



STIMSON

1540 Points of Contact (POCs): An Under- Utilized Resource

**FINDINGS FROM THE SURVEY OF POCs CONDUCTED
BY THE STIMSON CENTER**

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Dear Reader,

I am pleased to present to you 1540 Points of Contact (POCs): An Under-Utilized Resource. This analysis continues the Stimson Center's longstanding commitment to global nonproliferation generally and to the full and effective implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) more specifically. It is an important study that highlights the unrealized potential of 1540 Points of Contact around the globe and points to additional avenues of support to Member States' implementation of this critical mission.

For more than a decade, Stimson has worked cooperatively with the 1540 Committee, with Member States, and across civil society to pioneer new approaches and innovative new tools to facilitate implementation of UNSCR 1540. This includes a Government of Canada-funded 1540 Assistance Support Initiative, along with a host of tailored trainings and matchmaking efforts for states seeking implementation support.

I am particularly proud of the work done by my colleagues Seema Gahlut, the principal author of this report, and to Richard Cupitt for his longstanding commitment to effective implementation of the Resolution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Finlay', with a stylized, cursive script.

Brian Finlay
President and CEO
The Stimson Center
Washington DC

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The Stimson Center promotes international security, shared prosperity & justice through applied research and independent analysis, deep engagement, and policy innovation. For three decades, Stimson has been a leading voice on urgent global issues. Founded in the twilight years of the Cold War, the Stimson Center pioneered practical new steps toward stability and security in an uncertain world. Today, as changes in power and technology usher in a challenging new era, Stimson is at the forefront: Engaging new voices, generating innovative ideas and analysis, and building solutions to promote international security, prosperity, and justice.

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The author is particularly grateful to Dr. Richard Cupitt, Ms. Mary Vecellio, and Ms. Laura de Otalvaro for helping make the survey questions clear and precise. Thanks to Dr. Cupitt, Dr. Anupam Srivastava, and UNODA staff for reviewing and providing comments on the drafts. The final draft was shared with a select group of experts from UN Member States, regional organizations, and former 1540 experts, who provided valuable comments and insights, and helped refine the recommendations. Any errors or omissions are those of the author alone.

This report is intended as a data-backed civil society contribution to the dialogue regarding mechanisms that can assist UN Member States in the implementation of UNSC Resolution 1540.

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CONTEXT

Various UNSC Resolutions since 2008 have recommended more international attention on selecting and empowering appropriate national Points of Contact (POCs.) The current system of nominating POCs was based on the need to promote 1540 implementation and enforcement at the domestic level.

However, per the information on the 1540 Committee website, as of August 2020, only 123 UN Member States (MS) had appointed national POCs. Moreover, the roles and responsibilities of 1540 POC have not been defined, or confirmed, by either the Security Council or by the 1540 Committee. The appointed POCs have, nevertheless, continued to perform some functions in the interim. Given the lack of any framework or specifications for establishing the responsibilities of POCs, the full potential of this portfolio is perhaps not being harnessed by the relevant member states. For instance, based on anecdotal research, the roles of national POCs range between functioning as a “Post Office” (forward the requests from external actors to domestic actors and vice versa) or as a “Hub” (coordinating authority for all 1540-related activities in their country), with varying degrees of involvement in-between these two ends of the spectrum.

The 2020 Comprehensive Review of 1540 Implementation is moving forward on a delayed schedule due to COVID-19. This provides an opportunity for civil society to collect and present some data-backed recommendations for defining the roles and responsibilities of the POCs, to harmonize expectations of them at home and abroad, and to empower them so as to optimally contribute to strengthening 1540 implementation.

The Stimson Center, with financial support from UNODA, undertook a survey of 1540 POCs to get data on:

- the tasks they perform (or have performed) to support 1540 implementation
- what support they received to assist them in the tasks they undertook
- what challenges they faced in performing these tasks, and
- if they have any suggestions that would assist future POCs accomplish more.

METHODOLOGY

The survey, conducted via Qualtrics, was anonymous. The only identifiers included were at the regional level (see UN categories [here](#)), gender, location (national capitals or UN Missions), and experience (years in government and years as national POC).

UNSC Resolution 1810 (2008), under OP 5

“...calls upon States and such organizations, if they have not done so previously, to provide the 1540 Committee with a point of contact for assistance by 25 June 2008;”

UNSC Resolution 1977 (2011), under OP 14, “calls upon States and such organizations, if they have not done so previously, to provide the 1540 Committee with a point of contact for assistance by 31 August 2011;”

UNSC Resolution 2325 (2016), under its OP 6, “Encourages all States that have not yet done so to provide the 1540 Committee with a Point of Contact for Resolution 1540 (2004), and urges the Committee to continue to undertake initiatives to strengthen the capacity of such Points of Contact to assist on the implementation of the resolution, upon request of States, including through the continuation on a regional basis of the Committee’s Point of Contact Training Programme;”

The survey questions and answer choices were reviewed multiple times by Stimson and other experts, as was the accompanying note that explained the rationale of the survey. Most of the answer choices could be selected by the click of a button, whether these were Yes/No answers, or required selection of one or more choices from the listed options. We also included open-ended questions where the respondents had the option of typing their suggestions and comments in about 200 words. We translated the survey into Russian, Spanish, Mandarin, and French, to make it more accessible to a wider ambit of respondents.

The survey was distributed to all listed POCs three times between March and June 2021. We also received assistance from regional organizations (OAS, CARICOM, OSCE) and UNODA's regional offices (UNRCPD and UNODA offices in Africa), who reiterated to their member states the importance of responding to the survey. The survey remained open until July 30, 2021.

Total Survey Responses = 34

During the survey period, 123 MS had listed POCs on the 1540 Committee website. Of these, 18 had incomplete information, such as only the name of an official or an office, or only a telephone number. Consequently, we contacted a total of 105 MS, and included all the persons and offices listed. Despite these efforts, we only received a total of 34 survey responses. However, as the responses and the charts below show, the total number of responses recorded for each question do not always add up to 34. This is because some respondents did not provide answers to all the questions, while some selected more than one regional identifier.

UPDATES to the POC List

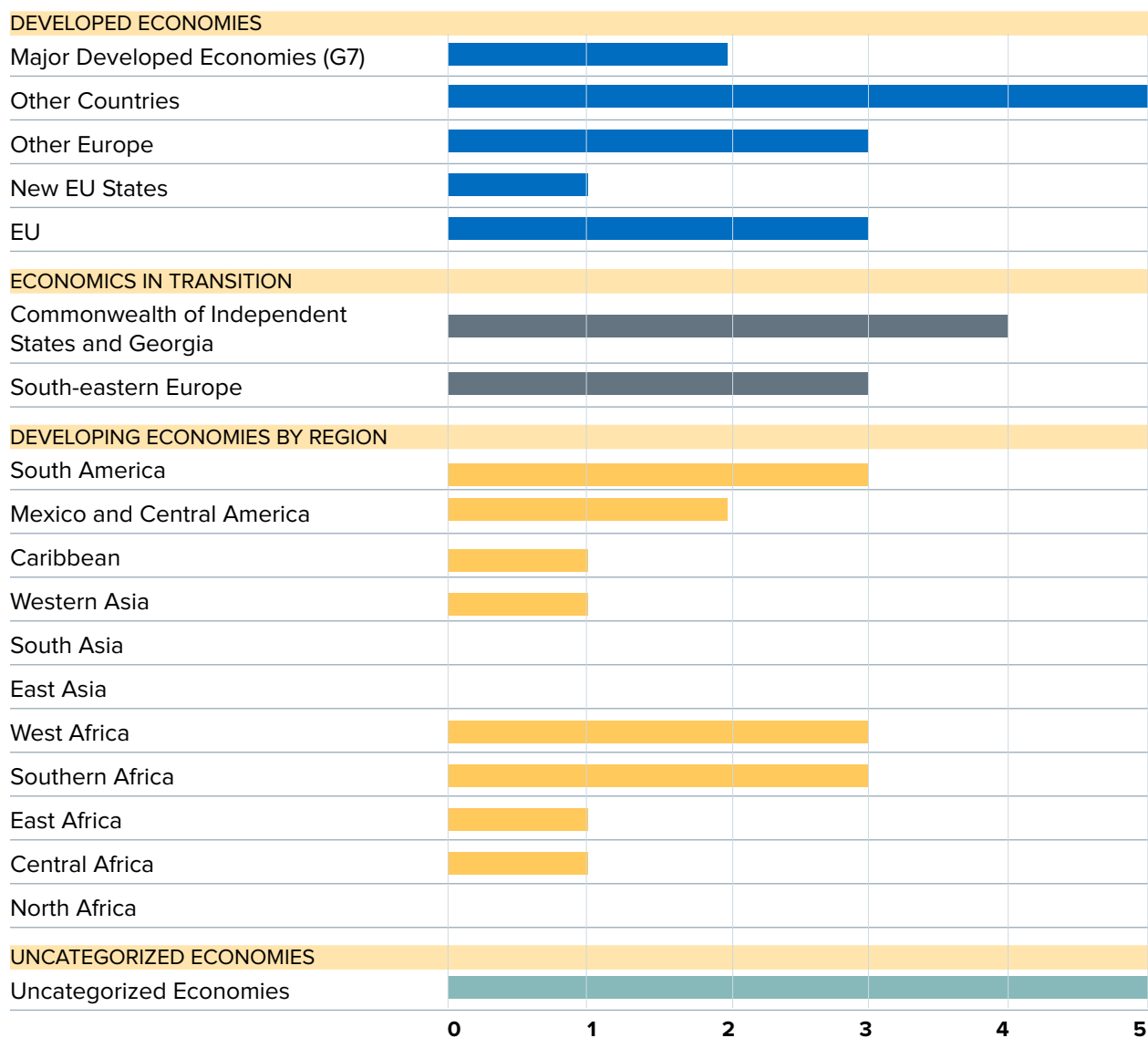
Of the 123 states, whose POC information was available on 1540 website in August 2020, 18 did not list complete contact information, and this included five “donor” states. Some of these gaps were closed in July 2021, when reportedly at the behest of one MS, 35 states updated their contact-information. As of August 2021, 11 additional states have appointed POCs and shared the information with the 1540 Committee, although 20 MS have not provided complete contact information. (Please see Appendix 2 for more information).

