

Minutes from the
17 June 2009
18th Meeting of the IBWG/IFBA
Stockholm, Sweden
(in association with the 12th Annual Conference of EBSA)

Meeting was convened at 3:00 pm at the Karolinska Institute.

All parties in attendance identified themselves by name and affiliation, as follows:

Member Organizations Present:

Heather Sheeley, Co-Chair IBWG – European Biological Safety Association
Leila Oda, Co-Chair IBWG –President, National Biosafety Association, Brazil
Steven Theriault (Co-Chair Elect, IBWG)– ABSA Canada
Ingegerd Kallings – President, European Biological Safety Association
Esmeralda Prat – European Biological Safety Association
Bob Ellis –President, American Biological Safety Association
Katsuaki Shinohara – Japanese Biological Safety Association
Teck Mean Chua – President, Asia-Pacific Biosafety Association

Observer Organizations Present:

Jennifer Gaudioso – Sandia National Laboratory
Kathrin Summermatter – Int’l Veterinary Biosafety Working Group
Gary Burns – Pharmaceutical Biosafety Group

Representatives of the Secretariat Present:

Craig Reed – Canada, International Centre for Infectious Diseases

Guests Present:

Paata Imnadze – Biosafety Assoc. of Central Asia and the Caucasus
Per Staugaard – Belgian Biosafety Professionals
Roland Mollby – Karolinska Institute
Zayer El Majid – Menes FCRS, Morocco
Mohammed Benbouida – Menes FCRS, Morocco
Felix Gmuender – Switzerland
Daniel Kumin – Swiss Biosafety Network (SBNet)
Debra Sharpe – ABSA/EBSA/A-PBA
Edith Tria – Philippine Biosafety and Biosecurity Assoc’n
Asa Szekely Bjorndal – Nordic Biosafety Network

Member Organizations by Skype:

Erum Khan – President, Pakistan Biological Safety Association

Observer Organizations by Skype:

Maureen Ellis – Global Partnership Program, Canada

Representatives of the Secretariat by Skype:

Terry Duguid – Canada, International Centre for Infectious Diseases
Jane Nikkel – Canada, International Centre for Infectious Diseases

Both Co-Chairs, Heather Sheeley and Leila Oda offered welcoming remarks to open the meeting. This particular meeting had a large number of new faces and organizations represented. All were warmly welcomed and invited to actively participate and give serious consideration to making application for Member or Observer status, as appropriate. The distinction between Member and Observer was briefly reviewed for the benefit of the guests present.

Minutes of the 17th Meeting of the IBWG (19 October 2008; Reno, Nevada) were approved as presented. The Secretariat was requested to post the 17th Minutes to the IBWG website.

During the previous meeting of the IBWG, Members discussed several potential new names for the organization. The list of prospective names was narrowed to four possibilities. Following that meeting, ballots were distributed by the Secretariat so that Members could vote for a new name electronically. The Secretariat announced the results of the vote at the beginning of the 18th Meeting. The new name of the organization is the **International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA)**. This name is intended to reflect the expanding international role of the organization.

During the 17th Meeting, Sandia National Laboratory applied for Observer Status and the International Council for the Life Sciences (ICLS) applied for Member status. Between the 17th and 18th Meeting, the Pakistan Biological Safety Association submitted an application and all necessary documents for Member status, as well. Members present at the 18th Meeting participated in a vote on these three organizations. **In unanimous votes, The Pakistan Biological Safety Association was elected to Member Status** while Sandia National Laboratory and the International Council for Life Sciences were elected to Observer Status. The Secretariat welcomes these organizations to the family of IFBA Members and Observers!

Following this vote, the Secretariat informed the meeting participants that a representative of the Secretariat had given a formal presentation about the organization's accomplishments and goals/objectives during the recent annual meetings of the Asia Pacific Biosafety Association (APBA) and the Biosafety Association of Central Asia and the Caucasus (BACAC). Following the presentations at these events, the Secretariat received expressions of interest from biosafety representatives of the following countries and organizations that would like to become Members or Observers of the IFBA: Azerbaijan, BACAC, India, Korea, Pakistan (different from the organization elected to Member status, above), Philippines Biosafety and Biosecurity Association (PhBBA), Tajikistan and the Thailand Biosafety Network. Prior to the 19th Meeting of the IFBA in Miami, Florida, the Secretariat anticipates receiving applications for Member/Observer status from many of these organizations. The applications will be distributed to the current Membership for consideration prior to the 19th Meeting so that a vote can be taken during that event.

