

Information Note¹

- Event:** *UNSCR 1540 Civil Society Forum - Opportunities for Engagement*
- Organizer(s):** Hosted by the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of Austria, in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) and organized by the Steering Committee of the Civil Society Forum². The forum was funded by contributions from the Governments of Austria, Norway, and the United States, as well as from the Stanley Foundation.
- Date and Venue:** 8-10 January 2013, Vienna, Austria
- Participants:** Representatives of forty-five civil society organizations and seven international and regional organizations³

1. Objectives of the workshop

The *UNSCR 1540 Civil Society Forum - Opportunities for Engagement* aimed inter alia to raise awareness on the importance of resolution 1540 (2004) as a key pillar of the global non-proliferation and disarmament enterprise and enhance the contribution of civil society to Member States' efforts toward achieving the its objectives. Based on the UNODA's active engagement with civil society on disarmament and non-proliferation issues, the first-ever Civil Society Forum in support of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) was convened to provide civil society representatives with the opportunity to discuss their possible contributions to national and international efforts toward implementing the key requirements of resolution 1540 (2004), as well as the parameters of their involvement.

A 1540 Committee expert participated in this event to:

- Discuss the objectives, mandate, status of implementation and challenges of resolution 1540 (2004) as well as the role of civil society;
- Engage with the participating civil society groups (such as academia, think-tanks and other non-governmental organizations) as representatives of relevant international, regional, and subregional organizations, to raise awareness of the objectives, mandate, status of implementation, and challenges of implementing resolution 1540 (2004);

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.

² The Steering Committee of the Civil Society Forum comprises the Federal Ministry for European and International Affairs of Austria, Henry L. Stimson Center, Institute for Security Studies (ISS), National University of Malaysia, Nonproliferation for Global Security Foundation (NPSGlobal), Polish Institute of International Affairs (PISM), Stanley Foundation, the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) in Vienna, VERTIC, and the Vienna Center for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP).

³ The list of participants is available online at: <http://www.stimson.org/unscr-1540-civil-society-forum-opportunities-for-engagement>. Representatives of five Member States attended the Forum as observers. Participants reflected a broad geographical diversity and included representatives from Asia, North Africa and Southern Africa, Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas.

- Enlist the support of civil society in identifying effective practices of Member States' implementation of Resolution 1540 and discuss ways and means for potential contribution of civil society groups in this area as well as opportunities for collaboration;
- Discuss needs and available resources for the development of educational and training materials on implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) (including online or computer-based self-assessment tools) as well as opportunities to integrate such training into the current curricula of relevant organizations.

2. **Background**

The Civil Society Forum stemmed from the special session on *Resolution 1540: At a Crossroads* which was organized at the UN Headquarters during the 2009 Comprehensive Review of the status of implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) and involved representatives of civil society. The 2009 meeting and subsequent meetings and reports emphasized an important role for civil society in strengthening WMD non-proliferation norms and in identifying effective practices to be used by States in implementing resolution 1540 (2004).

3. **Highlights**

The *UNSCR 1540 Civil Society Forum - Opportunities for Engagement* clearly conveyed the message that the civil society organizations in attendance were willing to contribute to Member States' efforts on implementing resolution 1540 (2004), and use this event as a stepping stone toward developing specific collaborative projects in the spirit of the resolution. The opening session featured a video message from Ms. Angela Kane, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, who conveyed a message from the Secretary-General to the Forum participants⁴. Recalling civil society's contributions to the activities of the United Nations including in disarmament, human rights, development, and many other critical areas, the Secretary-General stated that "*I have no doubt that the positive impact of civil society will move the world closer to meeting the objectives of resolution 1540 and a world without weapons of mass destruction*".

At the forum conclusion, the Steering Committee of the Civil Society Forum delivered a summary statement (agreed upon by all participants) which included suggestions for further activities in the areas of networking and information exchange and strengthening the interaction and regular dialogue among interested civil society entities. While the implementation of the key requirements of resolution 1540 (2004) is the responsibility of governments, the Steering Committee of the Civil Society Forum emphasized that civil society groups and organizations should continue to seek cooperation and interaction with national governments in order to promote the effective national implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). The Steering Committee of the Civil Society Forum will post its final report on this event at: <http://www.stimson.org/unscr-1540-civil-society-forum-opportunities-for-engagement>

4. **Additional comments**

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

⁴ Video message to the Forum from Ms. Angela Kane, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, available online at: <http://www.un.org/disarmament/update/20130108/>