

Biosecurity Policy and Practice: Contributions from Scientific Organizations

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Goal of the Chapter

To convey:

- Two stories about the engagement of international scientific organizations in the BWC as examples of contributions to biosecurity policy
 - 2005 work on codes of conduct for scientists
 - Reviews of S&T for review conferences
- Relevance of that engagement for scientists

2005: The content, promulgation, and adoption of codes of conduct for scientists

- Innovation – Guests of the Meeting
 - 23 scientific, professional, academic and industry bodies participated in the open sessions as guests of the meeting
- Lesson for Policy:
 - Provided a focal point for engaging and promoting action by scientists and science organizations
 - Had direct effects: IAP Statement and two union codes were inspired by the Meeting of Experts
- Message for students: Activities of BWC directly relevant to scientists

IAP–The Global Network of Science Academies

- Created a Biosecurity Working Group in 2004
 - Original members included national academies of China, Cuba, The Netherlands, Nigeria, the UK, and the US
 - Additional members now include Poland (chair), Australia, Egypt, India, Pakistan, and Russia
- Its first major task was to prepare a contribution for the 2005 BWC meeting

Example: IUBMB

Until 2005 IUBMB [International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology] had no official code of ethics. The idea that such a code could be useful came from a meeting in Geneva in which I participated on behalf of IUBMB. ... As the Chair of this meeting, John Freeman stated it as important that such meetings include the voice of scientists themselves. Listening to the meeting convinced me that IUBMB should develop an IUBMB Code of Ethics. A special committee ... undertook this task. The draft code was sent to biochemists and molecular biologists from around the world who were asked to comment. The code, which covers ethical conduct of scientists at different levels is posted on the IUBMB website.

Source: Mary Osborn, IUBMB Presidential address (2005)

S&T Reviews

Theme: There is already an informal “scientific advisory network” from international scientific organizations to for chemical and biological risks

- Workshops on trends in S&T for all three CWC review conferences and 6th and 7th BWC review conferences (workshop for the 8th in September 2015)
 - Engagement with BWC during intersessional process
 - Engaged with both BWC and CWC – and hence able to address areas of increasing overlap between chemistry and biology
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- Message for students: Scientists can contribute *as scientists* to implementation of the Conventions

S&T Reviews

Common Features of the S&T Workshops

- Sponsored by major international scientific organizations/networks
- Support from national academies and professional societies
- Mix of researchers in key fields and government scientists and technical experts
- Genuinely international participation
- Discuss and debate advances
- Conclusions about the state of S&T and potential implications, both positive and negative

S&T Reviews

Differences Between S&T Workshops

For CWC

- Formal link to OPCW via SAB
- Reports make recommendations to the SAB

For BWC

- No formal link, reflecting BWC/ISU structure
- Reports stop at conclusions; no recommendations

S&T Reviews

■ For BW & CWC

- Funding a perpetual struggle
- Very different resources and capacities across scientific organizations
- Dissemination often a challenge, both in Geneva/The Hague and in capitals
- Now generally not addressing how national governments do tracking and assessment – could more be done?

But a strong track record and potential to contribute

THANK YOU!

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