In the hours prior to this 18th Meeting of the IFBA, it was announced that the most recent addition to the family of biosafety organizations is the Azeri Biological Safety Association. Although no representatives of the organization were in attendance or participating by Skype, a general congratulation was issued to the professionals of Azerbaijan as well as the leadership of this new organization. It was noted by Maureen Ellis (GPP) and Dr. Bob Ellis (President, ABSA) that the acronym for this new organization – “ABSA” – would have to be modified so as not to be confused with the acronym used by the American Biological Safety Association. Dr. Ellis recommended “AzBSA” (similar to that used by the African Biological Safety Association – AfBSA). Maureen Ellis volunteered to notify the US Defense Threat Reduction Agency and the Azeri Biological Safety Association of this issue.

The Co-Chairs reminded the meeting attendees that a lengthy conversation ensued during the previous IBWG meeting concerning the future of the organization. The outcome of that conversation was the decision that the organization would conscientiously develop to have a greater international role in biosafety and biosecurity harmonization. Subsequent to that meeting Dr. Chua, Maureen Ellis and others devised an approach to accomplish this objective. Dr. Chua and Maureen presented the vision for this approach to the group assembled in Stockholm for the 18th Meeting. The idea is for the IFBA to accept the vision to become a non-governmental organization (NGO). If the organization will establish itself as a charitable entity in the US and/or Canada, it will be able to receive tax-deductible contributions from a wide array of other organizations and parties. This would allow the organization to accept “donations” from Member and Observer organizations (and thus avoid instituting a “Membership Fee”) as well as government agencies interested in supporting the mission and activities of the IFBA. Further, it was proposed that the IFBA should begin to exert its leadership at the international level by organizing and hosting an international conference to which all countries with an interest in biosafety and biosecurity could send representatives. The focus of the conference could be to identify obstacles to successful biosafety/biosecurity implementation, overcoming challenges associated with emergency response, and a wide variety of other issues common to countries that are struggling with matters of biosafety/biosecurity implementation. This international conference should not be an add-on to ABSA, APBA or any other annual meeting of a biosafety organization; it should be a standalone event, conducted outside the US and Europe so as to ensure the inclusion of other countries. Following the presentation of these ideas, individuals present discussed this vision and decided to establish two Working Groups – one to explore potential funding sources for future IFBA operation as well as the international conference, and another Working Group to investigate potential locations (countries/cities) and venues where the international conference could be hosted. The “funding” Working Group will be Chaired by Dr. Teck Mean Chua (APBA) who will be supported by volunteers Dr. Steve Theriault, Dr. Lela Oda and Maureen Ellis. The “international conference” Working Group will be Chaired by Maureen Ellis (GPP) who will be supported by volunteers Drs. Tech Mean Chua (APBA), Debra Sharpe, J. Craig Reed (IFBA Secretariat), Paata Innadze (BACAC) and Mohammed Benboudia (MENA).

The Co-Chair requested that each Member, Observer and Guest organization introduce themselves to the group and then provide a brief update of their organization's recent activities and accomplishments of interest to the IFBA. (To increase the efficiency of the meeting, many Members submitted this information in writing prior to the event. Written submissions were not duplicated by an oral presentation.) The following is the list of updates alphabetized by organization:

American Biological Safety Association (ABSA)

ABSA continues to provide biosafety training in several foreign countries including Thailand and countries of the former Soviet Union. This training has been funded by the U.S. Department of State and the Department of Defense. At the impending ABSA Annual Meeting the Department of State will send numerous scientists from various FSU countries.

The 52nd Annual Meeting of ABSA will be held 18-21 OCT in Miami, Florida. The largest slate off pre-conference courses in ABSA history will be offered 15-18 OCT. Visit www.absa.org for more information.

The ABSA Philanthropic Committee is willing to support IBFB initiatives. Please contact ABSA for further details.

ABSA- Canada

Dr. Steven Theriault reported that the organization is considering a name change. No specific candidate names were shared with the IFBA participants but we were assured that the organization would announce the name change as soon as it was voted upon by the leadership of ABSA-Canada. The organization is considering the possibility of acquiring the services of a Secretariat.

Asia-Pacific Biosafety Association (A-PBA)

The 4th Asia-Pacific Biosafety Conference was held in Manila, Philippines this past May. It was a highly successful event with 210 participants and 18 different countries participating. Attendee feedback suggested a high degree of satisfaction with the sessions and vendors.

