Distinguished Mr. Chairperson,

First of all, I would like to congratulate you on your election to this high position, to wish you success in your work and to assure you that you can count on full-fledged assistance of the Russian delegation in conducting substantive discussions on the proposed agenda.

Modern international relations are characterized by the growth of political turbulence, tensions and unpredictability, by the exacerbation of the old and emergence of the new threats to international and regional security and by the multiplication of military and political factors undermining international peace.

In such conditions, the issues of ensuring strategic stability, which is now being subjected to the most serious tests, come to the fore. The creation of the
necessary conditions for strengthening international security, establishing equal and mutually beneficial multilateral cooperation in order to further advance along the path of general and complete disarmament, the key dimension of which is achieving a nuclear-free world, depends on the solution of these issues.

As a responsible and consistent proponent of nuclear disarmament, the Russian Federation for over 50 years has been making its exceptionally large-scale contribution to the reduction of strategic offensive arms. On the 5th of February this year Russia reached the limits for delivery vehicles and warheads envisaged by the New START Treaty. As a result, Russian nuclear arsenal has been reduced by more than 85% compared to the peak of the Cold War.

We intend to continue moving down this path. We are ready to explore the option of extending the New START for another five years. The Treaty provides for this. However, it is first necessary to settle all remaining questions regarding its implementation by the US (in particular, with respect to the unilateral exclusion from the accountability of a significant number of strategic offensive arms bypassing the norms stipulated in the Treaty). We need an interested and responsible partner.

Further progress along the path of nuclear disarmament is impossible without all States with military nuclear capability joining the relevant efforts. First of all, it concerns the corresponding countries of the NATO military alliance. However, to our deep regret, so far none of them has expressed such intent.

Supporting the idea of liberating the planet from nuclear weapons, we stand for a measured incremental approach based on taking into account all the factors affecting strategic stability. The principle of the mandatory simultaneous strengthening of the security of all the participants to the process of eliminating nuclear weapons remains crucial as nuclear arsenals are reduced.
It is impossible to ignore the phenomena and factors of the modern military and political situation that have a destructive impact on strategic stability and international security. Among them, first of all, we should highlight the provisions of the updated US nuclear doctrine which result in lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons, as well as unrestricted expansion of a global US missile defense system.

Of equal concern is the prospect of placement of weapons in outer space. Recently, more and more signals have been received about active preparation by some countries for conducting combat operations in the near-Earth space. There are also serious questions with regard to actions by our US colleagues contrary to the INF Treaty, including on-ground deployment of Mk-41 universal launchers on the territory of Romania and Poland. Relevant administrative decisions are being taken and budget documents adopted, military-political and economic groundwork is being laid, and a massive indoctrination of national and international public opinion is being conducted.

Nuclear disarmament is also hampered by the remaining non-strategic nuclear weapons in Europe accompanied by the destabilizing practices of the so-called NATO "nuclear sharing", which provides for involvement of non-nuclear States of the Alliance in the planning of nuclear weapons employment and in relevant training, which is a direct violation of the NPT.

Political games around the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) are also a serious factor that has a negative impact on strategic stability. The new nuclear doctrine of the United States, in essence, dooms the prospects for the entry into force of the CTBT, in other words, it negates the very further existence of the Treaty as a full-fledged international legal instrument. In such situation, there can be no question of accelerated completion of the establishment
of the CTBT verification mechanism and of its provisional operation before the Treaty’s entry into force.

We are against such hasty opportunistic decisions in the field of nuclear disarmament as the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). A ban on nuclear weapons would only make sense after the complete elimination of military nuclear arsenals in order to ensure the irreversibility of nuclear disarmament in the framework of general and complete disarmament.

We have to admit that in its current form a TPNW does not reach its intended purpose and in no way contributes to further reduction of nuclear arsenals. On the contrary, it feeds inflated expectations and creates an illusion that the issue of nuclear weapons could be settled while factors influencing strategic stability and basic principles of disarmament are being ignored.

Such a new prohibitive instrument contradicts the NPT and undermines the international nuclear non-proliferation regime. The TPNW provokes a sense of discord within the international community, distracting it from the real task of establishing the necessary conditions for continuing the process of nuclear disarmament.

Mr. Chairperson,

We are in the middle of another NPT review cycle. We approached the 50th anniversary of the NPT’s opening for signature in very complex environment. The contradictions between nuclear and non-nuclear States are deepening, and the differences inside these groups are intensifying. The universally recognized norms and mechanisms in the field of nuclear non-proliferation are being undermined and subjected to revision. Recently, this was complemented by the attempts to use the NPT review process as a tribune to exert political pressure on certain States and efforts to raise the topics unrelated to the Treaty.
We still have a “zero” result with the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the establishment of a zone free from nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. Further inaction in this area is fraught with serious consequences for the NPT.

The UN GA draft decision presented by the League of Arab States on the convening a Conference on WMDFZ not later than June 2019 in current deadlock situation becomes particularly relevant. With its adoption the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East will be brought to practical implementation. The draft decision doesn’t contradict the interests of the regional States and deserves the fullest support.

We have repeatedly demonstrated our readiness to interact with all the interested countries to convene a Conference on the WMD-free zone and proposed practical steps in this regard. Russia is ready to support LAS initiative and to participate in the Conference. We urge other co-sponsors of this Resolution to take the same constructive position.

