

# Working Group on the Strengthening of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

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Agenda item 6

Identifying, examining and developing specific and effective measures, including possible legally-binding measures, and making recommendations to strengthen and institutionalize the Convention in all its aspects within the mandate of the Working Group

## International Cooperation of the Russian Federation under Article X of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction

### Submitted by the Russian Federation

1. The Russian Federation is consistently developing the international relations under the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC).
2. In 2023 Russia used the database tool under Article X of BWC to implement its provisions. In cooperation with the BWC Implementation Support Unit three proposals for the cooperation with other countries made by Russian federal executive bodies and subsidiary organizations were uploaded to the official Internet platform dedicated to Article X of BWC:
  - Advanced training course of the Federal Institution "Federal Centre for Animal Health" (FGBI 'ARRIAH') of the Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance (Rosselkhoz nadzor) focused on topical issues of preventing and controlling transboundary animal diseases, including emerging diseases and zoonotic agents that pose a threat to animal and human health<sup>1</sup>;
  - Workshop offered by the Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of Higher Education I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University of the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation (Sechenov University) on the issues of vaccination<sup>2</sup>;
  - Course offered by the Russian Research Anti-Plague Institute "Microbe" on the issues of contamination and autopsy of laboratory animals, emergency response when working with pathogenic biological agents, as well as specific questions on epidemiology, microbiology and laboratory diagnosis of especially dangerous infection<sup>3</sup>.
3. As part of the confidence-building measures between the BWC States Parties the Russian side annually provides information on facilities and biological activities.

<sup>1</sup> <https://bwc-articlex.unog.ch/offers/advanced-training-course-preventing-and-controlling-transboundary-animal-diseases>

<sup>2</sup> <https://bwc-articlex.unog.ch/offers/workshop-field-vaccination>

<sup>3</sup> <https://bwc-articlex.unog.ch/offers/online-course-infectious-diseases-and-biological-safety>



4. Bilateral cooperation is carried out within the framework of intergovernmental memoranda on ensuring biological security, intergovernmental and interagency agreements on specific areas of interaction. Bilateral consultations on the issues of biological security are regularly conducted at the interagency level.
5. Specialist training within the programmes of continuing professional education is underway in the area of chemical and biological safety in the educational institutions subordinate to the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Russian Federation. Over 50 programmes of advanced training for professionals specializing in the area of chemical and biological security (as of July 2023, over 1.2 thousand persons trained) were developed and uploaded to the Russia's Ministry of Health Platform of continuous medical and pharmaceutical education in order to train medical employees in this field.
6. Training for foreign specialists under various programmes in the field of veterinary and phytosanitary surveillance has been organized in Rosselkhoznadzor's institutions such as FGBI "ARRIAH" as well as "Russian State Center for Animal Feed and Drug Standardization and Quality" (FGBU "VGNIKI") and "Russian Center for Plant Quarantine" (FGBU "VNIIPK"). In 2023 the training was provided to specialists from Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.
7. Russia participates in providing practical assistance to the countries in fighting against dangerous infectious diseases. Thus, in 2022 in order to combat the spread of new coronavirus infection the Russian Federation organized humanitarian supplies of Sputnik Light vaccine to the Republic of Djibouti in the amount of 100 thousand doses.
8. In 2023, vaccines produced by the FGBI 'ARRIAH' against foot-and-mouth disease, poultry and birds diseases, cattle and small ruminant diseases as well as diagnostic tools were sent to Afghanistan, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belarus, Bulgaria, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Morocco, Mongolia, Pakistan, Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Uzbekistan. FGBU "VNIIPK" sent phytosanitary protection tools to Abkhazia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan.
9. Rospotrebnadzor continues to implement various programmes of assistance to partner countries and scientific research in the field of prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, plague, tropical diseases, prevention of antibiotic resistance as well as in conducting population-based seroepidemiological studies of topical infectious diseases and implementing the 2005 International Health Regulations (IHR):
  - Programme of logistical, scientific and methodological support to the countries of Eastern Europe, Transcaucasia and Central Asia in introducing and implementing the IHR 2005. The purpose of the programme is to develop cooperation with the indicated partners in fighting against global threats of biological nature, strengthen common emergency response system, maintain the state of readiness to the existing threats and to take response measures within the profile structures, formation of regulatory, legal and methodological platforms for a regional system of emergency response to biological threats, including the use of the Russian specialized anti-epidemic teams (SAET) to eliminate the consequences of sanitary and epidemiological emergency situations in these States. In autumn 2023 the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Exercises of mobile rapid response teams to emergencies of a sanitary and epidemiological nature using mobile laboratories will take place in Astrakhan;
  - Programme of cooperation with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to combat the spread of plague until 2025. It is aimed at building up cooperation in order to ensure epidemiological well-being concerning plague, strengthening plague prevention and control measures in these countries, including in cross-border foci in order to reduce the risk of epidemic complications, increase the level of anti-epidemic readiness of specialized partner institutions by strengthening human resources and material and technical equipment;

