

Community Corner

Issue No. 11 (October 2021)

The Action Package Prevent-3 (APP3) on Biosafety & Biosecurity is a community of experts and leaders from countries and non-governmental organizations that seek to advance global biosafety and biosecurity capacity under the auspices of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), in support of various international instruments and agreements including the International Health Regulations, the Biological Weapons Convention, and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540.

- For more information about APP3 and to explore additional resources, messages, and information, see the [APP3 webpage](#). Also, check out the APP3 Statement on [Biosecurity and Biosafety during the COVID-19 Pandemic](#).
- Missed last month's meeting? Check out the [September 2021 meeting recording](#). [August 2021 meeting recording](#) is also available.
- For information on joining APP3, email the Chair at GHSA.APP3@gmail.com
- GHSA Newsletter: <https://ghsagenda.org/category/ghsa-newsletters/>

KEY RESOURCES

[*A Guide to Training and Information Resources on the Culture of Biosafety, Biosecurity, and Responsible Conduct in the Life Sciences*](#)



A Guide to Training and Information Resources on the Culture of Biosafety, Biosecurity, and Responsible Conduct in the Life Sciences
2021

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Monthly APP3 Teleconference; October 28, 2021 at 08.00 EST. Details to follow by email
- [African Conference on Emerging Infectious Diseases and Biosecurity](#), Lagos, Nigeria, October 27-29, 2021
- [IFBA's Virtual Biosafety Conference "A Vision of Tomorrow"](#), November 2-4, 2021.
- GHSA Leadership Meeting, Phuket, Thailand, November 19, 2021
- [Global Health Security Conference 2022](#), Singapore, 28 June – 1 July 2022. [Call for Abstracts](#) closes 8 November 2021

A Message from:

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As the global science community evolves every day, it is faced with new challenges that present new opportunities. We are forced to grapple with the possibilities of what could be and the need to keep focus on issues relating to diversity, equity and inclusivity. Reinforcing the critical role of women in science therefore becomes ever so crucial.

Only recently (April 2021) the International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA)'s Equity Focused Coordinating Committee report on [grounding diversity, equity and inclusion \(DEI\) in Biosafety and Biosecurity](#) indicated the need for greater awareness and integration of the DEI principles into global biosafety and biosecurity strategies. For tangible outcomes to be achievable and sustainable, focus on these principles must remain a priority.

Women are often under-represented in participation and decision making in most spheres of life, from the rural areas to the city, at local or national, whether in government or private sector. Often fewer women are involved in elected official positions and meaningful participation in decision making due to societal restrictions and cultural barriers in certain parts of the country.

History has clearly demonstrated the important contribution of women in all fields of endeavour right from cradle to the citadel of achievement, and leading efforts in biosafety and biosecurity is not different. The experiences of many an institution have re-affirmed the capacity, foresight and doggedness of the woman to reinvigorate even moribund organizations by providing inspiring leadership which promotes positive changes. Biorisk management issues being largely attitudinal would definitely benefit from such influential leadership provided by women in science. Nevertheless, we find the lack of female representation in governance (local or national) as an exhausting concern in the developing countries in Africa and a threat globally.

Important impediments stem from socio-cultural perceptions regarding the place of women in society, often relegated to obscurity and confined to 'casual leaderships' that is, traditional roles as care givers, farming/food and water sourcing. The institutionalized gender role in many communities has hindered adequate or equal attention being given to the female child. It is not uncommon therefore that parents (fathers) are reluctant to invest extensively in the education of the "girl child" whom they consider "soon to be married off". Within the communities, the voice of the woman is often silenced and barely given any freedom of expression, nor her ideas given a chance to fly. While women certainly do have tremendous roles in raising a healthy society, this must not be a hindrance but rather a virtue that can; and has indeed been deployed effectively in those organizations fortunate to have had women in leadership roles. Be that as it may, helping communities understand this perspective must be approached with the needed sensitivity as socio-cultural issues run deep.



