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**STATEMENT**  
**by the First Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation at the 2016**  
**Substantive Session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission**

4 April 2016 года

Distinguished Mr. Chairman,

The Russian Federation has been a strong advocate of a comprehensive multilateral approach to addressing disarmament issues provided that principles of strategic stability and equal and undiminished security for all are met.

The United Nations is designed to play the central role in international efforts to ensure global stability and to counter new challenges and threats. The UN disarmament machinery, endorsed almost forty years ago, enjoys all the necessary authority and tools to address issues in the field of arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation. Our objective is to work intensively to make it more efficient under the current circumstances.

It is true to a great extent for the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC). We consider it to be a unique international forum which enables an open and equal dialogue between all States interested in adapting fundamental disarmament principles to the current situation and elaborating recommendations concerning new disarmament arrangements. It is important that every UNDC Member-State could be confident that its voice is heard while its national security interests do not fall victim to current political situation.

Unfortunately, the UNDC did not elude all those problems that are characteristic of the UN disarmament “triad”. These problems are mostly attributed to objective contradictions in the States’ approaches. Any reference to allegedly outdated methods of work is nothing more than a mere pretext and a smokescreen for the unwillingness to seek acceptable compromises. The UNDC has been successfully functioning for several decades under the current Rules of Procedure. We are convinced that any departure from the consensus rule which is crucial for the multilateral arms control negotiations would be fraught with harmful consequences for the international security.

We assume that the agenda adopted at the last UNDC substantial session will be effective for the whole three-year cycle. This said, we do not think that we have exhausted all the possibilities of improving the agenda based on compromises acceptable for everybody. In case the discussions about the inclusion of a third additional item continue we would be ready to offer our suggestions.

The complexity of problems that the international community is facing affects the state of play in the field of arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation. We welcome that the majority of States strives for compromises. This allows us to move forward to safely secure global and regional stability.

We are invariably committed to our obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). We regret that because of the position of three States, namely, the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada, the 2015 NPT RevCon did not succeed in adopting a final document. From our perspective, it only aggravated negative trends within the Treaty. The main trend is to foster inflated expectations and, sometimes, demands in the field of nuclear disarmament that are far beyond means and resources available to the Nuclear States. The basics of the Treaty would be undermined and its credibility would be compromised if the antagonism along these lines or on other issues continues.

In our opinion, the key objective of the new review cycle is to consolidate international efforts to secure efficient and sustainable functioning of the Treaty regime, as well as its strengthening and universalization. We believe that at the very beginning of the cycle we should focus on a balanced review of all three pillars of the NPT: nuclear non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of atomic energy and to avoid distortions in discussing certain issues.

Recently we have been witnessing increasingly frequent calls for a prompt elaboration of new international legal instruments which would regulate practical aspects of reaching a “global zero”. Undoubtedly, the issue is important. However, the appropriate NPT provisions are not taken into account. The Treaty’s Preamble and its Article VI stipulate that complete elimination of nuclear arsenals is to be carried out in accordance with a treaty on general and complete disarmament. In the last decades these provisions inexplicably happened to be practically ignored despite the fact that for all the NPT Member States they remain legally binding. Therefore, we regard redressing «historical truth» on the issue as an important dimension of our efforts in the framework of the new review cycle.

It is also worth emphasizing that along with unprecedented reduction of nuclear arsenals by Russia and the United States other nuclear-weapon States for some reason still remain on the sidelines. However, their aggregate nuclear capabilities are currently comparable to the threshold that Russia is obliged to attain under the START Treaty. We believe that meeting the START obligations will exhaust our possibilities regarding bilateral reductions with the United States. Therefore, it is necessary to seek possible ways of getting other states with nuclear military capabilities onboard.

A few words about the so called «humanitarian concepts» in the field of nuclear disarmament which have been recently gaining momentum. The main danger they bring, in our view, is in a wrong message they put across. For some reason, instead of strengthening international security and stability, they present as a core task of nuclear disarmament meeting some abstract «humanitarian standards». Such interpretation is pulling the issues of nuclear disarmament out of historical, strategic and legal contexts. It is compromising the principle of deterrence and presents a time-tested and responsible policy of the nuclear-weapon-states in the field of security as illegitimate and contrary to common interests and aspirations of humankind.

Prioritizing humanitarian considerations is dangerous also because it diverts attention of the international community from much more topical issues in the field of international security and stability, such as deployment of the U.S./NATO Missile Defense, prevention of placement of weapons in outer space, development of long-range high-precision weapons etc. In other words, we are putting on a back burner those issues which are critically important for upholding strategic stability and those weapons which determine the capacity of States to unleash and wage wars. It goes without saying that there are countries which could be comfortable with such a situation. Russia does not belong to this group.

Further discussions of nuclear disarmament prospects should provide for keeping the NPT as one of the pillars of the international security system, and not undermining it.

We support establishing Nuclear Weapon Free Zones (NWFZ) which, undoubtedly, moves us closer to a nuclear-free-world. We regard this practice as an important and efficient way of

consolidating the nuclear nonproliferation regime. States joining such a NWFZ contribute to the strengthening of regional and international security, advance mutual trust and agreement to a new level. The Russian Federation stands ready to promptly sign a Protocol to the Treaty on the NWFZ in the South-East Asia.

