

Geneva, 9 August 2016

BWC Preparatory Committee

Russia's side event

Establishing mobile biomedical units under the BWC: a multipurpose capability to strengthen collective security under the Convention and pursue its humanitarian mandate

Dear colleagues,

Good afternoon and welcome. My name is Vladimir Ladanov, I am Counsellor at the Arms Control Department of the Foreign Ministry. Dr Vyacheslav Smolensky is Head of International Co-operation Department of Russia's Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Well-Being.

Many thanks to all of you for attending this side event to take forward the discussion of Russia's proposal on mobile biomedical units. It was launched at the April session of the PrepCom in a working paper BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.1/REV.2. The paper is available on the PrepCom's webpage.

This initiative presents a new vision for strengthening the Convention and improving its implementation in three vital areas: promotion of international co-operation in combating infectious disease, delivery of assistance against biological weapons and investigation of alleged use of biological weapons.

The proposed capability for all these tasks is the same and it has two dimensions: humanitarian and security. We envisage that the chief occupation of mobile units will be humanitarian – responding to requests from States Parties to assist in suppression of natural epidemic outbreaks. Should a security situation occur, namely the use of biological weapons, mobile units will rapidly re-role to the delivery of emergency medical assistance and investigation of alleged use.

We propose that mobile units be established, operated and funded centrally under a future international arrangement to be developed as part of the programme of work after this Review Conference.

Over the past several months, we have reached out to stakeholders with a view to raising awareness about the various aspects of this initiative and promoting agreement in the run-up to the Review Conference in November. In the process of doing so, we have received their views, comment and questions.

A large number of questions revolved around projected costs and composition of proposed mobile units. Since we utilised long established Russian specialised anti-epidemic teams as a prototype in visualising the concept, the figures and other specifics that may serve as a baseline in making evaluations and projections have been extracted from real life.

Vyacheslav will take us through the slides presentation which will be circulated as a working document of the PrepCom after this side event. He will be speaking in Russian and simultaneous interpretation will be provided from Russian into English. After his presentation, we will be happy to take questions and comment.