

## Information Note<sup>1</sup>

- Event:** Regional Workshop for BWC State Parties from Asia on the Implications of the Rapid Developments in Science and Technology
- Organizer:** UNODA and the Government of the Philippines
- Date and venue:** 21-22 November 2018, Manila, the Philippines
- Participants:** Sri Lanka; the Philippines; China; Pakistan; Republic of Korea; Thailand; Lao DPR; Bhutan; Bangladesh; Nepal; Cambodia; Vietnam; Singapore; Myanmar; Malaysia;
- Resolution 1540 Committee; United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute; Delegation of the EU to the Philippines; South East Asia EU CBRN Centres of Excellence; Asia Pacific Biosafety Association; United States National Academy of Sciences.

### **Background**

On October 15, 2018, the European Union, the University of the Philippines and UNODA sent an invitation to the 1540 Committee Chair, inviting a 1540 Committee representative to participate in, and deliver a presentation on resolution 1540 (2004) at the BWC Regional Workshop on Science and Technology for States Parties from Asia to be held in 21 and 22 November 2018, Manila, the Philippines.

The Manila Workshop is the final one in a series of five regional workshops on the implications of the rapid developments in the life sciences. One expert of the Group of Experts attended the workshop for the Middle East and North Africa held from 11 to 12 July 2018, in Amman, Jordan.

### **Highlights**

The Regional Workshop on Science and Technology Developments Relevant to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) for Member States of Asia was the fifth supported by the EU Council Decision 2016/51.

The 2-day workshop was opened by Executive Vice President Teodoro J. Herbosa and Dean Charlotte Chiong of the University of the Philippines. They highlighted the Philippines' commitment and on disarmament and non-proliferation, in particular its commitment to BWC. They also emphasized that it is crucial to take into consideration the rapid advances in science

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<sup>1</sup> For information – not an official report. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the 1540 Committee or of the organizers or participants in the event.

and technology and their possible impact on BWC implementation. General Rolando Aquino, representative of the Anti-Terrorism Council Program Management Center of the Office of the President of the Philippines, reiterated the commitment of the Philippines to ensuring the effective implementation of the BWC and other international non-proliferation legal instruments.

During the workshop, over 50 participants from regional countries, industry association, academia and international organizations had in-depth discussions on science and technology developments relevant to the BWC, national and international regulatory frameworks to prevent the misuse of science and technology, the role of industry, academia and civil society in governance of science and technology, biosafety and biosecurity education, etc.

The 1540 expert gave an overview of the obligations under resolution 1540 (2004) in relation to biological weapons and related materials, in particular operative paragraph 3 which are the most relevant to the topic. It was emphasized that the resolution requires States to adopt legislation and ensuring effective implementation and enforcement. Statistics on regional implementation of UNSCR 1540 (2004) regarding BW related materials were shown to the participants to raise awareness of the urgency of implementing related measures in bio field. The expert also spoke on emerging technologies and ITT as stipulated by UNSCR 2325 (2016) and introduced the synthetic bio side event co-hosted by 1540 Committee, Bolivia and Sweden in late October, 2018.

During the discussions, participants generally recognize that advances in science and technology pose benefits but also risks in the fields of biosafety and biosecurity. The BWC remains relevant to this date. There are still challenges to convey the relevance of the Convention to the everyday activities and research of life sciences practitioners. At the regional level, monitoring and/or controlling the activities of BWC States-not-Party remains a challenge. Collective/regional security is a part of national security, with the latter as a pre-requisite. Awareness-raising at the community level and in local languages on topics such as dual-use research, biosafety, and biosecurity is crucial. In many cases, the nuances of the terminology are lost in translation and there is a need to elaborate on the concepts.

### **Additional Comments**

For further information, please contact the 1540 Committee experts by e-mail at [1540experts@un.org](mailto:1540experts@un.org).