

ПОСТОЯННОЕ ПРЕДСТАВИТЕЛЬСТВО  
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ  
ПРИ КОНФЕРЕНЦИИ ПО РАЗОРУЖЕНИЮ  
В ЖЕНЕВЕ



MISSION PERMANENTE  
DE LA FEDERATION DE RUSSIE AUPRES  
DE LA CONFERENCE DU DESARMEMENT  
A GENEVE

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## STATEMENT

BY

**H.E. MR. GENNADY GATILOV,**

DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

AT THE 7<sup>TH</sup> REVIEW CONFERENCE FOR  
THE BIOLOGICAL AND TOXIN WEAPONS CONVENTION

Geneva, December 5, 2011

Distinguished Mr. President,

Dear colleagues,

First of all, let me congratulate the President of the Conference, Ambassador van den IJssel, on his election to this important post.

Ambassador van den IJssel, you can count on the most active and constructive cooperation of the Russian delegation.

From the outset I would like to point out that our forum is to become one of this year's most significant events in the field of multilateral disarmament. The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) is one of the key instruments of international security and global stability.

Almost four decades have passed since the Convention was signed, but the BTWC regime is still relevant.

The Russian Federation fully implements its obligations under the BTWC. Our country has enacted effective laws that ensure that any attempts to violate the Convention are prevented, revealed and suppressed. The Criminal Code provides for serious sanctions in case of such violations.

Russia promotes international cooperation in the field of peaceful biology. We regularly – on the annual basis – provide information for building confidence in biological sphere. For this Review Conference the Russian Federation submitted two reports – on compliance with the Convention as a whole and on implementation of its Article X.

We are convinced of the need to further comprehensively strengthen the regime of complete prohibition of biological and toxin weapons. That is the goal Russia will pursue at our forum.

In our view, our efforts need to be focused on the following three areas.

**First. Universalization of the BTWC.**

Expanding the BTWC regime to all countries without any exception is the main prerequisite for global biological security.

We welcome those States that joined the Convention during the last five years. However, we are concerned that thirty countries still remain outside the

BTWC. Some of them are located in the areas of regional instability, and this further aggravates the situation. This implies that on the territory of thirty States the production and development of biological weapons could go unpunished. We believe that this situation is extremely dangerous. To make the Convention universal is our common priority.

In this context we should also bear in mind the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare. It is the only instrument that directly prohibits the use of biological weapons. It is of concern that some States Parties to the BTWC still maintain reservations to the Geneva Protocol. We would like to be confident that, by doing so they do not mean the possibility to use biological weapons. We urge all countries maintaining reservations to the Protocol to withdraw them as soon as possible.

### **Second. Implementation of the BTWC.**

The viability of any international treaty in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation is based on national implementation of all the commitments under the treaty. The BTWC is no exception. Further strengthening of the Convention's regime is only possible if all States Parties comply with their obligations in good faith. This would also provide an effective safeguard to prevent non-state actors from acquiring hazardous biological agents.

We regret that there are still many States Parties where laws to implement the Convention have not been put into effect or do not exist at all. We expect that the Review Conference will help eliminate this serious backlog. Russia, on its part, is prepared to render the necessary expert assistance to all States in need of strengthening their national legislation in terms of compliance with the BTWC.

### **Third. Effective international control and verification.**

The possibility to verify the compliance by all the States with their BTWC obligations is a guarantee that the provisions of the Convention are not violated and the regime of prohibition of biological and toxin weapons is functioning effectively.

It is impossible to ensure this confidence through transparency measures alone, no matter how important and useful they are. That is why we strongly believe that a legally binding BTWC verification mechanism should be developed.

Although different approaches to this issue do not allow us to find a solution today, it is important to make maximum use of the intersessional work format to explore every possible way to achieve this important goal.

We believe that consistent and focused joint work in the three above-mentioned areas can make the regime of prohibition of biological and toxin weapons even more effective. We are confident that this is what all States Parties should seek to achieve through their decisions at this Review Conference.

At the same time, even the most active work in these directions does not give way to self-complacency. The specific feature of the BTWC regime is that it is constantly influenced by biological **scientific and technological progress**. It is no secret that the cutting-edge achievements in biotechnologies not only help address numerous problems of medical treatment and public food supply, but also inevitably increase the risk that such achievements will come into conflict with the BTWC provisions. Our common task is to track everything carefully and to prevent the outgrowth of the existing challenges into real threats.

We believe that biological science and technology development should always be in the focus of the States Parties to the Convention. As part of the intersessional process, it is necessary to examine and analyze what specific spheres at this moment need an increased attention. We cannot let the biological research cross the thin line that can open the way to the production of biological weapons.

We attach great importance to **confidence-building** within the BTWC. Unfortunately, we have to note once again that more than a half of the States Parties to the Convention still fail to comply with their obligation to annually submit information on their biological facilities and biological activities.

The lack of information concerning biological activities of any country inevitably makes us question whether the Convention is being implemented in good faith. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that it is impossible to check whether these concerns are justified. In the context of confidence-building, we urge each and every State to provide information on its biological activities.

Mr. President,

Increasing attempts have been recently made to dilute the BTWC regime by burdening it with inappropriate functions. We do not question at all the importance of countering infectious diseases or bioterrorism. However, it is not a topic of

consideration within the BTWC. These issues are actively dealt with by other specialized international organizations and forums. Our Convention, on the other hand, focuses on the prohibition of biological and toxin weapons, and its main purpose is to prevent reappearance of biological weapons in any form. This should be taken into account when organizing our future work. It particularly concerns the approval of discussion topics for the next intersessional period.

By and large, Russia welcomes the outcomes of the 2007-2010 **intersessional meetings**. The broad participation of national experts, representatives of industry, science and public health contributed to a constructive exchange of experience on practical aspects of the Convention's implementation. The intent of all the States to work productively has yielded good results. We believe that such readiness and the very practice of our meetings should be preserved. The next intersessional period could be focused on the discussion of such issues as verification of compliance with the BTWC, improvement of confidence-building measures, and analysis of scientific and technological advances in the field of biology.

The establishment of the **Implementation Support Unit (ISU)** was among the outcomes of the previous Review Conference. We highly appreciate the five-year activity of the ISU that included assisting in preparation of intersessional meetings, promoting confidence-building measures and national implementation of the BTWC and much more. On the whole the ISU has made a significant positive contribution to the implementation of the Convention. We are convinced that its mandate should be extended for another five years.

Mr. President,

Our Convention has outlawed biological weapons, and we must reduce to zero the threat of their development, production and use. So, today a special responsibility rests upon us. As the States Parties to the BTWC we should use this Review Conference to adopt the decisions that would strengthen the regime of prohibition of biological and toxin weapons and rule out any possibility for the emergence of such weapons. The Russian delegation is ready for such cooperative work.

Thank you for your attention.