Origins of Responses to the Survey

The survey was anonymous and did not require the respondents to identify his/her country. But they were provided UN categories that they could identify as their region and sub-region. The most remarkable aspect of the distribution of responses is the total lack of representation from South and East Asia. (See Figure 1). Although the SARS-COV-2 virus has adversely impacted the working of bureaucracies globally, that cannot account for the complete lack of responses from the region. Countries in Africa, Latin America, and parts of Europe have been similarly impacted, and yet several of them elected to respond. Lack of Asian respondents is even more surprising because several of them have had long-standing programs on Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) security, border security, and Strategic Trade Controls (STC) – which are part of 1540 OP3 obligations – and have been the focus of numerous bilateral assistance programs (by the US, EU, Japan, Australia, ROK etc.), and have received briefings from international agencies, including the IAEA, OPCW, and UNRCPD, among others. Equally noticeable is the lack of response from North Africa – where countries have far more experience with 1540-relevant issues than their peers in East and Sub-Saharan Africa. This might well imply that despite the widespread support for UN initiatives and agencies in Asia and North Africa, there is relatively less importance attributed to their participation in 1540-related activities.

Figure 1: Economic Status and Regional Location of Respondents

Questions A-6 to A-9: Economic Status and Regional Locations of Respondents



Main Findings on the Characteristics of POCs

Among the respondents, 68% are male, 29% are female, and 3% preferred not to answer the question. (Figure 2). On this metric, the results reflect the predominance of men in government positions in most bureaucracies. Moreover, 67% of the respondents had more than ten years of experience working in their governments, while 32% had less than ten years of service (Figure 3). This suggests that the POC position is most often assigned to senior civil servants, which would logically imply that the POCs have greater ability to access 1540-relevant agencies within their systems. In most of the MS that have appointed POCs, more than one person and/or agency is identified as the POC. This makes it somewhat difficult to pinpoint who might be the primary person/agency. We included a question to parse out this data (Figure 4). 43% of the respondents identified themselves as the main POCs, 18% identified themselves as one of the persons mentioned in the POC list, while 39% identified themselves as one of the persons in a group identified as responsible for 1540 tasks. While a distribution of

POC responsibilities among several officials and agencies ensures that at least one person is available to answer questions from other national agencies (and presumably from external partners), it might also lead to a situation where no single person/department is responsible for timely responses, especially when it comes to issues where all named persons or agencies may have to concur before the response is issued. In cases where the POC is a senior civil servant, delays in responses or decisions might be explained by the fact that this senior official may be busy with other responsibilities. Indeed, as *Figure 7* shows, almost 55% of the respondents said that 1540-POC role constituted less than 10% of the time they spent on their overall duties.

Women Among National POCs

In August 2020, of the 123 states that listed POCs, 41 states listed at least one female.

- 31 of these women officials were from HQ and 18 from Permanent Mission (PM)
- 11 states had women officials listed from both HQ and PM

In August 2021, of the 134 states that listed POCs, 57 states listed at least one female.

- 35 of these women officials are from HQ and 22 from PM
- 11 states have women officials listed from both HQ & PM

Figure 2: Gender

Question A-1: Gender

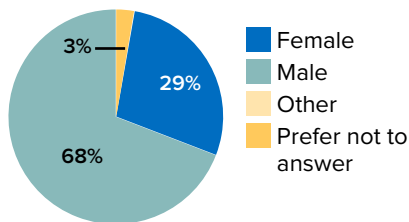


Figure 3: Years in Government

Question A-2: How many years have you been in Government service?

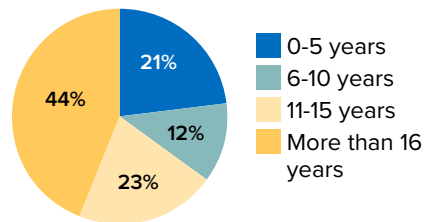


Figure 4: Current Status

Question A-3: Which of the following best describes you?

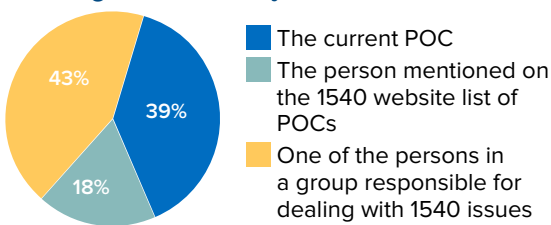
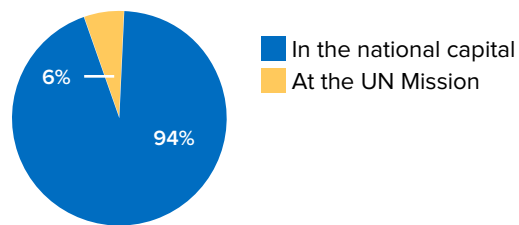


Figure 5: Location

Question A-4 Where are you located?



This is reinforced by another statistic: an overwhelming majority - 94% of the respondents -were located in the national capital, as opposed to the UN mission (*Figure 5*), suggesting that 1540 issues are handled almost entirely at the headquarters. Even if the UN missions have more opportunities to interact with the 1540 Committee and Group of Experts (GoE), their role in 1540-relevant communications remains secondary. Finally, reflecting the norm of periodic rotation of civil servants, only 34% of the respondents had more than four years of experience as the 1540 POC (*Figure 6*), while the rest had less than four years of experience in this role.

These results point to a few tentative conclusions: there is a need to induct more women into 1540 POC positions, to invite more *primary* POCs to regional events organized by the 1540 Committee, and to explore if ten percent of a senior civil servant’s time is adequate for fulfilling the responsibilities of the POC.

Figure 6: Time as POC

Question A-5: How long have you been the 1540 POC? (If you are not the POC but are nominated to deal with 1540 issues, please continue to answer the question below.)

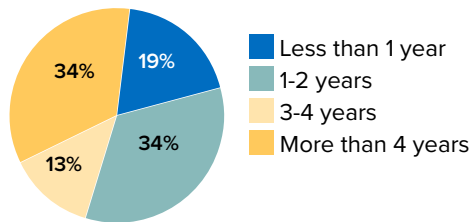
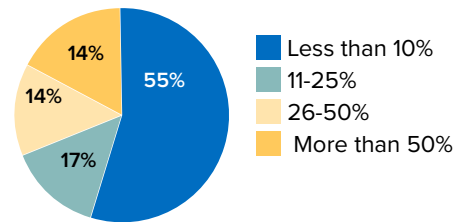


Figure 7: Time devoted to POC role

Question B-1: What percent of your time is spent on tasks assigned to the 1540 POC?



Are POCs Equipped for the Task?

The obligations under UNSCR 1540 cover a very wide range of materials (CBRN); technologies (manufacturing, specialized equipment, and requisite expertise); transactions (export, re-export, transit, transshipment, brokering, and facilitation – transportation, warehousing, finance, etc.); and interactions with stakeholders (domestic and foreign industry, academia, trading partners, IGOs). Moreover, these obligations overlap with concurrent obligations under a range of treaties (NPT, IAEA, CWC, BTWC), conventions (UN, IAEA, and others), and regional and multilateral agreements on anti-terrorism and nonproliferation. As such, the 1540 POC position would require a good grasp of how existing national mechanisms for implementation and enforcement of both 1540 and non-1540 obligations are performing, if there are any gaps, and how to coordinate available national and international resources to fill these gaps. One of the main issues we wanted to explore through this survey was the degree of awareness and knowledge about Resolution 1540 that POCs have (or acquire following their appointment), which would enable them to adequately perform their assigned roles. We asked a series of questions about briefings and other sources of information that they were provided, when, and by whom.

More than half the respondents (52%) reported that they were not provided any briefings about 1540, and among those who were provided briefings (48%), the source was a senior officer within their own agency/Ministry (27%), another source (14%), or both (7%) (Figure 8). The more troubling finding is that of the 52% who were not provided a briefing at the start of their term as POC, 73% were not provided a briefing even later (Figure 9). This underscores the need for the 1540 Committee to ensure that not only should the senior civil servants - and the agencies from which POCs are drawn - be kept updated on 1540 obligations, but that they are also sensitized to their responsibility in preparing the POC appointees for this position. And in the event that the senior civil servants are otherwise occupied, such outreach and training be available upon request from various external sources, including UNODA-organized meetings that include 1540 Experts as well as domain experts from the civil society. As to the timing of the initial briefing on 1540 (Figure 11), for most respondents, it was triggered by their own request, or when an external actor contacted them. In the latter category, the communications from the GoE appears to be one of the triggers. Perhaps the GoE and/or the Committee ought to leverage their influence by reaching out to the POCs within a few months after their credentials are submitted by the MS.

Figure 8: Briefings on 1540 and Source

Question B-2A: Were you given a briefing about Resolution 1540?