Despite the fact that the 2015 NPT RevCon failed to adopt concrete decisions on the issue of establishing a WMDFZ in the Middle East, the implementation of the 1995 UNSC Resolution on the Middle East remains on the international agenda. Russia is determined to exert all efforts to get it implemented and to promote regional dialogue on this topic.

We responsibly implement our obligations under Article VI of the NPT. It has been proved by rather considerable results already achieved. The nuclear arms race was halted long time ago. Moreover, for the third decade now we have been sustainably reducing the Russian nuclear arsenal on a step-by-step large-scale basis. Russia is ready for the most serious conversation on nuclear disarmament.

At the same time there must be no room for inflated expectations. Further steps in the field of nuclear disarmament are impossible unless serious and comprehensive preparatory work is done by all interested states, including in the first place, by all those states which possess nuclear military potential. First of all, it is essential that any attempt of applying “double standards” in international affairs is discarded. The fundamental principle of strengthening strategic stability, equal and undiminished security for all states should serve as a basis for the development of international relations. In other words, certain States and military alliances should abandon attempts to ensure their military preeminence at the expense of and to the detriment of other states.

Unfortunately, under the current international situation, we witness the directly opposite trend.

Our Western partners have been pushing the situation in the field of anti-ballistic missiles to the point of no return. Thus, the construction of the US anti-missile base in Romania is almost completed, four US Navy destroyers with anti-missile potential were relocated to the Rota base in Spain. The implementation of the new stage has begun with another US anti-ballistic missile base to be built in Poland and interceptor missiles with higher precision characteristics to be added to armory.

Notably, the achievement of agreements on the Iranian nuclear programme and, as a result, the elimination of the crucial argument justifying the deployment of missile defense system did not affect in any way the US and NATO missile defense plans. From this we assume that the genuine goal of the US global missile defense is originally the Russian nuclear forces. We are regularly assured about the contrary, but the developments after the settlement of the Iranian nuclear programme demonstrated again that the price of such political statements is not high.

The US anti-missile systems of THAAD deployed in the Republic of Korea threatens to become a new destabilizing factor in the Asia Pacific region. The THAAD systems might only to exacerbate existing problems on the Korean Peninsula. Such a step will have transboundary implications.

The US nuclear weapons capable of reaching the Russian territory are still in Europe. Moreover, such systems are currently being modernized. The NATO Member States have been practicing joint strategic planning, conducting nuclear “sharing missions” during which they train of non-nuclear states armed forces to prepare and use nonstrategic nuclear weapons. Lately such “nuclear sharing” missions have been carried out more in an increasingly frequent way involving new Alliance Members from Eastern Europe. We repeatedly declared that NATO “joint nuclear missions” contradicted the NPT. We believe that this issue can have only one solution – repatriation of all non-strategic nuclear weapons to the national territory of the possessor, the ban on deploying such weapons abroad and destruction of the infrastructure allowing its prompt deployment as well as the cessation of training of non-nuclear states representatives in using nuclear weapons.

The US concept of a prompt global strike and its reluctance to abandon the idea of placement of weapons in outer space has a hugely destructive potential.

The fact that the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is yet to come into force, since 20 years after its adoption is dealing another blow to the stability in international relations. This is a serious reason to undertake a thorough analysis of the situation with the CTBT and make additional efforts to ensure positive shifts on its anniversary.

Significant imbalances in conventional weapons create another impediment to further reducing nuclear arsenals and the number of missiles. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty) of 1990 is already a "turned over page", whereas an eventual new agreement to succeed it as a more up-to-date instrument is yet to materialize. The international community is well aware of our readiness to proceed to substantial discussions on a new CACE as soon as NATO demonstrates a serious approach on this issue and come up with the relevant ideas. This has yet to occur. Somewhat different is ongoing.

So far we see progressive implementation of the NATO Wales summit decisions, which are clearly anti-Russian, and at the same time freezing of military cooperation in the NATO-Russia Council. "Containing" Russia is again among the NATO priorities. Now, a "significant" military presence in Eastern Europe is being restored by the US. Preparations for further NATO enlargement are in full swing. Under the circumstances, the prospects for elaborating a new CACE regime (based on the principles of equal and undiminished security, well-balanced rights and obligations of all parties) must be considered in the context of restoring appropriate level of trust and, at the very least, of normalizing relations with Russia, including in the domain of Russia-NATO military cooperation. Currently we do not see any "added value" in our participation in the next CFE Treaty Review Conference. At the same time we are ready to consider any fresh constructive ideas in the field of conventional arms control should our Western partners come up with any in the UNDC or other relevant fora.

Mr. Chairman,

From our perspective, even such a brief overview of the most topical arms control objectives proves that our dialogue in the UNDC based on the current mandate and the rule of consensus (that makes it possible reach the best and mutually acceptable results) is still in demand. The UNDC efficiency depends on specific practical input of each State, rather than on its ephemeral modifications.

Let me assure you of the readiness of the Russian delegation to cooperate in the most constructive manner with you, Mr. Chairman, the Secretariat and all the participants to work on approaches acceptable to each and every State.