

Information Note¹

- Events:** Conference titled “UNSCR 1540 – Planning for 2021 and beyond”
- Organizers:** Governments of the United Kingdom and of Canada
- Date and Venue:** 13-15 January 2020, Wilton Park, United Kingdom
- Participants:** The 1540 Chair and members of the Committee or representatives from capitals
- Representatives from UN Member States:* Nigeria, Canada, Sweden, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Norway, Japan and Ukraine
- International Organisations:* Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, World Health Organisation, INTERPOL, World Organisation for Animal Health, UN Office for Disarmament Affairs, UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, UN Office of Counter-Terrorism, UN Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit, World Customs Organisation, International Atomic Energy Agency, EC Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development
- NGO and Academic Institutions:* Parliamentarians for Global Action, King’s College London

Background

Under resolution 1977 (2011) OP 2 the Security Council decided to extend the mandate of the 1540 Committee for a period of 10 years until 25 April 2021.

¹ For information – not an official report. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the 1540 Committee nor the organisers or participants in the event.

Under resolution 1977 (2011) OP 3 the Security Council decided “that the 1540 Committee will conduct a comprehensive review on the status of implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), both after five years and prior to the renewal of its mandate, including, if necessary, recommendations on adjustments to the mandate, and will submit to the Security Council a report on the conclusions of those reviews, and decides that, accordingly, the first review should be held before December 2016”.

The letter inviting the Chair of the 1540 Committee to participate in this Conference specified that it was intended to:

- Take stock of 1540 Implementation since the 2016 Comprehensive Review, with an emphasis on important developments and areas requiring further attention;
- Identify issues that should be addressed in the lead-up to and during the next Comprehensive Review in 2021;
- Consider potential challenges to renewal of the Committee mandate on 25 April 2021;
- Identify the focus of the Committee’s work until the comprehensive review and post-2021 to ensure it responds effectively in the face of new patterns of proliferation and evolving threats, including those posed by non-state actors.

Highlights and Discussions

Opening speakers, in setting the scene, noted that 1540 faced challenges in future as new technologies emerged. Although, for example, the private sector was making rapid advances in fields relevant to biological weapons, governments were slow to catch up. In addition, Member State implementation of 1540 in fields relevant to chemical weapons was relatively limited despite recent ricin incidents in Europe that showed that the CW threat from terrorism was unlikely to diminish. More positively, many States appreciated that implementation of 1540 requirements helped build assurance, and potentially played an important role in encouraging inward industrial investment. It was not clear however that 1540 had yet met its full potential, and the Wilton Park discussions would include an examination of whether the current mandate of the Committee was appropriate and being implemented effectively. Could the rate of implementation of the resolution be improved, and might it need tweaking in future?

The subsequent discussions then took place under the following headings:

- 1540 threat landscape
- Supporting robust and effective implementation – regional organization perspectives
- Taking stock of implementation and assistance: successes and challenges
- The road to the comprehensive review: plans and priorities

- Working Group discussions:
 - Taking stock of implementation since the 2016 Comprehensive Review
 - How adaptive and responsive is 1540 to threats, both existing and emerging?
 - How can UNSCR 1540 operate more strategically and adopt a horizon-scanning approach?

The Conference provided an opportunity for participants to discuss the requirements and challenges of implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) in the context of the Comprehensive Review, to identify themes and issues for further discussion during the Review, and to highlight issues for consideration when renewal of the mandate of the Committee is discussed later this year.

It seemed clear from the discussions that many of the challenges to full implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) by all Member States that were identified during the 2016 Comprehensive Review remained extant, and that the current review would continue to address many of the themes examined during the 2016 Review.

Additional Comments

For further information, please contact the 1540 Committee experts by e-mail at 1540experts@un.org.