

Information Note¹

- Event:** National Awareness-Raising Workshop on the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in Rwanda
- Organizer:** United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)
- Date and Venue:** 18-19 June 2024, Kigali, Rwanda
- Participants:** Representatives from institutions of Rwanda, including Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Health, Biosafety and Biosecurity Organization, Investigation Bureau, National Police, Atomic Energy Board, Utilities Regulatory Authority, Law Reform Commission, High Commission of Canada in Rwanda, CBRN Weapons Management Authority (CBRNMA) of Botswana, UNODA/BWC-ISU, Expert of the UN Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004).

Background

In a letter dated 29 April 2024 addressed to the 1540 Committee, Chief of the UNODA BWC Implementation Support Unit, Mr. Daniel Feakes, invited the 1540 Committee to attend the National Awareness-Raising Workshop on the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in Rwanda to be held in Kigali, Rwanda from 12 to 13 June 2024. The purpose of the event was to: (i) provide an overview of the BWC and related implementation requirements, including on national implementing legislation, Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs) under the BWC as well as roles and responsibilities of National Contact Points (NCPs); (ii) provide participants with an opportunity to discuss and exchange views on national implementation issues; and (iii) raise awareness of the relationship between the BWC and other legally-binding instruments such as UNSC resolution 1540 (2004).

This Workshop was of relevance to resolution 1540 (2004) and subsequent resolutions as follows:

- Resolution 1540 (2004) recognizes that most States have undertaken binding legal obligations under treaties to which they are parties, or have made other commitments aimed at preventing the proliferation of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, and have taken effective measures to account for, secure and physically protect sensitive materials.
- Operative paragraph 1 of resolution 1540 (2004) requires States to refrain from providing any form of support to non-State actors that attempt to develop, acquire, manufacture, possess, transport, transfer or use nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their means of delivery. Under operative paragraph 2, States are obliged to adopt and enforce appropriate and effective laws prohibiting such activities by non-State actors on their territories. Operative paragraph 3 requires States to take and enforce effective measures to establish domestic controls to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons and their means of delivery, including by establishing appropriate controls over related materials. This includes measures to account for and secure such items in production, use, storage or transport; effective physical protection measures; effective border controls and law enforcement efforts; national export and trans-shipment controls

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.

over such items, including appropriate laws and regulations to control export, transit, trans-shipment and re-export and controls on providing funds and services related to such export and trans-shipment such as financing, and transporting that would contribute to proliferation, as well as end-user controls; and criminal or civil penalties for violations of such export control laws and regulations.

- Resolution 1540 (2004) recognizes that some States may require assistance in implementing the provisions of this resolution within their territories and invites States in a position to do so to offer assistance as appropriate in response to specific requests to the States lacking the legal and regulatory infrastructure, implementation experience and/or resources for fulfilling the above provisions.
- Operative paragraph 8 of resolution 2663 (2022) encourages States to prepare on a voluntary basis national implementation action plans, with the assistance of the 1540 Committee and its expertise as appropriate, mapping out their priorities and plans for implementing the key provisions of resolution 1540 (2004), and to submit these plans to the 1540 Committee.
- Operative paragraph 12 of resolution 2663 (2022) reiterates the Security Council's decision that the 1540 Committee shall continue to intensify its efforts to promote the full implementation by all States of resolution 1540 (2004) ... noting the need for more attention on: enforcement measures; measures relating to biological, chemical and nuclear weapons; accounting for and securing related materials; and national export and transshipment controls.
- Furthermore, operative paragraph 25 of resolution 2663 (2022) requests the 1540 Committee to continue to organize and participate in outreach events on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) at..., as appropriate, national level, including, as appropriate, inviting parliamentarians..., and promote the refinement of these outreach efforts to focus on specific thematic and regional issues related to implementation.

Highlights

The Workshop, which was attended by 27 participants from 16 national entities of Rwanda, aimed at raising awareness of the “Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction” and other legally binding instruments such as UNSC resolution 1540 (2004) among national stakeholders as well as to train participants on the preparation and submission of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs).

The CBM training was based on interactive exercises and active learning sessions that gave participants the opportunity to discuss the preparation of CBM forms and to practice such forms.

Expert from Botswana shared national experience in implementing the BWC, including the procedure of preparing and submitting CBMs, as well as the establishment of an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism.

Expert of the 1540 Committee delivered a presentation on “UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) - key obligations with regard to biological weapons”, providing an overview of the UNSC resolution 1540 (2004) key obligations and supporting provisions with respect to BWC, UNSC 1540 Committee and its toolbox, National Reports to the Committee, 1540 Committee Matrix Overview, status of resolution 1540 (2004) implementation based on the latest matrix data focusing on BWC-related matters as well as the Committee's assistance in implementing resolution 1540 (2004) provisions into the national law.

Additional Comments

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