Report of Mexico on the implementation of resolution 64/38, “Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction”

[Mexico City, 24 May 2010]

Mexico believes that progress in the implementation of measures that prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction is essential to the preservation of international peace and security.

General initiatives

Through its National Nuclear Safety and Safeguards Commission, Mexico maintains continuous contact with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on the subject of safeguards and nuclear security, in order to comply with the instruments to which it is a party and to prevent nuclear materials from being diverted and ending up in the hands of terrorist groups.

In 2009, the General Customs Administration of the Ministry of Finance and Public Credit, in collaboration with the Civil Protection office of the Tax Administration Service and the National Nuclear Safety and Safeguards Commission, gave a course entitled “Immediate response to bomb threats” and three courses entitled “Training in radiological materials” for the country’s customs personnel. A further 10 courses are planned for 2010.

Updating of the regulations covering the transport of dangerous substances, materials and waste

In 2009 several steps were taken to bring regulations governing the transport of substances, materials and waste up to date in order to strengthen the rules on services for the transport of dangerous chemicals by road.

Work was completed on the review to update the Regulation on the Ground Transport of Dangerous Materials and Waste by a working group that comprised representatives from the Government and academia as well as the service sector. It produced a draft decree amending and extending the regulation in question.

Regulations are in place to ensure high safety standards in the transport of dangerous materials and waste. In 2009, efforts were focused on improving and updating safety standards in accordance with international guidelines.

Safety is being enhanced in the transport of dangerous substances, materials and waste with a view to reducing the number of accidents involving dangerous substances and ensuring compliance with the trade and safety components of the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Specifications and criteria applicable to the compatibility and segregation of dangerous goods have been updated to avoid the joint transport of substances or materials that could produce a dangerous and violent reaction.

Safety regulations containing precautionary specifications covering unstable chemicals (organic peroxides) have been updated to minimize risk. Stricter
specifications were introduced for the use and selection of suitable containers, receptacles and portable tanks for those dangerous chemicals.

In response to the recommendations made by the United Nations, whose Model Regulations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods and Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals are intended to help countries with the drafting and updating of their domestic regulations, Mexico has drawn up its own Official Mexican Standards.

**Official Mexican Standards issued in 2009 by the Ministry of Communication and Transport**


(b) Instructions for the use of containers and packaging, intermediate bulk containers, large receptacles and packaging, portable tanks, multiple-element gas containers and bulk containers for the ground transport of dangerous materials and waste. Official Mexican Standard NOM-002/1-SCT/2009.


(e) Specifications and characteristics related to the design, construction, inspection and testing of portable tanks for the transport of dangerous substances and materials in Class 1 and Classes 3 to 9. Official Mexican Standard NOM-010-SCT2/2009.


In addition, drafts have been prepared, based on the United Nations Recommendations on the Transport of Dangerous Goods (Model Regulations), sixteenth edition, that include specifications of the system of units of measurement, as follows:

(a) Draft marking of containers and packaging for the transport of dangerous substances and waste. PROY-NOM-007-SCT2/2009.

Rail and multimodal transport

The transport industry has been encouraged to adhere strictly to three relevant acts: the Federal Firearms and Explosives Act; the Federal Act to Control Chemical Substances Capable of Being Diverted to the Fabrication of Chemical Weapons; and the Federal Act on Chemical Precursors, Essential Chemicals and Machines for the Manufacture of Capsules, Tablets and/or Pills. Any body, whether an individual or a legal person, contracting services for the transport of goods characterized in the aforementioned legislation as dangerous, or that can be converted into potential components for the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction, must provide the carrier with full documentation — including the data sheet and operating manual for the container in question — and must prove beyond any doubt to the appropriate authorities that the source and the destination of the goods to be transported is legitimate.

In 2009, companies using the railway were instructed to notify the carrier promptly should they need to transport any of the goods covered by the Federal Act to Control Chemical Substances Capable of Being Diverted to the Fabrication of Chemical Weapons, in order to comply with the provisions of the Act. Carriers have reported no transport to date of goods in the national list.

Control and safety in ports

Work has continued on the “Megaports Initiative” which is designed to provide equipment, training and technical support for the General Customs Administration so as to build its capacity to deter, detect and intercept at ports and border crossing points, using non-invasive inspection technology, the illegal traffic in nuclear and radioactive materials. The equipment is functioning in Veracruz, Lázaro Cárdenas (first stage) and Manzanillo, and work is ongoing in Altamira and Lázaro Cárdenas (second stage).

Drills

From 16 to 31 July 2009, the National Level Exercise anti-terrorism drill was prepared and carried out, in coordination with the Governments of Australia, Canada, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. More than 150 high-level Mexican officials participated, representing the following federal agencies: Ministry of the Interior (Centre for Investigations and National Security, National Institute for Migration, General Coordination for Civil Protection); Ministry of Defence; Ministry of the Navy; Office of the Attorney-General; Ministry of Public Security; Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (Financial Intelligence Unit and Customs Administration); Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Communications and Transport; and Ministry of Energy (National Nuclear Safety and Safeguards Commission, Federal Electricity Commission, Laguna Verde nuclear power station and the State-owned Mexican oil company).

In October 2009, preparations went ahead for the biological attack drill (Fahrenheit 161), an exercise carried out from 11 to 14 November in Cancún, Mexico, in coordination with the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism of the Organization of American States. The goal of the drill was to assess the capacity
of the authorities to respond to a bioterrorist attack, and to examine plans, processes, and procedures for ensuring public health and safety during an attack of this nature.

The event brought together Mexican and international participants from the following: Ministry of the Interior (Centre for Investigations and National Security, National Institute for Migration, General Coordination for Civil Protection); Ministry of Defence; Ministry of the Navy; Office of the Attorney-General; Ministry of Public Security; Ministry of Finance and Public Credit (Financial Intelligence Unit and Customs Administration); Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Communications and Transport; Ministry of Energy (National Nuclear Safety and Safeguards Commission, Federal Electricity Commission, Laguna Verde nuclear power station and the State-owned Mexican oil company); Organization of American States; World Health Organization; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Pan American Health Organization; International Committee of the Red Cross; Federal Bureau of Investigation; International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL); Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe; United States Northern Command; Federal Emergency Management Agency and the International Civil Aviation Organization.