STATEMENT BY

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AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE
OF THE 67TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY

(Thematic debate on outer space)

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates,

The issue of preventing an arms race in outer space (PAROS) is our absolute priority on the multilateral disarmament agenda.

We believe it is high time that we embark on a serious practical work in this field by adopting a preemptive tactics. Otherwise, we could lose the opportunity. It is easier to prevent a threat than to remove it. Based on these considerations Russia joined the resolution “Prevention of an arms race in outer space”, submitted this year by Egypt, as co-sponsor.

Russia has put forward a number of practical initiatives on international arena to attain these goals.

As you know, together with China we submitted the draft of the Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space (PPWT) to the Conference on Disarmament in 2008. Russia proceeds from the premise that this draft contains a
set of preventive measures aimed at detecting up-to-date high tech destabilizing types of weapons and new areas of confrontation. Placement of weapons in outer space could instigate unpredictable consequences for international community – the same we witnessed at the dawn of nuclear age.

At the 59th UNGA session in October 2004 Russia unilaterally and unconditionally stated that it would not be the first to place any kind of weapons in outer space. Our partners from the Organization of the Treaty on Collective Security supported this initiative and committed not to place weapons in outer space. We call upon all states possessing relevant capabilities to follow suit.

Every state has equal and unalienable right to access to outer space. Naturally, space security is our common goal and we have to jointly find a solution that would strengthen international security and stability.

Given that so far the Conference on Disarmament unfortunately is unable to start negotiations on the PPWT draft we believe it reasonable to promote consideration of transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space. As you might be aware, resolution 65/68 established the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) to conduct a study commencing in 2012 on outer space transparency and confidence-building measures to be submitted to the 68th UNGA session in 2013.

In this respect we assume that application of these measures, while not being a substitute for efforts to prevent an arms race in outer space, would contribute to a greater transparency and predictability of outer space activities in all spheres, including military.

As Chairman of the GGE I would like to brief you on the outcome of its first session, which was held on July 23 to 27 in New York.