

## Information Note<sup>1</sup>

- Event:** *Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Workshop*
- Organizers:** The Government of Trinidad and Tobago and the Inter-American Committee Against Terrorism (CICTE) of the Organization of American States (OAS)
- Date and venue:** 25-28 March 2013, Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago
- Participants:** *States:* Trinidad and Tobago; US  
*International organizations:* 1540 Committee Group of Experts; OAS  
*Non-Governmental Organizations, Industry, Academia, and Other Entities:* Cubic Corporation; Voltaggio Consulting, LLC; Gablehouse Granberg, LLC; Crisis Preparation and Recovery, Inc.

### 1. Objectives of the workshop

The *Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Workshop* aimed to develop a national action plan to detect, deter, prepare and respond to deliberate or accidental biological incidents. It brought together representatives of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago, specifically from the Ministry of National Security [Trinidad and Tobago Police Service (TTPS); Office of Disaster Preparedness and Management (ODPM); Trinidad and Tobago Fire Service (TTFS); Trinidad and Tobago Defense Force (TTDF); Immigration Division; Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (AATT); National Security Operations Center (NSOC)]; Port Authority of Trinidad and Tobago; Airports Authority of Trinidad and Tobago (AATT); Ministry of Health; Ministry of Local Government; Ministry of Works and Infrastructure; Ministry of Finance and the Economy (Customs and Excise Division); Tobago House of Assembly [(Tobago Emergency Management Agency (TEMA)]. A complete list of Ministries of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is available online at: [http://www.ttconnect.gov.tt/gortt/portal/ttconnect/SharedDetail/?WCM\\_GLOBAL\\_CONTEXT=/gortt/wcm/connect/gortt+web+content/TTConnect/Home/Government+Ministries](http://www.ttconnect.gov.tt/gortt/portal/ttconnect/SharedDetail/?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/gortt/wcm/connect/gortt+web+content/TTConnect/Home/Government+Ministries)

### 2. Background

Trinidad and Tobago adopted an all-hazards National Response Framework (NRF) in 2010 (available online at: <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/idrl/839EN.pdf>) in order to create a resilient nation whose continuous protection from new and existing threats, posed by all natural and man-made hazards, is integrated into routine practices of individuals, communities, government and public and private sector businesses. The principal actors within the NRF are the Central Government, the Local Government represented by the Municipal Corporations, the ODPM, various Ministries and Agencies, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

Pursuant to the adoption of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA)– 2005 and Anti-Terrorism (Amendment) Acts (ATAA 2010 & 2011), as well as The Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons Act of 2012 (*“an Act to give effect to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction”*- Trinidad and Tobago acceded to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) on July 19, 2007), the Government of Trinidad and Tobago also undertook the opportunity to pursue a national preparedness and response plan focusing on biological incidents. The *Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Workshop* also aimed to operationalize The

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons Act in particular with the roles and responsibilities of the *Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons Committee* provided in the said Act (full text of the Act is available online at: <http://www.tparliament.org/legislations/a2012-04.pdf> ).

Of note, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago also has an *Inter-Ministerial Ad Hoc Committee for The National Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540* comprised of 14 ministries and agencies. The Trinidad and Tobago's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (letter dated 10 May 2012) invited the 1540 Committee for a country visit- planned to take place in April 2013, which will offer the opportunity to update of Trinidad and Tobago's 2006 national report on implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), prepare a voluntary national action plan, and fill a Request for Assistance, as appropriate.

### 3. **Highlights**

There was a wide range of multi-sectoral expertise at this meeting which aided the multi-faceted discussions on how to address the biological risks and mitigate the consequences of deliberate biological incidents. The previously adopted NRF also facilitated the facilitated discussions (based on two tabletop exercise scenarios) on the overall planning to deter and respond to biological incidents.

The workshop started with a keynote address by Honorable Jack Warner, Minister of National Security and was followed by a presentation by Ms. Camille Renie, Legal Advisor with the Ministry of National Security on the recently introduced legislative measures in Trinidad and Tobago and a presentation by Dr. Stephen Ramroop, Chief Executive Officer, ODPM, on Trinidad and Tobago's current plans, planning processes, and incident management systems. Speakers from the US Government, Cubic Corporation; Voltaggio Consulting, LLC; Gablehouse Granberg, LLC; Crisis Preparation and Recovery, Inc., underpinned the biological threat planning considerations and the key planning concepts, principles of effective planning and potential pitfalls. Two separate biological incident scenarios provided for facilitated tabletop exercise discussions on planning, communications, and response activities to bioterrorism.

The 1540 expert provided considerations of a unified conceptual framework of biological risk management and a comprehensive approach to countering biological risks via non-proliferation, counter-proliferation and consequence management. She emphasized the synergies and complementary measures under the resolution 1540 (2004), BWC and International Health Regulations in terms of implementation of biosecurity measures, and highlighted the progress up to date by Trinidad and Tobago in adopting legislation and enforcement measures to prevent the proliferation of biological weapons, and their means of delivery, and establishing appropriate domestic controls over related materials to prevent their illicit trafficking. The 1540 expert noted that in its 2006 National Report, the Government of Trinidad and Tobago stated that it remains committed to the achievement of the objectives contained in resolution 1540 and other multilateral initiatives on the question of international peace and security and disarmament, and that Trinidad and Tobago sees the attainment of international peace and security as a sine qua non of the economic and sustainable development of all regions of the world. Moreover, she also pointed out to participants that considering the objectives of resolution 1540 (2004) and its focus on international cooperation and collaboration, the motto on the Trinidad and Tobago's coat of arms, "*Together We Aspire – Together We Achieve*", is applicable to the national and international non-proliferation efforts.

The 1540 expert also met with officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of National Security, and CARPHA to discuss the upcoming 1540 Committee's visit to Trinidad and Tobago at its invitation.

### 4. **Additional comments**

For further information, please contact the 1540 Committee's Group of Experts by e-mail at [1540experts@un.org](mailto:1540experts@un.org).