INFORMATION
on Observance by the Russian Federation of Obligations under
the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and
Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and
Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction

The Russian Federation reaffirms its commitment to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (hereinafter "the Convention" or "the BWC"). Russia fully and unwaveringly is carrying out its obligations under the Convention. The strengthening of the Convention regime, fulfillment of the international obligations relating to the prohibition and non-proliferation of biological and toxin weapons is one of the fundamental priorities of Russia’s national policy.

All necessary national measures to ensure the implementation of the Convention have been adopted in Russia in accordance with constitutional procedures. Therefore, the following is emphasized.

1. In accordance with assumed obligations the Russian Federation carries out no activities incompatible with the aims and provisions of Article I of the Convention.

The Russian Federation does not develop, produce, stockpile, acquire or retain:

Microbiological or other biological agents or toxins, regardless of their origin or method of production, of types and in quantities that have no justification for prophylactic, protective or other peaceful purposes;

Weapons, equipment, or means of delivery designed to use such agents or toxins for hostile purposes or in armed conflicts.

In view of the aforesaid, there is no subject for consideration in the context of Article II of the Convention with regard to the Russian Federation.
2. The Russian Federation has never transferred to anyone, directly or indirectly, nor has it in any way assisted, encouraged or induced any State, group of States, international organizations or non-State entities to produce or acquire by any means any of such agents, toxins, weapons, equipment or means of delivery referred to in Article I of the Convention.

A system of export controls to monitor the movement of products of biological application complying with all international standards and regulations has been established and is now in operation in the Russian Federation. This system is continuously improved to take into account the new challenges and threats facing humanity. The export/import control legislation and activities ensure full compliance of the Russian Federation with Article III of the Convention.

In order to protect its national interests and ensure compliance with the international obligations under the Convention, export controls on products of biological application are governed by federal laws of the Russian Federation, decisions of the Government of the Russian Federation and other legislative acts.

The list of micro-organisms, toxins, equipment and technologies subject to export controls is approved by the Order of the President of the Russian Federation. Foreign trade operations involving controlled goods and technologies (including transfer of intangibles) is subject to corresponding licensing by authorized government authorities.

The non-observance of the legal requirements of the Russian Federation relating to foreign trade (illegal export, transfer, non-declaration or the submission of an invalid customs declaration, or illegal provision of services relating to raw products, materials, equipment or technologies, or of scientific or technical information) is a criminal and administrative offence.
3. In accordance with constitutional procedures, the Russian Federation has adopted and is implementing under Article IV of the Convention the required national measures to prohibit and prevent the development, production, stockpiling, acquisition or retention of the biological agents, toxins, weapons, equipment and means of delivery mentioned in Article I of the Convention.

A legal and regulatory foundation has been established to ensure compliance with the international obligations to prohibit bacteriological (biological) and toxin weapons. The Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation is the national agency that has been authorized to ensure the implementation of the Convention.

Federal laws of the Russian Federation, decisions of the Government of the Russian Federation and other legislative acts establish safety measures to be applied to the various biological agents and toxins and regulate the procedure for issuing authorizations to work with micro-organisms and toxins, for their accounting, storage, transport, and transfer. The licensing of activities related to the use of infectious disease pathogens has been instituted, and a State registry system has been established for genetic engineering activities. The Criminal Code of the Russian Federation provides for fines, compulsory labour as well as imprisonment for up to three years for illegal works, illegal export from Russia or transfer of raw products, materials, equipment, technologies, scientific and technical information (services), which can be used to create weapons of mass destruction, armaments and materiel, penalty of five up to ten years in prison for violation of obligations taken under the Convention, and of 10 up to 20 years for use of means prohibited by international agreements. The Criminal and Administrative Codes of the Russian Federation set out penalties for violation of established rules of handling pathogenic micro-organisms and toxins.
Measures to prevent the use of biological agents and toxins for terrorism or for other criminal purposes have been adopted and are being improved.

4. The Russian Federation is open to holding consultations and cooperating with other States Parties to the Convention to resolve any issues that may arise in respect of the Convention’s aims and the implementation of its provisions. Between 2017 and 2022, the Russian Federation, as depositary for the Convention, received no communications from any States Parties expressing concern about compliance with the obligations of the Convention, which are provided for under Article V of the Convention, as agreed upon by the Second and Third BWC Review Conferences.