- Programme of scientific and technical cooperation with Guinea. Pathogens of infectious diseases are studied under the programme carried out by the Russian-Guinean Scientific and Research Centre for Epidemiology and Prevention of Infectious Diseases. At the moment some 22 new diagnostic products have been developed to detect pathogens that are relevant both for the Republic of Guinea and the Russian Federation to carry out measures for the sanitary protection. The Centre carried out testing of the Russian products to diagnose hepatitis B and C, HIV and yellow fever. Employees of the relevant departments of the Republic of Guinea continue training and joint research on the issues of biological security, epidemiology, laboratory diagnostics and prevention of socially significant, natural focal and especially dangerous infections;
- Cooperation with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on countering the threat of infectious diseases. Joint scientific expeditions of the Russian and Vietnamese specialists are organized to various provinces of Vietnam in order to monitor the situation on dangerous, natural focal and socially significant infections. Such expeditions are aimed at taking samples of the external environment, isolating bacterial strains, conducting laboratory tests and further analysis of the material obtained (in 2022-2023 there were 22 expeditions). Vietnamese specialists receive training and prepare Ph.D. theses in scientific institutions of Rospotrebnadzor;
- Programme to counter the spread of antimicrobial resistance in Eastern Europe, Transcaucasia and Central Asia until 2025. As part of the project the following activities are planned: training of more than 350 foreign specialists from these countries, including specialized theoretical and practical courses, strengthening the material and technical base of partners' specialized laboratories (in particular, supplying modern Russian equipment and 2.8 thousand sets of Russian-made reagents for various purposes), continued support of the activities of the reference centre for organizing an epidemiological surveillance and monitoring system. It is planned to expand the range of studies and increase the speed of obtaining results, continue research on the molecular genetic analysis of antibiotic-resistant microorganisms, replenish the working collection of characterized antibiotic-resistant isolates of microorganisms separated from food products;
- Scientific research of infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia until 2025. Within the project Rospotrebnadzor specialists are working to improve the epidemiological surveillance of HIV infection in partner countries, i.e. to increase the effectiveness of HIV programmes and the activities of epidemiological surveillance services. In addition, the work of mobile medical and preventive complexes on the platform of a cross-country vehicle (KAMAZ) was organized; a project for catch-up vaccination against hepatitis B with Russian vaccines was launched in the Kyrgyz Republic; by the end of 2024 it is planned to purchase and deliver to the countries at least 860 thousand Russian-made express tests, as well as to train about 50 engineers and medical technicians;
- Programme of assistance to African countries in ensuring the sanitary and epidemiological well-being of the population, prevention and control of infectious diseases until 2027. The objectives of the assistance provided by Russia are to deepen cooperation in the study of emerging and re-emerging infectious and parasitic diseases relevant to the African region, reduce the risks of their importation and spread in the Russian Federation, improve epidemiological surveillance; ensure integration of the Russian experience in ensuring the sanitary and epidemiological well-being of the population into the systems for the prevention of infectious diseases in African countries, export of Russian technologies for monitoring biological threats, as well as education and training for specialists in the field of epidemiology, laboratory diagnostics and biological security; strengthen the material and technical base of specialized institutions responsible for the prevention and control of infectious diseases in African countries.

10. In order to exchange scientific achievements the Russian Federation held the 4<sup>th</sup> International Scientific and Practical Conference "Global Biosecurity Challenges: Problems

and Solutions" (Sochi, June 22-23, 2023), which was attended by experts from the CSTO and CIS countries, BRICS countries, SCO, Asia, Africa, Latin America, as well as international and non-governmental organizations.

11. Within the section events of the conference the participants discussed the issues of improving international law in the field of pandemic prevention, cooperation within the framework of Article X of the BWC, the Rospotrebnadzor assistance programme to partner countries in the prevention and control of infections, cooperation between the Russian Federation and other countries in conducting research on infections. Special attention was paid to international cooperation in the field of laboratory diagnostics, strengthening of the BWC regime, biological security issues in the context of the rapid development of digital technologies.

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