

**Keynote address by Ambassador Jose Javier De La Gasca**

**Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004)**

**Inaugural session of the National Conference on Strategic Trade Controls  
(NCSTC)**

**New Delhi, 30 January 2024**

Excellencies, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to start by expressing, on behalf of Members of the 1540 Committee, our gratitude to Government of India, in particular to the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) of the Ministry of Commerce of India, for its invitation to deliver a keynote address in this inaugural session of the National Conference on Strategic Trade Controls (NCSTC), organized in partnership with the Disarmament and International Security Affairs Division of the Ministry of External Affairs of India and other Government of India agencies.

This event constitutes an important occasion to promote United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) among various key stakeholders, including government officials, industry leaders, academics, representatives from neighboring countries and national and international experts in the field.

This is the first time for me, since I assumed the duty of 1540 Committee Chair, to reach out to representatives of a subregion to inform them of the achievements and challenges ahead and, more importantly, to discuss and seek your invaluable support in the implementation of resolution 1540.

The National Conference on Strategic Trade Controls is in line with the most recent resolution 2663, adopted in November of 2022, where the Security Council requests the 1540 Committee to continue to organize and participate in outreach events on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) at the international, regional, subregional, and, as appropriate, national level, including, as appropriate, inviting parliamentarians, as well as representatives of civil society, including industry and

academia and promotes the refinement of these outreach efforts to focus on specific thematic and regional issues related to implementation.

UN Security Council resolution 1540 was adopted in April 2004 to strengthen the global nonproliferation architecture and to address the possibility of non-state actors' accessing nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery. The resolution is legally binding to all UN Member States.

The resolution obliges states to refrain from providing any form of support to non-state actors that attempt to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer, or use nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons and their means of delivery. All States are required to establish domestic controls to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, biological weapons and their means of delivery, including by establishing appropriate controls over related materials while every State should also be assured that full implementation of the resolution by States does not hamper international cooperation in trading with materials, equipment and technology destined for peaceful purposes.

Since it was established, the 1540 Committee has become increasingly valuable to UN Member States striving to comply with resolution 1540 obligations. The most recent extension came via resolution 2663 (2022), which authorized the Committee to press ahead for another full decade, until November 2032. This long extension puts the Committee on a different footing, firmly establishing it as a durable mechanism in international efforts to stem the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It also makes it possible for the Committee to undertake long-range strategic planning, allowing it to program work and harness resources, stepping up and expanding its efforts to facilitate implementation of the resolution by Member States.

Resolution 1540 (2004) recognizes “that some States may require assistance in implementing” the resolution and invites States to offer such assistance in response to requests. The 1540 Committee itself offers States technical expertise in drafting their reports to the Committee, in preparing assistance requests, and in implementation planning.

The 1540 Committee also serves as a “clearing house” for requests and offers by posting the offers on its website and distributing the requests for assistance directly to those member states, international and regional organizations that offer assistance, such as the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, the Biological Weapons Convention, the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Customs Organization. The 1540 Committee also encouraged States to make requests, as well as make their requests more specific, and it developed an assistance request template in this regard.

The Committee will scale up its assistance facilitation functions to ensure that States in the region are well supported in identifying and articulating their needs and in accessing the available sources of assistance. While assistance is available to facilitate implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) by States, it can also complement or contribute to capacity building, for example, in border and export controls, transport safety and security, and public health.

The Committee is committed to a cooperative relationship with the international community to facilitate implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) by all States. The cooperative approach and dialogue with Members States will continue to be the cornerstones of the activities of the Committee.

India belongs to the 1540 Committee's list of potential providers of assistance to member states in their efforts to implement resolution 1540 (2004). This assistance covers aspects of the requirements of resolution 1540 (2004) in all nuclear, chemical and biological areas, including export controls.

As you may be aware, the 1540 Committee conducted a comprehensive review of the implementation status of resolution 1540 in 2022. According to the review, progress has been made towards the implementation of resolution 1540 since the last review in 2016, including in Asia-Pacific. However, full implementation of resolution 1540 remains a long-term task.

Finally, I would like to note that in April of this year we will celebrate the 20th anniversary of resolution 1540 (2004). Since its adoption, Resolution 1540 has become a vital component of the global non-proliferation architecture.

I wish you fruitful deliberations during this important conference.

Thank you for your attention.