STATEMENT
by
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Head of the Delegation of the Russian Federation
at the first third session of the Preparatory Committee
for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
(general debate)

New York, 29 April 2014
Mr. Chairman,

The NPT is rightly regarded as a cornerstone of the global strategic stability and security. It laid a foundation for nuclear disarmament, prevention of horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons and productive international cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Had it not been for the political shrewdness of our predecessors who signed the NPT more than four decades ago, the international relations of today would look different, and – I dare assume - our world would be far less secure and less stable. One could point out to certain shortcomings of the regime established by the NPT and yet, it's impossible to deny that the Treaty meets the fundamental interests of all States Parties. Therefore, our common goal is to treat the NPT with care and collectively respond to the challenges it faces. That is the principal objective of the forthcoming Review Conference to be held in a year. The Action Plan agreed in 2010 is a solid stepping stone in this work.

Mr. Chairman,

Russia fully recognizes its responsibilities under the NPT, including Article VI. Allegations are not rare that this article is not observed at all or is only observed in an unsatisfactory manner. How solid are the grounds for such allegations? See for yourselves. Article VI of the NPT contains three specific obligations. Firstly, cease the nuclear arms race. This requirement was fulfilled as far back as three decades ago. Secondly, it provides for nuclear disarmament negotiations. Such negotiations did take place and were repeatedly held by the two leading nuclear powers. As a result of the implementation of a whole range of the agreements reached, Russia’s strategic nuclear arsenals have decreased by more than 80% and non-strategic arsenals – by 75% over the last 25 years. Someone would probably wish for an even more spectacular progress, but you
should agree that any talks about stagnation, let alone total lack of any movement towards a global nuclear zero would mean distorting the truth. As a matter of fact, the current level of Russia’s nuclear potential is significantly lower than that of the period when the NPT entered into force. Therefore, Article VI really works and will continue to do so, given the progress in the implementation of the new START Treaty between Russia and the United States. The situation is different only regarding the third obligation under Article VI, i.e. the negotiations on a treaty on general and complete disarmament. Over more than four decades, the NPT States Parties have failed to make a single step forward in this area. Moreover, this obligation is often forgotten. Indeed, something needs to be done in this regard. Thus, we believe that one of the objectives of the NPT Review Process is to reaffirm the comprehensive and indivisible nature of the NPT obligations of all its Parties. Any attempts to raise the issue of tradeoffs and linkages within the NPT, or oppose nuclear and non-nuclear States are detrimental to the stability of the non-proliferation regime and might result in it losing its efficiency.

At this stage, one of the major challenges to the non-proliferation regime is the extremely unsatisfactory situation with regard to convening the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction as well as its means of delivery. In spite of the decisions of the previous Review Conference, this event was not held in 2012. Moreover, a new date for it has not been agreed upon. It inevitably causes disappointment and raises concerns.

As one of the co-sponsors of the Conference, Russia has been sparing no effort and will continue to do so in order to implement the relevant part of the 2010 Action Plan. We are looking forward to further working in close contact with the other co-sponsors and facilitator Mr. Jaakko Laajava and we highly
appreciate this cooperation. We intend to cooperate closely with all the countries of the Middle East whose support is essential for achieving success.

Although the current state of affairs is in general terms unsatisfactory, we should note that since the second session of the Preparatory Committee quite important results have been achieved in this field. I refer to the three informal meetings in Glion attended by the Middle Eastern States that managed for the first time to establish a direct dialogue. Although this dialogue is moving forward with many difficulties, it is encouraging that all its participants – I would like to stress that – all of them have repeatedly shown that they are ready to stand for their principle approaches while taking into account the positions of the partners and searching for acceptable compromises. It gives some ground for optimism, and allows us, in our view, to make a decision about holding this Conference in November, or December this year. We are confident, that if the participants of the process have enough political will, we will be able to successfully complete the necessary preparatory work, agree on the agenda, modalities and a draft outcome document for the Conference during the remaining time.

We consider the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones (NWFZs) as an important tool for raising the level of regional and international security and strengthening the non-proliferation regime. Extending such zones to new geographic areas is important as it provides legally binding security assurances to non-nuclear weapon States.

We welcome the efforts of the Central Asia and the P5 countries, which brought us close to the signing of the Protocol to the Treaty on a Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone in Central Asia. Together with other P5 countries we intend to sign the Protocol as soon as possible thus making an important step towards completing the international legal process of establishing a NWFZ in Central
Asia.

We are satisfied that we have managed to achieve the final stage in legally formalizing the status of the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Southeast Asia. The P5 has done its part of the work, making all the efforts for earliest signing of the Protocol to the Treaty on a NWFZ in Southeast Asia.

Mr. Chairman,

We assume that the main work on strengthening the non-proliferation regime is done at the national level by the NPT States Parties themselves. At the same time, it is always possible to achieve even more by means of joint efforts through exchange of information and best practices. This is where the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has a key role to play.

