

ONLINE HED: Life scientists: educate others to help strengthen biosecurity

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Scientific advances in fields such as genome editing and artificial intelligence have led to concerns about harmful use. Partly as a result, countries are working to strengthen the United Nations Biological Weapons Convention, which prohibits the development of such weapons. The convention's next major review is scheduled for 2027. The most recent round of negotiations by the working group aimed at strengthening the convention concluded in August, but progress was slow because of long-standing divisions and the need for consensus.

Scientists have helped to set up the International Nuclear Security Education Network and are part of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. Life scientists, too, could implement biosecurity education, to help prevent the misuse of their benignly intended work.

At the working group's latest meeting, there was support for establishing an International Biosecurity Education Network (IBSEN), but no formal agreement was reached (see go.nature.com/4mugui1). We and others have done projects on biosecurity education and have begun a pilot IBSEN using charitable funding (<https://ibsen.org.uk>). We urge the working group to recommend establishment of an IBSEN at the 2027 review.

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