



Statement by Ambassador Piragibe Tarragô
Deputy Permanent Representative of Brazil to the United Nations
at the Open Debate of the Security Council on Resolutions 1540 and
1673 (Non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction)
23 February

Mr. President,

Allow me at the outset to congratulate you on your work as President of the Security Council for the month of February as well as on your able Chairmanship of the 1540 Committee.

This open debate on Resolutions 1540 and 1673 is a timely opportunity for Member States to underline their concern that proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, as well as their means of delivery constitutes a threat to international peace and security. Preventing such proliferation, and the horrifying possibility that these weapons one day fall into terrorist hands, requires appropriate action by all Member States.

The risk of proliferation of WMD is one of the nefarious consequences of the very existence of these weapons, whose threat will only be definitively removed by means of their complete, verifiable and irreversible elimination.

Mr. President,

As one of the countries that helped negotiate Resolution 1540 in 2004, Brazil once again underlines that the core of the work of the 1540 Committee should be that of facilitating the provision of technical assistance. The 1540 Committee should therefore be a vehicle for cooperative efforts and for facilitating the provision of technical assistance to strengthen national capacities. The final result of the work of the 1540 Committee should be to provide a comprehensive picture of the efforts being undertaken at national and international levels to respond to the threat posed by non-State actors having access to WMDs.

It is important, however, that the Committee continues to abide by the principle that technical assistance should follow the formal request of a Member State, which is the only one in a position to identify its interests and shortcomings.

In response to specific requests, the Brazilian Government has offered to provide assistance to States in the Latin American and Caribbean region and to other developing countries lacking the legal and/or regulatory infrastructure and implementation experience required to implement the provisions set forth by Resolution 1540. We greatly encourage the continuation of outreach activities, in particular regional seminars like the one held in Lima, Peru, in November 2006, to States from Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to promote greater awareness of the provisions of Resolution 1540.

With regard to the reporting mechanism, we believe the Committee should concentrate in concluding the evaluation of the national reports (the first report) and of additional information (the second report). Countries that have not yet provided that information should be encouraged to do so, as soon as possible. The Committee could establish a date in order for Member States to present a third report, if deemed necessary.

Mr. President,

Before concluding, I wish to refer to a recent decision taken by the 1540 Committee to extend the contracts of five of its experts. Two experts, nationals of permanent members of this Council, had their contracts extended until the end of 2007, with the possibility of a further extension. The contracts of the three others, that are not nationals of permanent members, were extended for shorter periods of time.

No clear explanation was provided for such differential treatment of the experts. Possibly, such treatment had to do with the fact that some are nationals of permanent members and some are not. If that is so, it is our hope that in the future similar decisions by the Committee will afford equal opportunity to experts, irrespective of their nationality.

Thank you.