

## Information Note<sup>1</sup>

- Event:** African Union 1540 Review and Assistance Conference
- Organizer:** African Union Commission with the support of the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)
- Venue and Date:** Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 6-7 April 2016
- Participants:** African Union Member States: Algeria, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Comoros, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Niger, Rwanda, Sahrawi Republic, Senegal, Seychelles, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.
- Other States: Canada, Germany, India, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the United States of America.
- Intergovernmental Organizations: European Union (EU), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).
- International Organizations: 1540 Committee Chair, Committee Members and Group of Experts, Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit (BWC-ISU), International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), UN Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), World Customs Organization (WCO), World Organization for Animal Health (OIE).
- NGOs and Academic Institutions: International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA), Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), African Bio-safety Association (AfBSA), African Bio-safety Network of Expertise of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (ABNE/NEPAD), Chemical and Allied Industries' Association (CAIA) of South Africa, Global Emerging Pathogens Treatment Consortium (GET), International Centre for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB) of the University of Cape Town, Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research of the University of Ghana, Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and the Verification Research, Training and Information Centre (VERTIC).

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<sup>1</sup> For information - not an official report. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the 1540 Committee or of the organizers or participants in the event.

## 1. **Background**

Resolution 1977 (2011), inter alia, encouraged meetings on assistance issues with the participation of the 1540 Committee, between States prepared to offer assistance, States requesting assistance, other interested States, and relevant international, regional and sub regional organizations.

Since 2012, the African Union Commission (AU) has been active in arranging 1540 workshops for its Member States. In this regard, a “Workshop for African States on the Implementation of United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004)” was held from 21-22 November 2012 in Pretoria, South Africa. According to the AU, the successful outcome of the workshop contributed to an understanding of the synergies available to African States to advance their socio-economic development objectives, while developing national capacities for the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004). The workshop also discussed how best to meet the obligations of resolution 1540 (2004) given the limited capacities and resources of African States.

The 20th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the AU, held on 27-28 January 2013 in Addis Ababa, adopted a decision, Assembly/AU/Dec.472(XX), wherein the convening of the Pretoria workshop was welcomed and the AU Commission was requested to take all necessary steps, in collaboration with the 1540 Committee and the relevant partners, to implement the proposals and recommendations made at the workshop in support of Member States’ efforts in implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

In accordance with this decision, the AU Commission held a second 1540 Workshop from 10-11 December 2013 as well as the AU Review and Assistance Conference, which was held from 6-7 April 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. In preparation for this Conference, a meeting was held from 24 to 25 September 2015 in Vienna, Austria with key international organizations and donor States.

In accordance with the invitation to the Chair of the 1540 Committee, the objectives of the Conference included providing an opportunity for AU Member States to present their perspective on the 2016 Comprehensive Review; present an analysis of the implementation of the resolution and assistance in Africa, and; facilitating match-making through direct interaction between AU Member States and assistance providers.

## 3. **Highlights of discussions**

The conference agenda was divided into various sessions on 1540 obligations and status of implementation in Africa; assistance; national experiences; role of the AU and Regional Economic Communities and other bodies, and; a final session on recommendations and the way forward. These sessions were co-chaired by the AU Commission and the respective Coordinators of the Committee’s Working Groups I, II and III.

In parallel to the conference, the 1540 Committee members and experts as well as relevant international organizations held bilateral consultations with 12 of the 16 African States that formally requested 1540 assistance.

The Chair of the Committee delivered a keynote address, held bilateral consultations with the Ambassador Baso Sangqu, Chief Advisor to the AU Commission Chairperson as well as various delegations participating in the conference. The Chair also met with various African civil society and industry organizations focusing on biological and chemical issues.

The acting Director of the AU Commission's Peace and Security Department, Dr. Admore Kambudzi, delivered the welcome remarks in which he reiterated the commitment of the AU Commission to support the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) in Africa.

The Chair of the Committee in his statement emphasized the importance of the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) as a key preventative measure, outlined priorities of the Committee, progress made with 1540 implementation in Africa, and highlighted the assistance mechanism of the Committee. The Chair also announced that the Committee will be launching a 1540 training programme for African 1540 Points of Contact.

In terms of the outcome of the Conference the following were highlighted:

#### 1540 Implementation

The participants took note of the positive progress made over the last five years and that the 1540 Committee revised matrices have recorded additional measures for most Member States, including an increase in the adherence to related international legally binding instruments. It was also noted that, notwithstanding the increase in measures taken, there is a need to accelerate the implementation of measures especially on the accounting and securing of materials related to chemical and biological weapons, and in the export of materials related to nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

Regarding the designation of national points of contact, note was taken of the increase to 25 African States that have submitted to the 1540 Committee a national point of contact. States and RECs that have not already submitted a point of contact were encouraged to do so. In the context of the need to continue to develop activities to further enhance the capacity of national points of contact and engage them in relevant initiatives and capacity-building programmes, participants welcomed the announcement by the 1540 Committee of a dedicated training programme for African national points of contact which will be launched later in the year. Views were also expressed to have periodic meetings of 1540 points of contact to review implementation efforts, share experiences and map progress on assistance.

Participants recognized the value of submitting such information to the 1540 Committee and encouraged those States that have not already submitted a first report, to expedite the process of submission. In this regard, note was taken of the offer of assistance by the 1540 Committee to facilitate the drafting and submission of such reports.

A number of Member States briefed participants on their efforts and approaches to the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), and they also highlighted the institutional and capacity challenges they face and the innovative approaches that they have developed to overcome some of the obstacles encountered.

It was observed that the process of implementing resolution 1540 (2004), as driven by Member States, is making steady progress but it is a long-term task that requires national ownership of the implementation process, based on an approach that is informed by the national context, takes into consideration the institutional structures and capacities, and which guarantee the sustainability of the progress.

#### Assistance

Participants welcomed the substantial assistance programmes offered by the international partners and organizations and commended the dedicated efforts by the 1540 Committee and its Expert Group to match offers of assistance with requests made. Views were expressed that the actual delivery of 1540 related assistance needs to be strengthened and those that are considering submitting assistance requests, were encouraged to engage with the assistance providers, the 1540 Committee and the AU Commission to formulate specific and realistic assistance requests that would facilitate their delivery.

A number of regional specialised governmental and non-governmental organizations briefed participants on their efforts and initiatives to facilitate the implementation of activities related to resolution 1540. Participants were encouraged by the availability of such African expertise to assist States with their 1540 implementation efforts while advancing broader socio-economic agendas. In this regard, participants welcomed the efforts of the AU Commission to integrate specialized African bodies in the regional 1540 assistance framework.

The value of model legislation was recognized and the AU Commission was encouraged to consider launching a process to develop relevant model 1540 legislation that Member States could use as a reference in developing their national legislation on the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004).

#### 2016 Comprehensive Review

Regarding the 2016 Comprehensive Review of implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), note was taken of the 1540 Committee's open meeting to be held on 20 to 22 June 2016 in New York, and participants encouraged Member States and the AU Commission to actively engage in, and contribute to, the review process. While expressing appreciation of the match-making role of the 1540 Committee and the work it carried out during the last eleven years, participants expressed the need to consider, in the course of the Comprehensive Review, ways to enhance the role of the 1540 Committee in the provision of assistance.

#### 4. **Additional Comments**

For further information, please contact the 1540 Committee experts by e-mail at [1540experts@un.org](mailto:1540experts@un.org).