Question B-2B: If yes, who provided the briefing

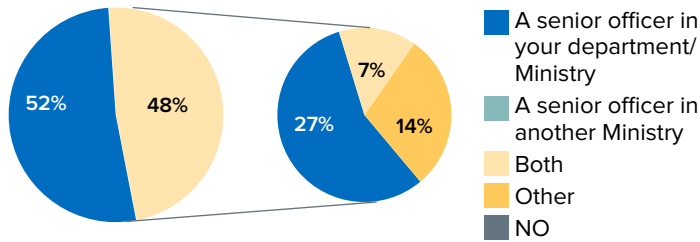


Figure 9: Briefings on 1540 (later)

Question B-2C: If no, did you receive such a briefing later?

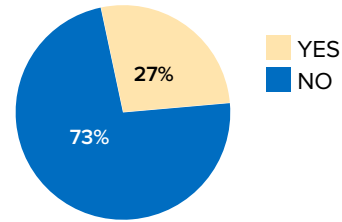
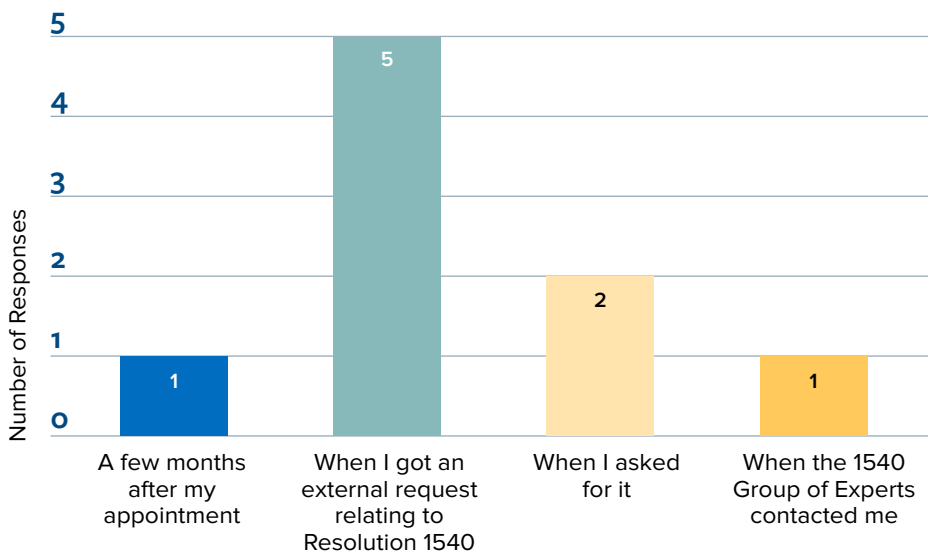


Figure 10: Timing of the Briefing on 1540

Question B-2D: If yes, when was it provided



For the 14% who were not provided a briefing by senior officials of their government, either from their own or another agency, the sources of their information varied (*Figure 11*). It appears that several of the respondents did not need any briefings since they were already familiar with the Resolution, suggesting their status as senior civil servants, and validating the logic of appointing such persons as POCs, since they would not require any internal or external handholding. For the rest, the briefings provided by the 1540 Committee, or via the regional workshop(s), were judged to be useful. This, in some ways, puts the onus on the 1540 Committee to proactively reach out to new POC appointees and enquire if they would benefit from receiving a briefing and, if yes, then to provide it as soon as feasible.

Figure 11: Other Sources of Information on 1540

Question B-2B.1: If the source for information on 1540 is “Other”, please provide detail:

Self-study and Research

I have been involved with 1540 since the Resolution was created

I gave the briefing as I dealt before with the res.

The 1540 committee and its services

Training workshop held in 2012 in South Africa

I was aware of the Resolution and the obligations it imposes due to my previous professional responsibilities.

An obvious issue to explore further is whether the lack of briefing from an internal source had any impact on POC performance. As *Figure 12* shows, among those that did not receive any guidance, the majority (65%) said that such lack of guidance did not impact their work. This is an interesting perspective that needs further exploration: were these POCs already knowledgeable about their 1540 requirements or did they engage in 1540-related activities at home (for instance, they only had a reporting role)? Most interestingly, only 39% of the respondents were provided any guidance by their government as to what activities they are expected to undertake as POCs. Or, since the respondents were making assessments about their own performance, perhaps they assigned higher marks to themselves without being aware of this cognitive bias.

Figure 12: Impact of No Briefing

Questions B-4 to B-5: Impact of No Briefing and Source of Briefing on 1540

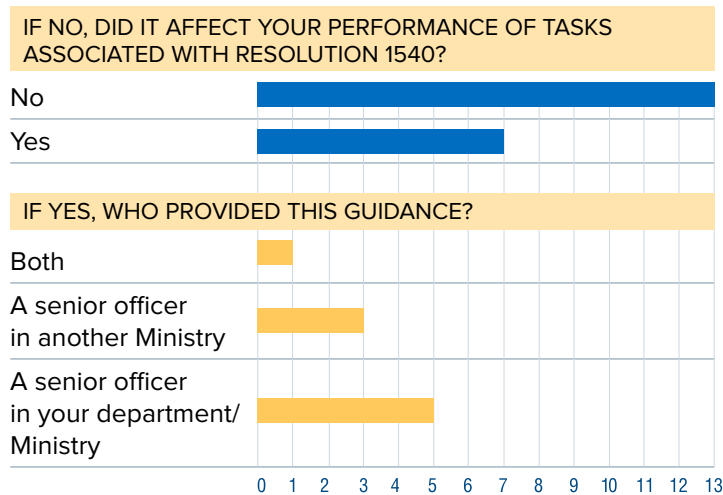


Figure 13: Guidance on POC Role

Question B-3: At any time during your tenure, were you provided guidance on what your role includes and excludes?

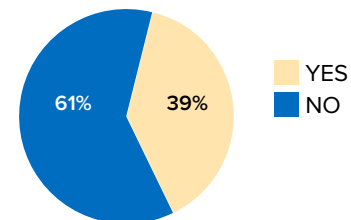
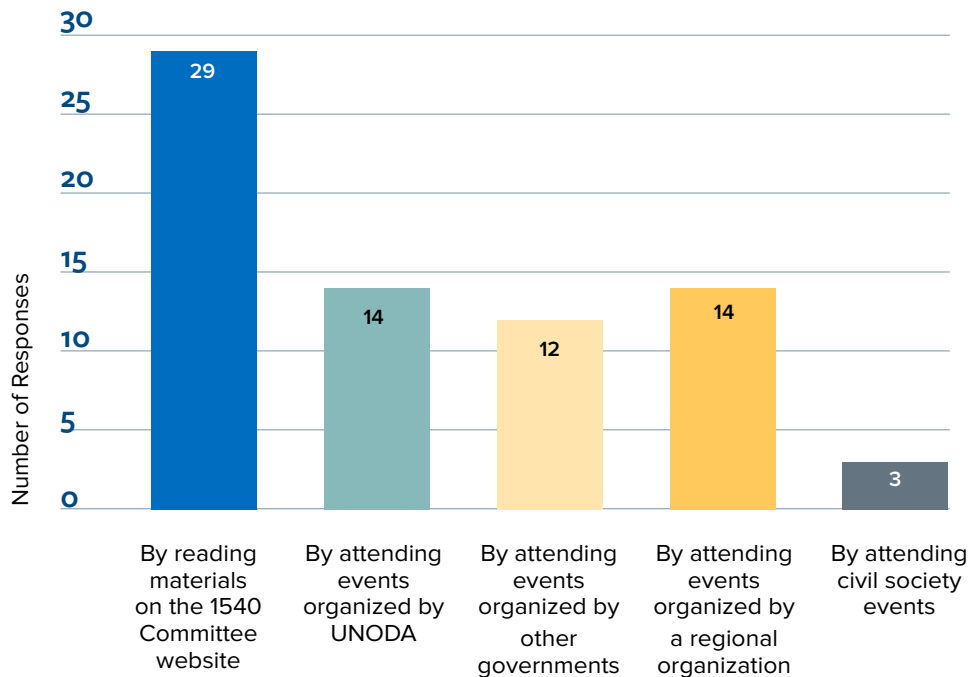


Figure 14: Sources of Information on 1540 (self-study)

Question B-6: During your tenure, how did you educate yourself about Resolution 1540 and the role of the national POC?(Please choose ALL that apply)



Materials on the 1540 Committee website are the primary sources for POCs to understand more about the Resolution. However, it appears that attendance in events organized by UNODA, regional organizations, other governments, and civil society provides opportunities for learning how the mandate translates into national “actions”. As we navigate our way through the pandemic for the next few years, it might be useful to think about several parallel options, such as presenting information on the 1540 webpage in a more user-friendly format and providing more details about the UNODA course on 1540 through various outlets.¹ At the same time, since neither of these sources deals directly with the role of POCs, it might be useful for a MS to provide a “non-paper” that explores various roles that POCs might be expected to perform.

