STATEMENT

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at the Second Session
of the Preparatory Committee
for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties
to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Statement of the Russian delegation
at the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee
for the NPT Review Conference

Mr. Chairman,

Dear colleagues,

In a couple of months the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will mark the 50th anniversary since its opening for signature. For five decades the NPT has played a crucial role in establishing and cementing the international legal architecture of disarmament and non-proliferation, which has allowed to effectively prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons for many years.

We fully align ourselves with the key assessments made by the delegation of China.

Let us have a look where we are in the lead-up to this anniversary. To be honest, the current international situation is challenging. The threat of armed conflicts in different regions of the world even with the involvement of nuclear weapons is growing. We observe that collective cooperation mechanisms are renounced and the authority of international organizations is undermined. Traditional dialogue, respect for positions and interests of each other and understanding the need for compromise are being replaced by some sort of aggressive radicalism and maximalism not based on common sense at all. We are unpleasantly surprised that suddenly many states easily abandon their traditional deep analysis of the situation and scrupulous assessment of short-term and long-term consequences. Some of our Western colleagues have gone so far as to even claim in their statements that Russia, allegedly, does not meet some of its obligations on international agreements. One cannot but understand that such absolutely groundless and, to be blunt, false statements increase international tensions, fuel distrust among states and destabilize existing legal mechanisms.
In such conditions, there is a critical demand for sustained collective efforts aimed at ensuring security and stability in the world, restoration of trust and convergence of positions of different groups of countries. The healthier international environment is possible only on the basis of traditional approved mechanisms that have confirmed their effectiveness and reliability for many years of existence. The establishment of any new politicized formats just provokes a growth in distrust and suspicions between states.

The NPT has been tested by time. It rests on the balance of interests of different States. The Treaty in its advanced sound age remains fully relevant. The NPT is absolutely in line with the objectives set at its conclusion. The NPT basic principles provide a solid foundation for settlement of the most complicated problems in the area of nuclear non-proliferation.

And the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on the Iran’s nuclear program concluded in 2015 is a bright confirmation of that. The agreement reached between E3/EU+3 and Iran through the EU mediation is a unique combination of measures developed within the existing framework of the time-tested UN Security Council and the IAEA mechanisms, and additional voluntary steps of the states-parties to the deal. As a result the JCPOA gives full confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iran’s nuclear program while ensuring its inherent right to the development of a civil nuclear program. The Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and the Additional Protocol implemented by Iran provide the Agency with a timeless possibility to monitor, verify and confirm the absence in Iran of any undeclared nuclear material or activity. The IAEA on a regular basis confirms Iran’s full compliance with its relevant obligations.

The JCPOA is quite a fragile compromise. Any deviation from its general philosophy or breach or non-compliance with its provisions as well as any attempts to amend its text for someone’s benefit will inevitably affect the global non-proliferation regime and have a powerful negative consequences for regional and global stability and security.
We strongly insist that continuing faithful and comprehensive implementation of the JCPOA and the UN Security Council resolution 2231 by all states - parties to the nuclear deal without exception meet the interests of the entire global community. For our part, we will continue to comply with our JCPOA commitments as long as the others do so. We are confident that our analysis and assessments are shared by most of the states. And today we call on our colleagues in this hall not to keep silence in a hope that the situation will somehow blow over but make specific serious efforts to preserve the JCPOA.

We, together with the delegation of China, have prepared a draft Joint Statement aimed at voicing our support for the JCPOA that we propose to adopt at this session. The delegations have already had a chance to go through the document. We believe that there is a demand for such a collective message by the Preparatory Committee and hope that the document will find broad support.

The developments around the JCPOA will directly influence any outcome of the efforts to settle the nuclear problem of the Korean Peninsula through diplomatic means. The breach of the JCPOA without any reasons and against the will of the international community would hardly add to the confidence of the DPRK that any potential future agreements would be observed. We follow with cautious optimism the recent positive developments on the Korean Peninsula, including a number of highest-level contacts with the participation of Pyongyang and recent declarations by the DPRK on suspension of nuclear tests and test-launches of intercontinental ballistic missiles. We welcome such steps.

Russia never recognized the DPRK ambitions to acquire a nuclear status. We consider unacceptable any DPRK incompliance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. However, we should not turn a blind eye to the obvious: the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula is possible only with reaching a complex solution to all security issues in North-East Asia, including the growing problem of building-up the U.S. missile defence system capabilities. Some time ago Russia and China put forward a joint initiative with a step-by-step moving plan towards
this goal. We believe that in the current circumstances the elements of this initiative are relevant and worth considering. We will continue to provide comprehensive support to any political and diplomatic efforts to find a negotiated diplomatic solution to the situation on the Korean Peninsula.

Mr. Chairman,

We are convinced that international community efforts in the area of nuclear disarmament should be focused at this stage on creation of prerequisites for further steps in this sphere. We draw your attention once again to the need to engage all the states possessing military nuclear capabilities in the work to reduce and limit nuclear weapons.

Russia calls on all the members of the international community to be proactive in solving the relevant problems of international security and stability. Among them are an unrestricted deployment of global missile defence systems, development of non-nuclear high-precision strategic offensive weapons, a prospect of placing strike weapons in outer space and growing quality and quantity imbalances in the sphere of conventional arms. As these issues are not being settled it destroys trust between states, destabilizes disarmament architecture and is becoming a more and more serious obstacle on the way of promoting disarmament efforts.

