STATEMENT

BY THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

at the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (general debate)

New York, April 29, 2019
Mr. Chairman,

Dear colleagues,

On July 1, 2018, we celebrated the 50th anniversary since the opening for signature of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Last June, Foreign Ministers of the three NPT Depositary States (Russia, United Kingdom and the United States) issued a joint statement of strong support for the NPT.

The 50th anniversary of the entry into force of the NPT, which we will approach next year, is a reminder of the Treaty's undeniable contribution to creating a reliable barrier to proliferation of nuclear weapons in the world and to ensuring international security and stability. The NPT can be considered a true example of the effectiveness of multilateral diplomacy and a model of interaction within the international community in addressing global international issues.

The conclusion of the NPT in 1968 was made possible due to the international community's revelation that nuclear war could have had catastrophic consequences for all mankind and there would be no winners in that war. The understanding of the danger of nuclear arms race led to the creation of an entire architecture of international legal agreements and mechanisms in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and arms control, which was based on the NPT, and for many decades since then has been ensuring predictability and stability in the world. That architecture was duly calibrated and well-balanced so that it could guarantee to all of us peace and confidence in the future.

Unfortunately, many obvious truths are now being deprived of their value or replaced by false notions. The pursuit of certain countries to absolute domination augmented by the complacency of the majority of members of the international community, paves the way for dangerous and destructive processes in the modern world. We witness the demolition of the most important core agreements in the field of strategic stability and nuclear arms control and the departure from the established principles of interaction within the framework of multilateral mechanisms and fora in
this field. Rejection of even one treaty mechanism may trigger disbalance of today’s architecture of international security but when the whole number of universally recognized and time-tested agreements are ripped up, the consequences for global strategic stability can be most serious. As a result, we may find ourselves in a situation when misunderstanding or error becomes fatal.

One of the first documents denounced by Washington in the sphere of arms control was the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty. The deliberate destruction of the Treaty on the Elimination of Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles (INF Treaty) is one of the latest example of the U.S. policy of renouncing agreements that restrict its "freedom of action". The dismantling of the INF Treaty takes us 30 years back in the field of arms control in nuclear and missile area. The situation is further aggravated by the uncertainty regarding the future of the Treaty on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (New START Treaty), which expires in less than two years. We do not want the New START Treaty to befall the fate of the INF Treaty.

The Russian Federation has repeatedly underscored its support for the extension of the New START Treaty. This would at least allow us to buy time to study possible approaches to new weapons emerging throughout the world and possible ways to subject them to control measures. But before we consider the issue of extension, we have to solve the problem related to the US unilateral removal from accountability under the New START Treaty of the considerable amount of their strategic offensive arms that have allegedly been converted, though we cannot certify it as provided for by the Treaty. This serious problem can be solved. But it requires that Washington exercises its political will.

The total potential of Russia's strategic weapons, as a result of reductions carried out in accordance with bilateral treaties with the U.S., was reduced by 85% as compared to the peak levels of the Cold War. Within the framework of the INF Treaty, we have totally eliminated two types of ground-based nuclear missiles. Russia
also reduced its non-strategic nuclear weapon arsenals by three quarters, shifted them to non-deployed mode and stored them at centralized bases within its national territory.

Our position on possible future practical nuclear disarmament measures and creating prerequisites for their implementation is detailed in the working paper circulated at this session. We encourage all delegates to study it. Given the limited time for this statement, we would like to point out the following key points: we need to pay the most serious attention to the creation of prerequisites for a relevant multilateral discussion, that would allow to consider in detail all important issues related to maintaining proper level of international security and strategic stability. This is a task for all of us.

At the moment, however, the number of problems continues to grow. Negative factors in this context include a whole spectrum of actions aimed at gaining unilateral advantages, for instance - unrestricted deployment of the U.S. global missile defense system, development of non-nuclear high-precision strategic offensive weapons, the prospect of placing strike weapons in outer space, attempts to weaken the defense potential of other countries through illegitimate methods of unilateral pressure bypassing the UN Security Council, violation of the NPT through notorious NATO "nuclear sharing" activities.

In the context of the policy to renounce its obligations that introduce nuclear restrictions equal to other States it is necessary to mention the refusal of the U.S. to ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). That is a significant blow for the NPT.

Without resolving the above mentioned problems on the basis of the principle of equal and undiminished security, we are unlikely to discuss in a meaningful way the implementation of practical measures in the field of nuclear disarmament, taking into account the role of nuclear weapons in ensuring security of quite a number of States. Building upon the NPT, we need to lay off a venue to move forward with
nuclear disarmament without being distracted by other issues to be settled at later stages of this process.