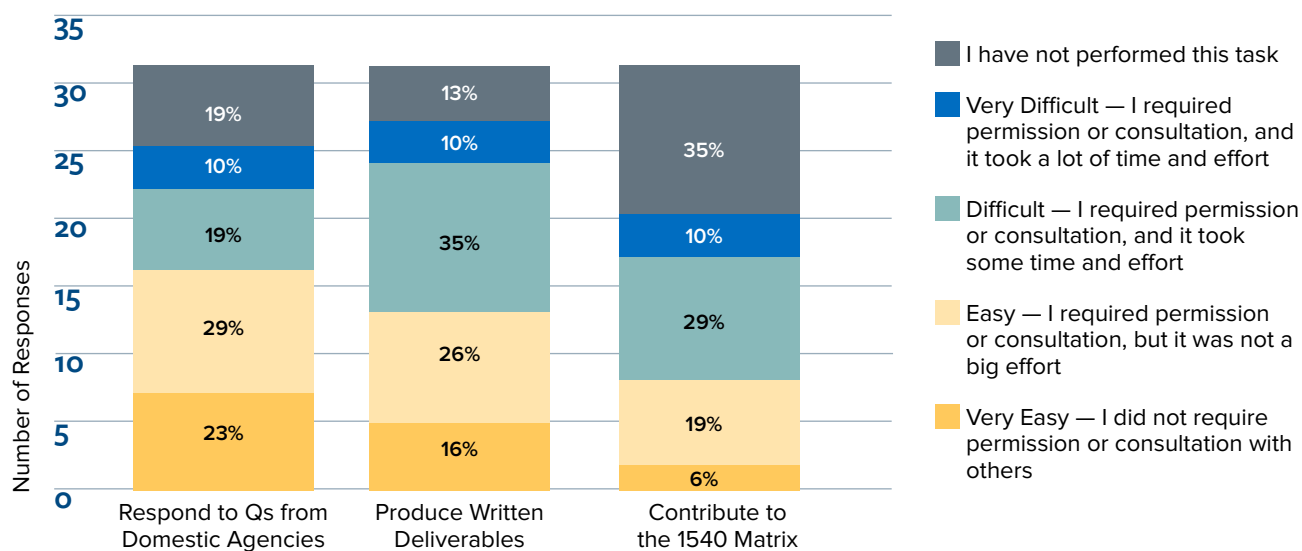
Domestic Activities as POC: How Easy?

As noted above, POCs are mostly not provided requisite guidance on what their role includes and excludes. But POCs are engaged in some activities, such as responding to questions from national agencies in their country who need clarity on how Resolution 1540 applies to them, or in preparing written products (reports, national statements, implementation updates) or responding to questions in the 1540 matrix. Our questions probed these roles to identify if the respondents found these activities easy or difficult and if they were the lead author or one of the support persons, or if they managed or participated in any inter-agency discussions on 1540 implementation.

¹ The UNODA course was not endorsed by the 1540 Committee, hence it cannot be linked to the Committee webpage.

Figure 15: Responding to Questions, Preparing Written Products and Completing the Matrix

Questions C-1 to C-3: Ease in Performing Various Tasks



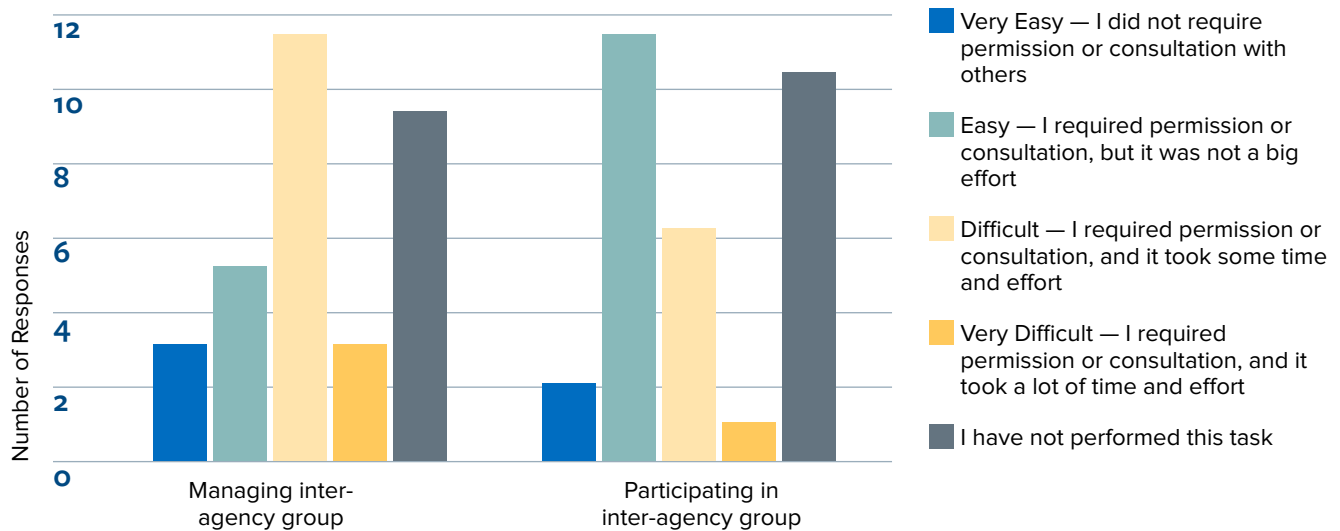
The majority (52%) of respondents claimed that they found it easy or very easy to respond to questions from agencies and ministries. However, there is still some room to improve, since 38% of the respondents found it either difficult or very difficult, and nearly one-fifth have not performed this task at all. Further, nearly 45% of the respondents found it either difficult or very difficult to prepare written documents submitted to the 1540 Committee.

For 39% of the respondents, the task of filling the matrix created by the 1540 GoE was either difficult or very difficult. Furthermore, a significant portion (36%) of respondents have not performed this task. The matrix structure is already being updated by the GoE, but it will be mutually beneficial for the GoE (who officially fill out the country matrices, based upon the information supplied by the country) and for the 1540 POCs (who provide the legal-regulatory information to the 1540 Committee), to understand how “data” needs to be arrayed by countries, and how the GoE would verify it before finalizing the matrices.

On several occasions, civil society experts have found it hard to verify matrix-data for a variety of reasons including: (i) the full text of the law or regulation or description at a national agency website is not available in any of the UN languages, (ii) the text is in a format that does not allow machine-translation, (iii) the regulation that is cited is general purpose (Customs law, Criminal law, national Constitution, etc.) and it is difficult to pin-point whether or how these actually apply to CBRN security, STC-related customs or border controls, and (iv) in numerous instances, the regulation mentions “dangerous goods” but with no reference to any list that enumerates what is included in this category.

Figure 16: Role in the 1540-relevant Inter-Agency Group(s)

Questions C-4 to C-5: Role in the 1540-relevant Inter-Agency Group(s)



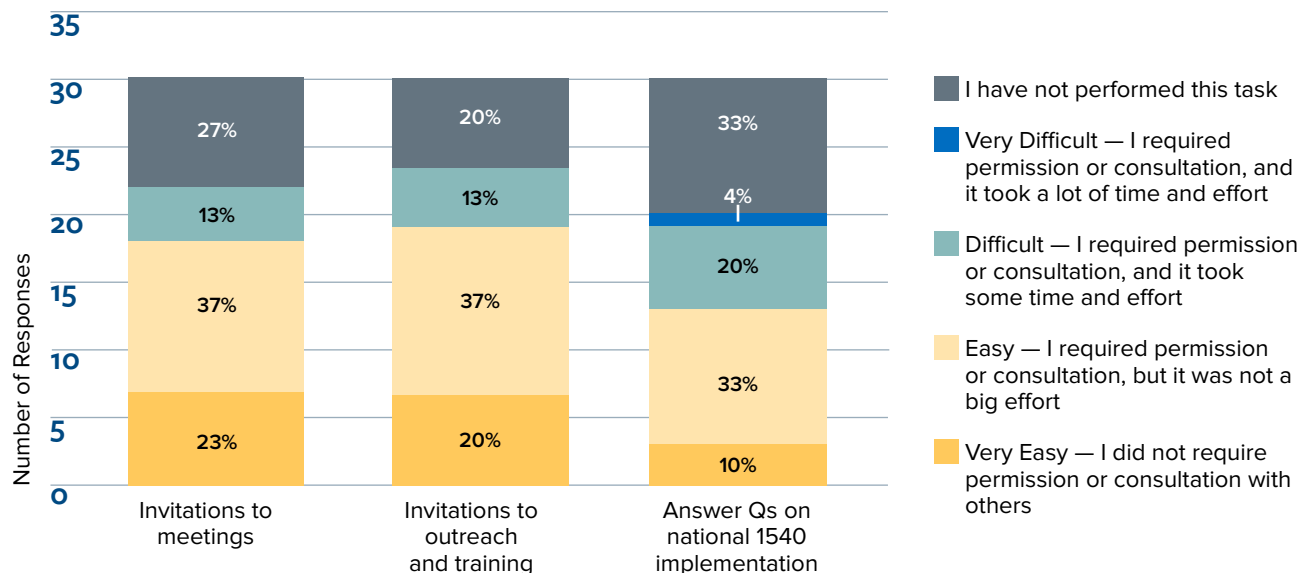
Of the 71% who had experience in managing an inter-agency group, only 36% found the task easy or very easy, while 63% found it difficult or very difficult. A significant portion (29%) of respondents have not performed this task. As opposed to this, 67% of the respondents had some experience in a national inter-agency group related to 1540 but one-third (33%) of the respondents have not been involved in such activities, even as participants. This points to a serious gap within the inter-agency process: POCs appear to be excluded from platforms where implementing and enforcing agencies (with reference to 1540) communicate. If the UNSC’s recommendation for POC position is based on this person assisting in national level coordination, such exclusion indicates that some MS do not see this role as important and might be using POCs as a means to only convey products prepared by HQ for the 1540 Committee. Alternately, there are no inter-agency efforts within a MS to discuss national 1540 implementation or to coordinate communication with the 1540 Committee.

Engaging with External Stakeholders

There is a logical expectation among the external stakeholders that national 1540 POCs are one of the main conveyors of information about 1540 developments to their HQ if not the inter-agency 1540 group(s). As such, they are invited to discussions, outreach, and training programs. We wanted to explore (i) how much leeway the POCs are allowed by their HQ in accepting such invitations, and (ii) did this leeway vary, based on the category of external stakeholder extending the invitation.

