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

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

Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, 14 November 2013

Distinguished participants,
Dear colleagues,

I would like to thank our gracious hosts, for organizing this much appreciated visit to the *Health Sciences Research Institute* (IRSS – Institut de Recherche en Sciences de la Sante), to the *International Center for Research and Development on Livestock in semi-humid Zone* (CIRDES – Centre International de Recherche et de Developpement de l'elevage en Zone semi-humide) and to the *Panafrican Project for the Suppression of the Tse-Tse fly* (PATEC – Projet Panafricain pour l'Eradication de la Mouche Tsé-tsé).

The journey in Bobo-Dioulasso offers us a unique opportunity, in the context of the 1540 Committee's visit to Burkina Faso conducted at the invitation of the Government, to observe *in situ* the actions and achievements of the scientific and technical community in strengthening capacities in areas that are key to the development of the country and the region. It is a privilege and a pleasure for us to engage in discussion and exchanges with representatives of the scientific and technical community, here in Bobo-Dioulasso, who mobilize their knowledge and skills for the public good. Let me express all my appreciation and recognition to the women and men who are committed to this gratifying endeavour.

The 1540 Committee was honoured to receive an invitation from Burkina Faso to discuss relevant aspects of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

During the first working sessions we have had in Ouagadougou, the importance of resolution 1540 (2004) was underscored. For those who did not participate in those sessions, let me recall that resolution 1540 (2004), which was unanimously adopted by the United Nations Security Council, aims at preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors, including terrorists. It represents a significant milestone in the efforts of the international community to curb the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and their means of delivery, by placing specific obligations on States in order to prevent the proliferation of such weapons to non-State actors:

- an obligation for 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;
- an obligation to adopt and enforce appropriate effective laws to prohibit and prosecute such activities by non-State actors; and,

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- an obligation for States to establish domestic controls over materials, equipment and technology which could be used for the design, development, production or use of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery.

As everybody can see, the scope of resolution 1540 (2004) is very broad and extensive; not only does it cover weapons of mass destruction themselves, it also extends to the materials, equipment and technology which could be used for proliferation purposes. It is one of the reasons why resolution 1540 (2004) is producing far-reaching effects, for the benefit of States. Let me underscore also that resolution 1540 (2004) was designed in a way that is respectful of the legitimate peaceful activities; it is understood that prevention of proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons should not hamper international cooperation in materials, equipment and technology for peaceful purposes. In many aspects, resolution 1540 (2004) is a cooperative tool.

As I have the immense privilege of addressing a distinguished audience of scientists, researchers and technicians, I would like to recognize the important role you play, in assisting the State in implementing resolution 1540 (2004) and, more broadly, in ensuring that the materials, equipment and technology which are used for peaceful purposes are not diverted for nefarious purposes. While it is the role of the State to provide the legal and regulatory framework to guide and control activities of dual-use items, those who operate them on a day-to-day basis obviously have special responsibilities.

The 1540 Committee appreciates and encourages efforts by States to make sure that the industry, the private sector and the academia, which includes the scientific and technical community, are involved in the most appropriate and efficient way. The 1540 Committee has noted many initiatives, by States, to work with and inform the industry, the private sector and the academia, and we hope that this trend will be accentuated. The biosafety course that will take place in Bobo-Dioulasso in early November, under the auspices of NEPAD's African Biosafety Network of Expertise is one such example of integration of the scientific and technical community into broader non-proliferation efforts.

As we stand here in the region of Mr. Sifana Ibsen Koné, my predecessor in the 1540 Committee as a delegate from Africa, I would like to pay tribute to his important role in advancing the cause of non-proliferation and a more peaceful and safer world. Those who had the privilege to meet with him know what a committed, talented and dedicated person he was. He remains for all a source of inspiration and his memory should be honoured.

I thank you for kind attention.