

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

**Meeting of Experts  
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Item 5 of the agenda

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

**THE CONTENT, PROMULGATION AND ADOPTION OF  
CODES OF CONDUCT FOR SCIENTISTS**

Prepared by the Islamic Republic of Iran

1. Promotion of national implementation of the BWC is considered to be one of the objectives by the States Parties and respective governments. The States Parties should appropriately inform the governmental and private institutions and companies about the objectives of the Convention, and highly and effectively warn them against the breach of obligations under the Convention.
2. Raising scientific community's awareness in either state or private sectors with respect to the objectives enshrined in the BWC could be an important and effective element in promoting the national implementation of the Convention.
3. The need to draft, promote and adopt code of conduct should be concluded by the States Parties on the basis of the necessity felt to dissuade scientists and scientific community from the hazards posed by the effects of accidental or intentional activities which run contrary to the obligations undertaken by the States Parties.
4. Code of conduct for scientists may provide a tool nationally adopted by each State Party to the Convention in implementation of its obligations under the Convention and in accordance with its constitutional process and put into force within its territory.
5. Ethical and responsible behavior by scientists complements States Parties' national obligations towards fostering international security.

6. Given the fact that any code as devised by States shall ultimately be applied to their subjects, it remains the prerogative to States Parties to decide on the content, promulgation and adoption of codes. However, the development and adoption of such codes of conduct could be effective and useful, when complemented with the involvement and assistance of national scientific community.

7. The Scientists should be encouraged to convene seminars, workshops and prepare research papers to raise the awareness. Training programs and materials on bio-safety should also be improved and inserted in university curricula.

8. The involvement of scientists and scientific community in preparation of codes of conduct would both strengthen and highlight the role and responsibility of the relevant individuals in this field, and guarantee that such codes would not endanger the scientific nature of their activities and use of scientific achievements for peaceful purposes.

9. The proper use of scientific information for peaceful purposes, as promoted in the Convention, should be safeguarded by States Parties, while ensuring the observance of ethical and moral norms and values by scientific and professional communities. The promotion of international scientific and technological cooperation and exchange of information regarding results of scientific research constitutes yet another effective assurance for the use of bio sciences to remain peaceful.

10. The new research requirements in different fields of bio sciences, particularly in the following areas make the implementation of Article X of the Convention and promotion of international cooperation an imperative:

- (i) vaccine production and research, molecular epidemiology and genome sequencing,
- (ii) detection and rapid diagnosis kits of biological agents,
- (iii) scientific exchange of information as well as exchange of research with respect to national health infrastructure systems,
- (iv) scientific exchange of materials and equipment.

Codes of conduct should avoid any restrictions on exchange of scientific discoveries in the field of biology for prevention of disease and other peaceful purposes. Subjecting scientific research and the free flow of scientific information to undue restrictions, may amount to violation of obligations undertaken under Article X of the BWC. Therefore, all necessary precautionary measures need to be taken *to avoid hampering the economic or technological development of States Parties to the Convention or international cooperation in the field of peaceful bacteriological (biological) activities*, while devising national codes of conduct.

11. Codes of conduct should not leave individuals and scientists with the impression that codes are designed against them or their scientific activities. Due respect should be extended to the scientific community as members of the society who serve the noble objectives of humanity through the advancement of science. Wider contributions by the scientists in promotion, establishment and adoption of codes would effectively remove any such misunderstandings and would enhance the implementation of codes.

12. Preparation and adoption of national codes of conduct may be conducive to expected results if concluded with due respect to the specific requirements of each State Party and the level of advancement and conditions of bio-sciences. Content of particular codes may

necessarily vary depending on their individual context and objectives and the way in which the codes are intended to be applied by organizations or professional bodies. The adoption of universal code of conduct would not, therefore, bear the expected results, since it would be seen as an additional international input without creating the necessary domestic grounds to sensitize the individuals directly involved in relevant activities.

13. While this process, as laid down in the Fifth Review Conference, should remain within the provisions stipulated in the BWC, the close linkage and relationship of different branches of bio sciences have made clear the need for the States to review their codes applicable in different areas of relevant activities. This necessitates a more comprehensive approach requiring the engagement of scientists and scientific communities active in diverse fields of bio sciences.

14. It sounds most unlikely that the adoption of a uniform approach would serve effectively our purpose in strengthening the BWC objectives. Different countries possess and implement different instruments some of which can hardly be defined as code of conduct. In some cases the codes of ethics are more detailed and cover some aspects of code of conducts. Some others have found it necessary to define codes in a more detailed manner and define them rather as codes of practice. No attempt thus should be made to impose on States Parties any particular form or format for codes of conduct.

15. A universal code of conduct is neither achievable nor practical. The success of this process lies in providing the States Parties with the most objective understanding of the possibilities to strengthen the implementation of the Convention through active interaction with the national scientific and professional community.

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