Some changes have taken place in the last few decades, due to mounting global pressures and emerging policies to increase the presence, visibility of women and equitable number in governance, leadership and decision-making processes. In order to make significant progress, the goals of the DEI must continue to be prioritized in all sectors. Strong advocacies and support systems for women should be encouraged; the girl-child education policy must become a basic fundamental right. Women's traditional and generational knowledge,

indigenous perspective of their environment; their role as resource managers, should all be applied by encouraging and including women in biosafety and biosecurity policies and decision making at all levels; and at work places, be it from rural communities to cities or as front line professional in government or private sectors. This disposition should give more women voices in policy development and not be relegated.

Various organizations need to encourage and support young women professionals by appointing many to positions where their inputs and voices can be relevant to decision making, in steering committees, conference delegations thus encouraging diversity equity and inclusiveness. The choice to start a family must not become an impediment in their professional career development and progression, rather support should be given by providing creches at workplaces for mothers with young children.

Young women in colleges, should be encouraged to develop vocalization and academic skills, build confidence by participating in science clubs and societies. Intentional mentorship programs for girls in science can contribute to advancing this course. Educating communities, and show-casing prominent women and their life contributions as examples of what women can contribute to development will help to correct the negative traditional perceptions of women and increase women meaningful participation in national governance. The media can also play significant roles in advocating for this change in some of the beliefs especially in nations where this exclusion is predominant.



In conclusion, I quote the words of the renowned mathematician, physicist and author, Emilie du Chatelet, "let us choose for ourselves our path in life, and let us try to strew that path with flowers".

**Champions
for
Women
in Biosecurity
& Biosafety**

Enhancing Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment as an Integral Part of the Institutional Strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Working Paper submitted by Panama to the Meeting of Experts on Institutional strengthening of the BWC, Geneva, 8 September 2021. Excerpt:

“In order to promote a real change, States Parties need to integrate gender perspectives into BWC meeting discussions and promote gender equality in the BWC’s machinery and processes in a sustainable manner... The Review Conference constitutes the only authority to make substantive and procedural decisions, and the upcoming Ninth Review Conference will provide the opportunity for States Parties to make recommendations in this regard.”

G7 Health Ministers’ Communique, 4 June 2021. Excerpt:

“The pandemic has particularly affected women and girls in a number of ways because of existing and persistent gender inequalities and unequal power relationships in societies: it has seen an intensification of gender based violence (GBV), including violence against women and girls globally that we all need to act to tackle; particular impacts of reduced access to services; as well as disproportionate impacts on women as informal, including unpaid, caregivers and income providers for their families. Women also constitute the majority of the health and social care workforce, particularly in nursing and midwifery. We should maintain a strong focus on gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls to achieve the goals of the UN Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goal 5 as we continue to combat this pandemic and through our recovery, promoting their important role as agents of change and leaders in our societies, including in the health sector.”

G7 Non-Proliferation Directors Group’s Statement, 19 April 2021. Excerpt:

“The G7 supports the vital role of international institutions in promoting a safe, secure, and stable world, and is committed to strengthening them in order to meet emerging challenges, including through the GP. The G7 is also committed to having gender equality integrated throughout these institutions’ work, and to supporting global efforts to enhance education and professional development in the field of non-proliferation, arms control, and disarmament.”

How much do you know about the gender-specific impact of COVID-19 pandemic? Take this [Women & COVID-19 QUIZ](#) developed by UN Women to find out.



Strengthening Health Security Across the Globe:
Progress and Impact of
U.S. Government Investments in
the Global Health Security Agenda



Statement by U.S. National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan on the Global Health Security Agenda Annual Report, October 14, 2021

“Over the past two years, the world has learned through hardship and tragedy just how dangerous and disruptive a threat to our global health security can be. More than 4.5 million people around the world have died from the COVID-19 pandemic and the global economy is still struggling to recover. That’s why the Biden-Harris Administration has put global health security back at the top of our national security agenda—to defeat this pandemic and to invest in strengthening health systems globally so that we are better prepared to prevent, detect, and respond to the next global health threat.”