On 29 June 2022, the Russian Federation, in accordance with provisions of Article V and final documents of the Second and Third BWC Review Conferences, submitted a request to convene a consultative meeting of the BWC States Parties under Article V of the Convention in connection with the existing questions concerning the fulfillment by the United States and Ukraine respectively of their obligations under the Convention in view of the activities of the bio-laboratories on the Ukrainian territory, which took place on 26 August and on 5-9 September 2022.

The Russian Federation is in full compliance with the recommendations and decisions of the Convention’s Review Conferences. As part of confidence-building measures, pursuant to the decisions taken at the Second, Third and Seventh Review Conferences, by 15 April of every year between 2017 and 2022 the Russian Federation submitted to the United Nations the information on its facilities and biological activities, in accordance with the established format. We believe that the submission of such information by all States Parties to the Convention is one of the key factors for strengthening the BWC.
The Russian Federation continues to believe that the resumption of work on adopting a legally binding Protocol and establishing an effective mechanism of verification should be a priority to strengthen the Convention.

In August-September 2021 at the Meeting of Experts and on 22-25 November 2021 at the Meeting of the States Parties to the BWC, Russia submitted the following proposals for inclusion in the final document of the Ninth Review Conference of the BWC,

- For the establishment of an Open-ended working group open to all States Parties to elaborate on a basis of consensus appropriate measures to strengthen the Convention to be included in a legally binding instrument (BWC/MSP/2020/MX.5/WP.3);

- For the establishment of a specialized subsidiary organ – a Scientific Advisory Committee to review the developments in the fields of science and technology related to the Convention (BWC/MSP/2020/MX.2/WP.4);

- For the establishment of mobile biomedical units to implement the following three elements (BWC/MSP/2020/MX.4/WP.2):
  a) Advancement of international co-operation for prevention of infectious diseases pursuant to Article X of the BWC;
  b) Provision of assistance and delivery of protection against biological weapons pursuant to Article VII of the BWC;
  c) Investigation of alleged use of biological weapons pursuant to Article VI of the BWC.

- For the establishment of a Group of Governmental Experts for the period from 2022 to 2026 to consider and agree on concrete guidelines and procedures to initiate and conduct investigations under Article VI of the BWC (BWC/MSP/2020/MX.5/WP.2 and BWC/MSP/2020/WP.2);
- For the completion of confidence-building measures under the BWC with a reporting form on military biomedical activities conducted on the territory of other States (BWC/MSP/2020/WP.1).

The Russian Federation is in full compliance with the requirements of UN Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) of 28 April 2004. The Committee of the UN Security Council is provided with information on the implementation of the measures called for in the resolution. The Russian Federation takes part in the consultations, working sessions and meetings related to the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540.

5. The Russian Federation is prepared to cooperate in investigations undertaken by the UN Security Council under Article VI of the Convention, on the basis of sound evidence provided for by the States Parties to confirm that any State Party to the Convention or Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare signed on 17 June 1925 in Geneva (hereinafter "the Geneva Protocol of 1925") has been in breach of its obligations.

6. The Russian Federation is prepared to participate in the provision of assistance to any State Party under Article VII of the Convention if the UN Security Council adopts a decision stating that such a Party has been exposed to danger as a result of a violation of the Convention.

Of added value to a successful implementation of that Article could be the enablement of the initiative on mobile biomedical units aimed at, inter alia, providing assistance and delivery of protection against biological weapons pursuant to Article VII of the BWC.

7. The Russian Federation, as a full-fledged party to the Geneva Protocol of 1925, maintains no reservations in respect of that instrument and fully meets its requirements.
The Russian Federation considers that the Convention and the Geneva Protocol of 1925 are mutually complementing international agreements related to the prohibition and non-proliferation of biological and toxin weapons.

With that in mind, the Russian Federation is concerned with the existence in the States, including the States Parties to the Convention, of the reservations they made during the ratification of the Geneva Protocol of 1925 and calls on all States to withdraw those reservations immediately (Article VIII of the Convention).

