

Pugwash-MSSRF International Dialogue on

***Scientific, Social and Ethical Dimensions of
Biotechnology Research and Application
in Agriculture and Human Health***

**M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation,
Chennai
May 15-17, 2007**

Many developing countries are advancing efforts to use biotechnology to improve agriculture and health care sectors for the benefit of their populations. Significant efforts have been made in these countries for establishing research capacity, biosafety and regulatory frameworks. Both publicly funded and private sectors in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are combining new biotechnology techniques with an overall objective of ensuring food, nutrition and health security of their ever-increasing population.

These developing country biotechnology research programs are much more comprehensive than could have been foreseen a few years ago. While intellectual property issues have thus far proven manageable for most countries, high regulatory costs, increased public concerns, and lack of knowledge regarding the potential benefits and risks of biotechnology confine research products to the laboratory. This calls for accelerated efforts on delivery of products to the farmer and consumers based on the established evidence of safety and sustainability of these interventions to the food, nutrition and human health as well as to the environment.

Under this backdrop and under the auspices of the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs, M. S. Swaminathan Research Foundation is organizing a three-day annual dialogue during May 15-17, 2007 in collaboration with national and international agencies to discuss and deliberate on issues related to safe and sustainable use of Biotechnology in the priority areas of Agriculture and Human Health. Experts representing various stakeholders will take part in the three-day dialogue that aims at providing a road map for biotechnology research and application as well as essential riders for the safe, sustainable and equitable use of technology. The major output of the dialogue will be a roadmap for the safe and responsible use of biotechnology and for assessment of risks and benefits in a transparent manner, which will build professional, political, public and media confidence.

TENTATIVE PROGRAMME

Day 1.

Session I: 11.30-1.00pm	Food, Nutrition and Human Health – Emerging Challenges
Session II: 2.00-3.30pm	Increasing the Agricultural Productivity in unfavorable situations/ environments (climate change, abiotic stress)
Session III: 4.00-5.30pm	Protecting Crop Productivity (Biotic stress, value addition)

6.00-8.00pm: **Working Group for Setting up of a National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority**

DAY 2

Session IV: 9.00-11.00am	Protecting the Environment (Bioremediation, water quality)
Session V: 11.30-1.00pm	Stem Cell Research
Session VI: 2.00-3.30pm	Emerging technologies for human health (Nanotechnology, r-DNA vaccines)
Session VII: 4.00-5.30pm	Societal, Trade and Proprietary Issues

6.00-8.00pm: **Break out Groups**

DAY 3

Session VIII: 9.00-11.00am	Public-private Partnerships
Session IX: 11.30-1.30pm	Regulations in Biotechnology (Biosafety, Regulatory process)
Session X: 2.30-4.00 pm	Concluding Session and recommendations