APBA moves their Annual Meeting from one country to another in the Asia-Pacific region in order to allow individuals who have trouble with travel to be able to participate. This approach has been highly successful according to feedback from APBA members. APBA is considering China as the location of the 2010 Annual Meeting. The organization would very much like to get China engaged in the international biosafety community. This year, China will have more BSL-3 facilities than all of the Southeast Asian countries combined. For these reasons, heavy emphasis is being placed on finding a location in China to host the 2010 Annual Meeting. Beijing is the city most heavily favored at the moment.

Belgian Biosafety Professionals

The BBP hosts three meetings per year. Two are half-day workshops; one is for biosafety cabinet use and certification training. The organization is planning to have a full-day conference on containment laboratory design and construction in the coming months.

Brazilian Biosafety Association (ANBio)

ANBio is completing 10 years this year and this is a special moment for biosafety in Brazil. During the last 12 month ANBio continued its biosafety and biosecurity capacity building program and has trained around 400 workers from public health and agriculture laboratories on topics of biosecurity and biosafety. ANBio has organized four regional courses in Brazil open to other Latin American countries with the support of the US Department of State's Biosecurity Engagement Program (BEP) and the Ministry of Health of Brazil. ANBio has prepared a survey on the biosafety biosecurity conditions of 220 BSL-2 and BSL-3 laboratories and the results are going to be published during the VI Biosafety Congress to be held 22-25 SEP 2009 in Rio de Janeiro.

Current activities:

ANBio has launched its regional training on biosecurity for Latin American countries. During 2009 ANBio has organized four regional training events on biosecurity within a biosafety framework. All the courses were both theoretical and practical including visits to BSL-3 laboratories and on site training on evaluation of the facilities. The priorities to the regions were given based on a survey conducted by ANBio which showed lack of training in biosafety and biosecurity. The training is supported by the US Department of State's BEP and the Ministry of Health of Brazil. As another commitment, ANBio has given support to the Brazilian government to establish procedures to dual use research and the development of a future framework on biosecurity. At this moment ANBio is planning to launch a Biosafety and Biosecurity Journal in September of this year with support from a State University in Brazil.

Planned activities:

In September of this year, ANBio will organize its IV Biosafety Congress to be held in Rio de Janeiro and in parallel the I Symposium on Biosecurity and dual use research. Other parallel meetings will occur considering the importance of this year for biosafety activities in Brazil. All IFBA meeting participants are invited to enjoy a waiver of all registration fees associated with the IV Biosafety Conference and all pre-conference training events. Please contact Dr. Oda for details.

A meeting on bioenergy and its impacts on food security and six courses on specific subjects of biosafety are supposed to occur during the next 12 months. Also, ANBio is planning to launch a Journal on Biosafety and Biosecurity to be a

source of scientific information for Latin America and to enhance prevention of biological threats in the region.

Regulatory initiatives and guideline updates:

ANBio is giving support to the Brazilian government to establish a future framework on biosecurity and to the establishment of requirements for laboratory security.

Other:

ANBio is continuing its program for enhancement awareness on Biosafety in high school and graduation courses. ANBio coordinates the Brazilian Biology Olympiad which has Biosafety as a topic of knowledge for secondary school students.

The VI Annual Congress of AnBio will be held in September 2009 in Rio de Janeiro. More information can be found on the AnBio website <http://www.anbio.org.br/congresso/2009/index.htm>

Dutch Biosafety Platform

April 2009 represented the 10th Anniversary of this organization. The focus of the Dutch Biosafety Platform is primarily on genetically modified organisms.

European Biological Safety Association (EBSA)

The 12th Annual Conference of the European Biological Safety Association has just concluded in Stockholm, Sweden. The event ran 15-17 June, 2009. The 13th Annual Conference will be held in Ljubljana, Slovenia 22-23 April, 2010. More information can be found at the EBSA website: <http://www.ebsaweb.eu/>

Global Partnership Program, Canada (GPP)

Through the Global Partnership Program (GPP), Canada is investing heavily in biosafety, biosecurity and biological non-proliferation activities in Russia, Central Asia and other countries of the former Soviet Union (FSU).

Highlights from 2008 and 2009 include the following:

1) Financial support to the IFBA Secretariat.

Canada's GPP is providing funding support to the IFBA Secretariat to enhance the IFBA's outreach to countries of the former Soviet Union.

