

**MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE
CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF
THE DEVELOPMENT, PRODUCTION AND
STOCKPILING OF BACTERIOLOGICAL
(BIOLOGICAL) AND TOXIN WEAPONS AND
ON THEIR DESTRUCTION**

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23 June 2005

ENGLISH ONLY

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

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

Item 5 of the agenda

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

CODES OF CONDUCT FOR BIOLOGICAL SCIENTISTS

Prepared by Italy

The Italian Delegation submits the following elements for the promulgation of codes of conduct for scientists:

1. Scientists should be aware that biological agents and toxins that are capable of causing temporary or permanent damage, harm or death to humans, animals, plants, materials of any kind or the environment are permitted only for protective or other peaceful purposes.
2. Scientists should be aware that the design, construction or possession, for *any* purpose, of delivery mechanisms designed to use biological agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflict is prohibited by the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention. There is no exemption for protective purposes.
3. Secrecy in biodefense programs, in general, causes suspicions and should be avoided as much as possible.
4. Scientists should be aware that weaponisation of active biological agents for defensive purposes violates the spirit of the BWC and should be avoided. Aerosolisation or other dissemination of active biological agents should be performed only in confined and small-scale environments and only for purposes of detection, prophylaxis or medical treatment.
5. Biological weapons are unacceptable under any circumstance and any event: scientists must be determined not to participate in any work or activity that will bring to the production or the use of biological agents aimed at causing harm to human and animal health or to the natural environment.

6. Life scientists must be constantly aware of the fact that the extraordinary opportunities made available by the knowledge and technologies recently developed or foreseeable in the near future, may have dual use effects.
 7. Personal benign intent does not justify neglect of the possible hostile utilization of available technologies, while the use of good and safe laboratory procedures must also be a part of the moral duties of scientists, particularly of those involved in the work with highly pathogenic microorganisms or with dangerous toxins, so that also the risk of unintentional damage be eliminated.
 8. Avoiding any possible hostile use of research must take precedence over any duty derived from other commitments.
 9. Scientists must strive to know, diffuse and teach the knowledge of national and international regulations aimed at abolishing the harmful use of biological agents, including, in particular, the Biological Weapon Convention.
 10. Scientists must act to raise the public awareness on the principle that the production or use of biological weapons should be universally prohibited, prosecuted and punished (from this point of views, the suggestion to encourage under-graduate and post-graduate education programs which address the ethical and practical aspects of preventing the misuse of science should be taken into account).
 11. Scientists and institutions must address questions and controversies surrounding the use of biotechnology and make choices that will best serve humanity.
 12. Scientists should communicate and share information about biotechnology and its derived products and services in a balanced manner, taking into account both benefits and risks.
 13. Scientists must collect and store in a retrievable form all information regarding studies and experiments performed, including the source of biological samples and pathogens used.
 14. The authorities in charge at the single Institution of management of scientific issues must define a policy for internal evaluation of scientific products and for the availability of the above mentioned information.
 15. Appropriate codes of conduct should be included in ethics courses in university and high schools curricula.
 16. Especially in the field of agriculture, researchers, when defining protocols derived from their activities, for the production of agents potentially usable as biological weapons, should include, whenever possible, advices on how to trace, reduce or neutralize the effects of such agents.
 17. The relevance of the efforts made to ensure the conversion of biological weapons scientists to civilian activities in particular through the G8 Global Partnership initiative should be acknowledged.
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