Today, we are releasing the annual report, “Strengthening Health Security Across the Globe: Progress and Impact of United States Government Investments in the Global Health Security Agenda,” which details our progress

and impact helping countries build health security capacity through the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSa) in fiscal year 2020. We are bringing a whole-of-government effort to address global health as a national security imperative, and this report describes how GHSa investments have been critical in advancing the COVID-19 response, and outlines our strategic approach for assisting countries to meet specific targets.

Initially, the GHSa was launched as a 5-year effort that began in 2014, but the success of the program and the incredible global need resulted in another 5-year plan, “GHSa 2024.” GHSa 2024 introduced the bold target of more than 100 countries completing a transparent evaluation of health security capacity, performing planning and resource mobilization to address their gaps, and implementing activities to improve their capacity. This Administration is committed to supporting and strengthening GHSa in the years ahead, and we will continue to use our partner country investments and technical expertise to help achieve the GHSa target.

Improving the capabilities of individual countries and our shared capacity to take on infectious disease threats has never been more important. The United States will continue to work expeditiously to end this pandemic, including by continuing to donate vaccine doses and drive efforts to vaccinate the world, and rally the world to build back better to prevent the next pandemic. It’s going to take ambitious actions to ensure sustained global financing and political leadership, but we can do it. We can invest in saving lives now and creating a more secure and healthy future. The GHSa is a vital part of that work.

Read the full report here: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Global-Health-Security-Agenda-Annual-Report.pdf>

ANNOUNCEMENTS



Next Generation Global Health Security Network

The NextGen Global Health Security Network's Call for Papers for the first issue of NextGen Magazine "The Future of Global Health Security in a Post-Pandemic World."

Submissions must be in English, should range from 750 to 2,000 words, and identify which of the GHSA Action Packages the manuscript corresponds to. Deadline for submission: November 30, 2021. For additional details, email: NextGenGHSAMag@gmail.com

The IFBA, in partnership with its Global Mentors in Africa and Carleton University, is pleased to announce the publication of its peer reviewed research article on the impact and outcomes of the [IFBA's Global Mentorship Program](#).

This unique mentorship program recruits biosafety and biosecurity champions across Africa (and globally) to provide local peer mentorship to developing professionals in their geographic region. Over the past several years, the program has demonstrated its ability to form crucial links between frontline biosafety professionals, laboratory workers, and policy- and decision-makers across several implicated sectors. By supporting regionally relevant peer mentorship programs, the gap between health security policy development and implementation may be narrowed. Click the link below to access the full publication in One Health Outlook's special collection of articles exploring all aspects of global health security, including the biosecurity and biothreat landscape:

[South-to-south mentoring as a vehicle for implementing sustainable health security in Africa | One Health Outlook | Full Text \(biomedcentral.com\)](#)

The IFBA is grateful to the support provided by the Weapons Threat Reduction Program of Global Affairs Canada for this program.

Science Safety Hub - a free online reference library for all things biosafety and biosecurity

The Science Safety Hub includes downloadable templates, editable standard operating procedures (SOPs), recorded videos/webinars on general biosafety and biosecurity best practices and starting an iGEM team, as well as links to other trusted references online. We hope emerging scientists can use the Science Safety Hub to enhance their knowledge and awareness of biosafety and biosecurity to promote safe science practices.

The open-source reference library can be accessed from any computer or mobile device using the following link: <https://www.sciencesafetyhub.com/>



Let's do safety together.

Now Accepting Interest Forms!

The [APHL - Association of Public Health Laboratories](#) in collaboration with Sean Kaufman, MPH, CHES, CPH, CIC, founder and CEO of [Safer Behaviors](#) (USA) are proud to present the **BioSafe360° Program: Biorisk Management Guidelines and Resources with no associated costs to participate**. This course provides a program that summarizes an effective laboratory biorisk management system utilizing current biosafety and biosecurity resources including the

Biosafety in Microbiological and Biomedical Laboratories (BMBL) 6th Edition, Laboratory biosafety manual 4th edition and ISO 35001 Biorisk management for laboratories and other related organizations standard. **The program will be offered on a virtual platform. Spots are limited to only 150 seats for this program. Register [here](#).**

Leadership Day in Biosafety

October 6, 2021
9:00 AM - 6:00 PM EDT



Video recordings of presentations at the Leadership Day in Biosafety virtual conference are now available [here](#).

