STATEMENT
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IN THE FIRST COMMITTEE
OF THE 72ND SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS CLUSTER

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Distinguished Mr. Chairman,

Russia shares a common goal of building a world without nuclear weapons and for thirty years now has been making a tangible contribution to nuclear disarmament process. As a result of implementation of a number of agreements between Russia and the United States a real progress towards a nuclear-free world has been achieved and strategic offensive arms have been reduced more than six times.

In addition, the Russian Federation has unilaterally taken a whole range of other important measures. In particular, it has reduced four times over the number of non-strategic nuclear weapons and turned them into non-deployed category. Nuclear warheads have been located exclusively within the national territory at centralized storage facilities where the strictest security regime is ensured. Altogether this represents nothing less than a measure of total de-alerting with regard to non-strategic nuclear weapons.

The national decision on de-targeting Russian nuclear weapons with “zero flight mission” has become another step in this area. The role and place of nuclear weapons in the Russian military doctrine have been substantially diminished. A hypothetical probability of its use has been limited by two extraordinary circumstances: an attack against Russia and its allies with the use of WMDs and a situation when as a result of an aggression against our country the very existence of state is under threat. In other words these provisions of the doctrine are of purely defensive nature. Moreover a concept of “non-nuclear deterrence” has been introduced into our military doctrine, which objectively has even more reduced the role of the Russian nuclear deterrence in ensuring national security.

As a result of large-scale efforts taken for many years the overall number of nuclear weapons both strategic and tactical has been decreased by many times. One should recognize that for Russia and the U.S. the nuclear arms race has not only been stopped but reversed as provided for in the first part of the NPT Article VI. Surprisingly, it has not been noted by those who despite all the facts continue to insist on the “absence” or “insufficiency” of progress in nuclear disarmament over and over again.
The Russian Federation, including at the highest level, has repeatedly confirmed its readiness to launch a substantial dialogue on further reductions of nuclear weapons. This being said we must act in such a way that every subsequent stage contribute to strengthening peace and security of all states without exception and not the other way round. We cannot but take into account the combination of factors that affect the global strategic stability, especially under current circumstances of sharply deteriorated geopolitical situation in the world. By the way, this fact has been highlighted by many delegations in this room. The entry of the CTBT into force at the earliest date could become one of such steps that contribute to international détente. However, there are other acute problems with powerful destabilizing potential that require urgent solution – the deployment of global missile defense and the danger of placement of weapons in outer space and many others.

The growing challenges and threats to international security objectively affect the disarmament process and dictate the need for the search for collective response. Therefore, Russia, among other things, has been consistently calling for the earliest launch of a multilateral dialogue engaging all states without exception that possess military nuclear potential.

Russia is conscious of the views of those who call for immediate abandonment of nuclear weapons. But the way they had chosen – to impose nuclear weapons ban through a treaty – seems fundamentally wrong and counterproductive from the viewpoint of nuclear disarmament prospects.

The Russian delegation has presented its assessment of principle of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons at the general debate. Indeed, we do not question the possibility of and even the need for a ban on nuclear weapons as an effective nuclear disarmament measure under the NPT Article VI at a final stage of multilateral nuclear disarmament process so as to make it irreversible. Under the current circumstances such a step is clearly premature.

We would also like to draw your attention to the fact that under the NPT Article VI the total elimination of nuclear arsenals must be carried out pursuant to the treaty on general and complete disarmament. This important provision of principle had been left out by the drafters of the Prohibition Treaty.
On the whole a constructive and result-oriented dialogue on issues of nuclear disarmament is only possible when we take into account security considerations of each other and comply strictly with the rule of consensus that secures the balance of interests. We call on the UN Member States to be guided by these basic principles of effective multilateral diplomacy in their approaches to complex issues of maintenance of international peace, security and stability, especially under the current circumstances.

We congratulate the Latin American and Caribbean States with the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Tlatelolko that for the first time established a nuclear-weapon-free status of this vast and densely populated region and defined the parameters for a relevant process in other regions of the world.

The Russian Federation has ratified all the Protocols to the Treaties on the establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZ) and is strictly complying with its relevant obligations. We are prepared also to sign at any time the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty on the establishment of a NWFZ in South-East Asia.

As a cosponsor of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East we pay particular attention to the establishment of a zone free from nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East (WMDFZ). We regret that this process came to an impasse. We intend to do our utmost to overcome the deadlock in the process of establishment of WMDFZ.

As an additional proposal, Russia has put forward an idea to hold in 2020 a Conference on regional security issues in the Middle East. To that end a Preparatory Committee is to be established and necessary preparatory work to be conducted with the assistance by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

We understand that the countries of the region need time to comprehend this initiative; and do not intend to push on moving it forward. Nevertheless, this proposal remains on the table until it is in demand by the Middle East States.

The last but not the least. The US President’s decision not to certify the implementation in good faith by Tehran of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action on the Iranian Nuclear Program is regretful. Instead of questioning the
results of the JCPOA implementation all the effort should be exerted to realize fully its entire potential. This is our common interest.

Irrespective of any decisions of certain participants of the JCPOA there can be no return to the situation which had been before its adoption. Whatever the case, any UN Security Council sanctions are definitely out of the question.