Statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Biological Weapons Convention

April 10 marks a historic milestone – the 50th anniversary of the opening for signature of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC).

The BWC was the first international legally binding treaty to outlaw an entire category of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). A ban on weaponization of biological agents is a significant step towards a world free of WMDs. Since its entry into force in 1975, the BWC has always been one of the pillars of disarmament and international security.

The achievements of the international community reached on the basis of the Convention are undeniable. However, there is also room for further improvement. As one of the founding members and depositaries of the Convention, the Russian Federation prioritises universalisation of the BWC. We regularly submit concrete proposals to improve the mechanisms of its implementation.

First of all, it is necessary to resume negotiations on a legally binding Protocol to the Convention stipulating an effective verification mechanism. We promote the establishment of mobile biomedical units and Scientific Advisory Committee under the Convention, and a mechanism for investigating possible violations of the Convention's provisions in accordance with Article VI of the BWC. More attention should be paid to the development of confidence building measures, including reporting of information by States on their military
biological activities abroad. The particular relevance of this requirement is confirmed by the information gathered during the special military operation in Ukraine. The disclosed data on the U.S. military and biological activities in the laboratories on the territory of Ukraine clearly indicate the violation of Articles I и IV of the BWC.

We urge all States Parties to promptly adopt appropriate collective measures and focus on achieving significant results and decisions at the forthcoming Ninth Review Conference this August. We are convinced that only decisions that are jointly adopted by consensus can provide reliable guarantees of good faith compliance with conventional obligations and prevent development and use of biological weapons. At the same time, it is important not to create artificial obstacles to the development of civil biological technologies and international cooperation provided for by the relevant provisions of the Convention.