STATEMENT

by the Russian Representative at Thematic Discussion in the First Committee of the 61st UN GA Session on Item “Other Types of WMD”

October 11, 2006

Madam Chairperson,

Russia supports the strengthening of multilateralism in addressing the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation of WMD on the basis of strict compliance with international agreements in this area. Along with strengthening the NPT that we discussed yesterday we pay great attention to unconditional compliance with the Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases or Bacteriological Methods of Warfare (the 1925 Geneva Protocol), Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), and Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). The relevance and urgency of efficient measures in the area of elimination of chemical weapons and non-proliferation of biological weapons is dictated first of all by the risk of their falling into the hands of terrorists.

We believe that the 1925 Geneva Protocol has not lost its relevance. In order to contribute to the strengthening of its regime, it is necessary to remove reservations made by some nations during ratification of this document. Russia has already done so. We call on other parties to the Protocol also to renounce the possibility to use chemical or biological weapons in retaliation.

We regard the CWC as one of the key elements of the system of international security. Over nine and a half years of its existence the Convention has convincingly
proved its validity for the cause of relieving the world from one of the most deadly types of weapons and has become an effective deterrence instrument against proliferation of chemical weapons, as well as demonstrated its positive potential in promoting cooperation for peaceful use of chemical technologies and know-how.

Russia is standing by its disarmament commitments under the CWC and consistently implements them. We are doing our utmost to complete the elimination of chemical arsenals within the time frame provided for in the Convention. In September 2006 a third Russian chemical weapons destruction facility was launched at Maradykovsky in the Kirov region. In the nearest future we are going to reach an important threshold of 10% in eliminating Russia’s chemical agents stocks.

One should emphasize that no other state has to fulfill such a tremendous task of eliminating chemical weapons, which faces Russia. We continuously increase the financing of the national chemical weapons destruction program from the Russian budget. We would like to take this opportunity and express our appreciation to all countries that provided their assistance in the elimination of chemical arsenal. Such assistance has important supplementary role. Russia receives financial assistance from the United States, Germany, United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Canada, the Czech Republic, the European Union and New Zealand. We must emphasize, however, that increasing efficiency of such assistance has become a pressing task at present. Let me draw your attention to the fact that we will require the bulk of assistance in 2006 – 2008 when we will engage in the most intensive construction phase of industrial weapons destruction facilities.

An important priority for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in The Hague from the view point of non-proliferation of chemical weapons is, in our view, the task of making the Convention universal. Recently, in this very hall Director-General of the OPCW, Mr. R.Pfister, pointed out that only fifteen states still remain outside the Convention. The number of State Parties can be
substantially expanded through the implementation of OPCW Action Plan to ensure the universality of the Convention.

We firmly believe that measures of national implementation that should be taken by all CWC States Parties are a necessary element of sustainable operation of the Convention. The adoption of relevant Action Plan could contribute to intensification of efforts going in this direction. We are ready to assist other states in drafting national legislation and share the existing experience. We are also cooperating on these issues within the framework of the CIS.

Madam Chairperson,

In the context of efforts on biological non-proliferation we continuously call for the strengthening of the BWC. We consider the forthcoming 6th Review Conference scheduled for late this year to be an important stage in these efforts. We believe that the Review Conference must thoroughly review the BWC implementation article by article and set out specific follow-up measures for the next five-year period to improve its effective operation. We continue to believe that the most efficient method of strengthening the BWC is the resumption of work on its verification mechanism as a legally binding document (Protocol). The Protocol would permit an effective and objective verification of compliance by all states with the Convention.

In the absence of consensus on this issue we support the continuation of intersessional work, annual expert meetings of experts and of State Parties to the BWC, which provided a positive experience during 2003 – 2005.

Another important measure that helps to prevent proliferation of biological weapons would be further universalization of the BWC. We call on the States that have not yet done so to accede to the Convention. We continue to call on all the State Parties to bring their legislation in full compliance with the provisions of the Convention.

Madam Chairperson,
In the context of non-proliferation of chemical and biological weapons, and, above all, such an urgent task as preventing those weapons from falling into the hands of non-state actors, especially terrorists, we should emphasize as a first priority the full compliance by all states with the UN SC resolution 1540. This resolution envisages the development at a national level of extensive legislative, law-enforcement and organizational measures to ensure safety, integrity and physical security of not only chemical weapons (this task is being actively addressed in the OPCW) but, and this is especially relevant, the materials associated with the CBW, i.e. dual use chemical and biological materials and technologies. The transfer to anyone of such weapons is highly improbable and the main threat of proliferation comes exactly from the uncontrolled trafficking and the risk of leakage of dual-use chemical and biological materials. Of particular importance in this connection are also the provisions of the resolution on the need to establish and strengthen measures of export control and trans-border movement of such materials.

We actively support the work of UN SC Committee for implementation of resolution 1540.

We appreciate the draft resolutions submitted by Poland and Hungary in support of the OPCW and BWC. We are going to vote in favor of these draft resolutions.

Thank you very much.