

Chairmen's Findings and Consensus Statement of Priority Actions

Resulting from
*Strengthening a Global Biosecurity/Biosafety Framework and
Coping with the Biotechnology Revolution*

An International Workshop Organized by
The Landau Network Centro Volta-International Working Group and
The Partnership for Global Security

Como Italy, 25-26 October 2007

Key Workshop Findings

The fourth IWG-LNCV and PGS workshop on biological security, *Strengthening a Global Biosecurity/Biosafety Framework and Coping with the Biotechnology Revolution*, highlighted the increasing importance and the multifaceted nature of the global biosecurity challenge. It provided an important forum for discussion which generated fruitful and positive feedback from a diverse range of government officials, representatives of International Government Organisations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), specialists in bioscience, and members of the private sector. In particular, there was a large measure of consensus on the importance of addressing a number of key issues, namely:

- Defining what constitutes risk in terms of biosecurity.
- Developing a global and harmonized biosecurity regime that links national legislation with an agreed set of international norms in the effort to stem biological threats.
- Educating and raising awareness among scientists, the academic community, and other actors involved in the biotechnology field of the responsible use of bioscience and its relationship to global security and nonproliferation dangers.
- Engaging the private sector in a productive dialogue on the relationship of the life sciences to global security in ways that enable rather than constrain value creation in the biotechnology economy.
- Establishing a mechanism for interdisciplinary (security, law enforcement, public health, science, private sector) discussion and coordination regarding the challenges posed by the biotechnology revolution and to support the essential concepts of transparency and confidence building.
- Making law enforcement at every level – down to the grassroots – a more effective link in the biosecurity chain and improving intelligence.
- Recognizing the importance of the nonproliferation and security aims of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) and the need to support the aims of this treaty.
- Maintaining the momentum generated by the Global Partnership Against the Proliferation of WMD established by the G8 at the Kananaskis summit, particularly as it relates to the cooperation established on biosecurity activities with biotechnology and life sciences institutes in Russia and the NIS.
- Expanding biological proliferation prevention programs to regions of the world with emerging life sciences sectors to ensure effective biosecurity norms are established in those regions.
- Understanding more thoroughly the link between human and animal pathogens as an essential part of the effort to prevent the spread of emerging/re-emerging infectious diseases.

The organisers of the workshop proposed the following steps to build on the consensus achieved at this workshop and to support the BTWC implementation process:

- Reviewing the biosecurity programmes and mechanisms currently in operation, and in light of the workshop's findings, to identify the gaps and needs that exist or may emerge.
- Creating a joint statement of critical priorities for action to be signed by international government organizations (IGOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) represented at the workshop, and to provide an integrated framework within which these key issues can be pursued (a Consensus Statement is attached).
- Submitting this joint statement to the meeting of BTWC states parties in December 2007, in the context of the national implementation discussions this year and in preparation of discussions of biosecurity and biosafety in the next year, and to disseminate this document more widely.
- Reporting back regularly to future meetings of states parties of the BTWC on the progress achieved in promoting these priorities in future workshops and related events.

Consensus Statement of Priority Actions for the Promotion of Global Biosecurity

November 15, 2007

The undersigned parties consider the following five issues to be immediate priorities for the global community for the purpose of enhancing global biosecurity. Some of these actions are best undertaken by governments and some can be best implemented through International Government Organizations and NGOs. However, these priority issues should be integrated through a mechanism that links them together and facilitates action toward their goals, for example, through a Global Compact or similar global initiative.

- Action 1: Sharing Baseline Information
Development of a baseline of information on global biological holdings, research facilities, and infectious disease patterns. Specifically this could include identification and alignment of all existing global databases of pathogen stockpiles, research facility and collection storage locations, inventories of biological materials and equipment, and infectious disease monitoring and patterns. This network should be connected and integrated by an information technology architecture that will allow it to be utilized for the benefit of global public health and security while protecting sensitive and proprietary information.
- Action 2: Education and Awareness Raising Promotion
Greater education and heightened awareness promotion on the nature of the biological threat in the scientific, academic, and policy communities. The potential for the accidental or intentional misapplication of biological technology needs to be recognized while protecting the enormous benefits the life sciences provide to humankind.
- Action 3: Interdisciplinary Coordination
Interdisciplinary coordination and information-sharing in support of the improvement of global biosecurity. The threat posed by the misapplication of the life sciences cuts across numerous sectors, including public health, science, technology, law enforcement, and private industry. Therefore greater cross-communication among the diverse stakeholder sectors is essential to improve information flow and promote awareness of the concerns and major issues in each sector. Yearly global conventions on global biosecurity featuring a broad cross section of life sciences stakeholders should be convened.
- Action 4: Engaging the Private Sector
Engaging in a dialogue with the private sector on the risks posed by the potential misapplication of biological materials and advanced scientific techniques while emphasizing the need to protect the scientific and economic value created in the biotechnology and life sciences fields. This dialogue must advance – not hinder – the vast benefits biotechnology can contribute to the promotion of public health and raise the quality of life globally.
- Action 5: Promoting Compliance with Harmonized Standards and Practices
Development and acceptance of globally harmonized biosecurity standards, improved gathering of intelligence, and better integration of law enforcement to enhance the quality, rapidity, and effectiveness of efforts to prevent and respond to biological dangers.

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