

Information Note¹

- Event:** Crisis Management Exercise ‘Bio-Shield’ for Caribbean States
- Organizers:** Secretariat of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism (CICTE) of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Government of Trinidad and Tobago
- Date and Venue:** 10-12 March 2010; Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
- Participants:** *Senior officials from ministries of National Security, Emergency Management, Public Health, Public Information, and Law Enforcement of Caribbean countries:* Antigua and Barbuda, Bahamas, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, St Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago.
Other States and international and regional organisations: US including its Centers for Disease Control, Department of Homeland Security, and Federal Bureau of Investigation; International Maritime Organization (IMO); Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO); Organization of American States (OAS); Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE); UN Office for Disarmament Affairs; 1540 Committee expert.

1. Objectives

- Identify across-government communications for crisis management of bio-incidents and natural disasters that can also be useful for implementing resolution 1540 (2004);
- Share experiences and lessons learned to facilitate implementation of the resolution, building on previous related workshops, dialogues, and large event security preparations;
- Examine possibility of extended bilateral or ‘mini-country’ visit on implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) with the host country of this exercise;
- Explore opportunities with participating organisations to improve cooperation on resolution 1540 (2004) as appropriate;
- Encourage States to submit reports of additional information, future implementation plans, and assistance requests as appropriate.

2. Background

This event was the second in a series of three table-top exercises, each covering one of three sub-regions within the OAS, on processes to prevent and respond to a bioterrorism incident. This exercise provided an opportunity for the 1540 Committee expert to continue dialogues on resolution 1540 (2004) with senior officials from the participating Caribbean States; and in facilitating implementation of the resolution, identify measures and action taken for the resolution that can complement or be integrated with other national priorities. These opportunities also reflect recommendations of the Final Document (paragraphs 25 and 20 respectively) of the 2009 Comprehensive Review of the status of implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

Additionally, the exercise builds upon dialogues sustained with officials at the New York-based UN Missions of individual Caribbean States and at previous outreach activities in the region, including:

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- an assistance-oriented workshop on domestic export controls and maritime security in support of resolution 1540 (2004), organised by OAS, CARICOM and the Stimson Center, Jamaica, June 2009;
- a regional workshop on responses to the Security Council resolutions 1267, 1373 and 1540 (2004) organised by UNODC/Terrorism Prevention Branch and the three expert groups related to these Security Council Committees, St. Kitts and Nevis, July 2009.

3. **Highlights**

Highlights of presentations and discussion of relevance to implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) by States in the region included the following:

- Experience was shared on partnership and information exchange between law enforcement and public health officials in the event of a bio-incident, for example, recognizing mutual benefit of knowing principles of criminal investigation and post-event laboratory testing of specimens, useful for potential criminal prosecution of a bio-incident.
 - Information sharing protocols between cruise liner companies and public health entities regarding certain passenger illnesses were raised as practices shared by States and the private sector/tourism industry to try to prevent bio-incidents/terrorism.
 - The 1540 Committee expert highlighted that types of inter-governmental communications for preventing and managing bio-incidents, including such communication in training exercises as this one, can also contribute to implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). Other practical considerations mentioned included: noting that public health officials often deal with chemical and nuclear/radioactive concerns as well as biological ones; bio-safety programmes can consider incorporating security-oriented controls as required by operative paragraph 3 of resolution 1540 (2004); and National Authorities created for implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention can be expanded to include implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention, both conventions containing prohibitions also required by resolution 1540 (2004).
 - Other recommendations or comments arising included to improve information exchange on passenger illness among airlines, as done by the cruise ship industry though it was noted to be more difficult with the faster mode of air travel; and to provide training on sample handling for customs and airline personnel.

4. **Bilateral Consultations**

Dialogues on implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) were conducted with each State, an extended one taking place with the host country. Particularly noteworthy was that each delegation comprised representatives from three or more government departments, and ranging from senior decision-making officials to technical operational managers. This broad spectrum of participation enabled across-government communications that could also facilitate implementing the broad scope of resolution 1540 (2004).

5. **Additional comments**

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