their obligations to adopt, inter alia, legislation to prevent the proliferation of biological weapons and their means of delivery, and establish appropriate domestic controls over related materials to prevent their illicit trafficking by non-State actors, in particular for terrorist purposes, as well as implementing and enforcing appropriate controls over related materials.

Distinguished Chair,

I would like to briefly share with you some information about the current status of implementing resolution 1540 (2004) as well as States' efforts at outreach, dialogue, assistance and cooperation in particular in the areas of convergence and synergy with the BWC.

The Security Council, in its resolution 1977 (2011), encouraged States to provide on a voluntary basis additional information on their implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), including on their effective national practices in implementing resolution 1540 (2004). In the course of the current year 30

States, from all regions of the world, provided additional information, conveyed effective practices or provided comments and updates on the Committee's record of their implementation measures - held in the form of matrix for each State.

The Security Council also expressed its intention to monitor closely the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and, at the appropriate level, to take further decisions which may be required to this end. In 2015, steady progress continued in terms of the number of recorded legally binding measures taken by States. This advance is revealed from the revision of the matrices of all 193 Member States. The continuing special efforts to encourage the submission of national reports by those States yet to make them yielded three more such reports so far in 2015. To date there remain 17 States that have yet to report.

The submission and development of voluntary national implementation action plans (NAP) has been increasing. In 2015, the number of NAPs increased to 21 from 14 in 2014. The number of assistance requests increased slightly in comparison to 2014. Most of the new requests came from States in Africa; two of them were included in reports of States that had not previously reported to the 1540 Committee. The Committee also received more responses from registered providers to these and previous requests than in 2014. Important progress has been made in taking a regional approach to enhancing the operation of the 1540 assistance system, particularly through collaboration with the African Union.

Work on the 2016 Comprehensive Review began in 2015 with the Modalities and Work Plan being agreed and opportunities being taken for consultations with Member States, international organizations and Member

States. Collaboration with international and regional organizations has continued to intensify; this aided the efforts to improve the assistance mechanism and should bring dividends for the whole Review process.

The active engagement and dialogue of the Committee with States on their implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) includes visits at their invitation. This direct engagement provides a good opportunity to discuss the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) with legislators and implementers, review the host country's regulatory and enforcement instruments, and identify effective practices or areas that may need to be strengthened, including on biological risk management. During several of these visits, members of the Committee and its Group of Experts had the opportunity to discuss on site the implementation and enforcement of biosafety/biosecurity measures. In these activities, the Committee routinely highlights the importance of the BWC and its implementation.

Assistance provided to States in need is an area of common interest for BWC and the 1540 Committee. To assist States in meeting potential challenges in implementing the provisions of resolution 1540 (2004), the Security Council has invited States and international, regional and sub-regional organizations to offer assistance in response to requests from other States lacking necessary capabilities and/or resources. The 1540 Committee itself does not provide assistance but it has a clearinghouse and match making role to facilitate assistance by others for implementation of the resolution ~~and~~ matching assistance requests with offers.

The Committee also continued its cooperation with the Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit. This year the Group of Experts participated in the annual Biological and Toxin Weapons convention

of Governmental Experts in August as well as in a regional workshop on the BTWC for States in East Africa aimed at promoting universalization of membership of the BTWC.

The Committee and its Experts also undertook outreach to academia, and in this regard, for example, a lecture on the interrelationship between the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, life sciences and resolution 1540 (2004) was given by the Group of Experts at the invitation of the Cape Town Component of the International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), at the Institute of Infectious Diseases and Molecular Medicine, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

As the possibility of use or threat of use of biological and toxin weapons or other toxic materials by terrorists and other non-State actors cannot be excluded, our common goal also extends to providing safety and security of such materials. In this regard, governments and non-governmental entities have a shared interest in ensuring that the life sciences and biotechnology are used for the common good and in a responsible manner.

As discussed in this forum in several occasions, promoting concerted outreach, education and training activities in biological risk management including such areas covered by resolution 1540 (2004) will serve to strengthen international non- proliferation efforts and enhance capacity-building in States as well as the ability of national stakeholders to do their jobs effectively.

Distinguished Chair,

As the scientific, technological, and political challenges associated with effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and BWC will continue to

evolve in a multi-dimensional fashion, the 1540 Committee will continue to benefit from work aimed at promoting the peaceful uses of science and technology and the integration of global non-proliferation efforts through regional cooperation and engagement with individual States; including with the assistance of international, regional and sub-regional organizations as well as the private sector as appropriate.

The rapidly changing global, political, scientific and technological environment requires the use of all available opportunities for international cooperation. The BWC States Parties are a significant partner in these efforts. The positive dialogue initiated with the 1540 Committee will only serve to strengthen the international non-proliferation regime and address future challenges in a cooperative manner based on our shared goals and commitment toward a world without biological weapons.

I wish to thank you once again for the opportunity to speak here today. I wish this meeting every success and look forward to hearing your views on how we might best work together to realize a world safer from the threat of disease or toxins used as weapons.

Thank you very much.