The Russian Federation has consistently supported the IAEA's activities, including through providing adequate resources for its functioning and supports further strengthening of its potential with due account for the wide scope of tasks it is charged with related to the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Under the IAEA Charter, the Agency’s principal objective is to promote the development of nuclear energy and its practical applications for peaceful purposes. This objective is the foundation for all the other areas of the IAEA activities, including its safeguards system. The non-proliferation dimension of the IAEA's work is the key opening the door to all the benefits of the peaceful atom for non-nuclear States. Therefore, we fully support the universalization of the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement, while assuming that accession to the Protocol is a completely voluntary measure.

Russia takes an active part in discussions of the safeguards system reform that the IAEA Secretariat is working on. We consider objectivity and political impartiality to be the foundation of the IAEA safeguards legitimacy. Therefore,
the new approaches of the Agency's Secretariat should only use objective
country-specific facts whereas its conclusions should be based upon unbiased
and technically sound assessments. We believe that in the framework of the new
approaches to safeguards only those measures and procedures for verifying
nuclear activities of States should be used that are provided for in their
respective safeguards agreements. We stress that any changes in the IAEA
safeguards approaches can only be made after the approval by the Agency's
policy-making bodies.

Mr. Chairman,

We advocate further strengthening of the international legal norms
regulating the security of nuclear materials with a view to reducing the
proliferation threats and preventing terrorists from acquiring WMDs. We
emphasize the importance of universalization of the Convention on the Physical
Protection of Nuclear Material and the 2005 Amendment to it, as well as the
International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. We
call upon all the States that have not yet done so to ratify these instruments.

We take note of the importance of combining efforts of the international
community to fight the threat of nuclear terrorism. To that end, in 2006 Russia
and the United States launched the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear
Terrorism (GICNT), which has proved to be an efficient tool for cooperating
and sharing best expertise with regard to countering the threat of nuclear
terrorism through action and reinforcing the global nuclear security, and which
now comprises 85 States.

Russia has consistently pursued the goal of the earliest entry into force
and the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty
(CTBT), which is a crucial international legal instrument for strengthening the
non-proliferation regime and limiting nuclear weapons.

We support the start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT) at the Conference on Disarmament within the framework of the balanced Programme of Work and on the basis of the Shannon Mandate.

Mr. Chairman,

We are of the view that resolving regional challenges to the nuclear non-proliferation regime could be accomplished exclusively through political and diplomatic means on the basis of the NPT and the IAEA safeguards system. There is no alternative to this approach. It is attested by the fact that over the past year we have advanced significantly in settling the situation around Iran’s nuclear programme. Right now the Joint Plan of Action agreed upon by the E3+3 and Iran on November 24th, 2013 is being implemented consistently. In parallel, Iran and the IAEA are actively cooperating in order to resolve all outstanding issues the Agency raised with regard to Iran’s nuclear programme. We are confident that the unprecedentedly constructive cooperation of Iran with the IAEA as well as with the E3+3 gives grounds to hope for a successful outcome of the talks on a comprehensive solution to Iran’s nuclear issue before the deadline of July 20, as set for by the Geneva Joint Plan of Action.

Vigorous steps are required to start moving towards a nuclear-weapon-free status of the Korean Peninsula. We are certain that all the stakeholders should do their best to resume the full-fledged NPT membership of DPRK and restore the application of the IAEA safeguards on its territory.

Mr. Chairman,

An increased interest in peaceful uses of nuclear energy is an objective trend of the modern world. Russia believes there is no alternative to further development and increased use of the civil nuclear power in the world in the
near future. This is proven by the outcomes of the 2013 High-Level International Conference *Nuclear Energy in the 21st Century* hosted by Russia under the IAEA auspices.

The final document of the Conference sets the direction for the development of the IAEA Member States. We are satisfied with the main conclusion of the Conference that for many countries nuclear energy is a proved, pure, safe, and resource-efficient technology that will play a prominent role in ensuring energy security and the sustainable development goals in the 21st century and beyond.

Russia consistently promotes a wide access to the benefits of peaceful nuclear energy for the NPT States Parties as well as the development of international cooperation in this area.

The NPT is a key element, a sort of guarantee of the ever-expanding international cooperation in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Russia is willing to continue working together with the NPT States Parties. Our vision of cooperation is that it should consist in attaining the goals of development and spreading the use of peaceful nuclear energy while strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime.

To conclude, I would like to inform the esteemed delegations that in pursuance of the relevant provisions of the 2010 Action Plan the NPT States Parties possessing nuclear weapons agreed upon a standard reporting form. In accordance with this form, Russia just as its other P5 partners, has prepared a sort of a report on the work done with respect to Actions 5, 20 and 21 of the last Review Conference Final Document. It will be placed on the official website of the third session of the Preparatory Committee in the form of a statement by the head of the Russian delegation.

Thank you.