



Regional Africa Parliamentary Workshop
to
Promote Universality and Implementation of the Biological Weapons
Convention

&

Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004)

Dar es Salaam | September 17-18, 2018

FOR HONOURABLE MINISTER HUSSEIN MWINYI
MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND NATIONAL SERVICE OF TANZANIA

Mr Speaker, Speakers, Members of Parliament and Government officials, Ambassadors, Representatives from International Organizations, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a singular honour and pleasure for me to have the opportunity to welcome you all to Tanzania and to this important Workshop.

The fact that you have come from a total of 24 countries across this great Continent of ours speaks very clearly to the importance that your respective Governments and Parliaments attach to the subject matter of this Workshop.

I appreciate your commitment and the time you have taken out of your busy schedules to be with us here in Dar-es-Salaam for the next few days.

May I also briefly commend Parliamentarians for Action, in consultation with its National Group in our own Parliament in Dodoma, for having taken this important initiative.

I understand this is the 3rd occasion in just 5 years that you have organized an important event in our country and we greatly appreciate your sustained commitment in this regard.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

We live in a world that continues to confront all kinds of devastating challenges and threats – poverty, mass starvation, conflict, global warming, political insecurity – to name but a few.

Indeed, it is difficult to conceive of any other time in our history when so many dark shadows cast themselves over our lives to the extent that they do today.

What has been abundantly clear, however, and for quite some time, is that – in order to succeed in effectively tackling these problems – we must work together, in an holistic manner – and with great determination and seriousness of purpose.

And – it must be said – with considerable urgency.

Addressing the threats posed by Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) is no exception to this inescapable reality.

In order to rid the world of these horrifying weapons – or at least to greatly mitigate the likelihood of their usage – no alternative means to achieve this other than all of us working closely together.

If we want international treaties to work, then all countries must sign on and ratify. Not just a few.

And all countries must implement and enforce these same treaties – not just a few.

The same goes for other international frameworks that seek to tackle head-on even the mere possibility that these weapons might one day be used against a general population.

We know what they can do.

No one has forgotten Hiroshima.

No one can forget the images of victims of chemical weapons attacks, past and present – including earlier this year in Syria.

The prospect of a Biological Weapons attack has never been more close than in all of history.

Already we have seen diffused biological weapons terrorist attacks 3 months ago in Germany and France.

Closer to home, and throughout Africa, alarming evidence is emerging that the likes of Boko Haram, Al Shabaab and ISIS are now actively seeking to develop and/or acquire no longer just small arms and light weapons, but also WMD.

We cannot – and must not – stand idly by.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

I am pleased to announce that Tanzania is already a State Party to the primary WMD Disarmament Conventions.

In May this year, I also announced that the Government would transmit the Biological Weapons Convention to Parliament this month for endorsement.

Tanzania signed the Biological Weapons Convention in August 1972.

We must finalize the process and become a full State Party without further delay.

Currently 181 UN Member States worldwide are already party to the Biological Weapons Convention that was adopted in 1972 and entered into force in 1975 with 17 Member States remaining to become full States Parties.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage the 5 other Non-State Parties countries that are represented here today to follow the example we are taking here in Tanzania and embark on the final path to ratification of the BWC in the very near future.

This would indeed be a remarkable legacy of this Workshop.

For many others that are here today that have already joined the BWC, may I encourage you – upon your return home – to initiate a process of review of the adequacy of existing legislation to give effect to the BWC within your respective countries.

Joining a treaty is meaningless – unless it is properly implemented and enforced.

I know that at this Workshop you will also be provided with draft model legislation and sample reports that will greatly assist you in this endeavor with careful explanations always available in follow up communications with the organizers of this event.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Biological Weapons Convention outlaws the use, manufacture, development and stockpiling of Biological Weapons.

Together with the panoply of other international WMD Disarmament Treaties, it is a vital arrow in the quiver of instruments that seek to free our world of such detestable weapons and the threat of their usage.

But it is also important to understand that significant technical and financial assistance and resources are available from the international community to implement this treaty, once we ratify it.

We in Tanzania look forward to avail of this considerable assistance on offer once we have finalized our ratification process of the BWC and also with due regard to Article 10 of the Convention.

Moreover, proper implementation of the BWC, strengthened security arrangements at laboratories, provision of new laboratories to protect supplies, technical training – all of this can be of crucial

importance even in preventing accidental releases of biological agents or bacteria – not just addressing deliberate threats/usage of such weapons.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Another extremely important international framework that you will consider at this Workshop is United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) which puts in place binding obligations on all UN Member States to Prevent the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction to Non State Actors, including terrorist organizations.

Now, most – if not all – of us here today come from countries that do not possess – and certainly never intend to possess – Weapons of Mass Destruction.

At the same time, some of us may have in our laboratories or in our military installations – or we may manufacture certain dual use components – which, if not properly regulated and controlled, can fall into the wrong hands and be used to create WMDs – either at home, or secretly squirreled out of the country for nefarious usage elsewhere.

So, therefore, we must still take this resolution 1540 very seriously indeed.

Tanzania submitted its Report on Implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) back in 2005.

I know that a number of countries represented here today have not yet submitted a report to the UNSCR 1540 Committee on measures they have taken to implement UNSCR 1540 at the national level.

Allow me, therefore, to kindly urge you to encourage your authorities to do so without any further delay.

More generally, it is important, as for the BWC, that we also all properly implement UNSCR 1540 into our national legal orders.

I am pleased to hear that you will receive some practical advise and sample documents on how to proceed on this during the course of this Workshop in the coming days.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

We all know the expression ‘the World waits for No One’

Today – the world cannot also afford to wait for anyone.

So many of the threats that hang over us, even if not all, are undoubtedly man-made.

And so it must fall to humanity to try to undo these terrible threats to our very existence and planet that we have so tragically self-inflicted.

At the conclusion of this Workshop you will adopt a Plan of Action including a number of straight forward steps that we can all take to address the threats posed by Weapons of Mass Destruction,

including ratifying and implementing the Biological Weapons Convention and implementing UNSCR 1540.

I urge each and every one of us to act on this Plan and in every way that is open to us.

We must seize the day – without delay.

Carpe Diem.

Thank you.