Figure 17: Responding to External Invitations

Questions D-1 to D-3: Responding to Invitation for Participation in Events

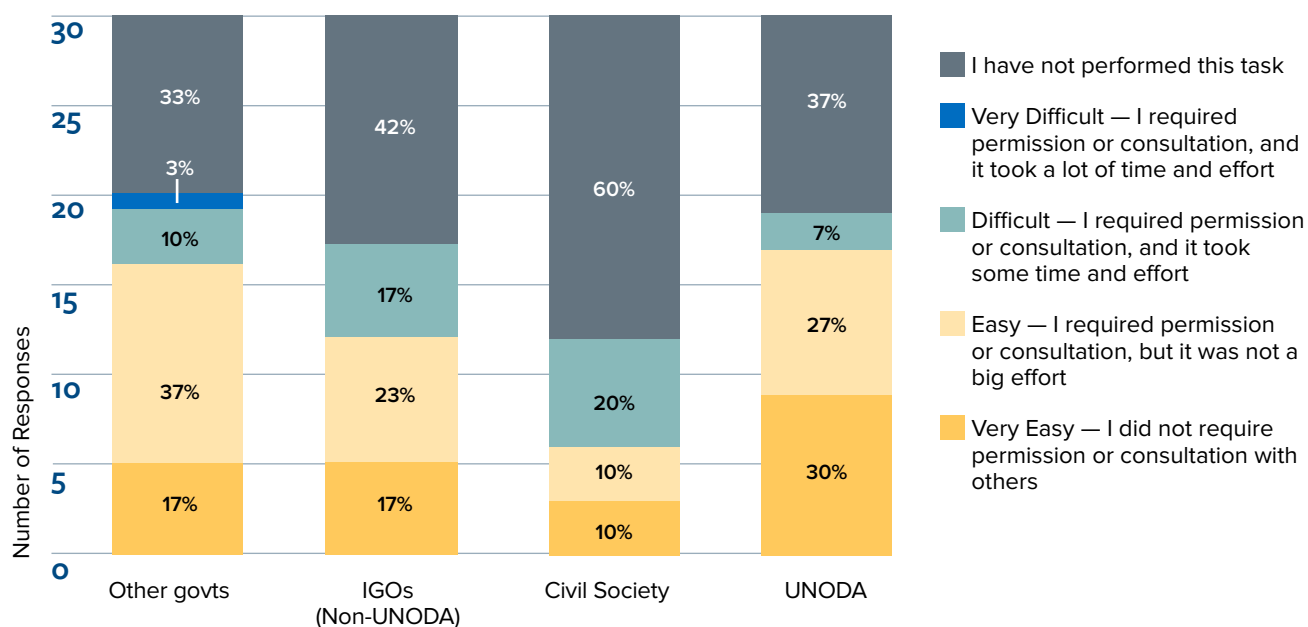


It is interesting to note that about a quarter of the respondents have not been invited to any meetings or to training and outreach events. If POCs are expected to be engaged with and informed about 1540-related issues, organizers of such programs need to consciously and deliberately invite them to participate – even if it is as observers. Of the POCs who did receive such invitations, a significant majority found it easy or very easy to respond, requiring few internal permissions or consultations.

Roughly one-third of the respondents have not been asked for information on 1540 implementation in their country. This could be because of two reasons: either the external stakeholders assume that some POCs are not experts in, or knowledgeable about, developments in their own countries, or they assume that there are no developments in these countries. These assumptions might be erroneous or superficial. As the data shows, among the 77% of POCs who did receive such requests, most found it easy or very easy to answer the questions, demonstrating their expertise and/or their ability to access relevant information from national sources. Clearly, the external stakeholder community needs to reach out to POCs more often and use them as a resource before turning to other sources. Even if the POCs might not have the information requested, these requests might propel them to engage with their own inter-agency system to acquire this information. This may well result in POCs becoming better known to implementing agencies and close the gap identified earlier that POCs appear to be outside the ambit of national inter-agency deliberations on 1540 issues.

Figure 18: Responding to Invitations from Different Types of External Stakeholders

Questions D-4.1 to D-4.4: Responding to Invitations from Different Types of External Stakeholders



At least one-third of the POCs appear to be ignored by all four types of external stakeholders. Civil society organizations (60%) and non-UNODA international organizations (42%) appear to be the most egregious in this regard. It is possible that this happens as an unintended result of stakeholders choosing to engage only with HQ staff in those agencies that are relevant for a particular meeting. Alternately, these agencies are seen as the most important veto-points in either the acceptance or rejection of the invitation. In other words, the assumption - whether based on experience or not- is that POCs are not free to make such a decision and that any national participation - whether by POCs or other officials - ultimately depends upon HQ staff. Even partner governments and UNODA appear to use this logic, although less frequently. If external stakeholders want all POCs to be more active in the 1540 space, at home and abroad, they need to route their invitations through the POCs, or at least include them in any communication with the HQ staff of relevant agencies/units.

When POCs need to access information about the Resolution and its requirements, the 1540 website remains a hands down favorite: all respondents were aware of this resource and an overwhelming majority noted its ease of use. By contrast, far fewer respondents were even aware of the online training course put together by UNODA. More effort needs to be made by all concerned stakeholders to direct POCs towards completing this course on their own time. Given its comprehensive coverage of the rationale for 1540 implementation, discussions of related international agreements, and overviews of the numerous external resources available to countries across technology domains (C/B/R and N) from a vast variety of sources (IGOs), the course is clearly under-utilized.

Figure 19: Accessing Information Resources on 1540
 Questions E-1 and E-2: Accessing Information Resources on 1540

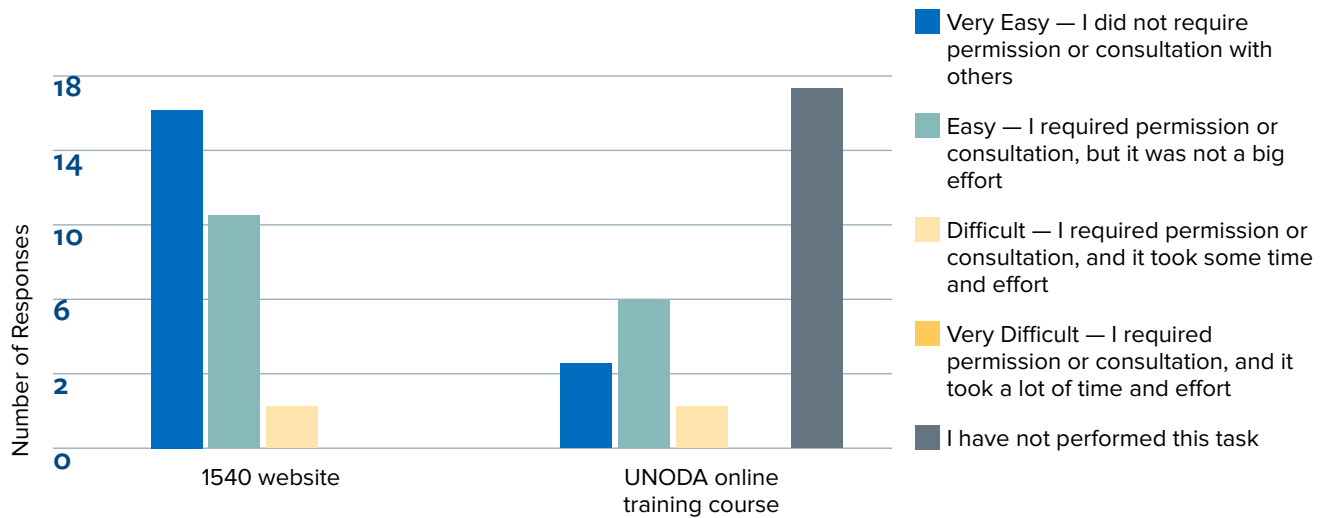
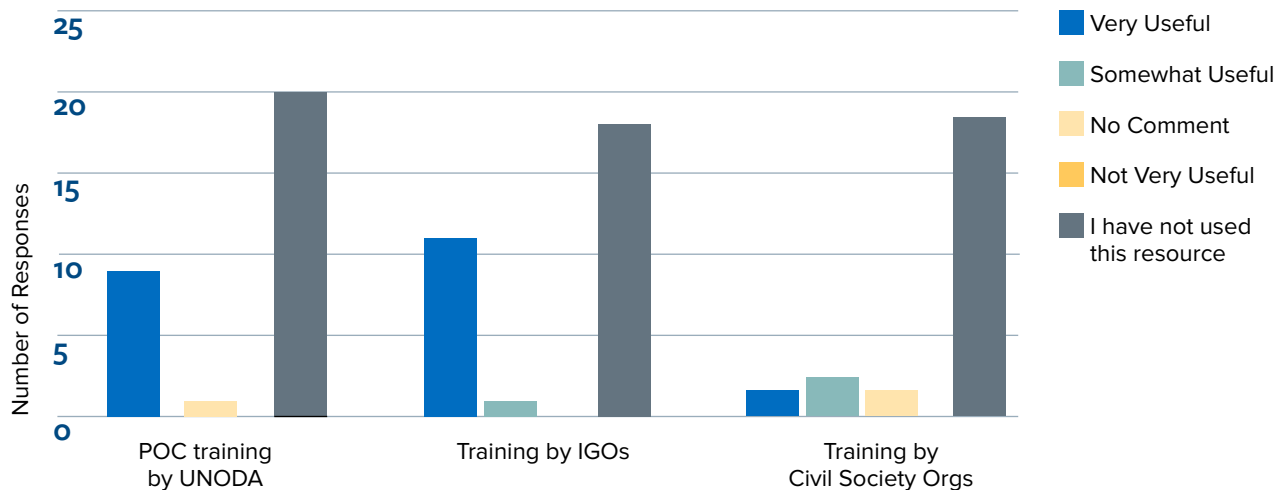


