

Information Note¹

- Event:** *Building a Sustainable Biorisk Culture in the Asia-Pacific Region*
- Organizers:** Asia Pacific Biosafety Association (A-PBA) and the Malaysian Biosafety and Biosecurity Association (MBBA)
- Date and venue:** 22-25 April, 2013, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- Participants:** *States:* Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Laos, Malaysia, Nigeria, Philippines, Singapore, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Thailand, UK, USA, and Vietnam
International organizations: 1540 Committee Group of Experts (by video), Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Support Unit, International Science and Technology Center (ISTC), INTERPOL, World Health Organization
Regional Training Centers: Southeast Asia Regional Centre for Counter Terrorism (SEARCCT); Tajikistan-Afghanistan Regional Biosafety Training Centre
Non-Governmental Organizations, Industry, Academia, and Other Entities: members of the A-PBA and MBBA, International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA), Biosafety Association Thailand, Taiwan Biological Safety Association, Indonesia Biosafety Association, The Korea Biotechnology Industry Association (KoreaBio), independent consultants, Biosecurity and Biocontainment International Consultants (Australia), Wilkore Construction (Australia), Bayer Cropscience NV (Belgium), Merrick Canada ULC (Canada), KAKETSUKEN (Japan), AVO International (Malaysia), Biovalence SDN BHD (Malaysia), Emec technology SDN BHD (Malaysia), Esco Micro (M) SDN BHD (Malaysia), FC-BIOS (Malaysia), GlycosBio Asia SDN BHD (Malaysia), International Medical University (Malaysia), Monash University (Malaysia), Sime Darby Technology Centre (Malaysia), SIRIM Berhad (Malaysia), University Kebangsaan Malaysia (Malaysia), University of Malaya (Malaysia), University Malaysia of Computer Science and Engineering (Malaysia), University Putra Malaysia (Malaysia), University of Sains (Malaysia), University Tunku Abdul Rahman (Malaysia), World Courier (M) SDN BHD (Malaysia), Mexican Biosafety Association (AMEXBIO), Aga Khan University (Pakistan), Asia BioBusiness Pte. Ltd (Singapore), Basler & Hofmann Pte, Ltd (Singapore), Dow Chemical (Singapore), Intersourcing Technology Pte Ltd (Singapore), National University of Singapore (Singapore), Riskren (Singapore), Zoetis (Singapore), King Mongkut University of Technology Thonburi (Thailand), Mahidol University (Thailand), DVS BioRisk (UK), Elizabeth Griffin Research Foundation (USA), Frontline Health Care Workers Safety Foundation (USA), Medical Consulting (USA), Robert Heckert Consulting (USA), University of Virginia (USA), University of California Los Angeles (USA), University of Michigan (USA), World BioHazTech Corporation (USA).

1. **Objectives of the workshop**

The conference on *Building a Sustainable Biorisk Culture in the Asia-Pacific Region* aimed to foster partnerships and alliance towards global safety and security, empower biosafety and biosecurity practitioners for sustainable implementation, and promote a biosafety/biosecurity culture. It also aimed to generate a forum exchange on the various developments in biosafety from strategic coalition and road map for the Asia-Pacific to biosafety capability and capacity building in the region.

2. **Background**

This was the eighth annual conference of the Asia Pacific Biosafety Association (A-PBA) (website: <http://www.a-pba.org>) and was co-organized with the Malaysian Biosafety and Biosecurity Association (website:

¹ For information –not an official report. The views expressed here do not necessarily represent those of the 1540 Committee or of the organizers or participants in the event.

<http://www.mbba.org.my>), the latter being officially launched in 2011 to further develop and strengthen the biosafety and biosecurity communities in Malaysia. Members of the A-PBA come inter alia from Singapore, Brunei, People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Myanmar, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. Topics of discussion ranged from biosafety challenges at national and regional level to technical operation and management level, faced by the respective countries in the region. Special feature included challenges faced by the biosafety professional of various sectors from health care to veterinary and scientific development.

There were several workshops which took place in parallel before the official opening of the conference on: (i) *High Biocontainment BSL3: Concept and Design Approach (BSL3/ABSL3/BSL3-P/GM-BSL3/ Arthropod BSL3)*; (ii) *High Biocontainment BSL3: Engineering Design, Operation and Maintenance*; (iii) *Understanding the Signals of Biosecurity Response*; (iv) *Risk Communication – Effective Communication in High stress, biothreat or bioemergencies*; (v) *Biorisk Management*; (vi) *Working Safely with TB*; and (vii) *Biosafety in Animal Handling*, respectively.

Conference details are available online at: <http://www.a-pba.org/conference/index.html>

3. Highlights

The conference was officially opened by Dato' Dr. Madinah binti Mohamad, Secretary General of Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Malaysia, and featured sessions on international approaches to countering biological threats; understanding biological risk spectrum in modern technologies; biosafety and biosecurity legal framework; empowering biosecurity and biosafety practitioner for sustainable implementation; *One World One Health* – integrating animal and public health; high biocontainment facilities – challenges in sustainability and solutions for developing countries; plant & arthropod containment facilities basics; and an “open paper” session with country or event-specific presentations on: *The Philippines' first biohazard spill response drill at St. Luke's Medical Center - Research and Biotechnology Division, Quezon City*; *Biosafety-biosecurity-bioterrorism for general public: Asia*; and *Knowledge and Attitude of laboratory workers towards biosafety measure to prevent spread of superbugs in Pakistan*.

The 1540 expert delivered a presentation by video on “*Countering Biological Threats through National Implementation of Resolution 1540 (2004)*” to bring to the attention of the participants the obligations on all States relating to resolution 1540 (2004) to adopt, *inter alia*, legislation to prevent the proliferation of biological weapons and their means of delivery, and establish appropriate domestic controls over related materials to prevent their illicit trafficking. Pursuant to the 1540 Committee's Eleventh Program of Work, the 1540 expert also discuss ways and means of States' integration of their implementation of resolution 1540 (2004) obligations into their pursuit of broader national objectives convergent with the resolution, as appropriate. She also pointed out the role civil society, academia, industry, and professional organizations could play a role in identifying effective practices on implementing resolution 1540 (2004) and technology governance, identifying relevant science and technology developments that require policy action, integrating training on resolution 1540 obligations into standard training curricula, and developing regionally- customized educational and training materials and programs on resolution 1540 (2004), WMD non-proliferation, risk management, and building a culture of responsibility.

The video presentation will be posted online on the websites of the Asia Pacific Biosafety Association (at: <http://www.a-pba.org>) and the Malaysian Biosafety and Biosecurity Association (at: <http://www.mbba.org.my>).

4. Additional comments

For further information, please contact the 1540 Committee's Group of Experts by e-mail at 1540experts@un.org.