

Information Note¹

Event: Participation of Mr. Raphael Prenat, 1540 Committee Expert, in the opening session of the Meeting of State Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention

Organizer: Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) States Parties and the Implementation Support Unit (ISU)

Date and venue: 4-5 December 2017, Geneva, Switzerland

Background:

During the last BWC inter-sessional process (2012-2015), 1540 (2004) Committee Members and Experts attended and made statements on the complementarity and synergy between the BWC and the resolution 1540 (2004). During the last Review Conference in November 2016, a member of the Group of Experts attended to this event and the representative of Spain made a statement on behalf of the 1540 Committee. At the same time, the BWC-ISU participated in events related to the resolution 1540 (2004) to support the aspects of its implementation related to biological weapons. The cooperation between the Committee and the BWC-ISU has been developed at these events and through bilateral meetings. This meeting will be an opportunity for the 1540 Committee to inform the BWC' States Parties and other organizations about resolutions 1540 (2004) and 2325 (2016), in particular on issues relevant to biological security and on the developments in the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

On 9 November 2017, the President-Designate of the BWC' State Parties Meeting, Ambassador Amandeep Singh Gill sent an invitation to the Chair of the 1540 Committee for a Member of the 1540 Committee, as well as a member of the Group of Experts, to participate in the opening session of the Review Conference.

Highlights and overview:

The general debate provided an opportunity for 67 States Parties to make plenary statements in public session during the two days. Two of them also gave statements on behalf of regional groups or organisations. This is a significantly higher number of general debate statements than is usual for the opening day. For comparison, there were 2 group statements and 38 statements by individual States Parties on the Monday of the 2015 Meeting of State parties.

A wide range of issues were raised including: efforts for the universalisation of the Convention,; the scope of the Convention's prohibition (article I); Confidence-Building Measures; confidence in the compliance, implementation of the Convention (article IV), assistance in case of emergency (article VII), review of scientific and technological developments impacting the Convention; scientific and technical cooperation for the peaceful uses in the framework of the Convention (article X); programme and structure for the next Intersessional process,; and the future of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU). It should be noted that these statements have been also supported by more than 24 working papers placed with the Conference's Secretariat.

¹ 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.

Like last year, there were many references to overlaps between BWC-related activities at a national level and resolution 1540 implementation. Some statements that contained suggestions of threat perceptions primarily made reference to possible threats from non-State actors.

The Conference also gave the opportunity for international organizations to make their own statements.

Recommendations and follow-up:

This event was an opportunity to engage one non-reporting State and to raise its awareness about the resolution 1540 (2004) obligations and the assistance process, especially to help this State in the draft of its first national report. It will be important to continue the engagement with this State during the next year.

In the light of a big number of States that emphasized the overlaps between BTWC-related activities and the resolution 1540 (2004), it is recommended that 1540 Committee engage a strong cooperation with the ISU (as implementing arm of the BTWC) on the common issues of interest like exchange of information on the 1540 resolution implementation and assistance.