Specifically, the following activities are underway:

- Mentoring and Twinning Program for Russian/FSU Biosafety Professionals and Organizations

- Updating the IFBA Biosafety Compendium to include Russian/FSU information, standards, guidelines and training tools;
- Maintaining the content on the IFBA website and translation of appropriate information into Russian language;
- Translation of the IFBA poster into Russian language, printing and distribution.

2) Biosafety Association for Central Asia and Caucasus (BACAC). With support from Canada's GPP, the first annual conference of the Biosafety Association for Central Asia and the Caucasus (BACAC) was successfully held in Almaty, Kazakhstan from May 18-20, 2009. The conference, entitled Biosafety and Bacterial/Viral Zoonotic Diseases, brought together 180 scientists and biosafety professionals from 15 countries in the region including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Mongolia, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Pakistan and Ukraine. Dr. Chua, President A-PBA, delivered the keynote address and outlined the need to address biosafety challenges on a global scale. A-PBA is acting as a mentor to the newly formed BACAC. The IFBA was represented by Drs. Heather Shelley (Co-Chair) and Craig Reed (Secretariat). Following the conference, the Association held its first meeting and elections with over 90 members in attendance. Canada's GPP supported the participation of Dr. Paata Imnadze, (Vice-President, BACAC) at the IFBA's 18th Meeting in Stockholm.

For further information: www.bacac.org



3) Russian Biological Safety and Security Professionals Society. With support from the Canada's GPP, the Biological Safety and Security Professionals Society in Russia has also been successfully developed. In December 2008, the Society held its first meeting of founding members to develop the by-laws and hold elections. Yuri Remnev, TEMPO, and President of the Society, will be working together with the GPP to further develop the Society. Preparations are currently underway to further develop the website and plan for the inaugural conference later in 2009.

4) Collaboration with ABSA-Canada. Canada's GPP supported a number of scientists and biosafety professionals from Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan to attend the Canadian Biosafety Symposium held in Halifax, May 31-June 2. Also present were Bulat Sukurov, BACAC Secretariat, and Yuri Remnev, President, Russian Biological Safety and Biosecurity Professionals Society, who

attended ABSA-Canada's annual general meeting. Ongoing collaboration between these associations is anticipated.

5) Looking Forward. Canada's GPP continues to support integration of scientists and biosafety professionals in countries of the former Soviet Union into the global biosafety and biosecurity community. As such, the GPP would support the concept for an international Biosafety and Biosecurity Conference that would address common global issues. Further details would be required in order to determine how best Canada's GPP can participate in the initiative.

For more information www.globalpartnership.gc.ca

International Veterinary Biosafety Working Group (IVBWG)

The organization's last meeting was held in 2008 in Argentina. The next meeting of the Group will be 28-29 SEP in Ames, Iowa.

Japanese Biological Safety Association

The next Annual Meeting of JBSA will be in Sendai City 11-12 DEC 2009.

Details of the meeting are available at:

http://www.nih.go.jp/niid/meetings/jbsa/english_info.html

Morocco Biosafety Association

Nordic Biosafety Network

In the past year the Nordic Biosafety Network organized a biosafety conference in Stockholm (in the week preceding the EBSA Annual Meeting). Over 50 individuals participated.

Pakistan Biological Safety Association (PBSA)

The Pakistan Biological Safety Association is a non-profit, non-government, professional organization dedicated to the provision of comprehensive knowledge related to Biosafety issues in Pakistan. The mission of the Association is to help ensure Biosafety through the promotion of best practices, standards, and codes of conduct in Life sciences that deal with pathogenic microorganisms, biological toxins and recombinant DNA.

Aims & Objectives

- The fundamental objective of P.B.S.A is to establish a core group of people trained in the biological safety.

- To utilize the expertise in much broader and comprehensive way to address National Biosafety issues:
- To formulate frame work for promotion of best practices, standards, and codes of conduct in Life sciences at National level
- To act as an advocating body for biological risks at regional and national level
- Awareness of Biosafety issues in all stakeholders

Accomplishments:

- 1st International Seminar on Laboratory Biosafety was organized in Karachi on March 21 2009 and it was attended by > 400 participants
- 2nd Biosafety Seminar and workshop was arranged in Lahore on April 05 2009
- Biannual Newsletter published.
- Webpage for PBSA was launched to create awareness www.pakbiosafety.org.

