

Information Noteⁱ

Mission: Seminar on the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention and UN Security Council Resolution 1540 related obligations

Date and Location: 26 June 2012, Quito, Ecuador

Organizers or Sponsors: The UN Disarmament Branch for Latin America and the Caribbean (UNLIREC), Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC), Government of Ecuador

Participants: Representatives of the Government of Ecuador, 1540 Committee Expert, UNLIREC, VERTIC

Objectives

- Promote implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) on biological weapons issues and raise awareness on relevant elements of resolutions 1540 (2004) and 1977 (2011).
- Provide information on the status of global implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and on relevant assistance programs available to States.
- Encourage submission of additional information, including updates, national action plans, and assistance requests, as appropriate.

Background

UNLIREC and VERTIC co-organized a seminar on the implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) related obligations. The meeting was hosted by the Ecuador's Ministry of Defense and included representatives from several other ministries, officials from UNLIREC, 1540 Committee Group of Experts, and VERTIC. The purpose of the seminar was to examine the international legal framework for non-proliferation (including resolution 1540-related obligations) with a view toward strengthening the legal framework on biological risk management as derived from the BWC and resolution 1540 (2004) obligations.

Highlights

The Quito seminar on the BWC and resolution 1540 (2004) brought together governmental and non-governmental officials to discuss ways and means for strengthening the national legal framework on biological risk management, as derived from the BWC and resolution 1540-related obligations.

Representatives from UNLIREC and VERTIC discussed with officials from the Ministry of Defense, Security Coordination, Ministry of Exterior, Electricity and Commerce the existing legislation related to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and areas for further consideration to criminalize WMD proliferation; enact effective export and other controls (including financial, transit, transshipment and brokering controls); and secure sensitive materials.

The 1540 Expert delivered a presentation on the complementary nature of obligations and national implementation measures required by the BWC and resolution 1540 (2004) and highlighted the key features of the resolution insofar as it affirms the support of the Security Council for the multilateral treaties aimed at eliminating or preventing the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, their means of delivery, and related materials, and calls upon all States to promote its universal adoption and full implementation.

The Expert also emphasized the differences between the BWC (as a treaty to which Member States should join) and resolution 1540 (2004) - which was adopted under the Chapter VII of the UN Charter. In addition, the 1540 Expert provided an overview of the status of resolution 1540 (2004) implementation in the Americas, and the procedure for requesting assistance through the 1540 Committee.

The Quito seminar is an example of Member States' efforts to develop and strengthen the coordinating mechanisms among relevant national stakeholders as well as among Member States and relevant assistance-providers in order to facilitate better communication. This, in turn, would facilitate the leveraging of resources required for implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and the synergies (among national stakeholders and relevant international, regional, sub-regional, and non-governmental organizations) toward effective and concerted action in strengthening biosecurity.

¹ For information – not an official report. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the 1540 Committee or of the organizer or participants in the event. For further information, please contact the 1540 Committee experts by e-mail at 1540experts@un.org.