STATEMENT

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at the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Cluster 2: Non-Proliferation and IAEA Safeguards)

Geneva, April 27, 2018

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Mr. Chairman,

Prevention of nuclear weapon proliferation is one of the key objectives under the NPT. Only through achieving it a more secure and stable world could be ensured.

For fifty years the NPT has successfully coped with this task. The NPT fundamental principles provide a solid foundation for addressing most complex problems in the area of nuclear non-proliferation.

The conclusion and ongoing practical implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran’s nuclear programme is the best confirmation. The Plan of Action is a balanced mechanism that takes into account the interests of all its participants. The unbalancing of this fragile system of interests and compromises will seriously affect international peace and security as well as global non-proliferation regime. We noted the strong support for the JCPOA expressed by a number of delegations at this session.

The collapse of the JCPOA without any reasons and against the will of the international community will inevitably have a direct impact on ongoing efforts to find a negotiated diplomatic solution to nuclear issue of the Korean Peninsula and would hardly add to the DPRK’s confidence that any potential future arrangement with Pyongyang would be observed.

We support the positive developments on the Korean Peninsula including a number of high-level contacts with Pyongyang participation. We welcome recent statement by the DPRK to suspend its nuclear and missile tests and to close nuclear test site. We see this decision as a vital step towards easing tension on the Korean Peninsula and promoting the normalisation of the situation in Northeast Asia.

We welcome the developments on the Peninsula that have taken a positive turn along the lines of the respective joint initiative with a step-by-step roadmap plan that has been proposed by Russia and China. According to this roadmap, the initial stage of normalisation provides for a mutual freeze on military activities and the development of direct contacts between North Korea and the United States, as well as between North Korea and South Korea, with subsequent multilateral talks held to find
a comprehensive solution to all problems concerning the Korean Peninsula including nuclear issue.

The IAEA Director General’s reports on implementation of the IAEA safeguards in Syria reaffirm non-diversion of the declared nuclear material, which confirms the meeting of direct obligations by Damascus under the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.

Moreover, the IAEA Secretariat could not provide a convincing proof that the site destroyed in Deir ez-Zor in 2007 was really an unfinished nuclear reactor. We are convinced that, after eradication of terrorist threat in the country and normalization of the situation, the IAEA, in interaction with the Syrian government, will be able to duly reconsider its previous conclusions. The Syrian side has repeatedly declared its readiness to interact with the Agency with regard to any issues within the framework of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. We have no reasons to distrust these declarations by the legitimate Syrian government.

Mr. Chairman,

The IAEA safeguards system has been and remains a basis for verification of compliance with NPT obligations. The confidence of the member states in the IAEA verification mechanism is the key factor that ensures sustainability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. States must be confident that the safeguards system is objective, depoliticized, technically credible, clear to them and based on rights and obligations of the parties in accordance with the Safeguards Agreements signed by them. If the confidence is undermined, this can cause a severe blow not only to the Agency, but also to the nuclear non-proliferation regime as a whole.

Any reforms, modifications and improvements to the safeguards system should not put into question the objective and depoliticized nature of the IAEA verification mechanism. We stand for close political control over the introduction of the State-Level concept into the IAEA practice. The IAEA member states should have a clear understanding of all details of the safeguards system reform that is underway, in particular as regards collection, analysis and the use of information. Any conclusions on compliance with non-proliferation obligations can be based on exclusively
credible information that the IAEA Secretariat could rely on in an open debate in the Agency’s policy-making bodies. Any information that cannot be proved as credible, as well as subjective assessments such as “very likely” or “highly likely” should not be accepted as evidence.

We consider greater transparency in the work of the Secretariat is crucial for strengthening the credibility of the safeguards system.

We are awaiting the IAEA Director-General’s report on implementation of the State-Level concept to safeguards with broader conclusions to be issued in the coming days. We consider this document to be a significant stage in solidification of the ongoing reform of the IAEA safeguards system. We expect that it will include necessary coverage of issues related to the treatment of information and the preparation of safeguards conclusions. Otherwise, we will have every reason to raise the issue in the next report.

Based on the current and previous IAEA Director-General’s reports we can conclude that the so-called State-Level safeguards as they stand now can only be applied to non-nuclear states that have signed the Additional Protocols to their Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements. Otherwise, there is no legal framework for their application.

Mr. Chairman,

We find it necessary to ensure gradual strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system through universalisation of the Additional Protocol that together with the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement should become a globally recognized verification standard. At the same time, we stress that signing the Additional Protocol with the Agency remains a purely voluntary for the NPT States Parties.

Mr. Chairman,

We are deeply concerned about the current situation around the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Washington’s refusal to ratify the CTBT as well as creation conditions for potential resumption of nuclear tests most seriously affects the Treaty and the work of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission.
Russia ratified the CTBT 18 years ago and has demonstrated its lasting commitment to the Treaty. The President of the Russian Federation has repeatedly reaffirmed our willingness to promote its early entry into force. We intend to undertake every effort to make the CTBT an operational international treaty. As part of these efforts we organized in Moscow in October 2017 the first CTBTO Youth Group Conference. It contributed to facilitating cooperation among young people from various countries to promote the Treaty. We plan to organize another event in support of the CTBT in May 2018 in Vienna on the margins of the Science and Diplomacy Symposium.

Today more than ever the CTBT needs support of the international community. We cannot let this crucial international treaty fail. We call on all its advocates to join efforts and launch a broad international campaign in support of the CTBT. It is crucial that the CTBT becomes a key issue on the agenda of international non-proliferation and disarmament fora. The Ministerial meeting of the Friends of the CTBT to be held in September should stimulate further work on the CTBT.

The Nuclear Suppliers Group (the NSG) and the Zangger Committee continue to demonstrate in practice that a non-discriminatory, based on NPT provisions, and lacking any detrimental consequences for civil nuclear cooperation exchange of fissile and nuclear materials and relevant equipment is feasible. The NSG, within its purely technical mandate, continues to prove its efficiency in developing international rules and principles for export control of nuclear and dual-use goods and technologies. We will make all effort to ensure that the NSG continues to strengthen non-proliferation regime while at the same time not undermining and creating inequitable obstacles to legitimate sensitive trade and transfers.

We also stress the importance of preserving the Zangger Committee as an export control mechanism established directly under the NPT. We emphasize that Russia is building its national export control system on the basis of guidelines and control lists compiled by the NSG and the Zangger Committee.

Mr. Chairman,
Russia is most actively engaged in negotiations on a possible Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) to prohibit production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other explosive devices, including the FMCT High Level Expert Preparatory Group.

At the same time, we would like to point out that debates over such a treaty are well overdue. 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 as four nuclear powers introduced voluntary moratorium on the production of fissile materials while non-nuclear states acceded to the NPT which _de facto_ prohibits the production of fissile materials.

Debates over the FMCT in various formats, including on the margins of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and at Expert Groups revealed that there is a wide range of views on its possible modalities. Elaboration of the treaty will obviously require a lot of preparatory work and there are no reasons to speed it up artificially.

We stand ready for such negotiations if they are to take place exclusively at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva within a balanced programme of work in accordance with the mandate set out in the document CD/1299 (Shannon Mandate). Diversion from this approach will undermine the entire work on the possible treaty.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.