STATEMENT

BY

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PLENARY MEETING
CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

Geneva, 22 January 2013
Mr. President,

Allow me to congratulate You on the assumption of this high duty. You can count on the support and cooperation of the Russian delegation. We also wish all the success to the six Presidents of the 2013 CD session.

The current year will see a number of significant events in the field of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation. First of all, this is the second Preparatory Committee of the 2015 NPT Review Conference. We take our NPT disarmament and non-proliferation commitments very responsibly. Therefore, Russia will host the next P5 Conference on the implementation of the 2010 NPT RevCon Final Document here in Geneva in April.

At the same time we regret that contrary to the decisions of the 2010 RevCon the Conference on the establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and all other Weapons of Mass Destruction and their Means of Delivery was not convened in 2012. As one of the coauthors of the 1995 NPT RevCon Resolution on the Middle East we have been making active efforts to hold the Conference in 2012. We intend to continue to act accordingly, interacting closely with other “co-conveners” and the Facilitator H.E. Mr. Laajava. According to the MFA Press Statement “the Russian Federation, being strictly committed to its commitments and to the “conveners” mandate, believes that a decision to postpone the Conference could be justified only if there was a clearly expressed consent of the countries of the Middle East and the future dates for the Conference were fixed”. This was not the case and not the fault of ours.

The Conference on the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) will be another important event on the multilateral disarmament agenda. We welcome our colleague Australian Permanent Representative Ambassador Peter Woolcott as the Chair-Designate of the Conference. We hope that he will duly consider all the results of previous meetings so that the March Conference would have a positive outcome.

Still, the most serious challenge in 2013, from our perspective, could be the continued impasse at the UN disarmament fora and, first of all, at the Conference on Disarmament. We are convinced that the causes of stalemate in the activities of the existing disarmament mechanisms under the aegis of the United Nations lie in objective political reality and differences in priorities of states rather than in imperfection of such mechanisms. To rectify the situation we need to work patiently and laboriously to overcome contradictions instead of destructing the
existing "Triad" and setting up alternative negotiation formats. Issues of vital national security importance cannot be resolved through mere vote. To disregard this factor means to maintain a semblance of moving forward, whereas in fact it could lead to a greater discord and international divergence.

Unfortunately, the 67th UNGA session adopted decisions which in fact would result in taking the agenda of the CD in pieces to other fora and, in particular, in transferring nuclear disarmament issue to the UN General Assembly. This situation is fraught with maintaining an impasse status quo at the CD as well as with fragmentation of the multilateral disarmament and, ultimately, with the collapse of the UN disarmament mechanism as a whole.

Under these circumstances we should ask ourselves a question about the prospects of the CD. We are convinced that the only possible way to re-establish the authority of the CD is to have a dialog aimed at lifting security concerns of some Members and, on this basis, reaching agreement on the Programm of Work (PoW).

To this end we put forward an idea of a PoW that would envisage – as an interim measure – in depth discussion of the four core issues of the agenda – prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), a treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons purposes, negative security assurances, and nuclear disarmament. Doing so we could gain some time to continue to seek compromise to launch negotiations at the CD. This idea was the core of the Joint Statement at the 67th UNGA First Committee by Interested States in Support of the Conference on Disarmament. Seventeen states from different groups and parts of the world associated themselves with this Statement.

PAROS remains Russia's priority at the Conference. We can witness that the interest in this issue is growing and the relevant UNGA resolution enjoys almost unanimous support. We believe that the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space (PPWT) introduced in February 2008, if concluded, would contribute to averting the emergence of weapons in outer space as well as to ensuring predictability of strategic situation and international security. We are sure that all states enjoying the benefits of peaceful space have a stake in this matter.

Transparency and confidence-building measures in space activities (TCBMs) are an important component of the PPWT. In April this year UNIDIR
will host a traditional Conference on the security in space. The Group of Governmental Experts on TCBMs will hold its second session here in Geneva. We count on close cooperation between the GGE and CD Member States.

Commitment by States not to be the first to place weapons in outer space could constitute a major step towards space security. The States Parties to the Organization of the Treaty on Collective Security joined this Russian initiative in 2005. Besides, Presidents of Russia and Brazil in their Joint Statement of December 14, 2012, “confirmed the commitment of the States to the policy of “no first placement” of weapons in outer space and encouraged other space-faring nations to follow suit”. We hope that states would lend an attentive ear to this encouragement.

Russia is open to consideration of any issue of international security, including nuclear disarmament. Our priority at the current stage is the implementation of the Russia-US Treaty on the Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms (START), e.g. realization of norms, understandings and verification measures provided for in the Treaty.

President Vladimir Putin stressed in his Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation on 12 December, 2012, that “Russia stands for the principle of agreed and collective efforts in addressing current challenges” and is committed to the goal of a nuclear-free world. However, we should be mindful that in order to continue this process certain conditions should be in place. The most crucial among them are: to maintain global strategic stability; to observe, in deeds and not in words, the principle of indivisible security; not to put security of other states at risk through pursuit of one’s own security; to give up intentions to ensure dominance of military force. These principles are jeopardized by unconstrained plans for a global ballistic missile defense, reluctance to address placement of weapons in outer space, lack of progress in CTBT ratification, quantitative and qualitative imbalances in conventional weapons. Certainly, all states possessing nuclear military potential should be gradually joining ongoing nuclear disarmament efforts.

We consider 2010 RevCon decisions as a road map in nuclear disarmament. We are not in favor of any attempt to interpret the provisions of the Action Plan in a biased way or selectively treat them.
The Russian delegation has continuously reiterated its support for the launch of FMCT negotiations in the framework of a balanced PoW and on the basis of the "Shannon mandate". Such a Treaty, from our perspective, could be seen as a useful multilateral measure to strengthen the NPT regime, and a step forward in nuclear disarmament. Our position on this issue remains unchanged. However, we believe that its consideration should take place exclusively within the CD with participation of all states possessing nuclear military arsenal. Any other option would seriously diminish the efficiency of work on the Treaty and is unlikely to have any added value.

Distinguished Mr. President,

You, as the first President of the 2013 CD session, have an uneasy responsibility to set the tone for its practical work. Allow me to assure You of our willingness to cooperate with You in a constructive manner.

Thank you.