

CHAIR'S OPENING REMARKS – 1540 FORMAL OPEN CONSULTATIONS (20 June 2016)

Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the 1540 Committee, I would like to welcome you to the formal open consultations on the Comprehensive Review of resolution 1540.

We gather here today and until next Wednesday to ensure that the review is informed by Member States, relevant international and regional organisations, and appropriate sectors of civil society. It offers an opportunity to contribute your inputs on the implementation of resolution 1540.

The Comprehensive Review is a complex process that has been conducted since last year and will result in a report to be submitted to the Security Council by November. In the process, the Committee has been analysing the information it has on how States are implementing the measures required by resolution 1540 -I would like to stress that this information is public and available on the Committee's website-. The Committee has also organised specific events, and has lessons learnt with Member States in the field of implementation, assistance, cooperation and outreach regarding preventing proliferation of WMD by non-State actors. In this exercise we have interacted, as appropriate, with international organisations, academics, industry and parliamentarians.

This process offers a good opportunity for Member States and the other participants to reflect on how resolution 1540 has been able to fulfil its main objective: to prevent non-State actors from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and related materials, or using them, particularly for terrorist purposes.

If we take into account that the Comprehensive Review occurs five years after the previous review and will not happen again until 2021, we can understand how important this three-day gathering is.

Furthermore, it has been more than twelve years since resolution 1540 was adopted in 2004 and a lot has happened since then. Terrorists are more determined than ever to get hold of WMD, and the use of chemical weapons in the Middle East shows how dangerous the threat is.

On top of that, rapid changes in science and technology also raise complex issues. We must foster their benefits, but there are risks of misuse that Member States must address in meeting their obligations under resolution 1540.

Throughout the open consultations, particularly in the thematic sessions, you will be hearing more about the preliminary conclusions of the analysis of the implementation of resolution 1540 since 2010 conducted by the Committee. Now I would just like to point out some elements in relation to the topics of the three thematic sessions:

Monitoring and National Implementation

The data show that there has been steady progress in the implementation by States of the measures established by resolution 1540, particularly putting in place appropriate legislation, although there is room for further improvement, especially in establishing effective domestic controls on sensitive materials and technology.

Assistance and International Cooperation

The Committee will continue to strive to match requests for assistance with potential providers, but its tools need to be sharpened, and I hope these consultations will let us reflect on ways to maximise complementary action and cooperation with international organisations.

Transparency and Outreach

Transparency and outreach activities foster greater cooperation and raise the awareness of States, international and regional organizations, and civil society.

In this field there are encouraging data. For instance, over the period under review (2010 to present), 97% of States attended 1540 events, which shows a high level of interest in the implementation of resolution 1540.

The Committee has also given special attention to two sectors of civil society which are particularly relevant for its work, industry and academia, as well as to parliamentarians. I welcome their participation in the open consultations.

What do we expect from participants in the formal open consultations?

Firstly, we would like to receive your ideas and suggestions to improve implementation of the resolution. They should be specific, clearly defined and to the point.

Secondly, we expect you to participate actively in the general debate and in the thematic sessions. The thematic sessions, by their nature -more interactive and flexible- are a good opportunity for you to ask questions and explore new ideas.

Finally, I would like you to always bear in mind that the framework created by resolution 1540 albeit relatively young, has been able to generate a dynamic of cooperation and prevention, which I believe is the main feature of the resolution.

We all need to make sure that we do everything that is within our capacity to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors. If we fail in this endeavour we would fail those who count on us to contribute to a safer world.