

Statement by Ambassador Donald Mahley, U.S. Representative
Biological Weapons Convention Experts Meeting
June 13 - 24, 2005 Geneva, Switzerland

Mr. Chairman,

My delegation congratulates you on your assumption of the chair of the 2005 BWC meetings and offers you our full support. The 2003-2005 Work Program has, to date, been extremely constructive. It has provided one of the largest-ever international gatherings of experts on potential biological weapons-related activities and created renewed awareness of the importance of effective national measures, and how such measures can work in conjunction with worldwide efforts to stem the threat of biological weapons. We expect that our 2005 meetings under your able Chairmanship will continue this trend.

During this year's focus on "scientific and professional responsibility," discussion will center on "the content, promulgation, and adoption of codes of conduct for scientists." This is an important issue. We hope that the expert discussions and exchanges over the next two weeks will help to generate a greater understanding of emerging codes of conduct, their role in reinforcing, and in some ways personalizing, the norm against biological and toxin weapons, and provide an impetus to efforts promoting scientists' professional responsibilities.

I've no doubt that our upcoming discussions will also amply demonstrate that there is no "one size fits all" approach to codes of conduct. A universal code of conduct is not, in our view, feasible. Instead, my delegation will measure the success of this meeting in the extent to which it contributes to enhancing recognition by experts and States Parties of scientists' professional responsibilities. Ethical and responsible behavior by national scientists complements States Parties' national compliance objectives as well as overall international security.

In the coming days, the United States Government plans to make the following presentations:

--Department of Defense: "Implementation of the BWC"

--Department of Health and Human Services: Two presentations on "Codes of Conduct for the Life Sciences: Past, Present and Future" and "The National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity: Enhancing Oversight of Dual-Use Research"

--Department of Agriculture: "Professional Responsibility in Agricultural Research"

--Department of Energy: Two presentations on "Developing an Acceptable Code: A Code of Ethics" and "Scientist Reaction to a Code: DOE National Laboratories Example."

--Department of Homeland Security: "Presentation to 2005 Experts Meeting on Codes of Conduct"

Mr. Chairman,

I also note that a number of United States based non-government experts have chosen to present their views which are not representative of the views of the USG:

--American Medical Association: "AMA Guidelines to Prevent Malevolent Use of Biomedical Research"

--Center for Biosecurity: "A Code for the Working Scientist; Preventing Misuse and Promoting Responsibility"

--Center for Strategic and International Studies: "The Scientific Community's Role in Countering Biological Weapons Threats"

--Chemical and Biological Arms Control Institute & International Institute for Strategic Studies (combined presentation): "The Future of the Life Sciences: Reaping the Rewards and Managing the Risks"

--Nuclear Threat Initiative: "Summary and Lessons Learned from Projects on Biotechnology Non-proliferation, Bioindustry Standards and Bioscience Self-Governance"

--American Society for Microbiology: "ASM Activities, Policies and Statements"

--USC Marshall School of Business: "Proposed Elements of a Code of Conduct for Life Science Professionals: Implications of Findings From a Survey on Acceptability"

--American Association for the Advancement of Science: "Promulgating and Implementing Codes of Conduct for Scientists"

--Center for the Deterrence of Biowarfare and Bioterrorism (CDBB) at the University of Louisville: "Ethics to Counter the Threat of Biological Weapons"

--American Biological Safety Association: "Biosafety: a Vital and Growing Component of Scientific Responsibility"

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.