

To be delivered in French

Visit of the 1540 Committee to Burkina Faso (11-15 November 2013)

Statement by Ms. Sophie Nzeyimana, as representative
of the 1540 Committee

Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, 12 November 2013

Honorable Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation,
Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,

On behalf of the 1540 Committee established pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), I would like to thank the Government of Burkina Faso for inviting the 1540 Committee and its group of experts to undertake a visit to facilitate the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

This invitation is a clear signal by the Government of Burkina Faso of its commitment to the instruments that promote international peace and security, to multilateralism, the United Nations and regional peace and stability.

Burkina Faso is party to the 3 main WMD non-proliferation and disarmament treaties, namely the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention; it plays also a key role in the framework of the CTBTO. Furthermore, your country has also demonstrated its political will to combat terrorism by ratifying 12 of the 18 international counter-terrorism instruments, including the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. Burkina Faso's commitment to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is recognized and welcomed.

As a member of the 1540 Committee in 2008-2009, Burkina Faso contributed actively to work of the Committee and supported this body in its outreach activities around the world. I would particularly like to mention the extraordinary commitment and dedication of Mr. Sifana Ibsen Koné as a member of the 1540 Committee in advancing the cause of non-proliferation and a more peaceful and safer world.

This visit by the 1540 Committee and its group of experts is the first one to take place in an ECOWAS member country and the third one undertaken in the African Continent, following fruitful and successful visits to Madagascar and the Republic of Congo.

By unanimously adopting resolution 1540 in 2004, the UN Security Council addressed the risk that non-State actors may acquire, develop, traffic in, or use nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and their means of delivery. Since criminals and terrorists do not respect borders, the global non-proliferation system is only as strong as the weakest link in the chain. They will exploit such weak points in pursuit of their nefarious objectives.

Should States fail in their non-proliferation efforts and in the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), the use of weapons of mass destruction by non-State actors

To be delivered in French

could bear tragic consequences. In its report to the 1540 Committee, Burkina Faso recognized that “the safety of the entire planet is at stake”.

Resolution 1540 (2004) sets out the role of UN Member States in preventing the proliferation of these weapons and their means of delivery to non-State actors. In particular, States are required to adopt and enforce appropriate and effective national laws and establish domestic controls to prevent the proliferation of these weapons to non-State actors. Such measures encompass not only accountability and physical protection but also border controls, export, and transshipment controls over equipment, materials and technology that could be used for weapons of mass destruction purposes, as well as critical financial aspects.

Regardless of whether a State possesses weapons of mass destruction or not, States use materials for peaceful uses, such as chemicals for instance, that may be dangerous if misused. This was also rightly recognized in Burkina Faso’s report to the 1540 Committee. No State is immune from proliferation and terrorist threats. Challenges are increased for States, like Burkina Faso, with large and porous borders where terrorist networks could inflict terrible damages would they acquire and use weapons of mass destruction. We should not underestimate this threat as we all are aware of possible sleeping cells.

The obligations derived from resolution 1540 (2004) cover a broad range of issues with an impact across different governmental departments. Therefore, their full and effective implementation will require coordinated actions at different levels with the participation of all relevant national stakeholders, including industry and the private sector where appropriate. The implementation of the resolution is a continuous task that requires sustained efforts.

The work of the 1540 Committee, in monitoring and facilitating the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), is guided by the principles of transparency, equal treatment, cooperation and consistency. The mandate of this Committee has been extended to 2021 following the adoption of Security Council resolution 1977 (2011).

The Committee recognises that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a global challenge that requires cooperation among States and across regions. Therefore, the Committee, in implementing its mandate, serves as a clearinghouse to facilitate matchmaking between requests and offers of assistance for capacity building. The Committee also serves as a focal point to share effective practices and promote cooperation with and among international, regional, and sub-regional organizations. We hope this collaborative visit will foster specific assistance and information sharing activities of interest to Burkina Faso.

It is important that States inform the Committee on measures taken to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors, thereby contributing to international peace and security. We welcome Burkina Faso’s initiative in having already presented, as early as 2005, a report on its efforts, becoming one of the first African State to do so. Preventing non-State actors from having access to weapons of mass destruction and their related materials requires constant efforts. We hope that this visit will allow members of the 1540 Committee delegation to hear directly from

To be delivered in French

the Government of Burkina Faso on further measures taken or envisaged to be taken the on-going fight to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

I also hope that through such exchange of information, we will be able to identify areas of assistance that would address other relevant concerns and facilitate the implementation of other 1540-related multilateral treaty obligations.

An important contribution would thereby also be made to create an environment that would more effectively support economic development. I am convinced that through visits to States at their invitation, the Committee forges partnerships to engage in collaborative efforts to advance the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) through the sharing of experiences, identification of areas of assistance and fostering closer regional and international cooperation.

The Committee is committed to provide support as identified by Burkina Faso, and the presence of myself as a Committee member and its group of experts is testimony to this commitment. I wish you a constructive meeting during the next four days and look forward to receiving a report of the outcome of the visit, which will enable the Committee to further strengthen its relations with Burkina Faso.

Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation,
Excellencies,
Distinguished participants,

As the delegate representing the 1540 Committee, I look forward to our deliberations over the next days and pledge our commitment to work with the Government of Burkina Faso to advance the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). I encourage you also to make the best use of the presence of Mr. Nicolas Kasprzyk and Mr. Enrique Ochoa, 1540 Committee experts, who are eager to share their expertise and insights on the implementation of the resolution.

I thank you for your kind attention.