8. In its implementation of the obligations under the Convention, the Russian Federation considers the effect of Article X of the Convention to be an important factor in mutual relations among States Parties in carrying out measures aimed at combating dangerous infectious diseases, regardless of whether they result from natural phenomena or from deliberate use of biological agents and toxins.

The Russian Federation has the ways and means available to combat infectious diseases of people, animals and plants. It actively cooperates with many States and international organizations in addressing problems in this field.

The scientific and technical activities of the Russian Federation in the area of biology and biotechnology are fully open for the world community. The Russian scientific institutions actively cooperate with many scientific and research centers of other States. Evidence of this can be seen in jointly developed scientific programmes, enhancement of scientific ties, openness of Russian scientific laboratories to foreign experts, and in a great number of joint publications of academic research results both in domestic and international scientific magazines.

To provide for scientific exchanges, the Russian Federation held international seminars and conferences on various aspects of biology and biotechnology (for instance, three international conferences on Global
Biosecurity Challenges: Problems and Solutions, in Sochi) between 2017 and 2021. Foreign professionals received biosecurity skill enhancement training, epizootology, diagnostics, dangerous infectious diseases prevention and means of combating.

Combating infectious diseases remains one of the important activities for the Russian Federation in conducting international cooperation within the inter-State fora and organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), BRICS, and other associations. Russia has participated and participates in providing practical assistance to other countries in combating dangerous infectious diseases. The examples of such activities include Russia’s work to eliminate the outbreak of Ebola in West Africa and its assistance to other States in combating the spread of new coronavirus infection Covid-19. The assistance provided included such areas as backing up diagnostic studies, laboratory support, delivery of vaccines and test-systems, equipment and devices as well as professional training. Assistance was provided to the republics of Central Asia, Armenia, Belarus, Moldova, European countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Italy, Serbia, the States of the Middle East and Africa, including Iran, Lebanon, Syria, Afghanistan, Algeria, Tunisia, Guinea, Congo, Djibouti, Namibia, Senegal, Sierra-Leone, South Africa, as well as to South-East Asia and Oceania, including Indonesia, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Nauru, and to Latin America, including Argentina, Brazil and Mexico.

Technical assistance was provided to the States that requested aid in order to ensure international commercial transactions with micro-organisms, toxins, equipment and technologies from controlled lists. Infectious pathogen strains
were exchanged taking into consideration the requirements of Article III of the Convention and the national procedures applicable to foreign trade operations.

The Russian Federation calls for strengthening of international cooperation, and is prepared to provide assistance to other States in combatting dangerous infectious diseases, including through mutually acceptable agreements and within the framework of international treaties.

An obstacle to the full implementation of Article X of the BWC is seen in the restrictions arising from Covid-19 pandemic as well as from unilateral restrictive measures against some States Parties to the BWC, which make it near to impossible to exchange equipment, materials and information on the use of bacteriological (biological) means and toxins for peaceful purposes, create difficulties to the development of the States Parties and to the international exchange of bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins as well as equipment to process, use or produce bacteriological (biological) agents and toxins for peaceful purposes in accordance with provisions of the Convention.

9. The Russian Federation believes that there is currently no reason to introduce amendments to the text of the Convention (Article XI of the Convention).

10. The Russian Federation considers the Convention’s review conferences to be important international events for the strengthening of the instrument. They make it possible to assess the status of compliance with the BWC and to identify future steps to strengthen the Convention and implementation of its provisions. We think that the next review conference should be scheduled for 2026 (Article XII of the Convention).

11. The Russian Federation expresses its satisfaction with the absence of any State Party to the Convention declaring its intention to withdraw from the Convention under any circumstances, and expresses the hope that this will remain the case in the future (Article XIII of the Convention).
12. The Russian Federation promotes the universality of the Convention and welcomes all States that joined it as its Parties in the period from 2017 to 2022. Russia will continue to provide assistance to the States Parties in their successful implementation of the provisions of the BWC and its Review Conferences’ decisions (Article XIV of the Convention).

We call upon the States that have not yet become Parties to the Convention to do so as soon as possible.

13. The Russian Federation is in full compliance with its obligations as a depositary of the Convention (Article XV of the Convention).