

INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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AFRICAN UNION AND UNODA CONCLUDE THE FIRST JOINT REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON STRENGTHENING IMPLEMENTATION OF UNSCR 1540 IN AFRICA



The African Union (AU) and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) concluded the first jointly convened regional workshop dedicated to strengthening the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) in Africa through biosecurity governance and strategic trade management. Held at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa from 4–5 August 2026, the workshop brought together representatives from AU Member States, AU institutions, RECs, specialized international organizations and development partners. Speaking on behalf of H.E. Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, Ms. Jocelyne Nahimana underscored that the workshop marked an important milestone in the AU–UNODA partnership. She noted that it provided a valuable platform for Member States and partners to exchange experiences, identify good practices and develop practical approaches to strengthening national and regional capacities for the implementation of Resolution 1540.

In his remarks, Dr. Adedeji Ebo, Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, emphasized that effective implementation of Resolution 1540 depends on national ownership, regional leadership and international cooperation. He underscored that these efforts must be reinforced by sustained dialogue, mutual trust, and close coordination among States, institutions, and partners.

Representing the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), Mr. Zibusiso Masuku, Biosecurity Lead, underscored the importance of strong laboratory systems supported by effective biosafety and biosecurity frameworks. He highlighted the Africa CDC Biosafety and Biosecurity Strategy 2026–2030 and its role in supporting Member States to strengthen and harmonize national frameworks and capacities, including in support of obligations under the Biological Weapons Convention, the International Health Regulations (2005) and Resolution 1540.

The workshop highlighted the biological dimensions of Resolution 1540, emphasizing stronger biosafety and biosecurity policies, legal frameworks, laboratory oversight, and diagnostics to protect public health, support innovation, and prevent the misuse of legitimate research. Participants also highlighted the implications of emerging biotechnology and synthetic biology for biosecurity governance, stressing the need for evidence-based approaches and strengthened oversight to mitigate risks. Strategic trade management emerged as vital, focusing on national control systems, licensing, customs, and inter-agency coordination to facilitate legitimate trade and prevent illicit transfers of sensitive materials and technologies.

The workshop also underscored the importance of national ownership and sustainable institutional capacity. Participants identified legal harmonization and domestication, effective national coordination, designation of competent authorities, regulatory certification, technical and laboratory capacity, and sustainable financing as priority areas for continued action.

The African Union and UNODA reaffirmed their commitment to continued cooperation in support of Member State-led implementation of Resolution 1540, including through capacity-building, regional cooperation, experience-sharing and strengthened networks among relevant national and continental institutions.

The African Union remains committed to working with Member States, the United Nations and international partners to strengthen Africa's capacity to prevent the proliferation and misuse of weapons of mass destruction, promote responsible scientific and technological development, and advance a peaceful, secure and resilient continent.

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