STATEMENT

BY

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THE ALTERNATE REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION,
IN THE FIRST COMMITTEE
OF THE 65TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

PRESENTATION OF THE DRAFT RESOLUTION L.38
"TRANSPARENCY AND CONFIDENCE-BUILDING MEASURES
IN OUTER SPACE ACTIVITIES"

New York, 22 October 2010
Prevention of the placement of weapons in outer space (PPW) remains one of the foreign policy priorities of the Russian Federation. When on behalf of Russian Federation and Peoples' Republic of China in February 2008 at the Conference on Disarmament (CD) we put forward the draft of a respective international treaty we did it in a deep understanding that it was easier to ban now the placement of weapons in outer space than "to sort out a weapon mess" some time later. To prevent appearance of weapons in outer space is extremely important from the point of view of assuring predictability of strategic situation in outer space, global stability and safety and security in general.

Since the time the PPW Treaty draft was introduced a great amount of work has been done to clarify its basic provisions. In August 2009 answers to basic questions put forward by CD States Parties regarding the draft treaty were issued as a CD official document (CD/1872). As a whole, the Russia-China initiative is being assessed as an urgent and very important step. The international community came to a better understanding of all the gravity of possible negative consequences the placement of weapons in outer space could cause and has become filled with the importance of meeting the PPWT objectives.

Of course, one can not expect to come quickly to an agreement on such a fundamental matter. The situation becomes even more difficult as the Conference on Disarmament is unable to adopt a program of work that could allow starting a substantial discussion on this issue. Under such conditions we consider it important to move forward to that objective stage by stage. At the current stage it is extremely important to assure adoption of at least those measures that did demonstrate their urgency and regarding which a consensus is already fostered.

First of all a creation of an atmosphere of transparency and confidence in outer space activities is badly needed.

During the current session the five-year period in the work of the UN GA First Committee on the topical issue of transparency and confidence-building measures (TCBMs) is coming to its end. Through that time the UN adopted five relevant resolutions introduced on behalf of Russia and China. 22 States and the
European Union as a group submitted their proposals on TCBMs to the UN Secretary-General. In December 2009 in the course of the 64th UN GA the resolution was adopted without a vote for the first time. We are thankful to all the States for the consolidated support. We would like to thank the UN Secretary-General for the publication of the TCBMs final report (A/65/123) by the time of the current session on the basis of proposals of States submitted in 2006-10 years.

Today we introduce draft resolution L.38 on TCBMs already co-authored by 60 States.

While preparing the new draft resolution for the current 65th session we proceeded from the understanding of the importance of the topical issue of security in outer space, as well as of favorable conditions resulting from the adoption of our resolution without a vote during the previous UN GA session.

We think that at the UN the efficiency of further work on TCBMs in many respects will depend on its transfer to a higher level – to the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) which could study, summarize and develop further national reports that have been forwarded to the UN in the implementation of previously adopted resolutions, as well as prepare and submit to the UN Secretary-General a report containing recommendations on the TCBMs implementation. Such a group in accordance with the draft should begin its work in 2012.

We take into consideration the results of the previous GGE on TCBMs, which worked during 1991-93 (A/48/675, widely distributed under UN GA Resolution 48/74), as well as political events and other important and revolutionary technological achievements in the exploration of outer space, that took place since then.

We take note of the fact that former work of the experts was not oriented towards the TCBMs introduction into international practice. In this connection we are of the opinion that future GGE, in case a decision on its establishment is adopted, will prepare recommendations regarding practical TCBMs implementation.
There is one more important moment as well. During the current year we were carrying out the work over the TCBMs draft resolution in a trilateral format, represented by Russia, China and the United States. However, some disagreements over the text of the preamble to the resolution have not allowed us to produce a joint draft. Nevertheless, regarding the principle thing – the establishment of a group of governmental experts – our positions coincide. We would like to thank our American and Chinese colleagues for the efforts made by them to find a compromise language. We welcome the adjustments introduced to the national outer space policy by the US Administration of President B.Obama and, in particular, the intention of the United States to develop transparency and confidence-building measures on bilateral and multilateral levels to provide for a responsible attitude regarding any activity in outer space.

We call upon all States to support draft resolution L.38 on TCBMs and consider a possibility of joining it as co-authors and co-sponsors.