

Bio Security Symposium

Discussion Topic: Bio Security Governance, International Diplomacy and the Risk of Pandemic

INTRODUCTION –

Mr Chair/ Madame Chair, Distinguished Guests

All Protocols Observed.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

- We established during this symposium that biosecurity encompasses the management of risk to the economy, environment and community from pests and diseases entering, emerging and re-emerging, establishing or spreading.

Biosecurity can also be concluded to be a system – connections national and international protocols, rules and regulations.

- Biosecurity is identified in the media today as raging news headlines
EBOLA HERE, BEES INDUSTRY UNDER ATTACK, BIRD FLU STRAIN SPREAD TO THE WESTERN WORLD, MERS AND H1N1 (SWINE FLU).
- Notable reminders on how vulnerable the increasingly interconnected world is to the global impact of new emergent diseases (PHEIC)

Agricultural intensification and the use of Bio-Technology and life sciences are occurring at an unprecedented and accelerated rate and the potential misuse due to the inherent dual use nature of life sciences.

- An appetite for change – An ever hungrier world will present new or increase biosecurity risks.
Technology and Innovation will require a more efficient “smart” biosecurity system.
- Mosquito Vectors and Human Health
 - Expanding threats on shore – Aedes Aegypti and Dengue
 - Invasive mosquito threats – Aedes Albopictus
 - Invasive disease threats – Chikungunya, Yellow Fever, West Nile, Rift Valley, Zika and Malaria.
Numerous vector competent endemic species.

- The Governance of Biosafety works at three levels
 - The Political Level – The Law Makers
 - The Administration – A National Agency
 - The Institutional Level – Universities, Research Institutes, the local laboratory.

Take away here is no Biosecurity systems laws will work if it is not taken seriously by the people who must live with it. This is called Biosecurity culture.

Caribbean citizens look to their Government for protection from health risks from natural events, disasters and highly dangerous infectious diseases. This is where the next pandemic could trigger global recession- FLU –CONOMICS.

The biggest driver of the economics of pandemics is not mortality or morbidity but risk of aversion as people change their behaviour to reduce their chance of exposure. No cinemas, restaurants, malls.

- A Way Forward

National analytical approach to Biosafety and Biosecurity proposed by PHAC

National Oversight in the area of Biosafety and Biosecurity.

The A A consists of four steps:

1. Understand the Issue.
Identify and Define the Issue
2. Set Boundaries or Objectives
Understand Stakeholder Needs
3. Move towards Solution
Policy Instruments – Assess, Enhance and Identify
4. Build the Program
Project, Performance Management

To make all of this work efficiently, effective implementation of the BWC Laws will enable a coordinated “whole of government multi-sectoral approach, underpin by three (3) practical Pillars, namely:

1. Comprehensive Legislature
2. Effective Implementation
3. Complementary Voluntary activities involving cooperation between Government and Facility Operators and Scientists.

Final Messages

Biosecurity is about investment for long term sustainability.

Done wrong – Biosecurity always represent a risk

Done right – Biosecurity can be an Enabler to support development and sustainability economic return.

CONCLUSION – To conclude Chair, I wish you and the symposium every success at this difficult and exceptionally important crossroads for the University in steering us onto a constructive path ahead.

I thank you for your attention.