

## **The Global Disarmament and Non-proliferation Framework and Biosecurity: Connecting Political Commitment and Effective Health Security in Africa**

**Wednesday, 24 November 2021**

**13:15-14:45 CET (UTC+1)**

*Joint virtual event on the margins of the annual meeting of States Parties to the  
Biological Weapons Convention*

Africa is increasingly interconnected. The free movement of people and goods underpins the integration agenda, aiming to stimulate economic growth and human prosperity. The viability and resilience of such an environment requires increased capacity to safeguard against a spectrum of biological threats that can have far-reaching consequences. In its holistic sense, biosecurity refers to a strategic and integrated approach to analysing and managing relevant risks to human, animal and plant life and health and associated risks for the environment. It is based on recognition of the critical linkages between sectors and the potential for hazards to move within and between sectors, with system-wide consequences.<sup>1</sup>

The international disarmament and non-proliferation instruments, namely the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), are geared towards preventing the deliberate and malicious weaponization of disease. Nonetheless, they share a key principle with the broader One Health approach: whether a biological threat is natural, accidental, or intentional, there is a prevention, detection and response imperative. African States have continued to express commitment to these instruments, recognizing their contribution to strengthening biosafety and biosecurity.<sup>2</sup> However, significant implementation gaps remain. Additionally, Africa is underrepresented in the only international mechanism for investigation of alleged use of biological weapons, the UN Secretary-General's Mechanism (UNSGM), specifically in terms of nominated experts and analytical laboratories.<sup>3</sup>

Sustainable and effective approaches to implementing the non-proliferation instruments, in a manner that complements and reinforces broader health security objectives, requires multi-dimensional networks and partnerships with and among African stakeholders at the health-security interface. The joint side event will gather practitioners and policy-makers from the Africa region to present some of the notable steps in this direction at the national and regional levels. The side event will highlight and discuss practical means to operationalize the synergies and complementarities between the international disarmament and nonproliferation regimes and health security in Africa.

---

<sup>1</sup> See The International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) [Information Note No. 1/2010 – Biosecurity](#).

<sup>2</sup> See the [press statement](#) of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission on the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the BWC.

<sup>3</sup> Read the UNSGM Factsheet [here](#).

## Speakers

### Mr. Ayodotun Bobadoye

Chief Operating Officer, GET

*Building a Regional Community of Practice on Biosecurity*

### Mr. Akin Abayomi

Honourable Commissioner for Health, Lagos State, Nigeria

*Biosecurity in Outbreak Prevention & Response: Lessons Learned*

### Mr. Talkmore Maruta

Senior Biosafety and Biosecurity Officer, Africa Centres for Disease Control

*Consolidating Regional Action on Health Security & Biological Nonproliferation*

### Ms. Melanie Reddiar

Chief Director: Secretariat of the South African Council for the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and Co-Chair of the Signature Initiative Sub-working Group on Nonproliferation, Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction

*Approaches in International Support for Sustainable Biosecurity in Africa*

### Mr. Ismail Balla (**Moderator**)

Head, 1540 Support Unit

United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs

## Language

The event will be held in English only.

## Platform and registration

The event will be held virtually on Zoom. To receive the link, please register here:

<https://forms.gle/Wb6iKYdTtYHNF3eW7>

## Contact

For inquiries about the event, please contact:

Ms. Christine Uhlenhaut  
Senior Programme Officer  
Team Lead - UNSGM, UNODA  
[christine.uhlenhaut@un.org](mailto:christine.uhlenhaut@un.org)

Ms. Einas Mohammed  
Political Affairs Officer  
1540 Support Unit, UNODA  
[einasmohammed@un.org](mailto:einasmohammed@un.org)