

Information Note¹

Event:	1.The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) Workshop on Ensuring Effective Inter-Agency Interoperability and coordinated Communication in Case of Chemical and/or Biological Attacks 2. Consultations with the OPCW on the cooperation in the provision of assistance to the Member States
Organizer:	The Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) Office / United Nations Counter – Terrorism Centre (UNCCT)
Date and venue:	19-20 February 2015 (CTITF workshop), The Hague, Netherlands 18 February 2014, (Consultations with the OPCW), The Hague, Netherlands
Participants:	BWC-ISU, FAO, IAEA, ICAO, INTERPOL, IOM, OIE, OPCW, UNDPI, UNICRI, UNIDIR, UNOCHA and UNOCHA/UNEP Joint Programme, UNODA, WHO, CTITF Office, 1540 Committee Group of Experts

1. Objectives

CTITF workshop

- Make a presentation on the background, objectives, key aspects, obligations and state of implementation of the resolution 1540 (2004), as well as on the mandate of 1540 Committee and its group of experts.
- Participate and contribute to the discussions regarding policies, regulations, operations and standards for emergency prevention and response

Consultations with the OPCW

Discuss with the OPCW synergies and possible cooperation in the provision of assistance requested by Member States, as well as in the identification of potential assistance needs.

2. Background

Resolution 1540 (2004) requires all States to take and enforce, inter alia, 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.

The CTITF WMD Working Group project is focused on ensuring effective inter-agency emergency preparedness and response mechanisms for dealing with terrorist attacks involving chemical and/or biological weapons or agents. It is comprised of two pillars aimed at ensuring coordination in both

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operational and communications aspects during such emergencies. The Project will consider existing inter-agency mechanisms with a view to enhancing them where needed, and the establishment of a network of inter-agency functional focal points as a means to sustain the mechanisms in the long term.

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 provisions. Taking advantage of the presence of a 1540 Expert in The Hague the OPCW Technical Secretariat agreed to conduct consultations on the cooperation in the provision of assistance to the Member States, which took place in the margins of the workshop.

3. Overview

The Workshop on “Effective Inter-Agency Interoperability and Coordinated Communication in Case of Chemical and/or Biological Attacks” was the launch of the CTITF WMD Working Group’s project on this topic.

Thirty representatives from 17 agencies participated in the Workshop including: BWC-ISU, CTITF Office, FAO, IAEA, ICAO, INTERPOL, IOM, OIE, OPCW, WHO, UNDP, UNICRI, UNIDIR, UNOCHA, UNOCHA/UNEP Joint Environment Unit, UNODA, and the 1540 Committee Group of Experts.

The 1540 Committee expert engaged with experts from other international organizations on the issues relevant to the effective implementation of the resolution 1540 (2004), as well as on roles of different agencies and non-governmental organizations involved in this process.

The Workshop considered the current status of the participating agencies’ capabilities to operate together in the field and ongoing efforts to enhance this cooperation. It further initiated the discussion aimed at identifying gaps in existing arrangements and practices as well as possible solutions. Discussions also dwelt on challenges and opportunities that affect agencies’ ability to inter-operate in the field. Some relevant experiences and lessons were also discussed.

The Workshop achieved its stated goals to: (i) officially launch the project; (ii) establish the network of the functional focal points; (iii) launch the gap analysis; and (iv) decide some aspects of the next steps for project implementation.

During the Workshop, the following main points emerged, which will guide future work on the Project:

- There is a need to involve all relevant agencies and stakeholders and to have well identified Focal Points (or list of partners) in each agency to activate and coordinate emergency response and to exchange and coordinate information.
- Participants to the workshop stressed the need to coordinate with UN and other agencies already present in the field and to have readily available expertise (from member States, from other international organizations, other international experts), as well as to identify specialized expertise in each agency (e.g. the network of experts within the United Nations Disaster and Assessment Coordination Mechanism (UNDAC), the UNSG Mechanism’s roster of experts and the OIE network of experts in the Reference Centres).
- It was stressed that it will be important to develop a common understanding of each participating agency’s mandate, policies and roles, to avoid confusion and misunderstandings, specifically in emergency preparedness and response, as well as to disseminate it also to other agencies and stakeholders, including particularly States.

- Preventive aspects of the project, including threat assessment and wide range of preventive measures were also discussed, as well as the need to regularly test preparedness through exercises.

4. Future activities

It was generally agreed that risk assessment is an important element of preparedness while certain aspects of prevention are important also for response. While depending on the relevant scenario, only certain agencies would be involved in response, broader relevant communities should be also included.

It was suggested that, as part of the gap analysis, a detailed mapping of each agency's mandates, policies and roles in the phase of response, including also actors in the humanitarian field. The mapping exercise could be supported by means of hypothetical scenarios and related questionnaires aimed at identifying how each agency would operate in response to different situations. For the purposes of dissemination, it was suggested to consider developing e-learning tools.

Participants further suggested that it would be useful to hold more frequent table-top exercises, including during the gap analysis.

UNICRI offered to host another working level meeting of Focal Points at its headquarters in Turin, Italy.

Consultations with the OPCW on the cooperation in the provision of assistance to the Member States

In the margins of the workshop the 1540 Committee expert conducted consultations with the representatives of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW on cooperation in the provision of assistance to Member States. The ways and means to better explore synergies and facilitate coordination and cooperation between 1540 Committee, its Group of Experts and the OPCW were considered. It was agreed to further improve information sharing in order to avoid duplication in the provision of assistance and to mutually complement activities in this field.

4. Additional Comments

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