Distinguished Mr. Chairman,

Let me congratulate you upon your election to this important position and wish you every success in the forthcoming work.

By the time of the 70th UN General Assembly session, the international community has come up with mixed results in nonproliferation and disarmament. Quite often we hear that the efforts in this area are if not in a state of crisis but of deep stagnation. We believe that such assessments are exaggerated. In fact, recent years have been marked not only by growing problems but also by a number of remarkable achievements as well. First of all I would mention the agreement upon the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action regarding the Iranian Nuclear Program. We have managed to successfully complete an extremely complex negotiating process and to move now with sufficient certainty towards implementation of the reached agreements. This is vivid evidence that political and diplomatic means are efficient in addressing the most complex issues.

Chemical demilitarization in Syria has become a breakthrough as well. In spite of ongoing hostilities, in close cooperation between many countries, the UN and the
OPCW, as well as with constructive contribution by Damascus, it became possible to eliminate military chemical potential in this country within the shortest period of time.

The conclusion of the International Arms Trade Treaty was also noteworthy. Despite a number of serious shortcomings that prevented Russia from joining the Treaty, we believe that with proper implementation it can play a positive role in combating "black" and "grey" arms markets and thus contribute to strengthening security at the regional and global levels.

Finally, despite a wide-spread opposite opinion, the process of nuclear disarmament is moving forward rapidly. I will give you just two figures: at the VIII NPT Review Conference in 2010, we announced that the Russian nuclear deterrence force had in its service 3,900 deployed nuclear warheads. By the IX NPT Review Conference last May, this number was reduced to 1,582 units. That means that just in five years the number of warheads has been reduced by two and a half times. I suggest that those colleagues who claim that the process of nuclear disarmament is in full stagnation take a closer look at these figures and adjust their assessments to be more objective.

At the same time, we have to recognize that there are enough grounds for pessimistic and even alarming statements.

The scheduled deployment of Mk-41 vertical launch systems at the U.S. missile defense facility in Romania by the end of the year, i.e. within the coming weeks, would seriously challenge the international security environment. Along with the use of missile targets and attack UAVs, this step will be another gross violation of the INF Treaty by the U.S. Let me remind that it is not prohibited to deploy the abovementioned systems capable of launching cruise intermediate-range missiles on naval ships, but their relocation to the ground is inconsistent with the obligations under the INF Treaty. We urge the U.S. and Romanian governments to realize the full measure of their responsibility for such developments and, before it is too late, abandon these plans.

Despite the agreements on the Iranian Nuclear Program, serious challenges in the area of nonproliferation still persist. In this context, besides the nuclear problem of the Korean Peninsula, it is necessary to point out the continuing practice of NATO member states to conduct "nuclear sharing" missions in violation of their obligations under the NPT Articles I and II. Moreover, by all signs the cooperation between nuclear and non-nuclear member states of the Alliance is building up. The U.S. intends to modernize its nuclear warheads stationed in Europe in the near future, while the European countries, on which territories they are located, are planning to renew their air delivery vehicles for these nuclear weapons. Thus, the violation of nonproliferation obligations will become indefinite in duration.
Contrary to the U.S. official statements that with removing the so-called Iranian threat the driving force behind the deployment of missile defense system in the European continent will disappear, the Euro Missile Defense project is being implemented as previously intended. The argument that certain "missile threats" still remain, what allegedly make it impossible to deviate from earlier established missile defense plans, has come into play. We have to state that the approach to missile defense deployment is adaptive only in the sense of adjusting arguments to justify the project itself but not of revising its parameters.

In recent years, we have witnessed a number of other factors affecting the situation in the area of disarmament. Along with unilateral plans to develop a global missile defense system to the detriment of security of other states, we should also mention the obstructive policy of a number of countries on preventing the arms race in outer space and U.S. persistence in realizing the concept of prompt global strike that implies the use of conventional high-precision long-range weapons for strategic missions. Such an approach can become an insurmountable obstacle to further steps towards reducing nuclear arsenals.

We believe that in a situation when the entire complex of arms control and disarmament agreements might be jeopardized it is vital to pay particular attention to the goal of strengthening global strategic stability as a fundamental principle of international security and an essential prerequisite for arms reduction. We are confident that it is time to adopt a special UNGA declaration to this end. The Russian Federation has prepared a draft of such a document. We intend to hold intensive consultations with all states concerned, including on the margins of the current First Committee session. We invite all delegations to take an active part in drafting this document in order to agree upon and endorse a strong declaration that can put a barrier to evolving destructive trends in the international affairs, including in the area of disarmament.

Let me also touch upon some other specific topics.

Preserving outer space free of weapons and preventing armed confrontation there remains one of the key priorities not only for Russia but for the overwhelming majority of states. We still have a chance, as a preventive measure, to put a barrier to arms race in outer space which is becoming more real. The draft of a legally binding treaty proposed by Russia and China, with its updated version submitted to the Conference on Disarmament (CD) last year, is considered to be a starting point and the basis for further joint effort. We believe that now this document is the most prepared for negotiations at the CD. Once again we call upon the Members of the CD to overcome differences on the Program of Work that would allow the Conference to commence substantive work on the draft. On our part, together with other like-minded
countries we intend to make the statement in support for the CD. We invite all
delегations who share this goal to join the statement.

However, pending the launch of negotiations in Geneva, it is important to promote, as
a provisional measure, globalization of the multilateral initiative under which the
concerned responsible states make a voluntary political commitment not to be first to
place any weapons in outer space. I am glad to announce that on September 26 such a
commitment was made by Venezuela under a bilateral declaration with Russia
adopted at the level of foreign ministers. Thus, the number of participants of this
initiative has increased to 11 and the number of its supporters, as the last year UNGA
voting showed, has neared 130. We hope that during the current session their number
will grow further.

We cannot help but mention the outcome of the NPT Review Conference held last
May. We do not consider the event to be a failure since at the end of lengthy
discussions we succeeded in reaching the intended objective, that is to examine, in a
comprehensive manner, the aspects related to the Treaty implementation across all its
three pillars – nuclear disarmament, nuclear nonproliferation and peaceful uses of
nuclear energy. At the same time, we are disappointed that we could not adopt a final
document due to the objections of three states to its Middle East section. It is
deplorable that two out of the three countries are co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution
on the Middle East. We believe that their decision to block the consensus on a
compromise and quite balanced draft was a serious mistake. Nevertheless, the
establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass
destruction remains and will be on the international agenda until the full
implementation of the 1995 Resolution. Russia is ready both in its national capacity
and together with the two other co-sponsors to continue providing all possible
assistance to the countries of the region to achieve this goal. Convening the
Conference on WMDFZ is to be the first step to that end.

I would also like to draw your attention to the situation with respect to the Biological
and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). Since its entry into force 40 years ago, no
serious measure has been taken to strengthen the BWC regime, notwithstanding some
confidence-building measures. However, given the accelerated technological
progress, biological threats are growing even more. In this regard, Russia put forward
an initiative to hold negotiations with the view to elaborate specific measures aimed at
strengthening the BWC. We call on everyone to support this proposal so that next
Review Conference in November 2016 could adopt an appropriate mandate in order
to start negotiations as early as in 2017.

In conclusion, I would like to reassure you, Mr. Chairman, and our colleagues from
other delegations that we stand ready for close cooperation in the interests of result-
oriented work of the First Committee.