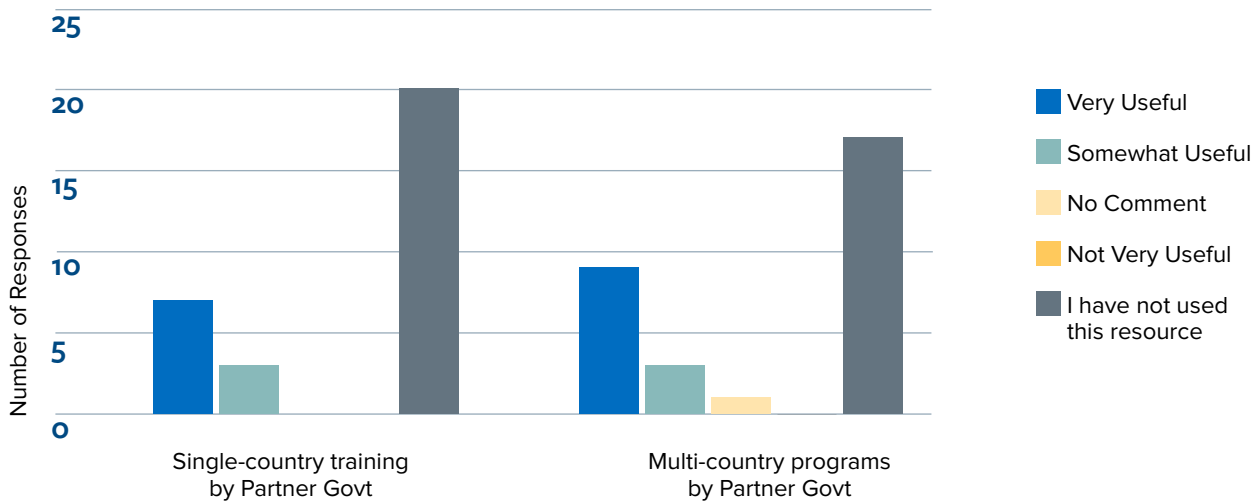
Figure 20: Assessments of Training Programs Offered by Different Types of Stakeholders

Questions E-3, E-6, E-7: Assessment of Training Programs by Different Types of External Stakeholders



Although nearly one-third (30%) of respondents found the POC Training Programs very useful, pointing to the excellent quality of the programs, the vast majority (67%) have not used this resource. More needs to be done to promote these programs so that more POCs could know and utilize them. Approximately 40% of respondents reacted positively to the training programs provided by international organizations, but the remaining 60% of respondents have not used this resource at all. Once again, this points to a lack of promotion of these programs on the part of international organizations, meaning that POCs are often unfamiliar with these resources and unable to utilize them. More than three-fourths of respondents have not used training programs or other activities organized by non-government organizations, i.e., non-profit civil society organizations or NGOs. This, at one level, points to a serious lack of engagement of these civil society organizations with POCs.

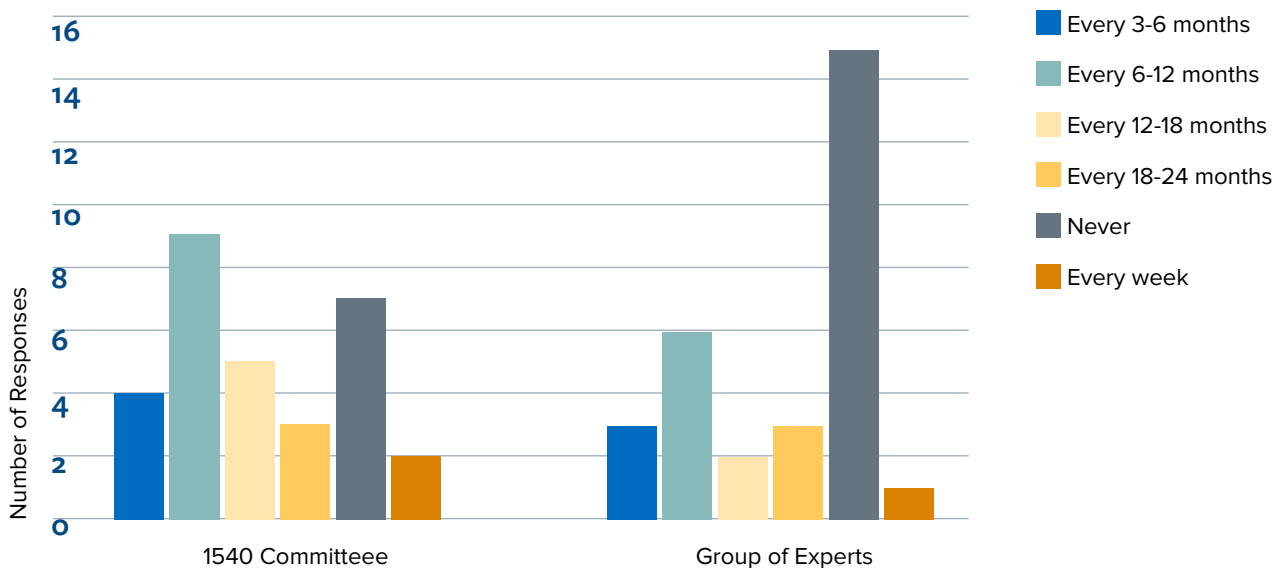
Figure 21: Assessments of Programs Offered by Partner Government(s)
 Questions E-4, E-5: Assessment of Programs by Partner Government(s)



Donor governments often organize 1540-related training programs – directly or through IGOs and NGOs – that are either focused on one country or bring together relevant officials from multiple countries. Among the respondents, a significant majority had no experience with either kind of training program. Among those who had attended such programs, more respondents found multi-country programs more useful than single-country programs. This may reflect two different kinds of logic: for some participants, multi-country programs allow them to understand how other countries are implementing different 1540 obligations; while for the others, absence of other countries allows more frank and in-depth discussion with Subject Matter Expert (SME) trainers on national initiatives and gaps.

Figure 22: Communication with the 1540 Committee and the Group of Experts (GoE)

Questions F-1 and F-3: During your tenure as POC, how often did the 1540 Committee and the Group of Experts contact you?

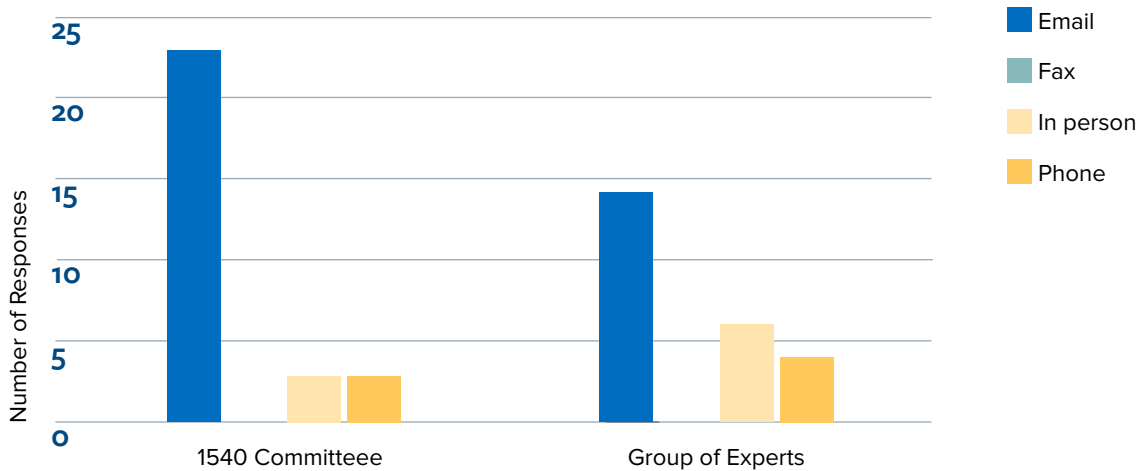


Member States might not be aware of the dynamics behind civil society events. Most NGO-led programs are dependent upon sponsors (funders), which may include private foundations, IGOs, and most often, specific donor governments. While the sponsors may rely on NGO SMEs to set the agenda and course content, they are reluctant to allow NGOs similar freedom in communicating with officials from MS. Therefore, in many cases, the invitations to specific national POCs may derive from sponsor’s preferences, and not from the NGOs.

57% of respondents received any communication from the 1540 Committee once every 6 months or more, while only 20% receive communication within 6 months. It is important to note that 23% of respondents never received any communication from the Committee. Filling this gap through periodic communication from the Committee, even if to highlight an upcoming event or an update posted on the 1540 webpage, would keep the POCs aware of various developments.

Only 10% of respondents said that the 1540 GoE communicated with them multiple times in less than 6 months. On the other hand, 38% of respondents said that it took the group more than 6 months to communicate with the POCs. Of more concern, the majority (52%) said that they have never received any communication from the group. This points to a serious gap.

