



International Federation of Biosafety Associations

Statement by the International Federation of Biosafety Associations to the 7th Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention

Mr. President, Excellencies, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen. It is a privilege to be here today and speak to you about the International Federation of Biosafety Associations at this Seventh Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention. All of us gathered at this event have a role to play in preventing the acquisition and use of biological weapons. When it comes to global public health and security, we need to take collective action. We recognize that widespread and lasting results can only be realized by harnessing the power of multiple stakeholders. No individual sector can make as big a difference alone as we can make by working together.

The International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA) is a global community of research scientists, biosafety professionals, laboratory personnel, NGOs, academics and policy makers from around the world who recognize that biosafety and biosecurity are important elements within the framework of biological non-proliferation and strengthening global security. The IFBA's mission statement ("*safe, secure and responsible work with biological materials*") highlights the need to protect and promote global health and security, and lays the foundation for the implementation of strategies to minimize the serious dangers that can arise from the failure to implement sound biosafety and biosecurity practices.

The IFBA's portfolio of programs addresses multiple threats to human security, reaching across the entire spectrum of biological threats from naturally-occurring outbreaks of infectious diseases, to research, to bioterrorism preparedness and response. We are an advocate for biosafety communities around the world and deliver sustainable capacity building programs across disciplines and borders. By working collectively and leveraging resources, the IFBA has become a renowned and resourced key actor facilitating international collaboration and promoting high standards in the safe and secure handling of biological materials.

Over the last few years, our IFBA community has grown to over 50 member biosafety associations and organizations representing virtually every geographic region of the globe. Creating partnerships and drawing heavily on the international community is a key driver for the IFBA in

achieving our mission and enabling us to accomplish our greatest successes. Mr. President, I am pleased to announce today, that the Implementation Support Unit for the Convention has officially joined the IFBA as an observer organization. We welcome the development of this constructive relationship with the ISU and look forward to working together to realize our common goals of biological safety and security.

Looking to the future, the IFBA and more than 50 of its members recognize the unique opportunity we have in strengthening our engagement and collaboration with BWC stakeholders as an important partner in achieving our complementary goals across the world. Our task is to help ensure that all states have the biosafety, biosecurity and biological non-proliferation knowledge and tools they require. Collaboration with international, regional and national biosafety associations provides a direct channel with those who actually run the facilities that conduct biological research. Our community, which includes countries which are not active participants in the BWC, is an invaluable resource for work related to the convention.

There is also a growing recognition of the synergies between our two missions. Biosafety associations are focused on strengthening the profession of biosafety, while the convention aims at preventing disease from being used to deliberately cause harm. In the age of biorisk management there is an increased need to harmonize efforts to achieve our common goals. However, with resource constraints being a constant challenge for all, working together not only makes sense, it is critical for future success. The biosafety community should work with states parties to build biosafety and biosecurity capacity in developing countries—with a particular focus on raising awareness among biosafety professionals about the convention and dual-use issues. The biosafety community can also act as a useful bridge between governments and the private sector, and become an influential partner in generating greater buy-in and encouraging closer engagement within the framework of the convention.

Mr. President, in your statement to the 2011 Biosafety, Biosecurity and Biodefense International Congress held in Kuala Lumpur, you called upon the international community to continue to build broader networks and to find better ways to integrate into the work of the Convention. We heard your remarks *“I hope...now that we also have the International Federation of Biosafety Associations, that we will continue to see such remarkable progress”*. Our task at the IFBA is to continue to build strong ties between the biosafety community and more importantly to facilitate greater and more visible engagement between these communities and the Biological Weapons Convention.