STATEMENT

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at the First Session
of the Preparatory Committee
of the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties
to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons
(Cluster II. Non-proliferation and IAEA safeguards)

Vienna, May 8, 2017
Mr. Chairman,

We consider prevention of nuclear weapons proliferation a primary objective for the States Parties to the NPT; only through achieving it, a more secure and stable world could be ensured.

One fundamental achievement on this track is the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Actions (JCPOA) on the Iranian nuclear programme. Today, Iran is the most verified country by the IAEA. The Agency has been rapid enough in arranging quite a sophisticated verification mechanism and is now effectively fulfilling its tasks that allow controlling all the aspects of the JCPOA implementation and safeguards application in Iran. We thank the IAEA and the personnel of the Secretariat for their professional work. On our part, we provide multifaceted support to the Agency on the Iranian issue, in particular, by organizing special training courses for inspectors on uranium enrichment and stable isotope production.

In his reports, the IAEA Director General regularly confirms Iran’s fulfillment of its JCPOA obligations. The country also implements the Additional Protocol to the Safeguards Agreement. We hope that such a large scope of verification measures will facilitate Iran’s early receipt of the so called broader conclusion confirming the absence of undeclared nuclear material or activities. There is no place here for politicizing or artificial dragging the process.

The JCPOA is by all means a unique arrangement. In particular, it envisages a unique verification mechanism and additional confidence building measures. It is for a good reason that the UN Security Council Resolution 2231 adopted in support of the Plan of Action contains a separate operative paragraph stipulating that measures defined in the JCPOA could not be considered as a precedent. We encourage all Parties to strictly adhere to this provision and refrain from any attempts to extend JCPOA verification mechanisms to other countries.

Nevertheless, certain Iranian experience might be helpful and applicable in the context of the most relevant and volatile threat to the non-proliferation regime,
which is the nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula. First and foremost, it is about the possibility to deal with complex problems through creative diplomatic and political solutions, and diligent talks. That is what lacks today on the Korean Peninsula.

Russia rejects the DPRK’s self-proclaimed nuclear status. We openly declare to Pyongyang our conviction that the policy of nuclear missile capacity building will not contribute to the security of the country. On the contrary, it will have devastating consequences for the DPRK and for the region as a whole. We advocate Pyongyang’s strong commitment to the relevant UNSC decisions, cease of all nuclear and missile tests and return to the NPT regime. It is important though to prevent restrictions from narrowing the window of opportunities for the negotiations, as well as from escalating the humanitarian situation in DPRK.

Still we are convinced that the reason of tensions on the peninsula lies not only in Pyongyang’s nuclear and missile programmes but also in the increased military activity of the United States and its allies in North-East Asia. It is evident that Pyongyang will not abandon its nuclear weapons as long as it feels that its security is directly threatened. And that is how it interprets regular maneuvers and exercises carried out by US-centered military and political alliances in North-East Asia, alongside the escalation of the US military presence, in particular, deployment of THAAD anti-ballistic missile systems in South Korea.

The problems of the Korean Peninsula, including the nuclear issue, should be dealt with through an integrated solution to the whole spectrum of issues arising between the parties concerned so as to further create conducive environment for denuclearization. This requires de-escalation of overall military and political tensions, abandonment of further military infrastructure build-up, reduction of the ongoing maneuvers, and establishment of a trust-based climate among the States of the region.

Mr. Chairman.

The IAEA safeguards applied in accordance with paragraph 1 of the Article
III of the NPT are a key element of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. The trust of the NPT States Parties in the IAEA safeguards system is a key factor of the sustainability of this regime. It has always been based on the objective character of the IAEA verification mechanism, its technical credibility, independence from political circumstances, as well as its resting upon safeguards agreements concluded by States. To maintain the NPT, the IAEA safeguards system should continue to be based on the above mentioned principles, including in occurrence of any reform.

It is vital to avoid introduction of any subjective element in the IAEA verification mechanism. The Policy-Making organs of the Agency – the General Conference and the Board of Governors – should play a key role in political decision-making related to the safeguards, including modifications to their application and monitoring of the Secretariat activities. The Board of Governors has also a vital role to play when making decisions related to Agency’s response in case of violations by States of their NPT obligations.

We have followed closely the situation around the reforming of the safeguards system related to the introduction of the State-Level concept of applying safeguards. Though the content of the reform has been modified to better reflect views of the Agency’s Member States, the process is far from over and the reform is far from perfect. We believe that the development of new approaches to safeguards application should be open, whereas decisions on modifications to IAEA safeguards application practice should build upon wide support from the Member States of the Agency and be adopted by its Policy-Making organs. It is important that the Secretariat regularly informs the Agency’s Policy-Making organs on the ongoing and future steps in this regard. Particularly important is the preparation of a comprehensive report on the implementation of State-specific approaches to the application of safeguards in States that have comprehensive safeguards agreements, additional protocols and broader conclusions confirming that all their nuclear material is used for peaceful purposes.
Mr. Chairman,

In the context of implementing State-Level approaches to safeguards a question of handling information on possible non-compliance with non-proliferation obligations received from external sources and not as a result of the Agency verification activity becomes particularly sensitive. All information used by the IAEA Secretariat in preparing safeguards conclusions should have an evidence-based character proving its accuracy and ensuring that this information may be relied on during political discussions in the Policy-Making organs. The IAEA Secretariat should be prepared, if necessary, to defend accuracy of such information at meetings of the Board of Governors.

