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The Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations presents its compliments to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) has the honour to refer to the “UNSCR 1540 (2004) Workshop for ASEAN States” which was co-organised by the Royal Thai Government and the UNODA between 21-22 September 2022 in Bangkok, Thailand with financial contributions from the Government of Japan.

In this regard, the Permanent Mission has further the honour to request the Committee to share the After Action Report of the said Workshop which is enclosed herewith on the Committee’s website under the section “Experiences Shared, Lessons Learned, and Effective Practices” for the interests of other Member States and regional organizations as well as the general public.

The Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004) the assurances of its highest consideration.

Permanent Mission of Thailand to the United Nations,
New York. *Thant*
22 November B.E. 2565 (2022)



Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004),
NEW YORK.

UNSCR 1540 (2004)
WORKSHOP FOR ASEAN
STATES

21-22 September 2022 (Bangkok, Thailand)

After Action Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Government of the Kingdom of Thailand, in cooperation with the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA), with the financial support provided by the Government of Japan, hosted an event entitled 'UNSCR 1540 (2004) Workshop for ASEAN States' in Bangkok, Thailand, from 21-22 September 2022. This event secured the participation of representatives from all 10 ASEAN States; 7 international and/or regional organisations; 3 donor States; and 3 United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs' staff.

The workshop met its objectives of: (1) strengthening the 1540 Point of Contact network throughout ASEAN; (2) enhancing the understanding of resolution 1540; (3) gaining insight into the 1540-related challenges in the sub-region; and, finally, (4) building capacity to enhance external coordination on 1540 implementation.

This Report summarizes the event's most salient event-related activities, discussion points, and conclusions.

EVENT OVERVIEW

Event Name	UNSCR 1540 (2004) Workshop for ASEAN States
Date	21-22 September 2022
Duration	2 days
Location	United Nations Conference Centre, ESCAP, Bangkok, Thailand
Planning Team	Ms. Amanda Cowl (ODA 1540 Regional Coordinator for Asia), and Mr. Aaron Junhoung Yoo (Deputy Director, UNRCPD)
No. of Participants	39 (14 ASEAN representatives; 7 IROs representatives; 15 representatives from 3 donor countries; 3 ODA staff)
Manager	Mr. Ismail Balla

SUMMARY

Objective 1: Contribute to strengthening the network of 1540 Points of Contact (PoC) throughout ASEAN States.

Activities:

- Lecture session entitled 'Key Players – 1540 Points of Contact' (Session 3)
- Dissemination of publication entitled '1540 Points of Contact (POCs): An Under-utilized Resource'

Outcome: ASEAN State representatives intensified their working relationships with neighbouring States, exchanging contact information, and sharing experiences in an ambience of camaraderie and transparency. States called on the United Nations to help maintain the momentum created on 1540 implementation and to help secure buy-in at the higher echelons of government. Discussions revolved around the benefits of assigning PoC duties to a person or to a desk.

State feedback (observations and/or recommendations):

- Maintain the momentum created among ASEAN States on 1540-related issues by not only sustaining their contact directly with ODA's 1540 Regional Coordinator for Asia, but also amongst each other.
- A call was made for guidance in fulfilling the role of 1540 PoC. The States expressed understanding, as pointed out by ODA, that the duties and responsibilities of the PoC are not prescribed and are up to the Member State to decide. However, the States further expressed that a 'guidance document' that can inform the State on what they should consider when making such a decision would be useful. ODA shared the Stimson Centre Survey of 1540 National POCs (Stimson_1540PoCsFINALJune27.pdf). States requested the updating of this publication now that ODA's 1540 RC is in place and can secure timely feedback by States to contribute to this publication.
- States voiced that it would be of great benefit if the 1540 Committee could consider delivering awareness-raising sessions to the Permanent Missions to the United Nations in NY on UNSCR 1540, in particular on the importance of submitting 1540 National Reports, their overall purpose and their utility. ODA recommended States to submit a request for these awareness-raising sessions directly to the 1540 Committee.
- ODA urged States to share their experiences and make use of the section on the 1540 Committee entitled "Experience shared, lesson learned and effective practices", which is unfortunately outdated and under-utilized, save some up-to-date documentation on recent peer reviews. This website section can be accessed at the following link:
<https://www.un.org/en/sc/1540/assistance/experience-shared-lessons-learned-and-effective-practices.shtml>

