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## IPU Statement

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Committee on Peace and  
International Security

Comprehensive Review of the  
Status of Implementation of  
Resolution 1540  
20-22 June 2016

Chairperson,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is a real pleasure to be with you at the comprehensive review of the status of implementation of resolution 1540. I am here today to represent the Inter-Parliamentary Union, the world organization of parliaments. In today's world, it is hard to think of a more substantial problem than the one that this resolution addresses.

In recent years, terrorists throughout the world have been engaged in alarmingly high levels of extreme violence. The variety of methods that these groups and their supporters have used is no less concerning. To appreciate the real danger that terrorism poses, one only needs to look at the inroads that Al-Qaida, Daesh or Boko Haram have recently made into some countries. Let's be honest. The consequences of these already heinous acts would be significantly greater if terrorists acquired nuclear, chemical or biological weapons of mass destruction. It is becoming increasingly clear that the world must be prevented at all costs from being taken by surprise by an attack using one of these types of WMDs. And indeed, as long as there are no adequate, effective controls or legislation in place, then no continent, no State, no nation, race or religion is immune from the threat of WMDs being used by non-State actors.

Resolution 1540 calls on States to prevent non-State actors – including terrorist groups – from gaining access to nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. In my view, this resolution is even more important today than when it was adopted 12 years ago. That is why we must raise its public profile as much as possible. As a member of parliament, I can assure you that the "problem" with security-related matters is that they are particularly difficult to tackle, unless they begin to pose a direct threat to a State. Citizens often engage more easily with challenges such as climate change, unemployment, the national debt, a natural disaster or a health crisis. Such events appear more tangible, until a specific security threat arises. This threat is now clear, and so we must take action.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to draw your attention to the important legislative aspect of resolution 1540, which calls on the UN Members States to adopt and enforce appropriate and effective laws. I need hardly highlight the crucial role that we play on this subject as legislators. As parliamentarians, we must ultimately take on the major responsibility of establishing the best legal framework that will both maintain and improve the security of our citizens. The implementation of Security Council resolutions such as resolution 1540 is a good way of achieving that.

However, the successful implementation of this resolution depends to a large degree on the extent to which politicians are aware of the existence of WMDs in their country or region, and on the risks of non-State actors acquiring such weapons. That said, if we are to successfully implement the resolution, we must make a concerted and sustained effort to ensure that everyone understands the urgency of the situation, and receives the information that they need.

As a starting point, the Inter-Parliamentary Union first held a general briefing for parliamentarians in October 2013 on the occasion of its 129<sup>th</sup> Assembly. One of the clear findings from that briefing was that there is very little awareness among parliamentarians of Resolution 1540, and that targeted action was needed at both national and regional levels. Further to extensive consultations between the IPU and the United Nations, this led to the convening of a first regional parliamentary seminar for Africa, in February of this year. The seminar was run in cooperation with the National Assembly of Côte d'Ivoire and with financial support from the UN Office for Disarmament Affairs. It provided the first ever opportunity for parliamentarians from the same continent to meet in order to address the complex problems and challenges of this resolution. On a more practical level, the seminar allowed good practices to be identified to ensure that the resolution can be effectively implemented in Africa. I am sure that they could also be applied in other regions. Those good practices constitute the IPU's contribution to the current official public consultations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In general, the mandates and prerogatives that we are given as parliamentarians make us ideally placed to support the reduction of WMD proliferation and to prevent the acquisition of WMDs by non-State actors. It therefore follows that that action we take should include:

- 1) Developing suitable legislative frameworks, including by drafting the strictest possible specific laws and strengthening verification regimes;
- 2) Monitoring the policies and actions of our governments to ensure that the legislative framework and related laws are effectively implemented, and that their impact is assessed;
- 3) Allocating adequate funds to, among others, counter-proliferation policies, various control measures, the surveillance of borders and sensitive facilities, and to research;
- 4) Raising public awareness about the benefits and risks of implementing – or failing to implement – the resolution;

In addition to our work that flows from these general parliamentary prerogatives, we can also take more specific action. My African colleagues agreed on the following actions:

First, we recommend that parliaments and governments should work as a team so as to be more effective and to successfully establish the framework needed to implement resolution 1540. This recommendation is also aimed at the various organizations responsible for promoting the resolution's implementation and calls on them not to ignore parliaments.

Second, interested MPs should regroup by meeting either within existing committees or as part of a specialized cross-party group. A parliamentary focal point should be identified to sustain interest and information flow on the subject. These focal points could then meet as a specific network; they could act as a parliamentary “1540 lobby” and enable information, experiences and good practices to be exchanged.

Third, parliamentarians need to become more aware of the content of resolution 1540. In light of the resurgence of different types of terrorism, they should be better informed about the resolution's different aspects and the current importance of implementing it effectively.

Fourth, certain technical tools could undoubtedly help parliamentarians in their work. Those tools could include a practical handbook drafted for legislators and a database of legislative action. That would enable the resolution to be implemented more effectively. It would also allow better monitoring of the way in which the texts are being applied.

Finally, parliamentarians should tackle the root causes of terrorism in their role as representatives of the people who are aware of the problems that their fellow citizens face. This is vital if we want to stop terrorism from spreading and continuing to attract new recruits.

Ladies and gentlemen, these are just some of the approaches that parliamentarians can take as part of the implementation of resolution 1540. Naturally, the IPU stands ready to lend support that will enable stronger parliamentary action to be taken.

Let me conclude my remarks by reiterating that parliamentarians and the IPU believe that the implementation of resolution 1540 is essential. We want to be closely associated with it.

Thank you for your attention.