Biosafety Awareness Activities

- Guest lecture was arranged at Aga Khan University by Pakistan Biological Safety Association (PBSA) for Dr Terence Taylor on Monday August 04 2008. Dr Taylor is President of International Council for Life Sciences and Vice President Global Health and Security based in Washington DC, U.S.A. Dr Taylor spoke on “Countering Biological Risks: Building Networks and Consortia”
- The first International Seminar was organized by Pakistan Biological Safety Association on March 21st 2009 in collaboration with Department of Pathology & Microbiology at Aga Khan University Auditorium. It was attended by more than 400 participants belonging to different scientific disciplines. The Seminar was addressed by national and international speakers on topics related to Principle and practices of Bio-safety, BSL-3 Facility design, Risk assessment, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and use of disinfectants in a health care facility. Key Note Speaker was Dr Adel Zaki, from NAMRO 3 US State Department from Cairo Egypt.
- 2nd Biosafety Seminar was held in Lahore Pakistan on April 05 2009 at Shaukat Khanum Memorial Hospital Lahore. It was attended by large audience of scientists. National speakers addressed the gathering on topics related to Biosafety. Sensitized by the National Biosafety issues concerned professionals took initiative to learn principals of Biosafety.
- Dr Erum Khan (President PBSA) attended ASM CUE conference from May 25- 29 at Denver Colorado USA. She has been awarded one year residency award for development of curriculum by UNESCO. The aim for this award is

to develop undergraduate/graduate/Masters level program for Microbiology/Biosafety.

- Ms Shahida M Qureshi (Treasurer PBSA) was part of Pakistan delegation attended the first BACAC conference held at Almaty Kazakhstan on May 18 - 20 2009. Attended the preconference courses as part of professional development and to impart this knowledge to local health care workers in Pakistan.
- Ms Maqboola K Dojki (Executive Member PBSA) was part of Pakistan Delegation to attend workshop on Biological Threat reduction organized by ASEAN forum on June 10-11, 2009 at Manila Philippines. This forum was co hosted by Philippines and US State Department.

Future Strategies

- To actively participate in training courses related to Biosafety nationally and internationally to become trainers for training local representatives in their respective areas.
- To arrange Hands-on Biosafety workshops with the support of internationally recognized Biosafety professionals.
- Founder members will develop themselves as certified Biosafety professional /Biosafety officers by attending various Biosafety /Biosecurity courses to carry out the Mission of PBSA.
- To formulate National and International Resource directory
- To conduct surveys to develop National Biosafety guidelines that are credible, flexible, transparent, adaptable to local health care, scientific industry and general public.
- To develop curriculum on Biosafety at undergraduate/graduate level for students and allied health care professional.

Pharmaceutical Biosafety Group

The last meeting of the Group was in OCT 2008 in Reno, Nevada in association with the 51st Annual Meeting of ABSA. Following this event, the organization has continued informal benchmarking regarding best practices, specific approaches to pandemic influenza, equipment standards review and availability in certain regions of the world, PPE standards for specific applications including vivaria operations.

Secretariat, IFBA

The secretariat has worked at getting important pieces of the website translated into Russian. The following are some of the documents that have been translated.

<http://www.internationalbiosafety.org/english/index.asp>
<http://www.internationalbiosafety.org/english/background.asp>
<http://www.internationalbiosafety.org/english/reference.asp>
<http://www.internationalbiosafety.org/english/members.asp>
<http://www.internationalbiosafety.org/english/ConceptsBiosafety.asp>
<http://www.internationalbiosafety.org/english/NationalBiosafetyProgram.asp>
<http://www.internationalbiosafety.org/english/ContainmentLab.asp>
<http://www.internationalbiosafety.org/english/BiosafetyResearch.asp>

Presentations about IBWG have been made at APBA and BACAC. That presentation is on the website under presentations

<http://www.internationalbiosafety.org/english/ppt/IBWG-BACAC-Presentation.ppt>

The secretariat is looking for individuals or organizations willing to serve as mentors to new organizations. Interested mentors should contact the secretariat.

The IBWG poster will be updated once the IBWG has ratified the name change at the June meeting.

This meeting represents the last meeting for which Dr. Heather Shelley (EBSA) will serve as Co-Chair. Nominations were received for Dr. Steven Theriault (ABSAs-Canada) to serve as the Co-Chair to replace Dr. Shelley. The nomination was seconded. There were no additional nominees. A vote was taken amongst all Member organizations present at this 18th Meeting and the outcome was unanimous for the selection of Dr. Theriault to become the next Co-Chair. Dr. Theriault expressed his appreciation to the group for their confidence. He also expressed his gratitude to outgoing Co-Chair Heather Shelley for her steady hand and unwavering support for the mission of the IFBA through this period of the organization's growth and development.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:00 pm local time.