



# APP3 Statement on the Future of GHSA

## GHSA Action Package Prevent 3 on Biosafety and Biosecurity

The Global Health Security Agenda (GHSA) Action Package Prevent-3 (APP3) on Biosafety and Biosecurity recognizes that a strong and supportive multilateral system is critical to improving global systems to prevent, detect, and respond to existing, emerging, and reemerging threats regardless of origin, whether natural, accidental, or deliberate.

Biosafety and biosecurity are a critical part of the systems needed at local, national, regional, and global levels to ensure that the world is prepared for diseases of pandemic potential. It is essential that countries take a whole-of-society, multisectoral approach to biosafety and biosecurity and incorporate the contributions of defense, agriculture, health, and others. We applaud the work accomplished during the first two iterations of GHSA, reaching back nearly ten years.

We appreciate the service and leadership by all APP3 members throughout the lifetime of the Action Package and we commend the current leadership – the Government of Uganda and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention – for their dedication to ensuring biosafety and biosecurity remain critical parts of global health security efforts worldwide.

We also commend the work of international bodies such as the World Health Organization, World Organization for Animal Health, the United Nation’s Food and Agriculture Organization, who all serve as advisors to the GHSA. We also recognize the role of civils society in health security, particularly through the GHSA Consortium. Their contributions and support for integrating biosafety and biosecurity in their efforts are crucial and must be continued. We encourage continued collaboration between GHSA partners and these organizations to ensure biosecurity is well supported and integrated at all levels.

The [Global Health Security \(GHS\) Index](#) highlights the challenges faced by countries globally as they seek to mitigate biosafety and biosecurity challenges worldwide. The 2021 GHS Index shows that 94% of countries have no national oversight measures for dual-use research, no agency responsible for such oversight, and no evidence of a national assessment for dual-use research. In addition, the Index also shows that virtually no countries have sufficient biosafety and biosecurity systems in place as 178 countries score less than 50 out of 100 points for whole of government biosecurity systems, training, and other factors.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, as outlined in the [APP3 Statement on Biosecurity and Biosafety During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#), the APP3 continues to maintain that upholding robust biosafety and biosecurity systems and practices remains a critical priority for the global community, especially in responding to the

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<sup>1</sup> Jessica A. Bell and Jennifer B. Nuzzo, Global Health Security Index: Advancing Collective Action and Accountability Amid Global Crisis, 2021. Available: [www.GHSIndex.org](http://www.GHSIndex.org).

COVID-19 pandemic. Safety and security should be key considerations as countries rapidly bolster their laboratory and disease surveillance surge capacities to combat COVID-19.

Given these continued challenges, past successes, and the likelihood that GHSA is to be renewed for a third iteration, APP3 calls on the GHSA community to take on the following recommendations as part of future efforts to ensure the world is safe and secure from infectious disease threats:

- 1) **GHSA partners – including the Steering Group, Task Forces, and all relevant Action Packages – should work to increase political will for biosafety and biosecurity at the local, national, global, and regional levels through increased advocacy and education.** This is critical to ensure there is funding, attention, and prioritization for biosafety and biosecurity activities, as well as the needed support for capacity development worldwide noting the drastic need.
- 2) **The Steering Group should continue supporting Action Packages through the relevant Task Forces and increase political attention to ensure they meet specific objectives during the third iteration of GHSA.** The Steering Group should set clear, measurable goals for the next iteration and concretely support Action Packages in their efforts to meet them.
- 3) **APP3 commits to incorporating the voices and opinions of the next generation of biosecurity leaders and calls on the Steering Group, Task Forces, and other GHSA partners to do the same.** The next generation must be part of ongoing efforts in tangible ways, incorporating viewpoints and providing opportunities for advancements where possible.
- 4) **APP3 will increase focus and attention on emerging biological risks,** particularly those derived from advances in biotechnology with dual-use potential. COVID-19 highlighted the incredible positive potential these tools present for the world, but many advances present security concerns that must be considered.
- 5) **Biosafety and biosecurity developments must be measured and evaluated using a robust framework with clear indicators.** APP3 will work with GHSA members and other partners to develop these systems, including performance indicators for biosecurity.
- 6) **APP3 commits to taking a strategic approach to driving attention and technical collaboration on biosafety and biosecurity.** We call on the Steering Group and all interested GHSA partners to join this effort and ensure political will is translated into clear, measurable action at the country level, so the world is safer from infectious disease threats regardless of origin.

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*The Action Package Prevent-3 (APP3) Biosafety & Biosecurity is a collection of experts and leaders from countries and nongovernmental 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 including the International Health Regulations, the Biological Weapons Convention, and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540. The APP3 will continue to facilitate effective integration of multisectoral and multi-stakeholder work in achieving sustainable and measurable results toward common targets for biosafety and biosecurity both during the current COVID-19 pandemic and into the future.*

*The 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 nearly 70 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.*