- It was suggested that it could be useful to create a channel or group of 1540 POC Alumni in-country so that newly-appointed POCs do not have to start from Ground Zero each time. There is so much expertise and institutional memory at Capital and at the PMs that gets lost when these persons move on to other positions. States should be capitalizing on this accumulated experience and offer a mechanism to share it internally with newcomers. Newcomers should be able to call on the more seasoned officials who have since moved on in an informal manner to learn from them.
- Buy-in is needed at the highest level of government to allow the 1540 PoCs to do their job effectively and invest time into their tasks. States stressed that it would be a good idea to conduct workshops such as these at capitals throughout ASEAN States to garner momentum and put (and keep) the topic on the agenda of governments across the sub-region.
- With respect to 1540 National Reports, States suggested that it is not enough to issue a note verbale to the PM to the UN in NY, because there are so many competing priorities and reports to prepare. This would go a long way to motivate States to comply with submitting their National Reports.
- ODA urged States to voice these suggestions at the First Committee or other high-level UN fora so that these matters may be considered by the 1540 Committee and incorporated into its Comprehensive Review.

Lessons-learned for Future Action (administrative matters):

- ODA's 1540 Regional Coordinator for Asia prepared the draft invitations specifically requesting that the "participating Government nominate one representative dealing with the national implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), preferably the country's official 1540 Point of Contact, to participate in the two-day workshop", however perhaps this language should have been more direct, seeing as only 4 countries nominated their respective 1540 PoCs.

Objective 2: Enhance understanding of UNSCR 1540.

Activities:

- Lecture session entitled 'Resolution 1540 (2004) and Successor Resolutions' (Session I)
- Dissemination of UNSCR 1540 (2004) at workshop
- Question & Answer period

Outcome: Participants increased their understanding of the provisions found in UNSCR 1540 as a result of the 1540 introductory presentation. This presentation included a background to the genesis of the resolution; its key obligations, provisions and structure; as well as a brief summary of the 2021-22 Comprehensive Review. States took avid notes and studied paper-copy version of the resolution during and after the session demonstrating their eagerness to learn and understand in-depth the implications of each of the provisions.

State feedback (observations and/or recommendations):

- States stressed the fact that to date they cannot always access quality training or awareness-raising on non-proliferation-related issues as a result of limited budgets. States expressed their gratitude at the sponsored nature of the present workshop by the Government of Japan.

Lessons-learned for Future Action (administration):

- Upon registration by nominated participants, ODA sent a link to its online course entitled 'Resolution 1540 (2004) Training Course' available at <https://www.disarmamenteducation.org/index.php?go=education&do=training-1540> encouraging all attendees to take the course prior to initiation of the workshop. This pre-event preparation contributed to more in-depth discussions during the workshop given that participants were acquainted with the provisions found in UNSCR 1540.

Objective 3: Gain insight into the challenges of implementing UNSCR 1540.

Activities:

- Lecture session entitled 'Status of 1540 Implementation (globally and regionally) (Session 2)
- Study session dedicated to understanding, analyzing and updating each individual country's 1540 National Report/matrix (Session 2)
- Formal feedback sessions by States entitled 'Sharing Experiences – National Perspectives' (Session 5 & 6)

Outcome: ASEAN State representatives shared their experience and expertise related to 1540 implementation over the two-days of the workshop in a collaborative and transparent manner. Many suggestions and recommendations were shared and commented on by other States and IROs, including the fact that there is oftentimes an over-emphasis on trainings when equipment is just as important so that – for instance - customs officials can interdict items at entry and exit points.

State feedback (observations and/or recommendations):

- Challenges for PoCs:
 - high turnover rate
 - lack of induction into the realm of non-proliferation prevention in general
 - lack of human resource capacity and expertise in-house at capital
 - no training offered / unaware of training opportunities
 - no hand-over files prepared by former PoCs
 - often overburdened with other files (NPT, CWC, BWC, etc.) whereby 1540 is just another duty and competing priority on their list of responsibilities.

Objective 4: Build the requisite capacities to enhance internal and external coordination on 1540 implementation.

