

**Opening Statement by Ambassador José Javier De La Gasca,
Chair of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004)
at the National Awareness-raising Workshop on the Biological Weapons
Convention (BWC) and UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004)
in São Tomé and Príncipe**

São Tomé and Príncipe, 4-6 March 2024

Excellencies, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to express my appreciation to the Government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe for inviting the 1540 Committee to participate in this national workshop, whose main goal is promoting both the Biological Weapons Convention and Resolution 1540 in our common objectives in the area of non-proliferation and of promoting international cooperation for peaceful purposes.

The unanimous adoption of resolution 1540 in 2004 was an important and timely measure in international efforts aimed at preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery to non-state actors. The resolution is the first international instrument that deals with weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and related materials in an integrated and comprehensive manner.

Since its adoption 20 years ago, resolution 1540 has become a vital component of the global non-proliferation architecture while it should be noted that resolution 1540 does not conflict with or alter rights and obligations of State Parties to the existing international disarmament and nonproliferation instruments such as the Biological Weapons Convention. It establishes additional obligations in order to address existing lacunae in current international instruments. 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.

In addition, I would like to stress that measures to prevent proliferation remain primarily within the responsibility of States and ultimately the implementation of resolution 1540 is a national responsibility. It is also important to raise the fact that the regime set up by resolution 1540 definitely does not concern only States that possess the relevant WMD-related technology. The obligations concern all States. The threat posed by non-state actors, including those with terrorist purposes, acquiring and using weapons of mass destruction, does not recognize borders, including maritime borders. Every single country has to get involved in this global effort. That is what makes each and every State's national performance so crucial for achieving the goals set out by resolution 1540. Your commitments and their transposition into national legislation, norms and practice, in particular, is what could make a genuine difference in this regard.

I would like to highlight that the 1540 Committee, jointly with other national and international partners, including the Implementation Support Unit of the Biological Weapon Convention, will continue to facilitate national implementation of resolution 1540.

It is my hope that this Workshop will contribute towards deepening understanding of the obligations under resolution 1540 and mutually benefits for the implementation of the Biological Weapon Convention.

I wish you a fruitful workshop.

Thank you for your attention.

**Closing Statement by Ambassador José Javier De La Gasca,
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Excellencies, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me a great pleasure to address this closing session. I am impressed by the dedication and active engagement of participants in the workshop and would like to congratulate all of you for what you have achieved during the workshop.

As I have stressed in my opening statement, there are threats than non-state actors laying their hands on the weapons of mass destruction. Resolution 1540 is intended to ensure that no non-State actors, including those with terrorist intentions, can exploit nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, means of delivery and related materials. The resolution concerns all States and not only those that possess materials and technologies relevant to nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. Every single Member State has not only the obligation, but I would say the responsibility, to implement the resolution and cooperate among themselves to that end.

I also stressed that 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. Positive impact on national economies of import and export controls constitute I think a further incitation for implementing resolution 1540 requirements.

I would like to thank again the Government of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe for its invitation to the Committee, the Implementation Support Unit of the Biological Weapon Convention as well as the United Nations Office for

Disarmament Affairs, including its regional coordinator in support of resolution 1540 (2004) implementation in Africa for organizing this event. I would of course warmly thank national participants for this event, as well as other international partners and States for their involvement in this effort.

I look forward to continue working closely with you in this regard.

Thank you.