

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

2 December 2024

English and Russian

Original: English and Russian only

Fifth Session

Geneva, 2-13 December 2024

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 within 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 consistently develops international cooperation within the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction (BTWC). It actively engages in providing practical assistance to countries in the fight against dangerous infectious diseases. It trains biosafety experts.

2. In November 2024, with the assistance of the BTWC Implementation Support Unit, the BTWC Article X database was updated with information on the following educational courses offered by the Russian Federation:

(a) An advanced training course by the Federal State-Financed Institution (Federal Centre for Animal Health) of Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance (FGBI-ARRIAH of Rosselkhoz nadzor), focused on preventing and controlling transboundary animal diseases, including emerging diseases and zoonotic agents that pose a threat to animal and human health;¹

(b) A workshop on vaccination by I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University, affiliated to the Ministry of Health of the Russian Federation (Sechenov University);²

(c) A course by the Russian Anti-Plague Research Institute (Microbe) of the Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Wellbeing (Rospotrebnadzor) on issues of contamination and autopsy of laboratory animals, working in biosafety cabinets, emergency response when working with pathogenic biological agents, as well as specific questions on epidemiology, microbiology and laboratory diagnosis of extremely dangerous infections;³

* The present document is being issued without formal editing.

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

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

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



(d) An advanced training program of the Federal State-Financed Institution Russian State Centre for Animal Feed and Drug Standardization and Quality on antibiotic resistance and containment measures.

3. From September to December 2024, the aforementioned courses were completed by representatives of Algeria, Argentina, Armenia, Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, Qatar, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Namibia, Nepal, Pakistan, Sudan, Uzbekistan.

4. Rospotrebnadzor held the III International Exercises for Rapid Response Mobile Laboratories (Nizhny Novgorod, 1-4 October, 2024) as part of experience sharing and demonstration of Russian approaches to the use of mobile laboratories in responding to sanitary and epidemiological emergencies, as well as to practically drill the skills of interaction between specialists from different countries in the event of an infectious disease outbreak. Over 150 experts from sanitary and epidemiological services, medical organizations, scientific and educational institutions of 26 countries across different regions of the world took part in the event. Throughout 3 days the participants were identifying functional capabilities and logistical needs of mobile laboratories before moving to a sanitary and epidemiological emergency zone and while working at the deployment site. They were studying encrypted samples with the use of modern laboratory diagnostic methods, practicing the skills of assessing and managing biological risks while working in mobile laboratories. The latest modern equipment of various formats was used to conduct the exercises like mobile indication and monitoring laboratories or portable laboratories based on a pneumatic frame module.

5. Advanced training courses in "Training of Personnel of Specialized Anti-Epidemic Teams for Work in Emergencies" for specialists from CIS countries were held at the Russian Anti-Plague Research Institute (Microbe) of Rospotrebnadzor (Saratov, 19-22 February, 2024).

6. The acquired skills were practiced during the international exercises of sanitary and epidemiological emergency rapid response teams from CIS countries (Saratov, 28-31 May 2024). The exercises involved 30 experts in epidemiology and dangerous infectious disease laboratory diagnostics from CIS specialized agencies. Rospotrebnadzor held bilateral exercises in Uzbekistan, Armenia and Venezuela to practice responding to epidemic outbreaks.

7. Rospotrebnadzor also continues implementing Government-financed programs to assist foreign partners and conduct scientific research in the field of prevention and control of plague, cholera, HIV/AIDS, tropical diseases, antibiotic resistance suppression, as well as to conduct population seroepidemiological studies of current infectious diseases and implement the 2005 International Health Regulations.

8. Within the mentioned programs, 11 mobile anti-epidemic laboratories of various formats were shipped to 9 countries in 2024. More than 400 specialists in epidemiology, infectious disease laboratory diagnostics, and disinfectology received in-person advanced training courses both in Russia and abroad. Hundreds of thousands of infection diagnostic tools were transferred.

9. The Second Russia-Africa Summit held last year in Sochi launched a partnership program between Russia and African countries at the initiative of the President of the Russian Federation. The Government of the Russian Federation has allocated 1.17 billion rubles until 2026 to work with African partners in the field of infectious disease research, personnel training, and building up laboratory capabilities. During that time, Rospotrebnadzor trained over 150 specialists in epidemiology, biological safety, laboratory diagnostics, shipped 3 mobile laboratories to the Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia and Madagascar, as well as laboratory equipment, tests and reagents.

10. Rospotrebnadzor held the First Joint Russian-African Conference on the Fight against Infectious Diseases in Uganda in April 2024 to exchange experience in responding to infectious threats. The event united over 150 delegates from 15 countries and two international organizations.

11. From August to October 2024, in connection with the deteriorating monkeypox epidemic situation in the world, advisory and methodological assistance was provided to a number of African countries, and more than 100 African specialists were trained in laboratory and clinical diagnostics and treatment of this infectious disease. African and CIS countries were also provided with technical assistance and test systems to conduct over 4,000 monkeypox detection tests.

12. The Russian Federation carries out bilateral cooperation within intergovernmental biosafety memorandums, intergovernmental and interdepartmental agreements on specific areas of cooperation. Bilateral interdepartmental consultations on biological safety, exercises to practice joint actions, scientific research and experience sharing are underway on a regular basis.

13. As a priority area of international biosafety cooperation within Article X of the BTWC, we consider the improvement of general professional and special professional competencies in, inter alia:

- (a) The use of regulatory health protection and biosafety documentation;
- (b) Epidemiological situation analysis and forecasting and anti-epidemic (preventive) planning;
- (c) Organization of the work of a microbiological laboratory in accordance with the rules of working with biological agents of pathogenicity groups I-IV;
- (d) Working on localization and elimination of various types of accidents with biological agents;
- (e) The use of specialized protective equipment and personal protective equipment;
- (f) Carrying out facility disinfection in emergency zones with biological agents;
- (g) Monitoring compliance with biological safety requirements when performing various works with biological materials;
- (h) Educating various groups of the population to eliminate risk factors for the development of dangerous infectious diseases.

14. The Russian Federation is ready to establish cooperation under Article X of the BTWC with all interested parties.
