

Information Note¹

- Event:** Seminar on the Contribution of the OPCW to the International Security Dimension: Achievements and Challenges
- Organizer:** Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)
- Date & Venue:** 7-8 June 2010, Berlin, Germany
- Participants:** 144 participants from 62 Member States,² international and regional organizations, academic and research institutions, relevant industry associations and concerned NGOs. Member States were predominantly represented by officials from the foreign ministries and embassies at The Hague and often also by officials from the CWC National Authorities in capitals. Presentations were made by officials from the OPCW and NATO, and by a 1540 Committee expert

1. Objectives

The objective of the Berlin seminar was to serve as an assessment of the achievements of the OPCW during the past decade and as an analysis of the challenges being faced in seeking to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security. The purpose of participation by the 1540 Committee expert was: (a) to build awareness to the complementarity of mandates under the CWC and resolution 1540 (2004) and the need for close cooperation in the implementation process and to interact with the participating officials from national authorities and international experts in the chemical field about the challenges of implementation, as well as expand the network for future contacts.

2. Background

The Berlin seminar summed up the extensive outreach efforts of the OPCW of the past several years, including many conferences and workshops in which the 1540 experts were represented. The event was planned as a major seminar led by Ambassador Rogelio Pfirter, in his last month as Director General of OPCW, to be both as a retrospective and as a projection into the future.

The Director General had previously personally briefed the 1540 Committee on OPCW's relevant work (2005) and also participated in a thematic meetings of the UN Security Council on non-proliferation issues focused on resolution 1540 (2004) (February 2007). He had also welcomed visits to OPCW headquarters by successive Chairmen of the 1540 Committee and its experts.

3. Highlights

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.

² Argentina, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Bhutan, Burkina Faso, Burundi, China, Cote d'Ivoire, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czech Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mexico, Mongolia, Myanmar, Netherlands, Nigeria, Pakistan, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Republic, United Kingdom, United States and Zambia

The implementation achievements, the challenges and the opportunities as stressed at the seminar may be summarized as follows:

- **Disarmament and non-proliferation:** Although the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles is behind schedule, almost 60 % of stockpiles have so far been destroyed and momentum has been regained. As the 2012 deadline for total destruction is extended, the awareness of new risks of proliferation involving non-State actors will necessitate counter-measures.
- **Implementation process:** The progress towards universal acceptance of the CWC has been remarkable: the vast majority of State Parties have ratified the Convention and many States have also adopted implementation legislation, with a National Authority in place. However, ensuring effective legislation remains a challenge for many States unless they receive assistance.
- **New Risks:** The verification system is already robust, using elaborate control lists, including the Scheduled chemicals, but the task of accounting, securing and physically protecting the relevant chemical agents and precursors is challenged by the advance in scientific research on chemical and biological agents. For example, how can the OPCW cope effectively with the risk posed by the convergence of chemical and biological processes, particularly from biologically mediated chemical methods and chemical synthesis of biological molecules?
- **New threats:** The OPCW fully recognizes the danger of acquisition of weapons-related chemical agents by terrorist groups and also the risk of terrorist acts against chemical facilities. In this regard, the seminar stressed the importance of the synergy between the CWC and UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the need to cooperate in deterring illicit trafficking in WMD-related material.
- **Correlation of mandates.** A tabular comparison demonstrated that the CWC covered almost all the activities in the chemical field identified in resolution 1540 (2004) for prohibition, accounting, securing and physical protection of chemical materials related to weapons. This underlined the importance of close cooperation in all those areas and also as regards border and export controls, where the CWC-based control lists of Scheduled Chemicals serve as an essential tool for Member States.

4. Additional Comments

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