

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

- Event:** Regional Workshop on Science and Technology Developments Relevant to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) for the Middle East and North Africa
- Organizer(s):** Implementation Support Unit for the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC-ISU) and the Government of Jordan in cooperation with the Royal Scientific Society
- Date and Venue:** 11-12 July 2018 – Amman, Jordan
- Participants:** *11 States Parties:* Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, State of Palestine, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Morocco  
*International and regional organisations:* UN 1540 Committee, EU Centre of Excellence for the Middle East, EU Centre of Excellence for North Africa, World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) and National Academy of Science (NAS)

### Background

On 4 June 2018, the ISU-BWC, sent a letter to the Chair of the 1540 Committee inviting a representative of the Group of Experts assisting the Committee to take part of the Regional Workshop on Science and Technology Developments Relevant to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) for the Middle East and North Africa.

The 1540 Expert was asked to give a presentation on “Governance of S&T: Roles of Stakeholder Community in Academia, Industry and Civil Society”. Furthermore, the invitation stated that the workshop would bring together scientists, technical experts and government officials, as well as experts from the United Nations, regional organizations and civil society to discuss how to prevent the misuse of recent developments in the life sciences for hostile purposes, as well as national responsibilities of State Parties and individual actors in this regard.

It is important to emphasize that as an outcome of the workshop, a regional working paper about the status of the science and technological developments in the Middle East and North Africa and its relation to the Biological Weapons Convention will be developed, nurtured by workshop participants inputs.

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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 organisers or participants in the event.

## **Highlights**

The Regional Workshop on Science and Technology Developments Relevant to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) for the Middle East and North Africa was the fourth supported by the EU Council Decision 2016/51.

During this 2-day workshop, the participants heard presentations from international organizations as well as from different academics and scientists from universities and official entities of the region. The 1540 expert gave a presentation describing the content of UNSCR 1540 (2004) making emphasis in operative paragraph 3, especially OP3a and b which are the most related to biosecurity issues. After that, some charts were shown where it was appreciated the low level of regional implementation of resolution UNSCR 1540 (2004) regarding BW related materials, which was in concordance with what was expressed by the participants during the group sessions. It was also mentioned resolution 2325 (2016), especially the operative paragraphs related to evolving technologies and intangible technology transfers. To conclude, it was stated that States shall fulfill obligations expressed on the UNSCR 1540 and the later ones, which implies fulfilling obligations under the BWC.

During the development of the workshop, there were many interesting discussions which highlighted subjects such as the importance a of full and effective implementation of BWC, the need for safeguards and governance of science and technology to prevent misuse while ensuring freedom of science, the necessity for continued education and outreach to promote a responsible use of scientific knowledge, the need to implement legislative frameworks and to fully enforce the measures which are already in place and lastly, the importance of strengthening international cooperation and assistance to enhance capabilities at the domestic and regional level.

## **Additional Comments**

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