We welcome the IAEA's professional and impartial approach in conducting inspections in Iran as part of the implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). For almost four years since the conclusion of the JCPOA, the Agency has been regularly confirming that Tehran strictly abides to the established limits for the development of the nuclear program, including by proactively providing IAEA inspectors with access to all facilities of interest. Iran's patience, restraint and responsible approach to fulfilling its obligations, despite constant provocations and blackmail, deserve to be commended and respected. Successful implementation of the JCPOA's "nuclear" provisions by Tehran is a crucial contribution to strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

Russia is determined to strengthen multilateral cooperation and joining efforts in the interests of a comprehensive settlement on the Korean Peninsula. We are generally satisfied that in the result of the steps taken by the parties concerned, including the DPRK, it became possible to reduce tensions in the region and negotiations processes was launched. We understand that achieving the goals of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula will take a long time and require maximum patience and restraint on the part of all the participants. It has to be supported by real practical steps towards each other on the basis of compromise approaches with an emphasis on creating an atmosphere of trust. At the same time all States involved need to work together and develop multilateral mechanisms to settle the existing issues. In cooperation with our partners, we are developing a plan of action to accelerate the establishment of lasting peace on the Korean Peninsula and its denuclearization.

An important regional topic within the framework of the NPT is the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction (WMDFZ). We are pleased to note that over the past year a qualitative
leap has been made in that area. The UNGA decision taken in December 2018 to convene a WMDFZ Conference makes it possible to start the practical implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East.

Russia as a cosponsor of this Resolution is fully committed to its implementation and does its utmost to that end. We intend to participate in the Conference and contribute to its success. We anticipate the U.S. and the UK, as depositaries of the NPT and cosponsors of the 1995 document also bear a special responsibility for its implementation, to send their representatives to New York. Refusal to do so under invented pretexts would run counter to the interests of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and could be interpreted as unwillingness to comply with their obligations to the international community.

Moreover, we call upon the U.S. to ratify the Protocols to the Treaties of Rarotonga, Pelindaba, and the Semipalatinsk Treaty without delay.

One of the key drivers of the NPT remains the IAEA safeguards system, which is based on the agreements, concluded by States and the Agency in accordance with Article III of the Treaty.

The Russian Federation supports and assists the IAEA in developing verification mechanisms, ensuring their sustainability and increasing their effectiveness. We do so, in particular, through the Russian Federation Safeguards Support Programme. At the same time, we are actively working to maintain the objectivity, non-depoliticized and technical character of the Agency's verification mechanism. The application of safeguards worldwide should be based on clearly defined legal obligations undertaken by the States and the IAEA. That is the only way to maintain the credibility of the IAEA safeguards system, which is an indispensable condition for the effectiveness of the Agency's verification activities and the integrity of the nuclear non-proliferation regime based on the NPT.

We believe that any significant changes in the work of the IAEA verification mechanism should be based on unanimous support by the Member States of the
Agency and approved by its policy making bodies. The use of subjective factors and baseless allegations is inadmissible when carrying out inspections and making safeguards conclusions.

Russia has been consistently advocating for broad access of the NPT State Parties to the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and promotion of the international cooperation in that field, as well as strengthening the role of nuclear power and non-power technologies in socio-economic and industrial development, as well as reducing carbon stress on climate and hazardous emissions. We consider the IAEA to be a very important international platform for cooperation, aimed at developing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, as well as non-power applications in accordance with the sustainable development goals, established by UN. Russia actively supports the Agency in these activities.

According to the IAEA’s forecasts, there is a growing trend in the use of nuclear energy worldwide. As of March 2019, 450 nuclear power units were in operation; another 55 power units were under construction.

Russia cooperates extensively with the NPT States Parties in the interests of exercising their rights under Article IV of the Treaty. Russian nuclear energy technologies and solutions received well-deserved recognition in various countries around the world. ROSATOM State Corporation is building 36 power units in 12 countries, holding a leading position in the world. Our country has concluded intergovernmental framework agreements on the peaceful use of atomic energy with 53 countries and on the construction of nuclear power facilities – with 18 countries. We shall provide a detailed account of ROSATOM’s cooperation projects in peaceful uses at a briefing on May 6.

Mr. Chairman,

The outcome of the third session of the Preparatory Committee will have a major defining impact on the 2020 NPT Review Conference. At the current session it is important to create grounds for the effective and comprehensive review of the
implementation of the Treaty's three pillars – nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peaceful use of nuclear energy – as well as to take decisions on all the outstanding procedural issues – the agenda, program of work and appointment of the Chair of the Review Conference.

The Russian delegation is ready to engage with all the States Parties to ensure the success of the current session and the settlement of the issues it deals with.

Thank you for attention.