

Biosafety Global Stakeholders Meeting 2015



Strengthening Laboratory Biosafety through Innovation and Sustainability

September 23-24, 2015

Emory Conference Center

1615 Clifton Road, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

Background

Biosafety program requirements for low- to middle-income settings must ensure biosafety policies and procedures are appropriate, operational, sustainable, and integrated within the laboratory tiers.¹⁻³ The **World Health Organization-Africa Region (WHO-AFRO) Resolution AFR/RC58/R2**⁴ urges member states to develop or strengthen comprehensive national laboratory policies that address laboratory functions, organization, structures, networking, coordination, technologies, and maintenance that include **biosafety and biosecurity** measures. Biosafety in point-of-care and laboratory settings is central—not only to the diagnosis, care, and treatment of patients—but also to the safety of health care providers and other staff workers of health and laboratory facilities. Laboratory biosecurity involves the protection of microbiological agents from loss, theft, diversion or intentional misuse, through appropriate accountability, storage and access controls.⁵

While biosafety is a core component of laboratory infrastructure and capacity, low- to middle-income countries often do not have the resources or knowledge base for ensuring that optimal biosafety measures and protocols are integrated into laboratory and health care settings. In addition, the capacity in low- to middle-income countries to build laboratory biosecurity as an element of laboratory capacity and infrastructure, may be challenging. The ongoing Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in West Africa has demonstrated the need to reinforce both biosafety and laboratory biosecurity as part of infection prevention and control measures.

Building upon and expanding beyond the United States **President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)** and the **US Global Health Security Agenda** investments in creating laboratory capacity, the goal of the Biosafety Global Stakeholders Meeting 2015 is to provide a collaborative forum for initial discussions on how best to strengthen biosafety practices in low- to middle-income countries.

Key objectives of the meeting include:

- **Establishing consensus for minimal biosafety requirements in human health labs and point-of-care sites in low- to middle income countries.**
- **Exploring innovative, practical, and sustainable best practices for biosafety implementation and management at different tiers of laboratory networks in low- to middle income countries.**



Among the anticipated meeting deliverables is the development of a working consensus on a low- to middle-income biosafety checklist applicable at different tiers of laboratory networks.

The meeting objectives will be achieved through a combination of presentations and small work group discussions. The approach is intended to strengthen intra/interagency and global biosafety communication and to create a network for future harmonization and optimization of biosafety protocols and operational procedures.

References

1. International Health Regulations, Second Edition. World Health Organization, 2005.
Available at [International-Health-Regulations\(IHR\)](#).
2. The Fifty-Eighth World Health Assembly, Enhancement of Laboratory Biosafety (WHA58.29), 2005. Available at [Enhancement-of-Laboratory-Biosafety](#).
3. *2008 Maputo Consultation on Technical and Operational Recommendations for Clinical Laboratory Testing, Harmonization, and Standardization*. Available at [2008-Maputo-Consultation](#).
4. [Strengthening Public Health Laboratories in the WHO African Region: A Critical Need for Disease Control AFR/RC58/R2](#)
5. *Laboratory Biosafety Manual*, Third Edition. World Health Organization, 2004.

