

Eighth Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference

Statement by the Chair of the 1540 Committee

[To be delivered by Mr. Julio Herráiz, Ambassador of Spain
to the Conference on Disarmament]

OPENING

Mr President, Excellencies, distinguished representatives, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of Ambassador Román Oyarzun Marchesi of Spain, the Chair of the 1540 Committee, I am pleased to have the opportunity to deliver his statement to the Eighth Biological Weapons Convention Review Conference.

Twelve years after its adoption, resolution 1540 (2004) has become one of the key components of the international regime to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery. The resolution is intended to help prevent non-State actors, including terrorists, from taking any step that could be a prelude to their use. It does not stand alone in this regard. The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and other international instruments or arrangements all work towards this end.

Resolution 1540 (2004) is an important complement to them, but it is also unique. For example, resolution 1540 (2004) covers all three weapons of mass destruction – not just one of them. It is also unique in that it requires States to implement a wide range of appropriate and effective domestic measures aimed at ensuring proper control of materials related to these weapons. These steps include, for example, effective export controls and measures to account for, secure, and protect such materials.

During the twelve years since resolution 1540 was adopted, there has been a relentless increase in extreme violence being perpetrated by terrorists. We know that if terrorists had the opportunity and capability, they would not shirk from using a weapon of mass destruction.

Resolution 1540 is designed to prevent such an outcome. It is more important than ever to achieve its effective implementation.

Mr President, the status of implementation of resolution 1540 is improving. Many States consider effective implementation of the resolution as an important national objective. All but 17 States have submitted reports to the 1540 Committee on their implementation measures, and many have submitted more than one. The development and adoption of voluntary National Implementation Action Plans is on the increase; of these some 25 have been submitted to the 1540 Committee.

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 to prevent biological weapons from being developed and used by non-State actors, including terrorists.

Assistance provided to States in need is an area of common interest for the States Parties to the 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 organisations to offer assistance in response to requests from States lacking the necessary capabilities and resources. The 1540 Committee has a

clearinghouse and match making role to facilitate assistance by others for implementation of the resolution. This is an area that merits close cooperation between the 1540 Committee and the BWC States Parties including through the BWC Implementation Support Unit.

Of importance is that States can benefit in these efforts by the support available from an array of assistance programmes of Member States and technical support from international organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Animal Health Organisation (OIE) and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL). Regional organisations such as the African Union, the Organisation of American States and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe and others provide important political support.

Due, in part, to the varying capacities of States, accomplishing the objective of full implementation of the resolution is a long-term task that will require continuous attention at national, regional and international levels along with sustained and intensified support from the 1540 Committee.

Mr President,

Academia and industry are the principal drivers of advances in science and technology. Over the past twelve years since the adoption of resolution 1540, scientists and engineers have made breakthroughs in many areas. These breakthroughs are bringing important economic and humanitarian benefits. While these advances are very much to be welcomed, along with them are risks of misuse for malign purposes.

Recognising these developments, as an integral part of the Comprehensive Review, a consultation was held in April with academics from around the world. This event not only covered ideas from the academic community on how

to enhance implementation and how to encourage academic research on resolution 1540 implementation, but also included a discussion of academia's own responsibilities, in accordance with national laws and regulations, for implementation of the resolution, particularly in the area of the physical sciences.

The Committee has also conducted extensive consultation over the past four years with industry through the sharing of effective practices through a series of meetings initiated by Germany, known as the "Wiesbaden Process" This process has raised awareness in key industrial sectors and promoted action among companies on compliance with resolution 1540 obligations and other related international instruments. In its Programme of Work for 2016 the Committee decided to take a regional approach in developing its engagement with industry. The Republic of Korea hosted the first regional meeting with industry last September in the Asia-Pacific region. Meetings in other regions are planned.

Work on the 2016 Comprehensive Review of the implementation of resolution 1540 began in 2015 with the Modalities and Work Plan being agreed and opportunities being taken for consultations with Member States, international organisations and Member States. As many participants in this meeting will know Open Consultations on Review took place in New York in June 2016. During these consultations the Committee received many substantive ideas and proposals. The inputs from Member States, international organisations and the many other participants highlighted ways forward to achieve our shared goal of effective implementation of resolution 1540.

Mr President,

In conclusion, I have to stress that the implementation of resolution 1540 is, in the end, the responsibility of States. However, in a rapidly changing global,

political, scientific and technological environment only a strong and close international collaboration can help to protect the world against the horrific consequences of the use of biology as a weapon by non-State actors. The Biological Weapons Convention and Resolution 1540 are vital components in the effort to prevent such an event from happening.

Thank you for your attention.