

## Information Note

- Event:** Virtual Forum for South East Asian Countries
- Organizers:** Singapore Customs in collaboration with the United States Bureau of Industry and Security (BIS), Export Control and Related Border Security Program (EXBS), United States Department of Energy (DoE) and Japan's Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry
- Date and Venue:** 30 September 2021, on a virtual platform
- Participants:** Representatives from the Governments of Cambodia, Viet Nam, Brunei, Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and the United States, the Pacific Asia Forum and the 1540 Group of Experts.

### Background

Under operative paragraph 3 of resolution 1540 (2004) the Security Council [d]ecides ... that all States shall 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 and to this end shall: ... (d) Establish, develop, review and maintain appropriate effective national export and trans-shipment controls over such items, including appropriate laws and regulations to control export, transit, transshipment 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 establishing end-user controls; and establishing and enforcing appropriate criminal or civil penalties for violations of such export control laws and regulations;

Under operative paragraph 14 of resolution 2325 (2016) the Security Council [r]ecalls its decision that all States shall 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 control over related materials, and calls upon States that have not done so to start developing effective national control lists at the earliest opportunity for the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004);

Under operative paragraph 23 of resolution 2325 (2016) the Security Council [e]ncourages relevant international, regional and subregional organizations to enhance cooperation and

information-sharing with the 1540 Committee, on the issues related to the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004); and Under operative paragraph 29 of resolution 2325 (2016) the Security Council [r]equests 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.

By means of a letter dated 5 August 2021, the Head, Trade Strategy & Security of Singapore Customs, invited the Chair of the 1540 Committee to nominate a member of the Group of Experts to participate in a Virtual Forum for South East Asian Countries in order to share their perspectives on the implementation of UNSCR 1540 in that region. He noted that the forum was a new segment of Singapore Customs annual Joint Industry Outreach Seminar on Strategic Trade Management (JIO). The Forum sought to engage countries in the region on the implementation of and developments in strategic trade management and served as a platform for the discussion of strategic trade control issues in the region. In the letter the Head, Trade Strategy & Security, Singapore Customs, noted that this would be an opportune time to engage regional Member States on developments or preliminary findings in respect of the Comprehensive Review.

## **Highlights**

The Forum was opened by Mr Lee Boon Chong, Senior Assistant Director-General, Singapore Customs. He noted that Singapore's 2003 Strategic Goods (Control) Act was the first Strategic Trade Control Act to have been implemented in the region, and since then Singapore had worked constantly to improve it by benchmarking and calibrating against similar legislation elsewhere, and sharing experience of implementation with other jurisdictions. In this context the focus of the current meeting was the control of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). Peace and stability were necessary to protect economic growth, but globalisation of trade carried threats, including WMD proliferation. Robust export controls were needed throughout the region to ensure proliferators did not exploit weak links. Investment in such controls was needed as well as technical assistance and cooperation between jurisdictions. Equally, though, it was important that the control framework did not hinder or weaken international trade.

The 1540 Expert described the main obligations of resolution 1540 (2004) and the tools used by the Committee to support implementation of the resolution by Member States. He described in particular the requirements of OP 3 (c) and (d), and how they were incorporated into elements of the Committee's matrices. He described the matrix data relevant to the ASEAN Region and presented charts based on analyses of these data which demonstrated that while many of the measures recorded in the matrices were implemented in the region some weaknesses existed. He described the Committee's work related to the Comprehensive Review.

The Forum continued with presentations by participants about strategic trade control legislation in their countries and its enforcement, about a study by the Pacific Forum on the economic benefits of strategic trade control legislation, and about relevant developments within the US.

The meeting was closed by Ms Lim Sok Peng, Head, Trade Strategy and Security Branch, Singapore Customs who said that this inaugural Forum had been a success and would be repeated. The region played a pivotal role in international trade and the Forum would be an important element. Ms Lim thanked the 1540 Committee for its contribution.

### **Additional Comments**

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