

**Statement by  
The Biosecurity Working Group  
of the  
IAP: The Global Network of Science Academies  
December 2011**

Mr. President, Distinguished Representatives, Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is an honor to have the opportunity to represent the Biosecurity Working Group of IAP: The Global Network of Science Academies\* and to describe some of the recent activities of the Working Group, IAP member academies, and other international scientific organizations. I am Professor Andrzej Górski, vice president of the Polish Academy of Sciences and chair of the Biosecurity Working Group. In addition to the Polish Academy, the current members of the Working Group are the national academies of China, Cuba, Egypt, India, Nigeria, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Through the Working Group, IAP has become involved in a number of biosecurity activities. These initiatives have benefitted from the attention that the BTWC intersessional process has given to topics directly relevant to the scientific community. In turn, we hope our activities have contributed to the success of that process; we believe that scientists and scientific organizations have a role to play in the effective national and international implementation of this Convention.

I want to highlight two activities of IAP and its partners in the international scientific community that are particularly relevant to the deliberations of the 7<sup>th</sup> Review Conference: first, advances in science and technology (S&T), and second, education and awareness-raising. In addition, attached to this statement you will find a list of other activities, with links to reports and conference materials. This list provides a more complete picture of how academies and scientific unions are addressing issues of biosecurity.

**Advances in Science & Technology (S&T)**

In early November 2010 three international scientific organizations – IAP, the International Union of Microbiological Societies (IUMS) and the International Union of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology (IUBMB) – co-sponsored a workshop on “Trends in Science and Technology Relevant to the BTWC” in Beijing, China.† The meeting, hosted by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, brought together almost 80 participants from 28 countries, including practicing scientists and government and nongovernment technical and policy experts. An international steering committee under the auspices of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences prepared a factual summary of the presentations and a

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\* IAP (formerly the InterAcademy Panel on International Issues) is a global network of over 100 science academies in a partnership “committed to making the voice of science heard on issues of crucial importance to the future of humankind.” The current co-chairs of IAP are the African Academies of Science and the Academies of Arts, Humanities and Sciences of Canada.

† In 2006, IAP and the International Council for Science collaborated with the Royal Society on a workshop to provide an independent scientific assessment of the implications of S&T developments. Similarly, the International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC) organized workshops in 2002 and 2007 for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons on trends in S&T relevant to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and a third workshop is being planned for late February 2012.

final report with a number of findings and conclusions.<sup>‡</sup> We are honored that the executive summary of the report was included as part of *New scientific and technological developments relevant to the Convention: Background information document submitted by the Implementation Support Unit*.

The goal of the project was to offer an independent contribution from the international scientific community to the 7<sup>th</sup> Review Conference. A lunchtime session on Tuesday, 6 December, offered an opportunity to hear about the final report, which was organized around three major themes that emerged from the workshop:

- The rapid pace of change in the life sciences and related fields;
- The increasing diffusion of life sciences research capacity and its applications, both internationally and beyond traditional research institutions; and
- The extent to which additional scientific and technical disciplines beyond biology are increasingly involved in life sciences research.

The report also underscores the relevance of S&T to every major article of the Convention and the challenges and opportunities that the advances present for implementation. The report does not make recommendations about policy options to respond to the implications of the identified trends. The choice of such responses rests with the 165 States Parties to the Convention, who must take into account multiple factors beyond the project's focus on the state of the science.

### **Education**

In November 2009, IAP and its partners<sup>§</sup> held a workshop at the Polish Academy of Sciences to develop recommendations for the most effective approaches to educating life scientists internationally on dual use issues. More than 60 participants from almost 30 countries took part in the meeting, including life scientists, bioethics and biosecurity practitioners, and experts in the design of educational programs.

The report of an international steering committee, *Challenges and Opportunities for Education about Dual Use Issues in the Life Sciences*, was released in September 2010.\*\* The report identifies (1) the extent to which dual use issues are currently included in postsecondary education in the life sciences, (2) the contexts in which education is occurring, and (3) what existing needs must be addressed to enable a significant expansion of education about dual use issues. It also emphasizes the increasing number of educational initiatives being undertaken in all parts of the world. One of its conclusions is that the 7<sup>th</sup> Review Conference “*will provide an obvious opportunity for member states to build on prior work and take affirmative steps in support of education about dual use issues.*” Along with a range of other conclusions and recommendations, the report offers suggestions for what the steps by States Parties could be.

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In closing, the IAP Biosecurity Working Group wishes the President and the States Parties every success in your deliberations, and we thank you again for providing the opportunity to address you today.

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<sup>‡</sup> Free PDFs of the summary and the final report are available at [http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=13113](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13113) and [http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=13130](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=13130) respectively.

<sup>§</sup> IAP, IUMS, and IUBMB, with support from the U.S. Department of State and IAP.

\*\* The report is available as a free PDF at [http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record\\_id=12958](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=12958).