

Greetings by High Commissioner Hogan Rufelds to Participants at PGA Workshop:
“Implementation of BTWC & UNSCR 1540”
Trinidad & Tobago, 29-30 Apr 19

Protocols

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Good Morning

- I would like to begin by thanking Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) for facilitating this initiative to promote universality and national implementation of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) and the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540 here in Port of Spain Trinidad & Tobago. A special thank you to you all for taking time out of your busy schedules to be here today. Your presence is testament to importance with which you regard this workshop.
- Your attendance is key to developing strong national legislation globally to help carry out effective and efficient implementation of treaties and international instruments, such as the BTWC and UNSCR 1540.
- Canada is particularly pleased to see Haiti also represented with us today. I want to assure you of Canada's continued support as you encourage the National Assembly to move forward with ratification of the Biological Weapons Convention, thereby ensuring full CARICOM participation in this vital international treaty
- I will repeat these words in French:
 - *Le Canada est particulièrement heureux de voir Haïti également représenté avec nous aujourd'hui et je tiens à vous assurer du soutien continu du Canada en cherchant à convaincre vos collègues de l'Assemblée nationale d'aller de l'avant avec la ratification de la Convention sur les armes biologiques, la pleine participation de la CARICOM à ce traité international vital*
- The government of Canada has very close and longstanding relations with CARICOM member states and is pleased to be a strong supporter of the region in a number of different areas, including support for the CARICOM Coordinator position and supporting the work of the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA) headquartered here in Trinidad and Tobago. The BioHazard Lab housed here at CARPHA, funded in part by Canada's Anti-Crime Capacity Building Programme, continues to do vital work in the Caribbean region.
- The Government of Canada, through its Weapons Threat Reduction Program (Global Partnership Program), is very pleased to support this event with PGA.
- This collaboration represents an important area of cooperation which strives to advance the universalization and implementation of the 1972 BTWC, the first

multilateral disarmament treaty banning the production of an entire category of weapons, and advance the implementation of UNSCR 1540, which Canada has also strongly supported since its initiation in 2004. Success in this area can be an effective means to help prevent terrorists and states associated with proliferation from acquiring or developing biological weapons

- This Workshop demonstrates Canada's commitment to fulfilling its obligations to "expand Canadian diplomacy and leadership on global issues" and it compliments Canada's chairmanship last year of the Global Partnership (GP)'s Biological Security Working Group and the GP's Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Working Group, and as well as Canada's recent chairmanship to the G7 and GP Presidencies.
- This commitment serves to solidify Canada's candidacy for a UN Security Council seat in 2020. Canada has always played an active role since the UN's inception because we know that working with our partners is essential. We are seeking a seat at the UN Security Council because Canada can make a real difference on the world stage.
- PGA saw the need for this Workshop given the close relations between UNSCR 1540 and the BTWC. PGA felt that both treaties could benefit from the same methodology used in PGA's global mobilization of its membership.
- In addition, preamble paragraph 18 and operative paragraph 29 of UNSCR 2325 (2016) specifically highlight the importance of Parliamentarians and civil society in the implementation of UNSCR 1540. Operative Paragraph 8 of UNSCR 1540 itself also calls on all UN Member States to seek universality and full implementation of certain treaties, including the BTWC.
- I am pleased to see so many high level Parliamentarians present here today including 5 Speakers of the House and 1 President of the Senate from neighbouring countries in the region. I am especially delighted to see many prominent women parliamentarians in the audience today. Canada views women's empowerment and full participation in leadership and decision-making processes as fundamental elements of democratic societies that are genuinely inclusive, representative, and sustainable.
- This is a national priority for Canada and Canadians to fully engage women in all programming and particularly in this work of non-proliferation.
- Parliamentarians represent a key constituency in the global campaign to strengthen these two treaties, as they have considerable influence in deciding whether and when a country will join the BTWC and what resources will be devoted by their countries to meeting obligations under the BTWC and UNSCR 1540.

- PGA is therefore implementing a Global Parliamentary Campaign to promote universality and national implementation of the BTWC and UNSCR 1540.
- The BTWC campaign was launched in December 2015 and has achieved a number of notable successes in the past 24 months in Africa, Latin America and Asia. However, 17 States worldwide remain as Non-States Parties to the Convention. PGA will conscientiously engage with Members of Parliament (MPs) and other Government decision-makers in 13 of these 17 States, to encourage and support their accession to or ratification of the Convention.
- Concerning UNSCR 1540, while many UN Member States have taken important steps to give effect to their obligations, implementation worldwide remains less than adequate. A large majority of UN Member States have submitted National Reports to the UNSCR 1540 Committee only once or infrequently, necessitating the submission of new reports containing updated information on what steps these States have taken to implement their obligations under UNSCR 1540.
- Meeting this reporting requirement, and submitting updated reports, has become even more important in light of troubling new efforts by Non State Actors (NSA) to acquire WMD capacity during the last several years. In this regard, this Project supports PGA with work in a number of key Caribbean countries to take adequate steps to implement UNSCR 1540 within their respective domestic legislation.
- Many Caribbean countries face enormous challenges at the present moment, dealing with Small Arms-Light Weapons (SALW) and organized crime priorities, so addressing threats posed by proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs) seems noble but not essential.
- However securing laboratories, regulating potential dual-use commodities while simultaneously addressing SALW and the reality of returning ISIS Jihadist fighters to the Caribbean region are all legitimate 21st century threats.
- Trade efficiency & profitable business and security go hand in hand. As such addressing both the issues together advances both these goals.
- As an example of this Canada's Global Partnership Program has provided significant support biological security, including in this region.
- There is a growing risk that biological weapons may be obtained and used by non-state actors, including terrorist groups. Compared to other weapons of mass destruction, biological weapons can be relatively easy to develop, transfer and conceal.

- Wider membership of the BTWC and UNSCR 1540 will ensure there are fewer places where bioterrorists could work with impunity. Joining the BTWC and meeting UNSCR 1540 obligations are steps all states can take to help reduce the threat of terrorism.
- In closing, I would like to reiterate that under the framework of the Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction, Canada's Global Partnership Program supports a wide range of activities designed to strengthen biological security (biosecurity) and biological safety (biosafety), and to enhance the capacity of partner countries to prevent, detect and respond to biological threats, whether naturally-occurring, accidental or deliberately caused (i.e. bioterrorism), including in this region.
- I hope that is Workshop is fruitful, and I hope you take this opportunity to share best practices and strategies in your deliberations with your counterparts.
- Thank you.