New York, 8 October 2014

STATEMENT BY
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AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE OF THE 69th SESSION OF THE UNGA

(General debate)

Mr. Chair,

Let me congratulate you upon your election to this important position and wish you success in the upcoming work. Most certainly, you can count on the support of the Russian delegation.

From the broad agenda of the First Committee we decided to touch upon some topics which seem to be the most relevant. We will begin with the issues of nuclear disarmament which are in the spotlight of our forum.
Elimination of the threat posed by the weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, remains one of the key priorities of the international community. Russia is actively working to that end taking concrete steps for limitation and reduction of its nuclear arsenals. Over the last 25 years they have been reduced many times over. Under the New START Treaty we have set a goal of reaching the agreed aggregate limits of warheads, means of delivery and launchers by the start of early 2018. We think that this goal can be achieved.

The New START Treaty is not the only existing agreement between Russia and the US in the field of nuclear missiles. The Treaty On Intermediate-Range And Shorter-Range Missiles (INF) of 1987, which is of unlimited duration, remains in force. Unfortunately, our American partners have been taking great liberations treating the INF obligations by committing gross and massive violations that are already becoming a recurrent practice. This includes the use of target missiles during the test of missile defense system and the commissioning of strike UAVs covered by the Treaty and also its definitions of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles. There are reasons to believe that the scheduled deployment of Mk-41 launchers in Europe would become another serious violation of the INF Treaty. We hope that as a result of the dialogue that has started on these issues the US will return to fully complying with the commitments under this important agreement.

It is obvious that for further advancement towards a nuclear free world it is necessary to establish appropriate international conditions. The most essential is
ensuring equal security and strategic stability as provided in the decisions adopted as part of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty implementation. Nevertheless the most serious problems in this area continue to grow, which, unfortunately, for some reasons almost completely fall out of the scope of vision of the First Committee. That is not right, taking the fact that disarmament does not happen in vacuum and its future to a great extent depends on the general state of "play".

We have repeatedly drawn attention to the factors that negatively impact on strategic stability. Without their elimination the advancement towards "nuclear zero" could risk remain just a wishful thinking.

One of the extremely destructive factors is the unilateral development of the global missile defense system without taking into account, and moreover to the detriment, the security of other states. It gravely complicates international relations not only in the Euro-Atlantic but in the Asia-Pacific region also. The reckless policy of missile defense system development could be a serious impediment on the way to further nuclear disarmament and even create dangerous conditions that could be the resumption of nuclear arms race. This vital issue can be addressed only if the states that are engaged in the development of missile defense capabilities begin to follow not in words but in practice the principle agreed in the OSCE’s frameworks, which in essence is a universal principle, stating any attempts to strengthen one's security due to the security of the others are unacceptable. The faithful application of this rule should become a starting point for the search of mutually acceptable solutions.
We also have growing concerns about the concept of Prompt Global Strike which is getting closer to the phase of its practical implementation. To our understanding its goal is to establish capabilities that would make it possible to almost immediately neutralize the defense capabilities of any “out of favor” country, leaving it without any time or opportunity for an armed response. Such efforts are even more risky when they are undertaken in the context of the policy towards establishing one’s exclusivity and overwhelming military supremacy adding to the efforts to develop a global missile defense shield. The negative impact of the concept of Prompt Global Strike on the prospects of nuclear disarmament still remain clearly underestimated by the international community.

A third negative factor of strategic nature is the threat of the placement of weapons in outer space. Over several decades the UN General Assembly has been adopting resolutions on preventing of the arms race in outer space, but no practical solutions have been agreed in that regard. Under these circumstances we believe that it is high time to take preemptive measures in order to prevent the transformation of outer space into the arena of military confrontation. We remind you that 10 years ago Russia submitted the initiative representing a political commitment not to be the first to place weapons in outer space. To date 10 authoritative states have joined this initiative. It allowed to start work towards its universalization. We trust that a relevant resolution, which we together with the like-minded states are planning to table at the informal consultations on the 10th of October will be adopted at the current session.
We call on everyone who shares the goal of keeping the outer space free of weapons to join the co-sponsors of this draft resolution and vote in its favor.

Of course, the adoption of such a resolution will not address all the problems. We view it as a very important but intermediate step towards a legally binding prohibition of the placement of weapons in outer space. The updated draft of this international treaty has been presented jointly by Russia and China at the Conference on Disarmament in June. We are looking forward to its thorough and constructive examination by the international community.

