

Information Note¹

- Event:** Workshop on the International Responses and Mitigation of a terrorist attack using nuclear and radiological weapons or materials
- Organizers:** United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), its Working Group on Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
- Date and Venue:** 29 to 31 March 2010, Vienna, Austria
- Participants:** CITITF members and participants comprising experts from 1540 Committee, DPI, DSS, IMO, Interpol, UNICRI, UNODA, UNODC, OPCW and IAEA staff from the Office of External Relations and Policy Coordination, Office of Legal Affairs, Department of Management and Department of Nuclear Safety and Security.

1. Objectives

- a) To facilitate an exchange of information and a better understanding of the plans and capabilities, and the cooperation arrangements, already in place by the relevant international organizations and UN entities in response to, and mitigation of, a terrorist attack using WMD or related materials.
- b) For the 1540 Expert to make a presentation on the legal frameworks on the nature of resolution 1540 (2004) in relationship to non-proliferation instruments, and to enhance the cooperation with the IAEA to be ready for any attack with WMD or related materials.

2. Background

The workshop took place in the context of international recognition that the threat of nuclear terrorism requires dedicated action by the international community, a point that was mentioned in all the opening statements and stressed by the 1540 Committee presentation, for the reason that resolution 1540 (2004) was adopted in 2004 as a binding instrument applicable also to threats from the use of nuclear, chemical and biological materials for terrorist purposes.²

The workshop addressed the international response and cooperation among the different agencies for responding to a radiation, and /or nuclear emergency, safety and security.³

3. Highlights

The adoption of UNSC resolution 1540 (2004) was featured among six legal instruments put in place by the international community as a response to the threat of nuclear proliferation and illicit use of related material for terrorist purposes. The list included the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear

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Material (CPPNM); the Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, the Code of Conduct for the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources; the system of Comprehensive Safeguards as agreements with improved verification mechanisms to strengthen nuclear security; and the various legal instruments for nuclear safety having built-in synergies with nuclear security instruments. The presentation of the 1540 expert focused on the nexus between WMD, their means of delivery, related materials and non-state actors, in particular terrorist, to deter them from having access to and/or being involved in illicit trafficking of such items.

Resolution 1540 (2004) established a barrier to prevent proliferation and consequently terrorist attacks with WMD by requiring States to adopt and enforce appropriate laws which prohibit any non State actors from engaging in activities listed in the resolution, as well as to adopt and enforce effective measures to establish domestic controls to prevent those activities, including measures to protect and secure those items, export and border control and the appropriate legislation and administrative provisions.

Participants of the WMD Working Group made presentations on their organizations' role in the event of a terrorist attack.

The IAEA experts gave an extensive presentation on the IAEA Nuclear Security Plan, the Radiological and Nuclear Emergency System and the Agency's Emergency and Incident Center. Participants recognized the need to obtain more information from member States on the internal national actions that could be taken to mitigate an accident of terrorist attack. Effective response by the national focal point to the IAEA's efforts was considered essential in this regards.

The Working Group acknowledged the efficiency of the Agency's mechanism for responding to a radiation and/or nuclear emergency, and it was agreed that there is no need to develop an additional plan as long as the existing procedures were found adequate.

4. Next steps

The summary of the proceedings of the Working Group were subsequently circulated by the Representative of the Director General of the IAEA to the UN, together with a questionnaire on how each entity would respond to a situation of nuclear terrorism, and a report was prepared for the CTITF's briefing to the General Assembly and for publication as a topic relevant to the implementation of the UN global counter-terrorism strategy.

5. Additional comments

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