

CTITF-Working Group on “Preventing and Responding to WMD attacks

International Response and Mitigation of a Terrorist Attack using Chemical and Biological Weapons or Materials

Workshop hosted by the OPCW in The Hague, 16-17 May 2011

Summary of Outcomes

1. Participants from the following entities were represented at the workshop: OPCW (Host); CTITF Office; ICAO; IAEA; UNDPI; UNDSS; UNICRI; and UNODC. UNODA (NY) and WHO participated with briefings through video conference. In addition to the working group members, Europol and BTWC ISU were represented as observers.
2. The workshop was part of the CTITF project to carry out a comprehensive review on how the UN system and international organizations from different disciplines would respond, individually and as a whole, to a terrorist use of WMD, as well as the level of planned coordination among the different entities in the rapid provision of assistance to the affected State/States.
3. The workshop started with a presentation by a number of the OPCW staff members of the legislative assistance to States Parties, training aimed at building capacity to deal with a CW related event and the procedures put in place to respond to a request for assistance by a State Party subject to use, or threat of use, of chemical weapons. Also the procedures for the investigation of alleged, analytical capabilities and experience from exercises conducted were covered. This was followed by the presentations from the other entities present of their role in the prevention, mitigation and response to a terrorist attack using CW and BW.
4. Leading into the round table on the two scenarios the specifics of a response to a CW and BW attack respectively was discussed. The analysis of the CW and BW scenarios further demonstrated the difference in the requirements for the response in the event of an attack. Following a CW attack, the initial actions to mitigate an impact must be taken within the time-frame of minutes to hours leaving the local authorities to handle the initial situation with resources available. Even pre-staged assistance as that that can be provided through the OPCW is likely to arrive too late to deal with the initial phase. Unlike CW, the manifestations of the consequences of a BW can take several days to weeks to develop, the main challenge can be to detect that an event has taken place but the time frames allowing for an international response if requested.
5. It was emphasized that it will be essential for regional and international organizations providing assistance to have a competent authority to interact with when

providing initial advice and discussion and agreeing on the most effective means of assistance to be provided.

6. The working group discussed the importance of a coordinated and well prepared response to provide information and in responding to requests from media for information. To achieve this, the composition and distribution of responsibilities of a Crisis Communication Groups to be established in the event of a CW or BW terrorist attack should be agreed and practiced in advance. The lead of such a group would depend on the type of event.

7. The discussions during the workshop emphasized that unlike the situation for radiological and nuclear events where IAEA will have the lead, there is not in place one existing interagency coordination mechanism to deal with CW and BW events and the lead will depend on the scenario. In the case of a CW event it was clear that the OPCW has a unique role within its mandate and have taken steps to be able to respond. For BW the situation is not that clear and further clarification is needed on the respective responsibilities of e.g. WHO and UNODA. It was also clear that both types of events could involve a large number of national, regional and international entities and there is a need to further consider how robust inter-agency mechanism could be established for responding to a CW and BW terrorist event.

8. The further work on the project will include:

- Compilation of all the inputs from relevant partners: 24 June;
- Presentation of a draft report with draft recommendations: 15 July;
- Submission of the report for the inter-agency consultations: 29 July;
- Finalisation of the report and sending for the publication: 19 August;
- Final CTITF report/publication is expected by September 2011.

9. In order to define and understand the competencies of the relevant UN agencies and international organisations one meeting is planned for 9 June at the OPCW, with WHO and UNODA, to discuss international response and mitigation of a terrorist attack using biological weapons and materials. More consultations are needed with the relevant international agencies, with an emphasis on UN OCHA, INTERPOL, FAO and UNDP.

10. The two consultants to the CTITF working group, Dr Ralf Trapp and Dr Per Runn will seek additional information from the entities not represented at the workshop and meetings are planned with WHO and UNODA to further elaborate their role in a response to a terrorist attack using CW and BW. They will also be in contact with the participating entities to ensure that the information as it is being compiled is correct and accurate.