We deem it relevant to note that Russia is not only focusing its attention on the need to join the efforts of states with the view to eliminating the factors that undermine stability, but also undertaking practical steps at the national level in this direction. Over the recent years in addition to a number of initiatives aimed at preservation of peaceful outer space, Russia has made proposals to sign a legally binding agreement, which would provide guarantees that the US and NATO missile defense components would not be targeting Russia. We ratified CTBT back in 2000. Long time ago we pulled back the non-strategic nuclear weapons to our territory and put them to the permanent storage sites having called on other states possessing such weapons to follow our example. We have consistently called for establishing a common European security space and for bringing the conventional arms control regime in Europe in line with the current military and political realities. Unfortunately these initiatives have not been met with a relevant response.
Mr. Chair,

We are entering the final phase of the current NPT review cycle. Next April the IX Treaty Review Conference will start its work. It is important that we come to this event with tangible results. The consolidation of the "Geneva Package" on the situation around the Iran’s nuclear program became a major recent achievement. Now, together with our partners in the Group of Six and our Iranian colleagues, we are continuing our work on comprehensive definitive settlement. We note with satisfaction the firm intention of all parties to come up with positive results as soon as possible. It seems that the negotiators managed to come much closer to finding the way out on all unsettled issues of the arrangement, which is currently being worked out. The time has come to take uneasy political decisions. We should not lose the existing opportunities for such a settlement. We intend to further actively contribute to reaching an agreement within the established timeframe.

A major result is the signing by all nuclear powers of the Protocol to the Treaty on the establishment of Nuclear Weapon Free Zone in Central Asia on May 6, 2014. We trust it as a similar Protocol to the establishment of the Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty in the Southeast Asia (the Bangkok Treaty) will be signed soon.

The results of the regular NPT Review Conference will much depend on whether it will be possible to implement in the near future the decisions taken in 2010 on holding a Conference on the establishment of a zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We think that as a result of
a number of informal consultations held within last year we managed to move from the dead-point. The countries of the Middle East region have demonstrated their readiness to reach reasonable compromises on a series of issues. It can be argued how substantive the achieved progress is but there is no doubt that there has been progress. It gives a reason to believe that with the necessary political will the countries of the region will manage to agree on the draft agenda and the final document of the Conference. That is why it is important not only to continue but to intensify the preparatory process. Russia on its part as one of the co-conveners of the Conference on the establishment of a WMDFZ in the Middle East will do its utmost to ensure its convening before the end of this year.

In the context of nuclear non-proliferation we would like to emphasize the following point of concern for us. It is the so-called "nuclear sharing" in NATO member countries. As part of this the non-nuclear members of the alliance accept nuclear weapons on their territory and participate in the planning of their use while their military and air forces participate in nuclear strike training. We fully share the view of the Non-Aligned Movement member states that this practice is incompatible with either the letter or the spirit of the NPT. Let us remind that under Article I of this Treaty State Parties that possess nuclear weapons undertake "not to transfer to any recipient whatsoever nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices or control over such weapons or explosive devices directly or indirectly". In their turn the non-nuclear States under Article II undertake not to receive the transfer from anyone of
such control directly, or indirectly. We call on NATO member states to bring their policy in compliance with their obligations.

Major achievement in the area of WMD non-proliferation and disarmament was chemical demilitarization in Syria. Under unprecedentedly difficult conditions the Syrian authorities eliminated chemical arsenals within a very short time and in full compliance with their obligations by ensuring – as it was several times confirmed by the UN and OPCW officials – a high level of cooperation with those international organizations. As a result, the topic of the so-called Syrian chemical dossier is no longer of an urgent nature. Now it should be considered under the regular procedure of a specialized international entity - i.e. the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical weapons (OPCW).

Mr. Chair, in concluding let me say a few words on a subject which matters to everyone. It is the issue of the current state of affairs in the disarmament mechanisms of the UN system. If the First Committee is functioning more or less productively, such renowned and prestigious entities as the UN Disarmament Commission and the Geneva Conference on Disarmament have suffered stagnation for many years. It is clear that the existing situation can not be considered normal. However, it is also obvious that the reasons for deadlock are not associated with some "inherited defects" of the UN disarmament triad. Actually, this deadlock has mainly to do with the differences in the scale of priorities of participating states and the lack of political will to search for mutually acceptable compromises. Under such situation some of the
partners are tempted to shift negotiations to new fora as if they could easily achieve meaningful international agreements with the participation of all states with relevant military capabilities. Such an illusion would threaten to bring serious damage to the existing institutions while the new full-fledged effective mechanisms would not be established. We believe that the best way out would be to focus our efforts and attention on the search for constructive solutions on the program of work of the Geneva Conference. This is the goal of the draft statement in support of the CD that we intend to table with other like-minded states at the current session of the First Committee. We call on all the countries that share our approach to join this statement as co-sponsors.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.