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Объединенных Наций
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STATEMENT

BY THE DELEGATION OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION

**at the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee
for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-
Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons**

**(Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of
Mass Destruction)**

New York, May 6, 2019

Mr. Chairman,

The establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMDFZ) in accordance with the 1995 resolution on the Middle East is an essential part of the NPT review process. The mentioned resolution was unanimously supported by all States Parties to the Treaty. Russia as a co-sponsor of this resolution is fully aware of its responsibility for its implementation and, as it has done before, will spare no effort to fully implement all the goals and objectives of the resolution on the Middle East. We believe that the WMDFZ issue remains on the agenda of the NPT.

Since the second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2020 NPT Review Conference, there has been an important qualitative development on the WMDFZ. The decision taken by the UN General Assembly last December to convene a WMDFZ Conference was an important step towards the practical implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East. We believe that it will have a positive impact both on the nuclear non-proliferation regime and on the ongoing NPT review cycle.

The inclusiveness of the entire process on elaboration of a WMDFZ Treaty is of major importance. All States of the region should have the opportunity to contribute to the common endeavor. Not one, I stress, not a single one of the Middle Eastern States should be artificially excluded from the process. The above-mentioned General Assembly decision fully takes that into account. The invitation to participate in the joint work is addressed to all countries of the region without exception. And they can join this work at any stage. We hope that all States of the region will join the negotiations.

It is also important that, in accordance with the GA decision, the work on the WMDFZ Treaty will be carried out on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of the Middle East. It is expected that all decisions in the relevant negotiation process will be taken by consensus. This ensures that the interests of all States in the region are taken into account. The principle of consensus completely

refutes the widely spread speculation that a majority can impose its concept of a WMDFZ on a minority. The forthcoming Conference will provide a forum for a direct dialogue between the States of the region.

It is important that the Conference and the elaboration of its possible decisions constitute the exclusive prerogative of the Middle Eastern States. At the same time, the role of the Secretariat and the UN Secretary-General in the context of the preparation of the WMDFZ Conference is limited exclusively to logistical and organizational functions. We welcome the decision to nominate Her Excellency, the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the UN S.Bahous, as the President – designate of the Conference.

The developments of the 2013-2014 Glion-Geneva consultations remain relevant. During the current NPT review cycle, the Russian Federation has also proposed its ideas on the organizational modalities, including the draft agenda and final document.

We will take part in the Conference and call upon the other two co-sponsors of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East not to shirk their responsibilities and to follow our example. The participation of China and France, which are also invited to the Conference, will be no less important for the substantive discussion and for the status of the forum.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.