

Information note ¹

Event: **Third Annual International Symposium “Biosecurity and Biosafety: Future trends and Solutions”**

Organizers: Sciences Department, Clinical Microbiology Laboratory of the University Hospital “L.Sacco” in Milan with the patronage of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defence and Ministry of Interior

Date and Venue: Milan, Italy, October 12-14, 2011

Participants: *International organizations:* UNICRI, European External Action Service, 1540 Committee Expert. *Governments:* Italy as host country, France, Georgia, Ghana (teleconference), Lebanon, Singapore, Philippines, Russian Federation, United Kingdom, United States, Switzerland, Uganda. *NGOs:* VERTIC, Centro Alessandro Volta. *Scientific institutions:* European Biosafety Association of the European Commission (EBSA), International Council for the Life Sciences

Objectives for participation

- Provide participants a comprehensive overview on the requirements of resolution 1540 (2004), including its complementarities with international instruments aiming at preventing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery by non-State actors, including terrorists, as well as the illicit trafficking in biological weapons-related materials
- Obtain information on effective practices for biosafety and biosecurity that might contribute to the development of a compilation, as highlighted by operative paragraph 12 of Resolution 1977 (2011) to serve as a technical reference to States, to be used on a voluntary basis, and to facilitate implementation of biological aspects of resolution 1540 (2004)
- Obtain updated information by participating States on the status of national implementation of resolution 1540 (2004)
- Dialogue with international and regional organizations on assistance projects across agencies and nations, which contribute to the implementation by States of the requirements of resolution 1540 (2004).

Background

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.

The main goal of the third edition of the Annual International Symposium “Biosecurity and Biosafety: Future trends and Solutions” was to offer a platform to officials, policy analysts, scientists, health leaders, and members of the media for sharing information on biosecurity and biosafety, in particular on how biorisk might be interpreted and countered in the future.

The symposium, structured into round tables to encourage participants to take an active role in the discussion, was intended also as an opportunity to develop and implement ethics education and training programs, to elaborate a common understanding and strategy for countering biological weapons threats and infectious diseases outbreaks. Furthermore, it addressed capacity building challenges and the availability of specific assistance programmes related to biosecurity and biosafety.

3. Highlights

The 1540 Committee expert presented the main contents of resolution 1540 (2004) relevant to the symposium. In particular, it was mentioned that the requirements of resolution 1540 (2004), including domestic controls that States need to adopt to accounting for and secure production, use, storage and transport of selected biological agents and toxins, apply to all States irrespectively of their status regarding international treaties and conventions countering proliferation, with a specific focus on the threat posed by non-State actors, including terrorists.

Using the data compiled in the 1540 Committee matrices, the expert presented the status of implementation of the resolution regarding operative paragraph 3 a) and b) and the need to enhance capabilities of States not only in adopting legislation but also in sharing international standards on biosecurity and biosafety and enforce them.

4. Additional notes

Many presenters underlined that achieving effective biorisk management requires strong cooperation with academia and industry, increased awareness and allocation of appropriate resources in biosecurity and biosafety, training and sharing of expertise. Life science institutions, when developing biological laboratories and production capabilities need to use biorisk management to prevent and respond to all possible biological threats – natural or deliberated – in full respect of ethical, safety and security norms.

5. Additional comments

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