



Global Biosafety and Biosecurity: Taking Action *February, 2011 Bangkok, Thailand*

1. About the Conference

Biosafety and Biosecurity are central to the global fight against emerging infectious diseases. The lack of safe and secure laboratory environments to handle dangerous pathogens presents a risk of infection not only to the laboratory worker, but to the community at large, whether from an accidental laboratory release or deliberate theft and subsequent bioterrorism event. Further, states lacking adequate laboratory capacity are unable to detect and respond to outbreaks of emerging infectious diseases.

This is a global problem that requires a global solution. The call for assistance is broad and far reaching and the risks from emerging infectious diseases continue to grow. There remains an urgent and under-addressed need to develop long-term sustainable biosafety and biosecurity capacity in countries around the world. To this end, the International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA) will host an international conference to provide greater visibility to this neglected issue and to act as a much needed catalyst for long-term biosafety and biosecurity capacity building. The IFBA's conference on "*Global Biosafety and Biosecurity: Taking Action*" will bring together policy makers and professionals from all regions for a dialogue that will address challenges and for a commitment to solutions.

2. Background

On 28 April 2004, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted *Resolution 1540* under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, obliging States, inter alia, to establish biosecurity measures and prevent the proliferation of biological weapons. In May 2005, the World Health Assembly adopted *Resolution WHA58.29 Enhancement of Laboratory Biosafety*, a plan to mobilize international resources to strengthen global biosafety.

“The 58th World Health Assembly, recognizing that some Member States may not have adequate controls in place...urges the mobilization of national and international human and financial resources to improve laboratory biosafety.”

While some progress has been made since the UN resolutions of 2004 and 2005, much work remains to be done. Consequently more intensive action is needed. Resources need to be leveraged to build national biosafety and biosecurity programs around the world. Both scientists and senior officials must direct more attention and resources to biosafety and biosecurity.

3. Conference Theme & Program

The IFBA International Conference will create a unique forum for policy makers, governments, international assistance programs and stakeholders to develop innovative solutions to achieve the UN and World Health Assembly goals. Engagement with countries from around the world will focus on developing programs that address their needs in a practical and sustainable fashion. The Conference will identify urgent risks, leverage resources, and raise the commitment needed to fill in existing gaps in global biosafety and biosecurity.

A second key driver for the conference is to enhance knowledge to and stimulate the future involvement of those new to the field biosafety and biosecurity. As such, the conference will also reach out to nascent biosafety associations and countries currently under-represented in the field.

Key conference goals include:

- Identify gaps in global biosafety & biosecurity and develop a plan of action for addressing them
- Secure commitment of senior level government and policy makers, international assistance and donor organizations, and stakeholders
- Promote more, better and sustained resources towards biosafety and biosecurity
- Advocate for and assist national Ministries of Health, Agriculture, and Security to develop effective and sustainable policies and programs
- Identify obstacles that may lie in the path of advancing global biosecurity and biosafety and develop solutions to overcome them

- Provide an opportunity for those new in the field to meet experienced peers and stimulate their future involvement
- Explore new and innovative ideas and pioneering work

4. International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA)

Established in 2001, the IFBA's mission is to support and promote biosafety on a national and international level through collaboration among biosafety organizations, governments and experts. IFBA's members include national and regional Biosafety Associations (Africa, Asia-Pacific, Central-Asia & Caucasus, Pakistan, Japan, Korea, Thailand, Europe, North America, Mexico, South America), Non-Governmental Organizations (International Veterinary Biosafety Working Group, Pharmaceutical Biosafety Group, International Level 4 Users Group, International Society for Biosafety Research, International Council for Life Sciences), Governments (US Centres for Disease Control, Public Health Agency of Canada, G8 Global Partnership Program, G7 Global Health Security Action Group), and others.

By working in partnership with its member organizations and leveraging resources, the IFBA is able to effectively reach to the national level in countries throughout the world and deliver sustainable biosafety and biosecurity capacity building programs where they are most needed.