Remarks at the side event on *"Initiatives to drive a biosecurity, bio-threat reduction and infrastructure development agenda in the wake of the West Africa Ebola outbreak",*
Open Consultations on UNSCR 1540 Comprehensive Review, 22 June 2016

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Resolution 1540 was adopted in 2004 by the Security Council under Chapter VII of the UN Charter which gives the Council the authority to deal with threats to international peace and security. Resolution 1540 established obligations for all Member States to develop and enforce appropriate legal and regulatory measures against the proliferation of chemical, biological, nuclear weapons, and their means of delivery, and ensure the security of related materials, to prevent their falling into the terrorists', criminals,' and other non-state actors' hands.

The proliferation of WMDs and the possibility of terrorists using chemical, biological, or radiological materials constitute significant threats to human security. In particular, disease threats (to individuals and populations) connect public health with the human security concept. Both the state-centric traditional paradigm of national security and the individual-centric concept of human security illustrate the political importance of public health. Moreover, many countries see their public health capabilities as critical national security assets should responses to biological incidents, whether natural, accidental or deliberate, be required.

In the 21st century, diseases emerged as such critical and pervasive threats to both human health and security, that they became a concern for the UN Security Council. Resolutions adopted by the Council effectively deemed the HIV/AIDS epidemic and the Ebola outbreak as threats to international peace and security.

Complementarily, WHO Constitution emphasizes that the "*health of all peoples is fundamental to the attainment of peace* and *security and is dependent upon the fullest co-operation of individuals and States*".

Such "fullest co-operation" is also required for the effective implementation of Resolution 1540 globally, in particular with regard to biosecurity. The 2009 comprehensive review of 1540 implementation and the background materials provided by the Group of Experts for this year's review show that while States continue to take additional steps to implement their obligations in this area, biosecurity remains an area in which States have adopted fewer measures, and thus is effectively the "Cinderella" of national implementation.

While the Ebola virus itself would be difficult to weaponize for a deliberate mass casualty attack, in general the nexus of weak public health infrastructures, presence of terrorism, and outbreaks of any high impact disease, are of great international concern. The security of biological materials whether in facilities or during transportation cannot be overlooked or built from the ground up during an outbreak. Looking at the Ebola outbreak through the historical lens, with the Japanese cult Aum Shinrikyo (infamous for releasing sarin gas in a Tokyo subway in 1995) that also sought to acquire Ebola, combined with recent media reports of African clinics being looted or samples being stolen while in transport, and terrorist groups actively recruiting in certain African universities, all raise concerns with regard to the potential of terrorists getting access to biological agents otherwise under lock and key in maximum containment research facilities.

Measures ensuring pathogens' physical security and accountability, and personnel access control measures, are all among the biosecurity practices consistent with obligations set forth by Resolution 1540. In a Global Partnership statement in 2009, it was said that "*The human factor is a key element in any effective non-*

proliferation policy". Similarly, the human factor is a key element in biosecurity as the individuals with access to biological agents should be reliable, suitable, and trustworthy in that they don't pose an insider threat. Yet, globally, less than 40% of States have met the obligations of Resolution 1540 to secure BW-related materials in facilities or in transport, and only about 30% of States have personnel reliability measures in place.

So where do we go from here?

The political will and commitment of the African Union to advance the full and effective implementation of the resolution and supporting Member States' efforts towards this end is commendable. The AU Working Paper submitted to this forum calls for "*enhancing synergies between UNSCR 1540 and the multilateral regimes*". I would go a step further and call for identification of synergies and convergence between the obligations set forth by Resolution 1540, BWC, and the WHO IHRs/OIE PVS, as well as actively seeking assistance, as needed, for capacity building under these international instruments in order to strengthen the African States' capabilities to deal with natural, accidental or deliberate disease threats.

We've seen progress in the past two years, as illustrated by the five National Implementation Action Plans submitted to the 1540 Committee, and support provided to States by the UN Regional Center for Peace and Disarmament in Africa.

Also, I could not agree more with the AU statement that "*there is a critical need to invest in sensitizing and educating policy-makers and stakeholders on the basic characteristics and current threats posed by WMD and related security and terrorism risks*". I would say that such education should also be offered to those working in academia and life sciences research, to sustain a culture of biosecurity, biosafety, and responsible conduct, to build on individual and collective responsibility, and to reinforce the biological risk management framework of laws, regulations, and policies.

Civil society, academia, and industry, have already demonstrated in many ways that they are important partners of governments and the 1540 Committee in strengthening the global implementation of resolution 1540, including by promoting educational initiatives, model legislation (VERTIC), and contributing to the development of National Implementation Action Plans (in Malawi). Only by working together we will effectively address the challenges of WMD proliferation, strengthen effective instruments of science & technology governance, and build a culture of responsibility, while promoting social and economic opportunity and ensuring international peace and security.

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