

China's Views and Practices in Adopting and Implementing Code of Conduct of Scientists

In light of huge and fast development of biotechnologies and ascending threats of bioterrorism, biosecurity has been given more and more attention. In this context, bio-scientists must have a clear understanding about the content and purposes of their research, conscientiously analyze and evaluate the consequences of the achievements in their research and try their best to prevent the potential negative impact brought by such achievements. Therefore, code of conduct or ethic regulations should be adopted and implemented to educate, supervise and regulate scientists' behavior in order to prevent the achievements in their research from being abused or misused intendedly or unintendedly. Thus the integration of discipline and self-discipline could be realized.

China attaches great importance to the issue of code of conduct of scientists and personnel in biological field. The Chinese Government, scientific and educational community have taken a series of measures to prevent scientific accomplishments from being abused or misused for the purposes prohibited by the Biological Weapons Convention.

I. At the Government Level

The Chinese Government has promulgated a series of relevant laws and regulations, which provides a solid legal basis in regulating the public, including the scientists' conduct, such as:

(1) *The Amendment III to the Criminal Law* promulgated in December 2001. It clearly provides that any illegal manufacturing, transporting, storing or using infectious pathogens and other conduct jeopardizing public security constitutes crimes and shall be punished.

(2) *The Regulations on Export Control of Dual-Use Biological Agents and Related Equipment and Technologies* promulgated in October 2002. It adopts such international practices as licensing system, end-user and end-use certificate and catch-all principle and has strict control over the export of dual-use biological agents and related equipment and technologies. The export defined by the Regulations includes not only the export for trade, but also the exchange with, gift to, exhibition in, assistance to, provision of service for as such and other forms of technological transfer thereof, to foreign countries, which covers scientific communication.

(3) *The Regulations on Biosafety Management of Pathogenic Microorganism Laboratories* issued in November 2004. It covers research, teaching, detection and diagnosis activities related to pathogenic microorganisms.

II. At the Scientific Community Level

Relevant codes of conduct have been adopted and implemented through the following approaches.

(1) **Establishing in-house guidelines.** In November 2001, China Academy of Science (CAS) passed the *Guidelines of Self-Discipline on Scientific Ethics of Academician*, which required that all academicians should scrupulously abide by scientific ethics, always put the interests of the nation, people and humankind on primacy and insistently make science to serve the human civilization, peace and progress. In the scientific activities, they should strictly comply with and safeguard the ethics related to national security, ecological, environmental and health safety.

(2) **Setting up institutions.** The main purpose of setting up institutions is to better supervise the implementation of the in-house guidelines. For example, China Association of Science and Technology (CAST) has set up a Commission on Ethics and Rights of Scientists and Engineers, which is especially responsible for dealing with scientists' conduct and moral character. CAS has also set up a Committee on the Scientific Ethics, which is responsible for strengthening scientific ethics, adopting or amending code of conduct of academician, investigating the behavior in violation of scientific ethics and making suggestion to deal with such cases.

(3) **Enhancing research and public awareness.** In order to strengthen and improve the adoption and implementation of the code of conduct, and make the existing code to be aware, accepted and complied by more personnel in the scientific community, Chinese scientific community has done a lot of research and promotion of public awareness.

In December 2002, six departments including CAS, the Ministry of Education and CAST co-held the itinerant lectures on "Science and China", in which the topics such as scientific spirits, scientific ethics and life aspirations totaled almost 1/3 of the agenda of the lectures.

Besides, CAS conducted a research project focusing on the issue of "scientific ethics and moralities in contemporary China". The project produced an advisory report entitled *Some Basic Analysis and Recommendations on the Issue of Scientific Ethics and Academic Discipline*. The report recommends, inter alia, opening a required course on scientific ethics for postgraduates, strengthening the moralities educations for young students and setting up supervising networks against improper research activities.

(4) **Participating in international exchanges.** Chinese scientific community attaches importance to exchanges and cooperation with their foreign counterparts with the aim to learn from each other and make progress together. Mr. Lu Yongxiang, President of CAS, is a member of the UNESCO's World Commission on the Ethics of Scientific Knowledge and Technology (COMEST). He has taken an active part in COMEST activities and made useful recommendations.

III. At the Educational Community Level

Efforts are made so as to foster the consciousness of scientific ethics and social responsibilities of teachers and students through the adoption of regulations or publishing books.

For example, in February 2002, the Ministry of Education issued a document entitled *Some Guidelines on How to Strengthen the Buildup of Scientific and Academic Moralities*. The Guidelines require strengthening the education on scientific moralities for teachers and students so as to promote their sense of historical obligations and social responsibilities and to devote themselves to science and serve the society.

Based on this regulation, some universities including Peking University and Tsinghua University, constituted or amended ethics regulations on teachers, which aim to enhance teachers' consciousness on scientific morality and social responsibility.

In conclusion, China attaches great importance to the issue of code of conduct of scientists and personnel in biological field. China has adopted a series of measures to regulate their behavior and facilitate them to adequately realize their obligations. China is ready to make unremitting efforts in cooperation and exchanges with other Parties so as to make all the scientific and technological developments in biological field to serve the peace and progress of human beings.