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Final statement
“EPIDEMIOLOGICAL WELL-BEING” INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
April 20–21, 2021, WTC, Moscow

The “Epidemiological Wellbeing” International Conference, organized by the Federal Service for Surveillance on Consumer Rights Protection and Human Wellbeing, in cooperation with the United Nations Joint Program on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), with the support of the Government of the Russian Federation and with the participation of the World Health Organization, was held in Moscow on April 20–21, 2021.

More than 4,000 specialists from 70 countries around the world took part in the conference, including leaders of state authorities, medical specialists and healthcare organizers, leading scientists, and representatives of civil society organizations and the business community, as well as heads and experts of key international organizations. The conference was attended by speakers from Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Western Europe, North America, Africa and Southeast Asia.

The conference brought together scientists, policy-makers and community leaders to promote and expand global scientific and public collaboration in synergy with other health and development sectors. As part of the event, results of new scientific research on infections were presented, progress of existing assistance programs to increase the potential of countries in the Eurasian region in the fight against infectious diseases was reviewed, and the experience of Russia and other countries in solving global health problems was demonstrated.

The COVID-19 novel coronavirus infection pandemic in 2020 has been a serious test for health systems around the world, including the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region. Progress made in recent decades in the fight against infectious diseases, including HIV and other socially significant diseases, has been threatened. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many economic, social and environmental problems have been exacerbated, which is negatively affecting the epidemiological well-being of the population.

In today’s conditions, sanitary and epidemiological well-being cannot be ensured in a particular country without proactive international cooperation in this area with other countries, intergovernmental associations and international organizations. The fight against COVID-19 has required the joining of efforts by partner countries and the entire world community on a whole range of issues in order to respond promptly to the emerging threat. At the same time, the pandemic has served as a trigger for the accelerated development of many technologies in the field of epidemiology, laboratory diagnostics, biotechnology, and information technologies in terms of predicting, treating and preventing infectious diseases.

Full implementation of International Health Regulations (IHR) 2005 is an effective mechanism for joining forces in the fight against infectious diseases. It is necessary to strengthen the mechanisms for implementation of IHR, but not to change their position. How we follow IHR determines the damage epidemics can do to health and the economy.

The conference also staged a number of regional consultations on the reform of the WHO system for responding to emergency situations of a sanitary and epidemiological nature, as well as in connection with the preparation by UNAIDS of a new UN political declaration on HIV/AIDS. The similarity was noted between the positions of the region’s countries in supporting the central coordinating role of WHO in the fight against infections with epidemic

potential, as well as developing proposals for a political declaration, taking into account national and regional contexts.

For further effective development of international cooperation in the field of infection control to preserve epidemiological well-being, it is necessary to pay special attention to the following areas:

- development and implementation of plans for joint actions to prevent, identify and respond to threats of a sanitary and epidemiological nature within the framework of interstate associations;
- creation and strengthening of mechanisms for practical multilateral cooperation and operational interaction at the level of sanitary services of member states, intergovernmental organizations and associations;
- development of a single/common regional early warning system, timely detection and effective response to infectious diseases with epidemic potential in a single Eurasian epidemiological space;
- development and implementation of infection control projects in cooperation with international organizations (UNAIDS, World Health Organization, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN));
- increasing the number of scientific competence centers in the field of combating infectious threats;
- provision of organizational and methodological assistance and aid in training staff, including highly qualified personnel, to scale the capacity of partner countries to prevent, detect and respond to threats of infectious diseases;
- provision of material and technical assistance;
- conducting joint exercises to respond to emergency situations of a sanitary and epidemiological nature;
- scaling joint research and development in the field of prevention, diagnosis and treatment of infectious diseases, and preparation of joint scientific works.

Participants call for the results of work of the “Epidemiological Wellbeing” International Conference to be considered at the next meetings of national sanitary and epidemic prevention commissions and coordinating committees on HIV/AIDS, as well as upcoming meetings of governing bodies of WHO and UNAIDS.