

## INFORMATION & COMMUNICATION DIRECTORATE

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### THE AFRICAN UNION COMMISSION HOSTS ITS FIFTH ORDINARY SESSION OF THE SPECIALISED TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, NUTRITION, POPULATION AND DRUG CONTROL (STC-HPNDC-5)

“Cultivating Wellness in Africa: Holistic Approaches to Health, Nutrition, Population, Drug Control, Crime Prevention, and Education”



*Participants at the Fifth Ordinary Session Of The Specialised Technical Committee On Health, Nutrition, Population And Drug Control*

The African Union (AU) Commission convened its Fifth Ordinary Session of the African Union Specialised Technical Committee on Health, Nutrition, Population, and Drug Control (STC-HNPDC-5) from 5-9 August 2024 in Addis Ababa. Under the theme "Cultivating Wellness in Africa: Holistic Approaches to Health, Nutrition, Population, Drug Control, Crime Prevention, and Education," the event gathered Ministers, experts, and key partners to explore integrated strategies addressing the intersection of health, education, and social development.

A wide range of initiatives was introduced to strengthen health systems, improve nutrition, manage population growth, and escalate efforts in drug control and crime

prevention. The discussions underscored the pressing need to create resilient health infrastructures capable of withstanding emerging and future challenges.

A significant focus was placed on the escalating public health crisis tied to increasing drug use among vulnerable populations such as youth, women, and children. The AU Commission emphasized the critical importance of intensifying drug control measures to address these rising concerns, alongside the broader health and social development objectives discussed throughout the session. This comprehensive approach reflects the AU's commitment to fostering long-term wellness across the continent through coordinated, multidisciplinary efforts.

H.E. Amb. Minata Samate Cessouma, AU Commissioner for Health, Humanitarian Affairs, and Social Development, called for increased collaboration among Member States to combat drug trafficking and related organized crime. "Africa is at a crossroads. The challenges we face with drug control are immense, but through collective action and increased investments, we can make meaningful progress," she emphasized.

Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the World Health Organisation Director-General, noted the importance of access to quality medicines, the significance of the African Medicines Agency (AMA), and the efforts in national and regional vaccine production. He further highlighted the importance of access to controlled substances for pain medication and palliative care. "Access to quality medicines and controlled substances is crucial, and the African Medicines Agency plays a significant role in vaccine production and pain management," he remarked.

In her capacity as STC-HNPDC-5 Chairperson, Hon. Umyy Ally Mwalimu, the Minister of Health, United Republic of Tanzania, acknowledged the Commission's initiatives in addressing health, nutrition, and drug control challenges on the continent. "Invest in maternal, neonatal, child, adolescent, and youth health while strengthening drug policies and border controls to combat drug abuse and trafficking." She stated.

In his opening remarks, Prof. Julio Rakotonirina, Director for Health and Humanitarian Affairs at the AUC, underscored the critical importance of resilient healthcare systems, particularly in the face of ongoing climate-related disasters and socio-economic shocks. "We must prioritize the health of our citizens, not only by addressing immediate health challenges but by building resilient, inclusive, and adaptive healthcare systems. Health, alongside education, remains a basic human right and is fundamental to achieving the African Union's Agenda 2063," he stated.

With respect to the AU Theme of the Year, Prof. Mohamed Belhocine, the African Union Commission Commissioner for Education, Science, Technology, and Innovation, emphasized the urgent need to transform and revitalize education systems across Africa. He noted, "Investing in education, particularly for young children, youth, and adolescents, is the most effective tool in the fight against poverty, reducing gender inequalities, and enabling people to survive and thrive. This investment directly

contributes to the socioeconomic development and human capital advancement on our continent.”

The STC-HPNDC-5 culminated in the endorsement and consideration of several pivotal documents aimed at advancing the health and socio-economic well-being of Africa. This session witnessed the endorsement of significant frameworks, strategies, and reports. In addition, several important documents were presented for information and briefing. These efforts underscore the AU's commitment to addressing critical health challenges and fostering sustainable development across the continent.