Join the Conversation @GHS_Conf



Global Health Security 2022

Suntec Convention & Exhibition Centre
Singapore 28 June - 1 July 2022

The next Global Health Security Conference will be held **28 June -1 July 2022** at **Suntec Convention & Exhibition Centre** in Singapore.

Key Dates

Call for Abstracts

Deadline: 8 November 2022

Registration

Early Bird Registration Deadline

28 February 2022

Discounts available for students, LMIC, and Global Health Security Network members.

Visit the conference website and sign up to the GHS 2022 mailing list to receive the latest news and events straight to your inbox!



BWC States Parties convened in Geneva for the first time since the start of the pandemic

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 BWC Meetings of Experts (MXs) and the Meeting of States Parties were postponed. After almost two years without any meetings, during which only informal webinars could be organized, the Meetings of Experts finally took place from 30 August to 8 September 2021 at the Palais des Nations, in Geneva, Switzerland. The Meetings gathered over 250 delegates from around one hundred delegations, and a wide range of international organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations.

These were the last MXs of the 2018-2020 intersessional programme. All MX Chairpersons highlighted the crucial role of the meetings, acting as a bridge between the MXs in 2018 and 2019 and the Ninth Review Conference, which has been postponed until August 2022.

Official documents, statements/presentations, video recordings and informal webinars concerning each of the MXs are available at <https://meetings.unoda.org/meeting/bwc-mx-2020/>.

Strengthening the national implementation of the BWC in CARICOM Member States

On 16 September 2021, the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) launched a **new project for the Member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM)**, made possible thanks to generous funding by the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office. This project aims to support the national implementation of the BWC in CARICOM Member States, particularly through legal assistance and training on the preparation and submission of Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs). The launch of the activities under this project was the opportunity to brief potential beneficiaries from the Caribbean CARICOM on the project's objectives and its various components to be implemented in the coming months.

Enhancing the implementation of the Convention in the G5 Sahel Region

On 28 September, the ISU of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) organized a workshop to strengthen the national implementation of the BWC among the G5 Sahel Member States in collaboration with the **Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)** and the **Bundeswehr Institute of Microbiology (IMB)**. During the event, the German Biosecurity Programme presented its existing collaboration with the G5 Sahel Member States to strengthen regional biosecurity capacities against the background of unintentional and deliberate release of pathogens. The discussions focused on national implementation in the Member States and highlighted some areas of cooperation, including capacity development (diagnostics, biosafety, biosecurity), the creation of a G5 Sahel rapid response team with a mobile lab, scientific support and exchange and the provision of technology and equipment.

UNODA received a delegation from the Kyrgyz Republic in Geneva to discuss the conduct of a Peer Review Exercise



From 12 to 14 October, a delegation of Kyrgyz representatives visited Geneva for a three-day meeting with UNODA and the BWC ISU to discuss preparations for a Peer Review Exercise, as requested by Kyrgyzstan. The event was organized in the framework of [European Union Council Decision 2019/97 in support of the BWC](#) and with the support of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Programme Office in Bishkek, which also participated in the meeting.

During the meeting, a draft programme for a Peer Review Exercise was elaborated and its modalities were discussed. The meeting also provided the opportunity for an initial in-depth discussion of Kyrgyzstan's draft Law on Biosafety further review of which will also be part of the Peer Review Exercise.

Get involved! Opportunity for two Online UN Volunteers to support the BWC

The BWC Implementation Support Unit is looking for two Online United Nations Volunteers with background on disarmament research and graphic design to support its activities.

The BWC ISU will release the vacancies through its [social media channels](#) in the coming weeks. Stay tuned!

Candidates should apply through the UN Volunteer platform at <https://www.unv.org/become-volunteer>