

Role of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) and cooperation with the OPCW

Statement at the seminar on “the OPCW’s contribution to security and the non-proliferation of chemical weapons”, 11 and 12 April 2011
OPCW Headquarters, The Hague

First of all, on behalf of the Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF), I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) for its efforts in organizing this important seminar.

In the context of this seminar, I would like to draw specific attention to relevant elements in the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy adopted by the General Assembly by consensus in September 2006. The Strategy was a milestone, since it was the first time that all 192 UN Member States agreed to formulate a comprehensive and collective plan to counter-terrorism. The Strategy specifically cited the danger of WMD and calls upon Member States, the United Nations and specialized agencies and organizations to cooperate to prevent this threat from becoming reality. Under pillar II of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which is measures to prevent and combat terrorism, member States invites the United Nations to improve coordination in planning a response to an attack using nuclear, chemical, biological or radiological weapons or materials so that Member States can receive adequate assistance.

In the Strategy, Member States decided “to encourage the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to continue their efforts, within their respective mandates, in helping States to build capacity to prevent terrorists from accessing nuclear, chemical or radiological materials, to ensure security at related facilities and to respond effectively in the event of an attack using such materials”.

Also in the Strategy, Member States recognized the UN Secretary-General’s initiative of Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF). They welcomed the role of CTITF to ensure coordination and coherence of the UN system-wide counter-terrorism efforts. CTITF thus functions under the framework of the Strategy with a particular focus on supporting Member States’ implementation of the Strategy.

The major role of CTITF is coordination. To us, the value of coordination is mostly achieved through supporting the respective and collective activities of the CTITF participating entities. The added value of Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) is exemplified by the wide-range of expertise and experiences housed within its 31 member entities, OPCW among them. OPCW has been a valuable member of the CTITF since the establishment of the CTITF by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2005, and OPCW has been extremely constructive in the joint efforts of the CTITF in supporting

Member States for the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

The CTITF established a Working Group on Preventing and Responding to Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) attacks, which is co-chaired by Director Krzysztof Patulej on behalf of the OPCW and the Representative of the IAEA to the United Nations. The Working Group is responsible for coordination of the United Nations support for Member States on countering the threat of terrorism with Weapons of Mass Destruction. The Group is recently active in analyzing and discussing the relevant experience of the UN agencies and cooperative organizations, including INTERPOL, in the sphere of response against terrorism with Weapons of Mass Destruction.

The Working Group has produced a report on inter-agency coordination in the event of a nuclear or radiological terrorist attack, launched in September 2010 at the time of the second biennial General Assembly review of the Strategy.

One key goal of this report is to look at the experiences of well-established systems for nuclear and radiological security, with a view to exploring how best to develop similar interagency mechanisms in the context of chemical and biological weapons and materials. This is exactly the project that OPCW will lead the CTITF working group for the next phase on international response

and mitigation of a terrorist use of chemical, biological and toxin weapons or materials.

I would like to take this opportunity to announce that, to implement the project, on 16-17 May 2011 the OPCW will host the workshop “International response and mitigation of a terrorist attack using chemical and biological weapons or materials”. The aim of the workshop in the Hague is to carry out a comprehensive review on how the UN system and international organisations from different disciplines would respond, individually and as a whole, to a terrorist attack where chemical and biological weapons or materials are used, as well as the level of planned coordination among the different entities in the rapid provision of assistance to the effected State or States. We believe that the seminar that is taking place here will contribute to this important project as well.

I also would like to thank the European Commission for its valuable support to the initiatives undertaken by the CTITF working group on preventing and responding to WMD attacks.

Once again, we thank OPCW for its active leadership in the CTITF working group on preventing and responding to WMD attacks, and we thank other CTITF participating entities presented here for your engagement in this initiative. We will continue to count on your partnership on supporting the implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.

I will conclude with the words by the Secretary-General of the United Nations who stated in his letter to the Director-General of the OPCW that “I envisage that the CTITF will enhance its role to contribute to, and support the implementation of the Strategy, particularly in three areas:

- 1) Ensuring overall coordination and coherence in the counter-terrorism effort of the United Nations system;
- 2) Catalyzing system-wide collective initiatives to support Strategy implementation in all its elements;
- 3) Providing an interface with Member-States, relevant regional and international organisations, and civil society regarding the implementation of the Strategy.

The continued active participation of OPCW in the CTITF will be critical to the accomplishment of these objectives”.