**List of Documents Endorsed:**

1. 14th ATFFND Meeting Report
2. Africa Regional Nutrition Advocacy and Communication Strategy 2024-2028
3. Strategic Framework for Prevention and Management of Anaemia in Africa
4. Concept Note on Development of Africa Regional Nutrition Strategy (ARNS) 2026-2035
5. Cost of Food and Nutrition in Africa (COFAN) Studies Concept Note
6. Report on the Integration of the Traditional Leaders in Drug Demand Reduction in Africa
7. Report on the Implementation of Recommendations of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Health Population and Drug Control (STC-HPDC-4) held in 2022
8. Report on the Recommendations of the Continental Technical Experts Consultation on Drug Demand Reduction held on 06-07 November 2023 in Lusaka Zambia
9. Report on the Recommendations of the Continental Technical Experts' Consultation on Drug Supply Reduction held on 19-21 July 2023 in Abidjan Cote d'Ivoire
10. Draft Common African Position for the Midterm Review of the 2019 Ministerial Declaration on Strengthening Actions at the National Regional and International Levels to Address and Counter the World Drug Problem
11. First African Union Youth Forum Declaration on Drug Use Prevention (2023)
12. AU Digital Health Strategy (2024-2030)
13. Roadmap 2030 on Sustaining the AIDS Response Ensuring Systems Strengthening and Health Security for the Development of Africa
14. Terms of Reference for the AU Taskforce on Health Financing
15. Terms of Reference of the Community Health Workers (CHW) Champion

16. Terms of Reference (TOR) for Reproductive Maternal Newborn Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH)
17. Revised African Union Model Law on Medical Products Regulation
18. African Union Declaration on the Fight against Substandard and Falsified Medical Products on the Continent

**List of Documents for Information/Briefing:**

1. Updates on the Operationalisation of the African Medicines Agency (AMA)
2. Lusaka High-Level Session Declaration on Addressing Substance Use and Related Mental Health Disorders among Youth Women and Children
3. Paper on the theme of the year
4. Draft AU Roadmap to 2030 and Beyond on Sustaining the AIDS Response Strengthening Health Systems and Health Security for the Development of Africa
5. Updates on Multi-country Mpox Outbreak and Response
6. Progress Report on the Implementation of the Addis Ababa Declaration on Immunization (ADI) and ADI Scorecards
7. Progress Report on the Implementation of the Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) Legal Framework
8. Africa CDC Strategy on Non-Communicable Diseases, Injuries Prevention and Control, and Mental Health Promotion (2022 – 2026)
9. Health Development Partnership for Africa and the Caribbean (HeDPAC).

The session included the nomination of the Bureau members in accordance with the STC Rules of Procedure. The nominated members are as follows:

- **Chairperson:** Tanzania (Eastern Region)
- **1st Vice-Chairperson:** Zimbabwe (Southern Region)
- **2nd Vice-Chairperson:** Senegal (Western Region)
- **3rd Vice-Chairperson:** (Northern Region) - Consultations are ongoing
- **Rapporteur:** Democratic Republic of Congo (Central Region)

The Legal Counsel presented the nominations for the African Population Experts Committee (APEC) Bureau. The proposed positions are as follows:

- **Chairperson:** Northern Africa (Consultations in progress)
- **1st Vice-Chairperson:** Central Africa (Chad)
- **2nd Vice-Chairperson:** East Africa (Tanzania)



- **3rd Vice-Chairperson:** West Africa (Côte d'Ivoire)
- **Rapporteur:** Southern Africa (Namibia)

The session concluded with a call to action for AU Member States to implement the outlined strategies and ensure that the health, nutrition, and safety of Africa's population are safeguarded.

The Ministers recommended that Member States focus on strengthening the integration of health and education sectors to enhance overall population well-being and emphasized the importance of addressing the link between population dynamics and educational outcomes, ensuring policies are aligned with the demographic dividend.

The Ministers also urged the promotion of Early Childhood Education and Development, alongside school health and nutrition programs, as well as the implementation of early interventions for substance use prevention and treatment. Additionally, they requested the Commission to develop a manual of best practices for addressing substance use disorders.

Lastly, the Ministers highlighted the need for increased investment in women's education, recognizing its crucial role in driving social and economic development across the continent. The African Union reaffirmed its commitment to working with international partners, civil society, and the private sector to achieve these goals and create a healthier, more prosperous Africa.

The STC-HNPDC-5 marked a significant milestone in the African Union's efforts to cultivate wellness across the continent. With strong leadership and strategic partnerships, the AUC is poised to make transformative changes in health, nutrition, population, drug control, and Education creating a healthier and more resilient Africa.

The Sixth Ordinary Session of the Specialised Technical Committee on Health, Nutrition, Population and Drug Control (STC-HPNDC-6) will be held in 2026.

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