

Seventy-Seventh Session of the World Health Assembly

Geneva, 19th May – 27th May 2025



Draft Intervention by India

28. Matters for information: Progress reports

Agenda H. Enhancement of laboratory biosafety (resolution WHA58.29 (2005))

Agenda I. Smallpox eradication: destruction of variola virus stocks (resolution WHA60.1 (2007))

(Word Count:225)

Thank You Chair!

India acknowledges and appreciates the leadership of the World Health Organization in strengthening laboratory biosafety and biosecurity, especially through the adoption of resolution WHA77.7, which builds upon the foundational work of WHA58.29.

Chair,

India has more than 90 operational/upcoming Biosafety Level 3 (BSL-3) laboratories, with diverse mandates including research, medical countermeasure development and diagnosis of high risk pathogens.

India has intervened by decentralizing the regulation of BSL-3 labs, shifting oversight from a central body to expert committees within line ministries. This move, aligned with international norms, aims to enhance biosafety and accountability nationwide.

Chair,

India has also launched the National One Health Mission, bringing together 22 laboratories from human, animal, and research sectors to collaboratively address outbreak-prone pathogens, including those from wildlife. These laboratories have been trained on essential biosafety practices at the apex laboratories including ICMR-National Institute of Virology (NIV) and National Institute of High Security Animal Diseases (NIHSAD).

Chair,

India has in the past also supported destruction of live virus stocks of small pox as no new R&D or medical countermeasure development is currently underway for this virus.

India is of the view that retaining live virus stocks is unnecessary, as they pose a significant biosecurity risk with no clear benefit. In the event of any future need, synthetic or recombinant viruses can be used.

Thank You