

Information Note¹

- Event:** Africa Regional Workshop on Biosafety and Biosecurity
- Sponsors:** Hosted by the Government of Kenya, with support and funding from the United States Government, in cooperation with the 1540 Committee and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)
- Date and Venue:** 2-4 February 2010, Nairobi, Kenya
- Participants:** Algeria, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, European Union, France, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Nigeria, Republic of the Congo, Senegal, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, United Kingdom, United States of America
Biological Weapons and Toxins Convention Implementation Support Unit (BWC-ISU), World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), World Health Organization (WHO), African Biological Safety Association, Moroccan Association of Biological Safety, Uganda National Academy of Sciences, VERTIC

1. Objectives

The aim of the workshop was to promote capacity-building at the national and regional levels, to advance full implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), to encourage experience-sharing on relevant issues, in particular in the biosafety and biosecurity area, and to help ensure a safe and secure biological infrastructure in the path to sustainable economic development.

The focus on the biological area was consistent with the findings of the July 2008 report from the 1540 Committee to the Security Council (“*The issue of preventing the manufacture/production and acquisition of biological weapons, their means of delivery and related materials by non-State actors has been identified as requiring more specific attention in the future*”) and with the conclusions of the Comprehensive Review of the status of implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) achieved in January 2010 (“*The Comprehensive Review identified some areas in which States have adopted fewer measures, such as: biological weapons and access to related materials*”).

2. Background

The *Africa Regional Workshop on Biosafety and Biosecurity* was the second regional workshop in support of resolution 1540 (2004) sponsored by the Government of the United States of America, following the *South Asia* workshop held in Colombo, Sri Lanka, 25-27 June 2009. For both events, UNODA and the 1540 Committee experts played a role in the shaping of the agenda and in various preparatory activities, such as a pre-workshop briefing session for UN missions.

¹ 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.

3. **Highlights**

In the closing session, the representative of the 1540 Committee Mr Pablo Arrocha (Mexico) highlighted:

- The high quality and participation during the workshop, with informative presentations and interactive and lively discussions;
- The transparency with which States shared experience in the areas of biosafety and biosecurity, as well as the humility with which gaps and needs were identified;
- The number and quality of ongoing programs in Africa concerning biosafety and biosecurity that are substantively meaningful for the implementation of resolution 1540 (2004);
- The awareness that African States have showed in order to comply with resolution 1540 (2004), and their willingness to do so;
- The existence of a real need for capacity building in the region, for which the establishment of partnerships is needed, in connection with what States are doing and should do by themselves to implement resolution 1540 (2004);
- The deep appreciation for this type of opportunity to engage in discussions with potential partners.

Calling for continuous efforts toward full implementation of resolution 1540 (2004), the representative of the 1540 Committee:

- Encouraged States that have not yet done so to present their first report to the 1540 Committee, and States that have already submitted a report to report on new developments in the implementation of the resolution;
- Encouraged open and transparent flows of information and communication within States, especially between technical and political areas;
- Encouraged regional cooperation and sharing of information among States;
- Extended appreciation for the bilateral discussions that were conducted during the workshop and encouraged States to make full use of the results of these discussions with relevant stakeholders;
- Reiterated to delegations that a key objective of the 1540 Committee is to enhance cooperation with Member States to fully implement resolution 1540 (2004), and to use the 1540 Committee as a helpful tool in this regard;
- Invited delegations to visit the official website of the 1540 Committee, and to maintain an open and transparent flow of information and communication with the Committee.

4. **Bilateral consultations**

Bilateral consultations were held between participating African States and 1540 Committee Members and experts, focusing on next steps of implementation and, as appropriate, identifying areas of cooperation, including assistance, to further improve implementation. Various issues and ways forward expressed by States were discussed.

5. **Additional comments**

The agenda of the workshop as well as the presentations and other relevant documentation can be found at: <https://1540.sandia.gov/past-workshops/africa2010>

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