Activities:

- Lecture sessions entitled:
 - Working session entitled 'Breakout Groups on Coordination Mechanisms' and dissemination of guiding questions to encourage reflection and dialogue (Session 6)
 - Formal feedback by States session entitled 'Feedback/presentations on coordination mechanisms' (Session 7)
 - 'Peer reviews' (Session 8)
 - 'Improving external 1540 coordination and 1540 matchmaking mechanism' and dynamic round of questions on '1540 requests and offers of assistance' (Session 9)
 - 'Available assistance from International and Regional Organizations' (Session 10)
- Question & Answer period (Sessions 7 and 10)
- Drafting session on how to fill out 1540 'requests for assistance' (Session 9)

Outcome: It was jointly agreed that strong internal 1540 coordination is a predecessor to strong external coordination. ASEAN States need to have access to training on all things 1540-related from the operational to the political level. They need to be made aware of the opportunities to strengthen their implementation of the resolution and tap into the expertise already present in the region.

State feedback (observations and/or recommendations):

- The issue of control over CBN has been in the States radar for many years now, but the importance of UNSCR 1540 is relatively new to some States in the ASEAN region.
- Some ASEAN States are faced with the additional challenge of having numerous islands within its territory making it a haven for proliferators and impeding their monitoring and control. It is very difficult to instill standardized procedures throughout all these islands.
- Oftentimes CBN themes operate in silos, whereby a different authority is responsible for chemical, another for biological and yet another for nuclear. These entities must coordinate better.
- Many countries are still at the stage of increasing their knowledge of the resolution and on its importance and how it can be practically implemented. ASEAN States need to sit all the stakeholders at the same table to talk. This discussion cannot be limited to government officials, but must include industry and academia. It was suggested that ODA could play the role of convener to bring all relevant entities together and support discussions on 1540 implementation.
- States further noted the need to continue to participate in conferences, meetings and workshops to communicate with other POCs, especially from other ASEAN States, to share best practices and learn from each other on both capacity building activities and also share technical expertise.

- Many States agreed that State focus is more often than not on addressing the pressing threats to the country posed by WMD regardless of whether this threat comes from State actors or non-State actors, despite the fact that they know that 1540 focuses only on NSAs.
- Concerns expressed concern over – primarily - emerging technologies and to somewhat lesser degree over proliferation financing.
- States agreed that additional efforts are needed on engaging with industry and to cooperate more effectively.
- States stressed the importance of reviewing Trade Acts and amending them based on a concerted analysis of their effectiveness.
- In order to drive momentum in countries, efforts need to be streamlined involving all relevant agencies and players (all the different ministries, industry, the police, customs, maritime security, etc.).
- The sharing of experience or expertise must be done across the board, not just from one diplomat to another. There is a need for field-based sharing of information between, for example, customs officials. States recommended having customs officials from other countries coordinate amongst themselves in a systematic manner. Customs officials speak the same language despite being from different countries. They need to share experiences with each other.
- All States very much appreciate training opportunities and seminars offered by IROs. Countries are eager to learn, develop and improve, and to receive relevant interdiction equipment, but sometimes the connections are not made and opportunities are lost.
- States need IROs to coordinate better amongst each other to facilitate the delivery of assistance and avoid competing with each other.
- It was noted that the regional dynamics of Southeast Asia are very unpredictable and could even be volatile at this stage. Nevertheless, the ASEAN region has platforms in place to improve cooperation and a call was made to make use of these to communicate amongst each other.
- Long-term investment is needed to strengthen 1540 implementation in the region one-off activities. All States welcomed the appointment of ODA's 1540 Regional Coordinator for Asia.
- Focus should be on ASEAN States' trade realities and commodities and not just copy-pasting the control lists of the EU or the US. States stressed that customs officers must be made aware of this focused list so that sensitive dual-use commodities can be identified right away.

Outreach Activities

- The Government of Thailand published a press release on the 1540 workshop on its official website acknowledging the usefulness of the workshop and the support provided by the Government of Japan (Thailand and UNODA co-organised "[UNSCR 1540 \(2004\) Workshop for ASEAN States](#)" - กระทรวงการต่างประเทศ (mfa.go.th))
- ODA published a spotlight article ([Press Releases – UNODA](#)).
- UNRCPD posted a link to the event on its Twitter account (<https://twitter.com/UNRCPD/status/1576825183003766784>)

Conclusion

The workshop met each of its goals and served as a launching pad to generate momentum in the strengthening of UNSCR 1540 implementation throughout the ASEAN. The plentiful and useful feedback provided by States will contribute to the strategic planning and undertaking of activities by ODA and its partners to support 1540 implementation in the future throughout ASEAN. The logistical support provided by the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand in its role as host to the event and the financial contribution made by the Government of Japan were essential in bringing this workshop to fruition.