

**Statement by the Delegation of the Russian Federation  
at the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the Ninth Review  
Conference of the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons  
Convention (BTWC)  
Item 5 of the Agenda – General exchange of views  
(Geneva, 4 April 2022)**

Distinguished Co-chairs,

We are confident that your strong joint leadership will help meet the tasks that have been set before the Preparatory Committee. You can count on the support and cooperation from the delegation of the Russian Federation.

The current review cycle is nearing completion. We hope that the COVID-19 pandemic and the difficulties in organizing in-person events are now behind us. We believe that the States Parties are well positioned to set up a substantive basis for ensuring the success of the Ninth BTWC Review Conference. The events held as part of the intersessional work programme confirmed the relevance of such meetings and showed that there are initiatives to strengthen the Convention on which the States Parties of the BTWC are able to reach consensus decisions. It is important to keep the momentum.

Russia has consistently advocated an early resumption of negotiations on a legally binding protocol to the Convention that, among other things, provides for an effective verification mechanism. However, being realistic, we understand that the destructive position of one of the States makes it hardly possible to resume the work at this point.

Therefore, the Russian delegation has introduced and continues to promote the well-known initiatives aimed at institutionalizing the BTWC regime. These include establishing an Open-ended Working Group to elaborate measures and proposals on strengthening the BTWC, creating mobile biomedical units within the BTWC to render assistance in case of the use of biological weapons and to help suppress epidemics of various etiology,

introducing an investigation mechanism with regard to alleged breach of obligations deriving from the provisions of the Convention in line with Article VI, as well as founding the Scientific Advisory Committee which would analyze scientific and technical developments relevant to the BTWC and render advice to States Parties. These approaches are fully shared by the CSTO and CIS Member States, which is reflected in joint foreign ministers' statements on strengthening the BTWC of 19 May and 14 October 2021 respectively, as well as by many other countries.

Russia supports the proposals of the States Parties aimed at strengthening the BTWC. In particular, we welcome China's initiatives to establish a separate non-discriminatory export control mechanism under the Convention and to develop a model voluntary code of conduct for biological scientists.

For many years, the delegation of the Russian Federation, as well as those of other countries, namely China and the CSTO and CIS Member States, noted the importance of improving confidence-building measures under the BTWC, including through incorporating information on the military biomedical activities of participating States abroad in the reporting form in order to dismiss concerns with respect to these activities carried out by certain BTWC States Parties.

Significant expansion of the scope of these activities, especially in the countries near us, makes us wonder as to their real purposes and content and is considered by the Russian Federation as a national security risk factor. Regrettably, the States Parties, namely the United States and its NATO allies, do not report on these activities under the confidence-building measures currently in place.

In this context, Ukraine is the most alarming example today. We have gathered materials giving every reason to assert that military biomedical activities had been carried out in the biological laboratories in the territory of

this country with the support of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) of the U.S. Department of Defense and its affiliated companies Black and Veatch, CH2M Hill and Metabiota, in violation of Articles I and IV of the BTWC.

The programmes were funded directly by DTRA under the Pentagon project "High-Danger Pathogen Threat Reduction in Ukraine". About 30 Ukrainian laboratories were involved, as the registration card of the programme in question shows. This card is signed by Viktor Polishchuk, Deputy State Secretary of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine. It names DTRA as the customer.

DTRA's main activities in Ukraine included collection and transportation to the United States of strains of dangerous microorganisms, and research pertaining to potential biological weapon agents endemic in this region, which have natural focuses there and can be transmitted to humans.

Hasty elimination of the biological facilities' stocks of dangerous and high-danger pathogens evidence that an attempt was made to cover up the traces of these activities. The analysis of certificate of destruction has confirmed that the facilities handled plague, anthrax, leptospirosis and brucellosis. The Lvov laboratory alone has destroyed 232 containers with the agent of leptospirosis, 30 containers with the agent of rabbit fever, 10 containers with brucellosis agent and 5 containers with plague. A total of 320 containers have been destroyed. The range and the excessive number of pathogens show that those were involved in biological weapons programmes in violation of Article I of the BTWC.

The Ministry of Defense of Russia has publicly demonstrated the papers received from the staff of Ukrainian laboratories and confirming our allegations and long-standing concerns. We continue to analyze the facts.

We call on the United States and Ukraine to act in the spirit of transparency they advocate and to answer all the questions that have arisen in the context of their compliance with Articles I and IV of the BTWC.

In conclusion, we would like to declare with full responsibility that the Russian delegation stands ready to cooperate closely with all the delegations present in order to obtain specific practical results.

Thank you.