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# 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

18 August 2023

English only

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## Second Session

Geneva, 7-18 August 2023

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**

## **Improving the National System of Biological Safety and Biological Security as an Element of Strengthening the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC)**

### **Submitted by Ukraine**

1. The implementation of the main provisions of the Convention, including Article X, primarily depends on the capacity of national biological safety and biological defense systems to respond to biological threats in a timely and effective manner. National response systems should include disease surveillance, detection, diagnosis and control, as well as risk analysis and forecasting.
2. Russian unjustified and unprecedented military aggression against Ukraine has posed many new challenges in the field of biological safety and biological security, and forced Ukraine to review and strengthen the existing system of response to biological risks.
3. Russian terrorist attacks aimed at destroying Ukrainian energy system and the destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power plant have increased the risk of biological, epidemiological and environmental disasters not only in Ukraine but also in other countries.
4. In order to strengthen the level of response to biological threats and challenges, including those caused by Russian military aggression against Ukraine, the Biosafety and Biological Protection Strategy was introduced, which is being implemented through the Action Plan for the period up to 2025 and developed on the basis of the “One Health” principle.
5. The main principles and objectives of the Strategy are enshrined in the legislative acts “On Biological Safety and Biological Protection” “On the Public Health System”, and “On Veterinary Medicine”. These documents provide for the introduction of a new system of public administration in the field of biological safety and biological protection; measures to strengthen the level of biological safety and state control over compliance with the requirements; strengthening the system of epidemiological and epizootic surveillance as a component of biological safety; scientific and support for these areas and responsibility for violation of requirements.
6. The effectiveness of the national system of response to biological threats should also be ensured by a number of regulatory documents governing the activities of microbiological laboratories, the circulation of biological materials, primarily strains of microorganisms, and



the system of establishing and controlling the activities of depositories and collections of microorganism strains.

7. Regulatory mechanisms will cover all the main elements and areas of work with pathogens: licensing of laboratories working with particularly dangerous pathogens; training and certification of personnel; accounting for the storage, transfer and transportation of biological materials; evacuation of the collection of microorganism strains of the national heritage in case of threat or emergency; analysis of the functioning of the collection of microorganism strains of the national heritage; evaluation of the effectiveness of the functioning of depositories, collections of strains of microorganisms.

8. In order to control access to and use of pathogens and biological materials, and to prevent their misuse, the depositories have implemented a comprehensive information security system and installed an electronic pathogen accounting program.

9. The updated biological risk response system will ensure the functioning of the biological risk response system:

- Development of biotechnology aimed at reviving the domestic potential of biotechnology production and improving access to diagnostics and immunobiological products;
- Reliable interaction between the links of threat detection, identification, control and forecasting;
- Building and developing a network of epidemiological institutions, whose activities will be aimed, in particular, at analyzing, forecasting, informing, applying effective mechanisms and methods of responding to biological threats, as well as preventing emergencies, including those of biological origin, and applying anti-epidemic and preventive measures to prevent or reduce the impact of biological threats on human health, the environment, food, animals, and plants;
- Introducing an effective and efficient mechanism for handling biological agents;
- Development of an effective state mechanism for controlling the circulation of pathogenic microorganisms, including genetically modified ones, in order to prevent their possible negative impact on the environment and human and animal health.

10. The implementation of the National Strategy of Ukraine on Biological Safety and Security is in line with the spirit of the BWC and is fully aimed at implementing the decisions of the 2nd-4th Review Conferences, which identified the importance of national response systems and measures to strengthen them.

11. Implementation of all these measures by Ukraine will ensure its resilience to all biological threats, including those that arose during the Russian military aggression against Ukraine.

12. The effective functioning of the global biological security system under the Convention should be based on national and regional experience and the results of these response systems.

13. The identification of potential biological threats at the global level should be carried out with the involvement of the expert potential of highly qualified scientists in the field of biological safety and biological defense. Therefore, it is important to establish a permanent expert group of scientists that the Convention could engage in this work.

14. The recommendations of the expert scientific group should determine the global nature of biological threats and be crucial in determining the priority of project funding and the direction of international assistance.