STATEMENT

BY

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PLENARY MEETING
CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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Mr. President,
Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished colleagues,

It is a great pleasure for me to have the opportunity to speak at the plenary meeting of the 2012 session of the Conference on Disarmament – a unique and authoritative international forum in the field of security which has a good record of service to the world community, a rich history and the present that is anything but simple.

(This is my first intervention as the Russian Representative to the CD. I have been monitoring though very carefully the situation here as well as those efforts which had been taken, here in Geneva and in the framework of the UN GA, to resume its substantive work).

To overcome stagnation at the CD and to invigorate other multilateral disarmament fora is still one of the most pressing issues. We share sensible assessments of the current situation we have heard many times within these walls that genuine causes of the stalemate at the CD lie in the political domain and could be attributed to the fact that CD deals with a very sensitive substance – security of states. We stay convinced that rather than pushing for a drastic reconstruction of institutions we should mobilize political will to use existing multilateral negotiating mechanisms to work out universal disarmament and non-proliferation agreements.

It is encouraging that all states present here concur in their aspirations to keep CD as a multilateral negotiating forum. We are also grateful to the UN Secretary General and to the CD Secretary General Mr. Tokaev for their efforts to promote multilateral disarmament agenda.

However, discussions on the future of the multilateral disarmament system that took place last year in various formats show that we have reached the juncture when we have to make a responsible choice. To agree to a compromise and embark on a practical work to resolve the most burning issues of multilateral disarmament agenda or to have to face the threat of paralysis and disruption of the UN disarmament mechanism. The status-quo when de-facto procedural decisions by
the UN General Assembly on the CD and UN Disarmament Commission reports just take note of absence of any progress at these fora is not acceptable at all.

Unfortunately, we do not see much progress in the field of multilateral disarmament in general either. The more precious those instances of success we have are.

One of the most important consolidating and far-reaching events the last year saw was the entry into force of the Russia-US Treaty on the Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START Treaty). Two Parties have already embarked on the comprehensive implementation of their obligations. It is critically important that the Treaty is based on the principles of equality, parity and equal and indivisible security of Parties. We believe that reductions of nuclear arms under the Treaty would strengthen international security and stability, consolidate nuclear non-proliferation regime and allow to continue the nuclear disarmament process in a wider context.

Russia is invariably committed to the goal of ridding the mankind of nuclear threat and is open to a dialogue on nuclear disarmament. In the meantime, it should be crystal clear that further steps towards nuclear disarmament could be taken only when the principle of equal and indivisible security for all is in place.

The complex nature of current security environment and interdependence of various factors affecting strategic stability are mirrored in the debate on missile defense. The logic of Russian concerns is outlined by the President Dmitry Medvedev in his Statement in connection with the situation concerning the NATO countries’ missile defense system in Europe of November 23, 2011. The accelerated and unrestricted build-up by one party, moreover, by a military alliance, of ABM capabilities would inevitably make another party strengthen, as a compensation, its offensive arms or take other asymmetrical actions. It should also be noted that plans to deploy missile defense are of global nature and are not confined to the European continent alone. So, the speedy development of missile defense projects without due account of interests of other states significantly undermines strategic stability and international security and, according to Dmitry Medvedev, “may create unfavourable international conditions for further disarmament and arms control measures”. We are concerned by other factors as well, such as an increasing imbalance in conventional arms in Europe, plans for
placement of weapons in outer space, plans to develop strategic offensive arms in non-nuclear configuration and proliferation risks, etc.

Russia has consistently stated that current global and regional challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation regime should be only resolved within the framework of the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In this context we welcome the start of the practical implementation of the decisions of the 2010 NPT RevCon which provide for a number of steps aimed at the strengthening of the Treaty on the basis of a careful balance across its three pillars: non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The P-5 countries are actively interacting to implement their commitments. We assume that the 2010 NPT RevCon decisions are of a holistic nature and provide for the contribution of all parties to the Treaty. We note the importance of the consistent and full-scale implementation by all states of the Security Council resolutions 1540 and 1887 in the context of global non-proliferation efforts.

