Statement by the Head of Delegation of the Russian Federation at the PrepCom of the VIII BWC RevCon
(Geneva; August 8, 2016)

Agenda item 5: “General exchange of views”

Distinguished Mr. Chairman,

The Russian delegation is glad to welcome you again in this high office. There is hardly any doubt that under your able leadership resumed session of the Preparatory Committee will successfully address the tasks assigned. I am saying "hardly any" as, obviously, not everything hinges upon chairmanship. Yet "cautious optimism" is not misplaced at all, since the majority of States Parties to the BWC display shared willingness to strengthen the regime thereof. On our part, the Russian delegation will keep providing any assistance required to help you fulfill your duties.

We welcome Angola as a new State Party to the Convention and express our willingness to work together to further the Convention. This is a step forward along the way to universalizing the Convention and strengthening its authority in Africa and all over the world.

Mr. Chairman,

The Russian Federation has high hopes for the upcoming Review Conference. The BWC has a long and complicated history. Regrettably, so far little had been done for securing the necessary conditions for effective implementation of the Convention's provisions. Due to reasons well known, these efforts have been blocked for over 15 years now. Over the course of time the BWC challenges have only aggravated and now it is a matter of exigency to find universally acceptable
solutions. It is time we move on from speculations to actual multilateral efforts to strengthen the Convention and enhance the implementation thereof.

It is precisely to this end that last December the Russian Federation along with its co-sponsors (Armenia, Belarus, China) presented the draft decision for RevCon VIII (document BWC/MSP/2015/WP.4/Rev.1) geared towards establishing an open-ended Working group to draft a legally binding document on strengthening the Convention. We urge everyone to seriously engage in development of measures addressing virtually all Convention provisions:

- National implementation;
- Confidence building measures;
- Assistance and protection in case of use of biological weapons;
- Investigation of an alleged use;
- Strengthening international cooperation for peaceful purposes;
- Monitoring recent developments in science and technology.

We urge everyone to stand united in pursuing this positive, forward-looking agenda and adopt a corresponding decision this November.

As part of the efforts on enhancing the BWC implementation Russia presented a working paper (BWC/CONF.VIII/PC/WP.1/REV.2) at the PrepCom session in April outlining the concept of establishing mobile biomedical units within the BWC framework – an effective mechanism for implementing internationally the provisions of Article X (assistance for prevention of diseases), Article VII (assistance in case of a biological weapon use) and Article VI (investigation of alleged uses of biological weapons). The core task of such units would be purely humanitarian: reaching out to a request of an affected State, to provide assistance in addressing the outbreaks of hazardous infectious diseases. If any State is attacked with biological weapons, mobile units would respond by immediately engaging in respective mitigation efforts and would conduct an appropriate investigation. The concept of the proposed units grasps the very essence of the BWC, seamlessly combining collective security and humanitarian cooperation. It also sets a solid and relevant institutional framework for the future
implementation of the Convention. We expect that our initiative on establishing mobile anti-epidemic units under the BWC aegis will be endorsed by the RevCon.

Since April meeting we have maintained close contacts with the delegations that showed interest in the initiative and continued discussing, clarifying and ascertaining the parameters of our proposal on mobile units. In an attempt to broadcast the answers to the posed questions and reach out to a vast audience tomorrow the Russian delegation will hold a briefing (room XXII, 1 pm - 3 pm). Information presented therein will be disseminated afterwards as a PrepCom working paper. Everyone is welcome to participate at the event organized by the Russian delegation.

In April, we have also distributed the working paper on establishing within the BWC framework a Scientific Advisory Committee that would review technological developments relevant to the Convention and prepare corresponding recommendations to the States Parties (BWC/CONF.VII/PC/WP.2/REV.2). The concept we have drafted takes full account of required effectiveness, inclusivity, wide geographic representation and efficient resource management. Some other working papers prepared by other States or groups of States address the same subject. NGOs also have their recommendations to present thereon. Undoubtedly, each of the proposed models for monitoring scientific and technological developments has its advantages and disadvantages. It is thus required to strike a balance between various parameters and criteria that would address the needs of all BWC States Parties in the best possible way. Matters of inclusivity, representation, procedure and scope of financing for such a mechanism are gaining prime importance now. We are ready to tackle meaningfully all the raised questions through dialog with all the delegations interested therein.

Mr. Chairman,

We study thoroughly all the working papers and initiatives presented by other BWC States Parties. We take note of the productive efforts of our Swiss colleagues intended to reconcile the positions of stakeholders in drafting the proposal on the mechanism for monitoring scientific and technological developments.
developments. Due attention should be paid to constructive ideas presented previously by the delegations of India and South Africa. Other delegations also have some noteworthy suggestions.

Of peculiar interest are Chinese proposals to put together an international export control mechanism within the BWC framework and the Code of Conduct for biologists. The Russian Federation supports Chinese proposals and highlights their future-oriented nature and potential for further strengthening of the Convention.

Mr. Chairman,

In order to enhance the BWC implementation, positive and comprehensive plan of actions is required, the one that would be prepared with the best interests of States Parties in mind and feature participation thereof. Let me emphasize the word "action" in this plan. We all grew tired of the last 15 years of talkfests. International community expects us to develop and adopt specific measures promoting the goal of the Convention. The Russian delegation will participate most actively in this effort in close cooperation with all the interested States Parties.

I wish us all success in this important task.

Thank you for your attention.