



IFBA

International Federation of
Biosafety Associations



The IFBA Declaration on Advancing Global Biosafety and Biosecurity

February 17, 2011
Bangkok, Thailand



2011: The Year of Building International Biosafety Communities

The International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA)

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We, representatives from the global biosafety and biosecurity community, participated in an international conference on Global Biosafety and Biosecurity on 15 to 17 February 2011 in Bangkok, Thailand. The conference sought to identify urgent gaps and priorities and recommend action to advance biosafety and biosecurity with particular attention to building sustainable capacity where it is most needed.

We recognize that biosafety and biosecurity are important elements within the greater framework of strengthening global health and security. In particular promoting high standards in the safe and secure operation of biological facilities of all kinds underpins the effort to enhance the capacity to respond to the most challenging biological risks in areas with high endemic disease. Such activities will also greatly facilitate international collaboration essential to sustained success, particularly in the less well-resourced areas of the world.

We draw attention to the serious dangers that can arise from the failure to implement effective biosafety and biosecurity and, importantly, we highlight the significant benefits offered by the implementation of sound biosafety and biosecurity practices including:

- Minimising the socio-economic impact of human and animal disease outbreaks and better protection of laboratory staff, the wider community and the environment.
- Contributing to better biosecurity through control of access to dangerous pathogens and tracking their use and improving reporting of incidents.

We recognize the need for innovative approaches to develop affordable biosafety and biosecurity capacities appropriate for those areas of the world with limited resources. Further, we recognize that, in promoting the implementation of appropriate biosafety and biosecurity practices, they need to keep pace with the rapidly developing field of the life sciences. We recognize the need to implement biosafety and biosecurity strategies and practices in a manner that does not impede progress in the life sciences. We also recognize the importance of taking into account the ethical aspects of these developments.

Raising the International Biosafety Posture

Our common goals for the international biosafety and biosecurity community are:

- Advocacy and promotion of biosafety and biosecurity (i.e. biorisk) issues.
- Outreach and awareness raising outside the biosafety and biosecurity community by utilizing case studies to clearly communicate the health and related socio-economic impact of biosafety/biosecurity incidents.
- Providing support to IFBA members for the development of guidelines and regulations, including a world map with country status and links to existing relevant documents.
- Developing a central IFBA information resource with biosafety and biosecurity information, links, training curricula and materials, and funding opportunities.

Moving the Agenda Forward

We identified three types of organizations required for successful multi-stakeholder partnerships to promote biosafety and biosecurity. They should have one or more of the following characteristics: the appropriate mandate to be directly involved in biosafety and biosecurity issues; the appropriate expertise; and/or are able to deliver funding support. These organizations include international intergovernmental organizations, national governments, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, private foundations and private industry.

We strongly recommend that the IFBA should serve as the visionary and coordinator by bringing together the major stakeholders in order to promote the advancement of biosafety and biosecurity globally by:

- Establishing a formalized and sustainable professional management structure to include a Board of Directors based upon the new goals and aims of the organization.
- Establishing a corporate responsibility fund to support IFBA activities.
- Developing a 5-Year Strategic Action Plan and identifying metrics for this plan.

Addressing Priority Gaps and Needs

We identified priority goals and projects to help address, in the short term, gaps and needs as follows:

- Raising awareness from the political and public perspectives, and encouraging collaboration among the human and animal health communities.
- Developing sustainable biosafety associations and mapping gaps and needs.

- Providing advice to the competent national authorities and services for the improvement of efficient waste management through disseminating knowledge of appropriate systems, tools and technologies for public and veterinary health environments.
- Promoting human and laboratory capacity building with proper identification of gaps and needs using the best available concepts, principles and practices.

We also identified longer-term goals as follows:

- Promoting biosafety education, particularly of the younger generation, involving curriculum development within a common framework and a common methodology for evaluation.
- Supporting appropriate and practical legislative framework development.
- Developing a strategy to obtain funding for applied biosafety research programs.

The above recommendations for action were developed by 160 participants from 36 countries from all regions of the world. We acknowledge the wide variety of local challenges that may be related to the endemic biological risks, scientific and technical capacity and available resources. Nevertheless we seek through partnerships from within and beyond our regions to help achieve the shared essential goals stated above in the interest of the health and safety of our communities.

Done in Bangkok, Thailand on 17 February 2011