Global Health Security Agenda

Key Messages from the Global Health Security Agenda Action Package Prevent-3: Biosafety & Biosecurity

The Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) serves as a catalyst for attaining a world safe and secure from global infectious disease threats and seeks to elevate global health security as a national and international leader-level priority. The GHSA is a collaborative multi-sectoral initiative, bringing together 65 countries representing nearly six billion people, regional and international organizations, and non-governmental and private sector partners to build and strengthen health security capacity.

The GHSA seeks to:

Prevent and reduce the likelihood of outbreaks – natural, accidental, or intentional;

Detect threats early to save lives;

Respond rapidly and effectively using multi-sectoral international coordination and communication.

The Critical Role of Biosafety and Biosecurity in Health Security

- Strong biosafety and biosecurity capacity is key to prevention. Disease outbreaks usually occur naturally; however, it is important to prepare for a potentially devastating outbreak caused by an accidental or intentional release of a dangerous agent.

- Biosafety practices aim to protect people – and the surrounding community and environment – from accidents associated with exposures to, or the unintentional release of, dangerous pathogens.

- Biosecurity practices aim to prevent unauthorized access, loss, theft, deliberate release, or misuse of hazardous biological agents, and associated research-related information. It is equally important to actively promote responsible conduct of life science research and oversight of dual-use risks.

- National government and institutional oversight help ensure that the dialogue on appropriate biosafety and biosecurity is taking place continuously, in the relevant fora and in line with scientific advancements.

- Laboratory staff who have access to especially dangerous pathogens can prevent accidental or intentional releases through appropriate training, tools, and oversight in biosafety and biosecurity.

- Biosafety and biosecurity practices help nations counter both natural and manmade biological threats while also fostering safe scientific progress.

World Health Organization's Joint External Evaluation Biosafety and Biosecurity Target:

A whole-of-government multisectoral national biosafety and biosecurity system with dangerous pathogens identified, held, secured, and monitored in a minimal number of facilities according to best practices; biological risk management training and educational outreach conducted to promote a shared culture of responsibility, reduce dual-use risks, mitigate biological proliferation, and ensure safe transfer of biological agents; and country-specific biosafety and biosecurity legislation, laboratory licensing, and pathogen control measures in place as appropriate.

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The Global Health Security Agenda Action Package Prevent-3: Biosafety & Biosecurity
Frequently Asked Questions

What is the APP3?

The Action Package Prevent-3 (APP3) Biosafety & Biosecurity is a collection of experts and leaders from countries and non-governmental organizations that seek to advance global biosafety and biosecurity capacity under the auspices of the Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA), in support of various international instruments and agreements including the International Health Regulations, the Biological Weapons Convention, and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540.

What is APP3 working toward?

The APP3 works in collaboration with technical experts across the spectrum of health security to enable progress toward the GHSA 2024 target, which seeks to advance the capacities of 100 countries to a "demonstrated" level (JEE score of 4.0) across five technical areas. The APP3 strives to ensure biosafety and biosecurity is one of the areas in which we can measure progress in 2024.

How is progress measured?

The APP3 measures progress by countries' improvements toward increasingly advanced capacity levels, using the indicators within the World Health Organization Joint External Evaluation (WHO JEE). For biosafety and biosecurity, these indicators are: 1) Whole-of-government biosafety and biosecurity system in place for all sectors (including human, animal and agriculture facilities); 2) Biosafety and biosecurity training and practices in all relevant sectors (including human, animal and agriculture).

How is APP3 enabling progress?

The APP3 is enabling progress through three primary actions:

1) Promoting global compliance with biosafety and biosecurity targets by spreading key messages in relevant fora, increasing membership of APP3, and making tools available to countries seeking to make progress in the area of biosafety and biosecurity.

2) Tracking progress toward global achievement of biosafety and biosecurity targets and using this information to identify priorities for further capacity development.

3) Liaising with partner countries, pairing committed countries looking for support with countries seeking to direct resources toward effective capacity building in the area of biosafety and biosecurity.

What is expected of members of APP3?

All members are expected to contribute to the APP3 strategic objectives and to make available all biosecurity and biosafety resources (tools, guidance, training, etc.) to advance global biosafety and biosecurity capabilities toward the WHO JEE target. Countries are expected to highlight their own priority needs and contribute toward collective action in addressing global gaps in biosecurity and biosafety.

How can experts join APP3?

Email the Chair at GHSA.APP3@gmail.com

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