

Information Note¹

- Event:** National awareness-raising workshop on the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and Resolution 1540 (2004) in São Tomé and Príncipe
- Organizer:** Organized by the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) Geneva Branch and its BWC Implementation Support Unit (BWC-ISU), with support from Kazakhstan, USA and Global Partnership
- Date and Venue:** 4-6 March 2024, São Tomé, São Tomé and Príncipe
- Participants:** Representatives from institutions of Sao Tomé and Príncipe, including Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Communities, Ministry of the Council Presidency of Ministers, matters Parliamentarians and the Coordination of Sustainable development, Ministry of Defense and Administration Internal, Ministry of Justice, Administration Public and Human Rights, Ministry of Health and Human Rights Woman, Ministry of Planning and Finance, Customs, Tax Police, Ministry of Agriculture, Rural Development and Fisheries, Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences, University of São Tomé and Príncipe, Center for Agricultural Research and Technological, Direction of Commerce, Direction of Industry, Migration and Borders Service, Federation of Non-Governmental Organizations in São Tomé and Príncipe, National Radio, UNODA/BWC-ISU, UNODA/1540 Support Unit, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), experts from Ministry of Defense from Angola and Portugal, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH), expert of the UN Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004)

Background

In a letter dated 6 February 2024 addressed to the 1540 Committee, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Communities of the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe invited the 1540 Committee and members of its Group of Experts to participate in a national awareness-raising workshop on the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). The 1540 Committee was invited to open and close the workshop, as well as to appoint members of its Expert Group to make presentation on the objectives, obligations of resolution 1540 (2004), aspects related to implementation, assistance and national cooperation.

This Workshop was of relevance to resolution 1540 (2004) 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

¹ For information – not an official report. The views expressed here by the member of the Expert Group do not necessarily represent those of the 1540 Committee or of the organizers or participants in the event.

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.
- 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 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.
- Operative paragraph 21 of resolution 2663 (2022) urges the 1540 Committee, using its full expertise, to promote the facilitation of technical assistance through, as appropriate, organizing, co-organizing, participating in or supporting international and regional assistance conferences, which bring together Member States that request assistance with those offering assistance, and further encourages Member States, including those in the region with relevant expertise, relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, in a position to do so, to support such efforts.
- 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 the international, regional, subregional, and, as appropriate, national level, including, as appropriate, inviting parliamentarians, as well as representatives of civil society, including industry and academia and promote the refinement of these outreach efforts to focus on specific thematic and regional issues related to implementation.

Highlights

Under São Tomé and Príncipe protocol, the workshop was opened by an statement of the 1540 Committee's Chair, delivered by the by the member of the Expert Group, presenting the universal importance and relevance of resolution 1540 (2004), while not conflicting with or alter rights and obligations of State Parties to the existing international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments such as the Biological Weapons Convention and not hampering international cooperation in trading with materials, equipment and technology destined for peaceful purposes.

Mr. Eric Overvest, United Nations Resident coordinator in São Tomé and Príncipe, welcomed this workshop for national stakeholders in the context of biosecurity and biosafety which requires a

multi-sectorial approach. He highlighted the relevance of both instruments, including with regards of potential impacts caused by the proliferation of biological weapons in terms of public health and sustainable development, and also stressed the importance of control mechanisms.

H.E. Jorge Amado, Minister of Defense of São Tomé and Príncipe stated his satisfaction of this visit by the United Nations. He pointed out the indispensable participation of São Tomé and Príncipe in this global effort as a necessity for peaceful and security in the world. He then highlighted the national goal to implement both resolution 1540 (2004) and BWC by new legislations that fill the existing gaps. He concluded his statement by emphasizing that the nomination of Points of Contacts for 1540 Committee and BWC-ISU by São Tomé and Príncipe demonstrates their national engagement.

The workshop brought together nearly 25 São Tomé and Príncipe officials from around 20 different national entities in charge of external relations, security, trade, customs, public health, education, science and technology and others. The active engagement of all participants contributed to the success of this event with the objective to support the full and effective implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and BWC by São Tomé and Príncipe. Together with representative of participating IROs, the participation of representatives of Angola and Portugal was of great support in terms of share of experience, lessons learnt and best practices.

Additional Comments

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