We would like to draw special attention to the decision taken by Washington to renounce the policy of supporting the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and create conditions to resume nuclear tests. These actions by the U.S. represent a serious blow to the CTBT and create an extremely worrying situation in the area of nuclear non-proliferation. It should be understood that if the example of Washington could be followed by other states which ratification is required for the CTBT entry into force, that will pave the way for an unrestricted nuclear arms race.

We reaffirm our commitment to the INF Treaty. We share the concerns voiced by a number of states regarding the future of the Treaty. However, it seems
that only few of them know the real state of play. The U.S. continues to reproduce its unsubstantiated allegations. While the fact that the US has been severely violating for many years the INF Treaty and trying to justify its intention to destroy it by shifting responsibility on Russia is being silenced. We would like to believe that chances to save the INF Treaty are still there and the U.S. will be strong enough to show political will needed.

In this context we consider attempts to focus the disarmament process on unconditional abolition of nuclear arsenals as soon as possible to be premature and disorienting. There is no way to reach the goal of building a world free of nuclear weapons by the methods that formed the basis of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which now is open for signature. This initiative makes no contribution to the advancement towards the noble goal declared. Quite on the contrary it threatens the very existence and efficiency of our fundamental Non-Proliferation Treaty.

We stand for inviolability of the provisions of Article VI of the NPT in correlation with the respective parts of the Treaty’s preamble. Let us recall what they provide for in essence: the cessation of the production of nuclear weapons, the elimination of all their existing stockpiles, and the removal of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery from national arsenals cannot be ensured separately from efforts to conclude a Treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control.

Mr. Chairman,

The system of the IAEA safeguards is the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. The confidence of the member states in the IAEA safeguards system is the key factor that ensures sustainability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Russia supports gradual improvement of the IAEA verification mechanism. Any modifications are justified only if the safeguards system remains objective, depoliticized, technically credible, clear to the member states and based on rights
and obligations of the parties in accordance with the safeguards agreements signed by them. We stress that introduction of any subjective and politicized elements in the IAEA verification mechanism would inevitably undermine its sustainability and lead to erosion of the fundamental principle of non-interference into domestic affairs of states, which could ultimately have unpredictable consequences both for the safeguards system and the nuclear non-proliferation regime as a whole.

Introduction of the State-Level Concept to safeguards still requires close political control by the IAEA member states through the Agency's policy-making bodies in order to avoid introduction of any subjective elements in its verification activities.

Mr. Chairman,

We have to state that we are reaching the middle of the NPT review cycle with zero result as regards such an important track as establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems (WMDFZ). Further inaction in that area threatens to undermine the confidence of states in the NPT. We still believe that convening a WMDFZ Conference remains a highly relevant and achievable goal in the context of implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. We cannot further procrastinate with preparation of this event. Proposals presented by Russia at the first session of the Preparatory Committee in 2017 on structuring the work on this track could serve as a good basis for adoption of a decision at the 2020 Review Conference to convene a Conference.

We consider that the unpreparedness of South-East Asia states to finalize the work in 2012 on signing the Protocol to the Bangkok Treaty that would provide security assurances to members of the zone was a lost opportunity. Russia is open for consultations with countries of the region on the matter.

We attribute great importance to final formalization of the status of NWFZs in Central Asia and in Africa and call on the U.S. to expeditiously ratify the Protocols to the Semipalatinsk Treaty and the Treaty of Pelindaba.
Mr. Chairman,

We are confident that strengthening the global nuclear non-proliferation regime is only possible if three key elements of the Treaty are implemented in a balanced manner – nuclear non-proliferation, peaceful use of nuclear energy and nuclear disarmament. Unfortunately, while focusing far too often on the complex and controversial issues of non-proliferation and disarmament, we tend to forget about the peaceful use of nuclear energy – the most consolidating and prospective pillar of the NPT that is relevant to achievement of the development tasks for all member countries.

According to the IAEA estimates, the use of nuclear energy will increase globally, which demonstrates a demand for it and important role in the energy mix of many states. Approximately 450 nuclear power plant units operate in the world while 55 more are at the stage of construction. There is a growing interest in the development of technical cooperation projects and non-energy application of nuclear technologies.

Russia is one of the most active participants in international cooperation in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy. The State Corporation «Rosatom» is currently implementing abroad 33 nuclear projects on power plant units construction. At the same time, as already stressed by the President of the Russian Federation, our country not only sells equipment for nuclear power plants – we develop a whole new industry for our partners including training of national specialists.

Russia has always fulfilled and will fulfill its obligations under bilateral and multilateral treaties and projects regardless of political developments. We stand ready to continue cooperation with the NPT member states and are determined to develop a genuinely modern and mutually beneficial interaction system in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Mr. Chairman,
Careful treatment of the NPT, as well as responsible approach to the balance of interests enshrined in it and obligations taken by all are key to successful implementation of the Treaty. We believe that reaffirming these principles as well as the enduring importance of the Treaty and its crucial historical value is the minimum of what we all should absolutely do during this NPT review cycle. This would be particularly important given the fact that the year 2020 will mark the 50th anniversary of the NPT coming into force.

We stand ready to cooperate with all states in the interests of effective work of current session.

Thank you for your attention.