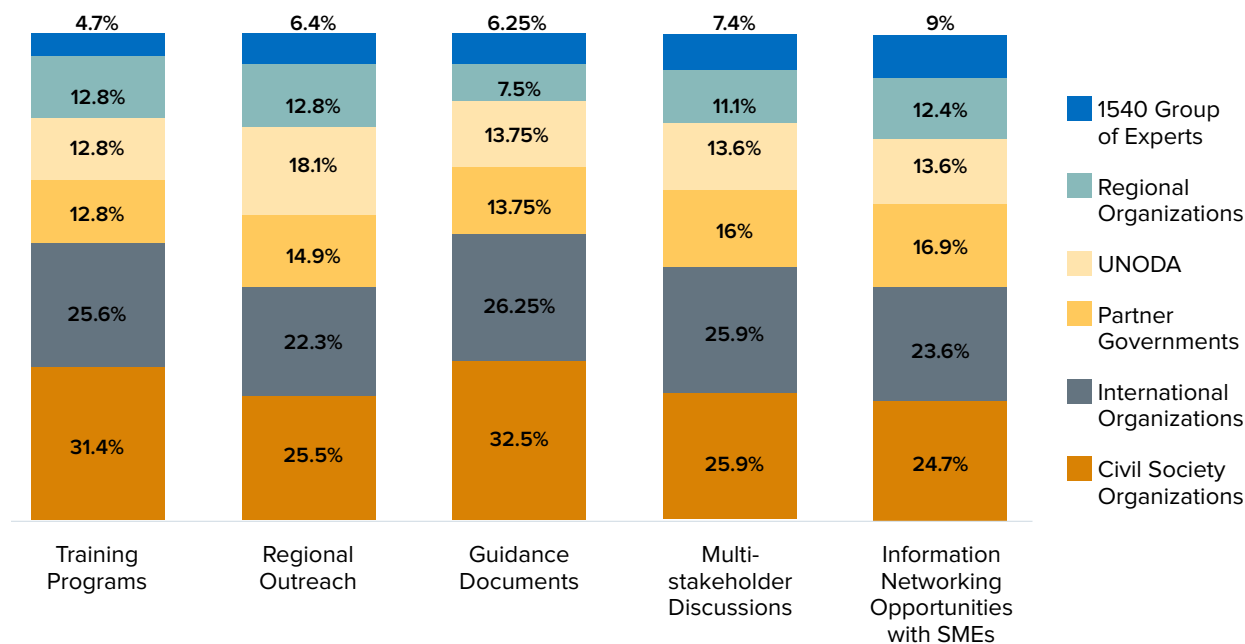
Figure 23: Mode of Communication with the 1540 Committee and the Group of Experts (GoE)



Email remains the most popular means of communication that both the 1540 Committee and the GoE employ to communicate with the POCs. In-person and phone communications are also used, although, in both, Experts appear to have a significant edge over the Committee. This is as expected, because Experts need to elicit or confirm information about national implementation from POC and/or they participate in live as well as virtual events organized by other stakeholders, providing them more opportunities for interaction.

Figure 24: Preferred Organizer for Various Activities and Resources for POCs

Questions G-2.1 to G-2.5: Which of the following entities would you prefer as the organizers of various activities to assist you?



Despite a lack of regular communication from the 1540 GoE, it remains the most popular choice when it comes to all types of activities and resources: training programs for POCs (31%), regional outreach events (25.5%), providing guidance documents (32.5%), organizing multi-stakeholder meetings (25.5%), and informal networking events with SMEs (24.7%). UNODA follows closely behind in each of the categories for each activity. The responses in favor of IGOs, regional organizations, and partner governments providing these resources are almost the same, varying between 12% and 18%.

When it comes to preference for organizing regional outreach events, regional organizations (at 18%) are preferred, albeit by a small margin, when compared with IGOs (15%) and partner governments (13%). This probably reflects the extent and qualitative assessment of the prior engagement that respondents have had with regional versus other organizations.

Despite increasing attention by the UNSC on the importance of civil society contributions to the dialogue and expertise regarding 1540 implementation, POCs see civil society organizations as the least preferable for generating guidance documents (6.25%), although partner governments (7.5%) did not get very different percentage of votes either. It is likely that the respondents perceive both types of stakeholders as somewhat limited or biased, and expect that international organizations are more likely to produce documents that reflect the broadest consensus among MS, clearly ignoring the possibility that such documents may also reflect the most watered-down guidance so as to not offend any MS's real or anticipated perspectives.

UNSC Resolution 2325 (2016), under OP 30, “Encourages the 1540 Committee to continue drawing on relevant expertise, including industry, scientific and academic communities, with, as appropriate, their States’ consent, which can assist States in their implementation of resolution 1540 (2004);”

A plurality of POCs prefer that the GoE (26%) and UNODA (also 26%) organize multi-stakeholder discussions events, followed by IGOs (16%), regional organizations (13.6%), and partner governments (11%). Once again, civil society organizations remain the least popular choice (7.4%) for POCs in this regard. This reflects the common assumption among most bureaucracies around the world that although other kinds of stakeholders (partner governments and civil society) might be relevant, their convening power cannot match that of the international organizations.

For organizing networking opportunities with SMEs, GoE is once again the most popular choice (25%), followed very closely by UNODA (24%), IGOs (17%), regional organizations (13.5%), and partner governments (12%). Civil Society Organizations remain the least popular choice (9%), although this is one of the five activities for which they got the highest number of votes.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the language used in Resolutions 1810 (2008), 1977 (2011), and 2325 (2016), the national 1540 POCs were to be used for facilitating assistance and implementation. Logically speaking, therefore, they may be expected to perform two categories of tasks that are inter-related:

- (1) **internal:** nudge various relevant national agencies to do more on implementation and enforcement, gather data on any 1540-relevant developments and initiatives among agencies, identify their assistance needs etc., and
- (2) **external:** represent the country in 1540-related meetings, explain what has been done in their country, and request assistance from the 1540 Committee, the IGOs, and the individual donor states on what needs to be done.

The “assistance” and “implementation” tasks require POCs to understand 1540 requirements:

- What activities is their country expected to undertake to translate the obligations into laws, regulations, procedures, and processes related to CBRN security, export controls, and border controls?
- Which national agencies are already implementing specific obligations and which ones may need to be brought into the discussion?
- How are these domestic activities/actions linked with international obligations (under each of the nonproliferation and security related treaties/regimes/conventions)?
- What do the mandates of individual IGOs feed into the international obligations under 1540, including overlaps, limitations, and redundancies?

The survey sample was admittedly small (34 responses), but since several officials did take the time to respond, one can assume that these respondents are more active in thinking about 1540 issues, or at least prioritize 1540-related issues more than the majority of POCs (who remained passive or unresponsive). The results indicate that there are some shortcomings in how both the MS as well as the external actors appear to envision the POC role.

Not only do most MS not provide briefings on Resolution 1540 to POCs before or after their appointment to the position, they also do not provide any guidance as to what activities will fall within the purview of POCs. Indeed, given that a plurality of POCs are not even included in routine national-level activities such as inter-agency discussions on 1540 implementation, writing 1540 reports, filling the matrix etc., their role is assumed to be that of a conveyor of documents prepared at the HQ of relevant agencies. Furthermore, since the majority of POCs are senior civil servants, with more than 10 years of government service, it is not surprising that POCs are only able to devote about 10 percent of their time to 1540-related tasks. The behavior of external actors, including the GoE and UNODA, appears to reflect a similar view: engaging agency-heads in national capitals on 1540-related activities is more useful than engaging POCs, who are in any case not likely to be the decision-makers or influential actors when it comes to national participation in activities organized by external actors. At the same time, it is possible that, and especially for GoE and UNODA, the lack of contact with some POCs could be due to lack of available resources to organize such meetings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Within this overall context of perceptions and assumptions, some specific conclusions are apparent, and we can offer some recommendations to strengthen the role of the POCs:

1. Communication from the Committee and the GoE

Significant numbers of respondents noted the absence of communications from the 1540 Committee (23%) and the GoE (52%). This may be resolved with a simple strategy: periodic emails to all POCs, noting new developments, statements, or even updates to the 1540 website.

- a. The Committee could prepare a “welcome package” for new POCs which could contain information about the Resolution and the Committee and its various activities in simple terms.
- b. Alternately, Regional Coordinators and UNODA regional offices could put together such welcome packages that are customized to the regional situation, and include links to helpful websites, publications, and upcoming events.

UNSC Resolution 2325 (2016), under OP 25, “Encourages also relevant international, regional and subregional organizations, to highlight the obligations of resolution 1540 (2004) in their model legislation and/or guidelines, where appropriate, pertaining to instruments under their mandate relevant to the resolution;”

2. 1540 website as a source of user-friendly information

The website remains the most accessed resource for POCs – whether they have received briefings from their agency on the Resolution, or not. It would make sense, therefore, and especially within the context of pandemic-induced virtual communication in the next few years, to make this resource more user-friendly. The GoE (who officially fill out the country matrices, based upon information supplied by the country) should provide a guide for the 1540 POCs (who provide the legal-regulatory information to the 1540 Committee) on the new matrix. This should help the POCs understand how matrix-relevant “data” needs to be arrayed by countries and how GoE would verify it before finalizing the matrices.

- a. The materials on the website should highlight the logical need – if not the legal requirement – for POCs to be “plugged into” their national inter-agency system (e.g., taskforce, periodic dialogue) on 1540-implementation.

3. Utilizing UNODA’s 1540 online training course

Most respondents were not even aware of the online training course on 1540 put together by UNODA.

- a. While linking the URL of the UNODA course on 1540 webpage is not possible, other organizations, especially regional and civil society organizations, should publicize this resource amongst the MS.
- b. More effort needs to be expended by all concerned stakeholders to direct POCs toward completing this under-utilized course on their own time.
- c. Instructor-led regional outreach programs based on the materials in this course have been successful in generating interest in 1540 obligations, and the virtual format can be put to good use in this regard.
- d. Out-of-the-region POCs could be invited to such programs if language is not a hindrance.

4. Guidance Document

Given that neither the 1540 website, nor the UNODA course, deals directly with the *role* of POCs, it might be useful for a MS to provide a non-paper or a *Guidance Document* that explores various roles that POCs *could* be expected to play.

- a. This document would not direct MS on who or which national agency needs to be the national 1540 POC, but provide several models of selected role(s) their POC could play.
- b. It would also provide good practices to keep in mind when matching the preferred role to the candidate characteristics, briefing requirements, and institutional reach within the domestic inter-agency structure.
- c. It could, through real or fictional examples, provide lists of domestic agencies that might be involved in 1540 implementation in a country, and therefore, might be of interest to the 1540 POC.

