

Ambassador Solíz, Ladies and gentlemen

- Let me join Ambassador Solíz in welcoming you to this side event on synthetic biology and its potential impact on the implementation of resolution 1540.
- As Vice-Chair of the 1540 Committee, Sweden is pleased to co-host this event together with the Chair Bolivia and in collaboration with the 1540 Expert Group.
- Sweden considers resolution 1540 to be an essential complement to the disarmament and non-proliferation regimes for weapons of mass destruction, focusing on non-state actor threats.
- As with all disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, the system around resolution 1540 needs to stay dynamic and continuously adjust to evolving proliferation threats. In contrast to the time when resolution 1540 was first conceived in 2004 in reaction to the discovery of a covert supply network for nuclear weapons technology, the threat perception from non-state actors today is much more focused on the risk that terrorists may gain access to and use such weapons.
- As we implement resolution 1540, we must adjust to the evolving security threats, but we must also take into consideration technological innovations of potential relevance to the resolution. Arguably, there is no area where this is more evident than in biotechnology. The pace of development in biotechnology in recent years has only been rivaled by that of computer power. New technologies have been moving rapidly from fundamental research to applications. And new knowledge gained through technologies that can read, map and manipulate the genetic code of living organism has given rise to the new interdisciplinary field of synthetic biology.
- Synthetic biology is being pursued overwhelmingly for beneficial purposes such as novel methods for the production of food, drugs, chemicals and energy. However, in parallel with this enormous potential, it also gives rise to security concerns varying from dual use research and potential designer pathogens to questions of safety and security at laboratories.
- It is important to assess how synthetic biology and related technologies could plausibly be regulated in ways that enhance our common security. The multilateral instruments protecting us against the misuse include the prohibitions inscribed in the Biological Weapons Convention and the strengthened legislation and national controls that States are obligated to introduce pursuant to resolution 1540.

- Against this background, Sweden was very happy to provide financial support through UNODA and to co-host this side event, where eminent experts in the field will explain the possibilities and risks of applications of synthetic biology, as well as their relevance to the implementation of resolution 1540.
- In conclusion, let me thank Ambassador Solíz for co-hosting this event and for chairing the 1540 Committee during our tenure as a Member of the Security Council. I would also like to thank UNODA and the 1540 Committee for making this event possible, and all the those who have agreed to take the role of speakers at today's event.
- And with that, I hand the microphone over to Mr Scott Spence from the Expert Group, who will introduce the event and our first speaker.