It is vital that, notwithstanding the reform, the IAEA verification activity would still focus on those materials and facilities that could represent a real proliferation threat. The genuine importance is not to be found in declared intentions or the image presented in mass media. The genuine importance lies in the country's potential. Policy may change quickly but potential or its absence is a more stable thing.

Mr. Chairman,

We find it important to ensure a sustained strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system through universalization of the Additional Protocol and the Safeguards Agreement, which alongside the Agreement is meant to become a globally recognized verification standard for the States' fulfillment of their non-proliferation obligations. Recognizing that signing the Additional Protocol with the Agency remains purely voluntary for the NPT State Parties, we call upon the countries that have not yet done so, to conclude as soon as possible the Additional Protocol to Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements with the IAEA.

Mr. Chairman,

In the Russian Federation, more than 30 nuclear facilities are listed as those to which the IAEA safeguards could be applied, in accordance with the Agreement of 21 February 1985 between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the
On July 1, 2010, the Agency chose the facility of the International Uranium Enrichment Centre in Angarsk to start applying safeguards. The first full-fledged Agency’s inspection on the site took place in 2010 and since then inspections have been carried out regularly with the latest one taking place in November 2016.

The Russian Federation has been actively cooperating with the Agency to enhance the safeguards system by providing financial and technical assistance through implementation of a national scientific and technical safeguards support programme. For over 30 years of the existence of this programme, significant work has been done to strengthen the technical base of the IAEA’s Department of Safeguards, and to provide it with new objective measurement methods, samples of materials and sources, as well as trained personnel.

In particular, under this program, the Russian Federation provides the IAEA with assistance in analyzing in Russian laboratories of environmental samples collected by the Agency during its inspections. New technologies to detect undeclared nuclear materials and activities are being developed. We place great emphasis on the training of the Agency’s inspectors. This training goes beyond traditional application of non-destructive methods of nuclear materials control. We train IAEA inspectors to conduct verification at isotopic enrichment plants. We also continue training the personnel of the Agency’s Secretariat and expects from IAEA Member States on nuclear material accountancy and control in Russian specialized institutions.

Mr. Chairman,

This year marks the 20th anniversary since the opening for signature of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). 183 States have already signed the Treaty and 166 have ratified it. The importance of CTBT’s early entry into force has been confirmed at various fora in Vienna and New York dedicated to the anniversary of the Treaty. For the first time in history, the UN Security Council
adopted a resolution (resolution 2310) in support of the Treaty. A separate statement was arranged upon by the P5 on the CTBT. Russia ratified the CTBT 17 years ago and has consistently been committed to the Treaty. In his statement on April 11, 2016, President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin underlined our willingness to promote its early entry in force.

Nevertheless, despite international efforts, the CTBT has not entered into force yet. Total lack of positive developments in the position of eight States whose ratification is required for its entry into force, is a matter of deep concern. We should avoid the situation that such an important Treaty could risk a doom. We encourage the remaining eight States, among which the United States has special responsibility, to do their utmost to accede to the CTBT without further delay. It is in your hands to finally make this vital Treaty fully operational.

Let me also draw your attention that in the context of vague prospects for the Treaty’s entry into force, it is necessary to carefully and prudently consider any initiative aimed to qualitatively change the situation around the Treaty. Moratoria, though important, cannot substitute for the legally binding obligations under the CTBT. Besides, we believe that any further lack of progress in the Treaty’s entry into force calls into question the need for the accelerated development of the Treaty’s verification mechanism.

Mr. Chairman,

In the context of implementation of Article III of the NPT, Russia attaches great importance to the work of international export control regimes, namely the Zangger Committee (ZC) and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). These regimes have proven in practice that it is feasible to effectively counter nuclear proliferation risks on a nondiscriminatory basis and without prejudice to the international cooperation in peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The Russian national export control system is based inter alia on the ZC and the NSG guidelines and control lists. We have consistently stated that participation in the NSG of all States - major suppliers of nuclear and dual-use goods that are controlled by the Group, including those
States that are not Parties to the NPT, provided that they pledge to comply with the NSG Guidelines and to promote non-proliferation, will strengthen nuclear export control regime.

Mr. Chairman,

Russia is engaged in the negotiations regarding a fissile material cut-off treaty (FMCT). In particular, our expert has become a member of the FMCT High Level Expert Preparatory Group, which will hold its first meeting this summer. However, let me note that the adoption of such an agreement is well overdue. A FMCT could have become an extremely valuable agreement in the late 1960s – early 1970s. In the course of time, its ‘added value’ has significantly dropped with four nuclear powers introducing a voluntary moratorium on the production of fissile materials, while non-nuclear States acceded to the NPT, which *de facto* already prohibits for them the production of fissile materials. We do not consider the conclusion of this treaty as a priority for the nuclear non-proliferation regime. However, we stand ready to participate in negotiations understanding that they will take place at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva within its balanced programme of work and in accordance with the Shannon Mandate (contained in the document CD/1299).

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.