

**Third Meeting  
Geneva, 5-9 December 2005**

**Meeting of Experts  
Geneva, 13-24 June 2005**

Item 5 of the provisional agenda

**Consideration of the content, promulgation, and  
adoption of codes of conduct for scientists**

## **REGULATIONS FOR THE PREVENTION OF BIOTERRORISM – PROS AND CONTRAS FROM A SCIENTIST’S POINT OF VIEW**

Prepared by Germany

1. Agents considered to be suitable for bioterrorist purposes are largely identical with emerging and re-emerging pathogens causing devastating disease in man and animals. The need to find cures, diagnostic tools, and preventive measures against these agents is therefore aimed at fighting not only bioterrorism, but also naturally occurring dangerous infections. On the other hand, there is a risk that new information on these agents may be misused. This is therefore a research field with a very obvious dual use dilemma. Several measures have been proposed and introduced to deal with this problem. Strict application of the rules of good laboratory practice is indispensable. Likewise, education and training of physicians and researchers in recognizing and controlling emerging infections is necessary. Codes of conducts will do no harm, but will have no effect on those who have bad intentions. Some recent developments are unacceptable, however, because they violate central rules of scientific research. These include:

- i Censorship of scientific publications, even if it comes under the label stewardship;
- ii Incrimination of certain research topics, such as studies aiming at altering Pathogenicity, transmissibility, and host range of an infectious agent;
- iii Impeding the exchange of biological material by non-transparent and non-matching shipping regulations; and
- iv Restrictions of free international exchange of scientists.