I would like to focus your attention on the importance of the implementation of the 2010 NPT RevCon decisions about the creation in the Middle East of a zone, free of weapons of mass destruction and means of their delivery. We consider the 2012 Conference as one of the priorities. Its success will depend to a great extent upon participation of all Middle East states and their determination to have a constructive dialogue. We welcome the appointment by the UN Secretary General of Mr. Yaako Laayava, Deputy Secretary of State of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, as a facilitator of the Conference. As co-sponsor of the 1995 Middle East resolution and one of the Depository States we are ready, within our obligations and in accordance with the 2010 RevCon decisions, to render an extensive assistance to the process of preparation for the Conference.

We believe it important to speed up the CTBT ratification to ensure its early entry into force. We welcome the CTBT ratification by Indonesia, one of the “44 list” states, and by Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea. We call on all countries and first of all, those remaining from the “list”, to sign and ratify it as soon as possible.

Mr. President,

It is in the interests of Russia to resume as soon as possible the substantive work of the CD. You might be aware, that in the margins of the 66th UNGA session and during consultations in Geneva, we unofficially made available the
proposal that, from our perspective, may serve as a basis for launching a substantive work of the CD. Within the balanced Program of Work we propose to start to “elaborate elements” of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) and to continue substantive discussions on other three core issues – nuclear disarmament, “negative” security assurances and prevention of an arms race in outer space. Agreement on a Program of Work, besides ending a long stalemate at the forum, might be an effective alternative to radical ideas on the reform of the UN disarmament mechanism. We are grateful for a broad support for our approach. Though the chance to have an agreement during the 66th session of the UNGA First Committee due to various circumstances was lost our proposal is still on the table.

The issue of preventing the placement of weapons in space is our absolute priority at the Conference. We count on further activization in the CD of collective work on the Russia-China draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space (PPWT) introduced in February 2008. If concluded, the Treaty would contribute to averting the emergence of weapons in outer space as well as to ensuring predictability of the development of the strategic situation and international security. We are sure that all states enjoying the benefits of peaceful space want this. The discussions of this draft in different formats, including at international conferences and UNGA First Committee, revealed a high interest to this issue from the world community. We call upon all interested states to join our efforts more actively.

Transparency and confidence-building measures in space activities (TCBMs) are an important component of PPWT. The Group of Governmental Experts tasked with analyzing, consolidating and developing existing TCBMs and preparing practical recommendations will start its deliberations this year.

We are ready for discussions on nuclear disarmament issues.

Russia supports the beginning of negotiations on the FMCT in the framework of a balanced Program of Work and on the basis of the “Shannon mandate”. We think that it is counterproductive to launch any discussions on the FMCT topic parallel to the CD, unless they comprise all countries possessing military nuclear arsenals. From our perspective, if concluded, such a Treaty would become a multilateral measure of strengthening the NPT regime.
We also support the establishment of a Working Group, with a discussion mandate, to consider substantively the issue of “Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons”. We stand for developing a global agreement on security assurances taking into account relevant provisions contained in the Russia’s military doctrine. We believe that the establishment of Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones (NWFZ) based on the Guidelines approved by the UN GA in 1999 is one of the options for non-nuclear weapon states to have legally binding security assurances. We support the extended geography of NWFZs in the context of solving the problem of such assurances. We welcome the establishment of new zones, most recently in Central Asia. I would like to remind of the signing and ratification by Russia of the Protocol to the Treaty on the NWFZ in Africa in March 2011 (Pelindaba Treaty). Russia is also satisfied that the negotiations between the P-5 and ASEAN on the Protocol to the SEANWFZ Treaty (Bangkok Treaty) have been completed. We are ready to discuss a nuclear-free status of Mongolia.

We would also like to reiterate our support for the enlargement of the CD and the appointment of a special coordinator on the expansion of the CD. We believe that the CD membership should be relevant to the realities and embrace all significant players in disarmament and international security. We would welcome further consideration of the issue of a broader involvement of a civil society in the work of the CD similar to the one we see at NPT RevCons and UNGA First Committee.

Distinguished Mr. President,

You as the first President of 2012 CD session bear an uneasy responsibility to come up with the main concept of the work of the session and to organize its practical activities. Our main common task is to reach consensus on the Program of Work as soon as possible and to resume the substantive activities of the forum. Let me assure You, Mr. President, and all six Presidents of the 2012 CD session of the readiness of the Russian Delegation to contribute to fostering a compromise. We are open to cooperation and dialogue.