

The International Federation of Biosafety Associations

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The International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA) is a global community of research scientists, biosafety professionals, laboratory personnel, NGOs, academics and policy makers from around the world who recognize that biosafety and biosecurity are important elements within the framework of biological non-proliferation and strengthening global security. The IFBA's mission statement ("safe, secure and responsible work with biological materials") highlights the need to protect and promote global health and security, and lays the foundation for the implementation of strategies to minimize the serious dangers that can arise from the failure to implement sound biosafety and biosecurity practices. The IFBA's portfolio of programs addresses multiple threats to human security, reaching across the entire spectrum of biological threats from naturally-occurring outbreaks of infectious diseases, to research, to bioterrorism preparedness and response. The IFBA and its member associations have declared 2012 as the Year of International Biosafety Advocacy whereby a series of key strategic activities will be carried out to further achieve these shared goals.

In June of 2012, participants from 47 countries met in South Africa to identify innovative approaches to biosafety and biosecurity that are affordable, practical and sustainable; to raise awareness and highlight the significant benefits of sound practices; to advocate strategies to collectively address urgent gaps and priorities in under-addressed regions of the world; and, to facilitate collaboration among the African and international biosafety communities. In addition to plenary presentations, working sessions were dedicated to address 3 priority goals:

- Building, Empowering and Advocating for Biosafety Communities;
- Practical and Sustainable Risk-based Biocontainment for Safely Diagnosing Pathogens; and
- Ensuring Quality Biorisk Management through Certification of Professionals.

Looking to the future, the IFBA's community of 61 member and observer organizations will continue to reach down to the local level to address biorisk management, biological security and biological non-proliferation issues in virtually every geographic region of the globe. These national/regional/international biosafety associations are working in partnership and leveraging resources to strengthen national and regional biosecurity programs and foster a culture of security among scientists with access to dangerous biological materials.

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