The adoption of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action for the Iranian nuclear programme (JCPOA) was a major success in the field of nuclear non-proliferation. Teheran fully honors its obligations, which was repeatedly confirmed by the IAEA. Currently Iran is State-Party to the NPT the most inspected by the Agency.

We consider the US withdrawal from the JCPOA as a serious miscalculation undermining the NPT and politically a quite short-sighted step.

Russia intends to live up to its obligations under the JCPOA. Jointly with other participants of the JCPOA we are looking for effective mechanisms to protect trade and economic cooperation with Iran from the extraterritorial US sanctions. We are convinced that truly protective measures against these sanctions could be really effective only if they become collective and create the basis for their joining by all interested States.
We note the role of the IAEA as a unique organization that contributes to the development of international cooperation in the field of peaceful use of atomic energy, as a reliable pillar for the WMD nonproliferation regime based on the NPT, as an important mechanism of international cooperation in the field of strengthening nuclear and physical nuclear security, as well as a significant instrument contributing to international development. We stand for the provision of broad access to the benefits of peaceful atom to all States meeting their obligations in the field of non-proliferation. At the same time, it is fundamentally important for us to preserve impartial, depoliticized, technically justified nature of the IAEA system of safeguards that is based on the agreements concluded between States and the Agency.

We believe that the IAEA must continue to distance itself from any initiatives aimed at its meddling into the issues related to the verification of nuclear disarmament or prohibition of nuclear weapons. We consider such initiatives as an attempt to provoke the IAEA’s departure from the scope of its purposes and functions determined by the Charter.

Dear Mr. Chairperson,

The Russian Federation fully supports the current international regimes of banning chemical, biological and toxin weapons and consistently stands for their strengthening.

We consider extremely destructive for the CWC regime the attempts to give the right to the Director-General of the OPCW Technical Secretariat to practically individually attribute responsibility for the use of toxic agents bypassing the UN Security Council. We hope that States conducting independent policy in the international arena will seriously assess the ongoing situation within the OPCW and at the forthcoming CWC Review Conference will oppose implementation of such odious decisions, destructive for the entire UN system.
Russia repeatedly proposed to establish under the auspices of the UN Security Council an impartial and highly professional international mechanism to investigate all incidents of "chemical terrorism" without exception (first of all, in the Middle East) and in accordance with high standards of the CWC. However, our initiatives fell victim to the reckless and adventurist policy of the irresponsible opponents of the legal Syrian government.

As for the proposal to create "a transitional capability" embedded in the UN Secretariat to investigate the alleged use of biological weapons, we consider it in the context of attempts to build manageable and cooperative structures which are ready to sacrifice their own reputation for the sake of implementation of a political order. Measures in circumvention of the BTWC may lead to the replication of the negative experience of various "alternative investigations". Any multilateral mechanisms can be created only as a result of full-scale negotiations held between the BTWC State-Parties. Nobody has the right to impose such mechanisms on sovereign States.

We consider the strengthening of the BTWC regime as one of the priority tasks for the international community. The list of existing problems was outlined at the August Meeting of Experts that we were able to hold as a result of consolidated efforts to overcome the crisis that took place after the 8th Review Conference in November 2016.

We believe that now we jointly need to concentrate on the elaboration of measures capable of strengthening the BTWC. We count on the assistance from the Secretary-General and the UN Secretariat.

Dear Mr. Chairperson,

We follow with concern how some States gradually start carrying out their plans on the production and placement in the near-Earth orbit of strike space systems. Their implementation threatens to unleash an arms race in outer space
with the view of making it yet another arena for armed confrontation. Such a
development threatens to undermine international security and global stability and,
therefore, is absolutely unacceptable for us. We do not want to see humanity living
once again in the expectation of another Armageddon, now in outer space, as it
was the case within several decades after the US bombardment of the Japanese
cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki when the threat of nuclear war sometimes
seemed to be highly likely.

This is why Russia remains in the vanguard of multilateral efforts to keep
outer space free of weapons of any kind, proposing and promoting concrete
practical measures on PAROS. We are still convinced that the only way to protect
humankind from the devastating pretentions in outer space is to elaborate a legally
binding agreement with all space-faring nations involved that would provide for
the prohibition of placement of weapons in outer space, and the use of force or
threat of force against outer space objects. While such agreement is not signed,
Russia will promote and support any initiatives, contributing to the use and
exploration of outer space for peaceful purposes and putting a solid barrier to its
weaponization. The only such proposal so far is our No-First Placement Initiative
that is increasingly getting global.

We assign a central role in the issues of arms control, disarmament and non-
proliferation to the UN multilateral disarmament machinery. We are convinced that
drafting new disarmament agreements outside the UN mechanisms decreases their
efficiency and even reduces it to zero.

We continue to give priority to revitalization of the work of the UN
disarmament fora, above all, of the Conference on Disarmament (CD). In this
regard, we would like to remind you once again about our constructive and,
hopefully, palatable to all initiative that was presented in March 2016 with the aim
of overcoming a two-decade-long stagnation in the work of the CD. It is about the
elaboration of an international convention on the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism. This way we could launch negotiations at the CD in accordance with the existing mandate.

Thank you for your attention.