5. POC-focused training and outreach programs

Despite the low frequency of communication, many respondents have demonstrated their faith in, or preference for, GoE and UNODA as the organizers for trainings, outreach, guidance, multi-stakeholder meetings, and networking with SMEs.

- a. More resources should be allocated to UNODA to organize and for GoE to participate in such POC-focused programs.
- b. Moreover, these programs should include SMEs from not just IGOs, but a variety of organizations, including civil society (academia, industry, think tanks, and retired government officials).

When discussing 1540-implementation, more governments now ask “how” rather than “what” and “why”. Given the limitations of IGO-officials in going beyond their official mandate, civil society organizations can combine their expertise and institutional freedom to suggest practical means of fulfilling the 1540 mandate in situations where resources and political will are sub-optimal.

6. Building Networks of POC

Outreach and training events should explicitly aim to establish and strengthen networks among POCs – regional, global, and technical.

- a. In countries where taskforces or committees or commissions on WMD or CBRN security exist, national 1540 POCs should be linked to these national bodies.
- b. Similarly, most IGOs (IAEA, OPCW, BWC-ISU, WHO, OIE etc.) have national focal points within MS. National 1540 POCs should be made aware of these technical focal points and provided opportunities to interact with them.
- c. Focal Points for IGOs have induction meetings. 1540 Committee should have induction meetings for their POCs.
- d. Such networks can allow for peer-to-peer exchanges of good practices as well as generate on-going attention on 1540-related events.

7. Role of External Stakeholders

If POCs are expected to be engaged with, and informed about, 1540-related issues, all external stakeholders, and all organizers of meetings, outreach, and training on 1540:

- a. need to consciously and deliberately invite them to participate – even if it is as observers,
- b. route their invitations for non-POC officials through the POCs, or at least include the POCs in any communication with the HQ staff of relevant agencies/units, and
- c. reach out to POCs more often, and use them as a resource on national implementation, before turning to other sources.

Even if the POCs might not have the information requested by external stakeholders, these requests might propel them to engage with their own inter-agency system to acquire this information. This may well result in POCs becoming better known to implementing agencies and close the gap identified earlier that POCs appear to be outside of national inter-agency discussions on 1540.

8. Suggestions from the Survey Respondents

Beyond the recommendations based on answers to structured survey questions, we can also elicit some expectations from unstructured comments of the respondents (Appendix 1)

- a. Periodic POC meetings can be “a platform to share what everyone is doing in their country.”
- b. “More standardized and regular POC training programs are needed. These should not be limited to a geographic region as that can mean a very long wait for a session.” Moreover, “training should be on how to formulate national reports, prepare national action plans, and coordinate at national and regional levels in implementation of the resolution.”
- c. The 1540 Committee should ensure that requests for assistance do not go unanswered. This presumably includes follow-up with donors who have pledged assistance, as well as responding to donors’ feedback on a particular assistance request, such as “lack of appropriate level of detail to be actioned”. In either case, 1540 Committee must devise a mechanism where assistance requests can be stream-lined to ensure that assistance providers can identify specific action-items (e.g., training, outreach, consultation) for specific national stakeholders (e.g., those relevant for CBRN security, export controls, border controls) in identified domains (e.g., regulating CBRN materials, delivery systems, proliferation finance, financing of terrorism, etc.).
- d. The 1540 Committee should: “(1) keep regular & direct communication with POC regarding the implementation of Resolution 1540 in country (2) provide guidance to assist POC in excelling at this job (3) notify POC about up-to-date information regarding the Resolution 1540 and its implementation (4) provide assistance & support which are useful for POC to take on roles and responsibilities in fulfilling this job (5) sharing experiences and best practices of empowering the POC in other countries.”
- e. 1540 Committee should “re-affirm the importance of POCs, their tasks, and responsibilities.”
- f. 1540 Committee and GoE “need to adapt their processes and approaches to be more effective and user-friendly. Until and unless (they) demonstrate a willingness to improve their approach and listen to those with experience and resources, 1540 will continue to under-deliver.”
- g. “The inability of 1540 to engage with the G7-led *Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction* (the main CBRN capacity-building mechanism) is a serious problem. If one or more UN member countries are blocking this engagement due to political reasons, a *circum opus* or work-around should be identified with other 1540 stakeholders. The current roadblock is depriving

counties that need the support of engaging with those with a proven track record and the greatest capability of delivering it.”

- h. The communications from the Committee should be “in brief form, without verbiage, so that agents can put them into practice.”

Recommended Follow-on Actions

93% of the respondents expressed an interest in attending a workshop to discuss the evolving roles and responsibilities of the 1540 POCs. Stimson recommends that interested stakeholders organize a brief public online event to discuss the results and recommendations. This could be followed by a virtual workshop on possible and feasible roles of POCs in the coming years.

Final Thoughts

The survey has provided some data that reiterates that POCs are an under-utilized and often ignored resource in 1540 implementation. But to realize the potential of this position, all stakeholders need to re-assess their underlying assumptions. Member States need to engage in national as well as multi-national dialogue on whether their current vision of POCs - as senior, mostly male, civil servants who spend less than 10 percent of their time on 1540-issues, primarily as conveyors of formal documents from HQ to the Committee – is the best use of this resource. On the other hand, the 1540 Committee and other IGO and donor-state interlocutors must explore what they can do to empower POCs to perform their role as a focal point of information for their national agencies and as a window to national 1540-implementation for external stakeholders. Only after this can the role of the POC transcend superficial compliance with the UNSC mandate and emerge as the connective tissue for the MS in the discharge of its 1540-related sovereign obligations.

Appendix 1: Suggestions from Respondents

Question G-1 What could the 1540 Committee do to empower you as a 1540 POC?

Training programs and experience-sharing meetings of POCs might be helpful. In addition, periodic POCs meetings can also promote a better acquaintance between the POCs and networking, and a platform to share what everyone is doing in their country

There is a need to enhance communication. The committee should organize more training programs and the issue of assistance to countries should be easy to be completed as some requests have been made but no assistance forthcoming. Some assistance providers have asked for more details when details are provided still assistance is not rendered. There is a need to improve the implementation of 1540 at SADC and AFRICAN UNION Levels. Empower the 1540 POC at SADC then also at the AU level.

The committee should organize trainings at SADC and African Union levels. The committee should help the countries in meeting the request for assistance. Requests have been made but the countries that pledged assistance have not fulfilled the promise.

The 1540 Committee should: 1. keep regular & direct communication with POC regarding the implementation of Resolution 1540 in country 2. provide guidance to assist POC in excelling at this job 3. notify POC about up-to-date information regarding the Resolution 1540 and its implementation 4. provide assistance & support which are useful for POC to take roles and responsibilities in fulfilling this job 5. sharing experiences and best practices of empowering the POC in other countries 6. conduct trainings, seminars, workshops, conferences & meetings which Cambodian representatives can participate

More standardized, regular POC training programs. Should not be limited to geographic region as that can mean a very long wait for a session.

As a major assistance provider, for years we have been encouraging the 1540 Committee and GoE to adapt their processes and approaches to be more effective and user-friendly. They have never responded to our offers. Similarly, we routinely provide detailed feedback to the Committee on assistance requests, most of which lack the appropriate level of detail to be actioned. Again - not a single reply. Until and unless the 1540 committee and GoE demonstrate a willingness to improve their approach and listen to those with experience and resources, 1540 will continue to under-deliver.

To strengthen our capacities through training and support to our structures to work in favorable conditions. support for the implementation of the national action plan

There should be trainings for the 1540 POCs, explaining their role, tasks, etc., and how often they should contact the 1540 Committee. Since I became POC 3 or 4 years ago, there have been no trainings, and the 1540 Committee has not carried out cooperation and assistance activities to the States on the implementation of Res. 1540, as other organizations such as UNLIREC, CICTE, etc. have done. It would be convenient that they, as responsible for the subject, also carry out activities. It is necessary, they are needed!

It could organize meetings with POCs in the region to exchange information and identify demands and offers for cooperation in the implementation of R.1540.

Reaffirm the importance of POCs, their tasks, and responsibilities.

Question G-3 If you have suggestions regarding the content of any of the activities or programs by any of the entities listed above, please write below.

Organize trainings for 1540 POC at regional and African union levels

There is a need to enhance training in the implementation of resolution 1540. training should be on how to formulate national reports, prepare national action plans, and coordinate at national and regional levels in implementation of the resolution. The 1540 committee of experts is doing a very commendable job in ensuring that at least a country knows about the resolution and submit an initial report and commence implementation at the national level.

The inability of 1540 to engage with the G7-led Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction (the main CBRN capacity-building mechanism) is a serious problem. If one or more UN member countries are blocking this engagement due to political reasons, a workaround should be identified with other 1540 stakeholders. The current roadblock is depriving countries that need the support of engaging with those with a proven track record and the greatest capability of delivering it.

in brief form without verbiage so that agents can put them into practice.

Appendix 2: Updates to POC List as of August 2021

Change since August 2021	No. of MS	Names of Member States
Updated POC information	35	Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Botswana, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Denmark, Estonia, France, Greece, Guatemala, Honduras, India, Ireland, Japan, Lithuania, Mauritius, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Panama, Philippines, Poland, Republic of Korea, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Sweden, UAE, Uruguay,
New Entries	11	Bulgaria, Burundi, Cameroon, Ecuador, El Salvador, Eswatini, Georgia, Latvia, Nicaragua, Norway, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Tunisia,
Incomplete information	20	Belize, France, Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Hungary, Jamaica, Liberia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Sudan, Switzerland, Tunisia, Uruguay.