Mr. Chair,

The nuclear disarmament issues are in the centre of the international agenda. Despite the obvious progress in strategic arms reduction, there are claims that the nuclear powers should make more far-reaching steps in eliminating nuclear weapons.

We understand the views of those who advocate for an immediate and unconditional abolition of nuclear weapons. We share the noble goal of achieving a nuclear-free world. At the same time, attempts to impose on the states that possess nuclear weapons a complete and unconditional elimination of their arsenals are hardly practicable without taking into account current strategic realities and legitimate security interests. For these reasons, we consider the adoption of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons as misguided and counter-productive in its essence. It only aggravates the situation provoking deep divisions in the international community and undermining the foundations of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

Tangible progress in nuclear disarmament can only be achieved based on consensus, respecting the course towards calibrated and phased reductions in the context of Article VI of the NPT and taking into account the imperative of maintaining strategic balance on the basis of principle of indivisible security.

Conscious of its special responsibility as a nuclear power and a permanent member of the UN Security Council for the observance of obligations under Article VI of the NPT, the Russian Federation fully complies with the existing agreements in this area. Our efforts towards actual nuclear arms reductions in line with our arrangements with the United States are well known. We continue to meet our
obligations under the 2010 New START Treaty. By the Treaty deadline (which is February 5, 2018) we reduced our arsenals below the limits set by New START.

We positively note the Agreement with the United States reached on January 26, 2021 to extend the New START until February 5, 2026. Thus we secured an adequate level of mutual transparency in relation to strategic offensive weapons covered by the Treaty. We intend to use this timeframe for talks with the United States on the future arms control taking into account all factors that impact strategic stability, including offensive and defensive arms, both nuclear and non-nuclear, capable of performing strategic tasks.

By agreement of the Presidents of Russia and the United States at the summit in Geneva on June 16, an integrated dialogue on strategic stability began. Two rounds took place so far. The business-like atmosphere of the meetings gives rise to cautious optimism that the Parties will be able to creatively work on finding common ground in order to bring their positions closer taking into account each other's interests.

Mr. Chair,

We are fully aware of the difficulty and scale of the challenges we face. Thus, the United States’ withdrawal from the INF Treaty on August 2, 2019 nullified international legal prohibitions on deployment of intermediate- and shorter-range land-based missiles. In order to prevent a new disastrous arms race in nuclear-missile area, the Russian Federation unilaterally took over the initiative of no first placement of systems previously prohibited by the INF Treaty in those regions where such American-made systems would not be deployed. We urge the United States and its allies to make similar commitments. But the cart is still upon the self-same spot.

What is more, on October 26, 2020, President Vladimir Putin in his Statement on additional steps to de-escalate the situation in Europe after the termination of the INF Treaty, building up on the initiative on mutual moratoria invited all the parties concerned to consider specific options of reciprocal verification measures to remove existing concerns. Our proposals remain in force. We call to look at them in the most attentive way.
With all responsibility we assure that Russia has never possessed intermediate- or shorter-range land-based missiles. To state the opposite is to paint a false picture and cover up for those who are responsible for the breakdown of the INF Treaty.

Let me give another example. The Russian Federation has four-fold reduced the number of non-strategic nuclear weapons (NSNW) from the numbers that the Soviet Union had in 1991. All NSNW have been transferred to the category of non-deployed, located within the national territory and concentrated in centralized storage facilities, where a maximum-level security is assured, preventing any accidental or unauthorized use of the nuclear weapons. Control over Russia’s NSNW is not transferred to any other states either directly or indirectly, and its use is not being practiced during the activities of the general-purpose forces.

By contrast, US nuclear weapons, remain within the territories of non-nuclear European states. Their use is practiced by NATO at the European theatre with the involvement of non-nuclear states. It is imperative that such practice contrary to the NPT is stopped immediately. Nuclear weapons should be returned to the national territory of the owner state, and the infrastructure in Europe should be dismantled.

Mr. Chair,

The Russian Federation has consistently advocated the recommitment by all nuclear powers to the fundamental formula that a nuclear war cannot be won and must never be fought. Important first steps have already been taken. The mentioned principle was confirmed in the Joint statement by Presidents Vladimir Putin and Joe Biden of June 16, 2021. Russia and China included it in the Joint statement of June 29 on the twentieth anniversary of the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship and Cooperation between our countries. We urge remaining nuclear-weapon States to follow suit. The main task is to prevent the tragedy of 1945, when the United States used nuclear weapons against Japanese cities, from happening again.

We are open to any constructive ideas regarding multilateral negotiating formats on prevention of an arms race and strengthening of international security and
stability, which should be pursued based on consensus and with due regard to the legitimate interests of their participants. Attempts to "compel" anyone to participate in such discussions are counterproductive.

Mr. Chair,

The Russian Federation sees the NPT as one of the foundations of today’s world order. The fact that the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference agreed to indefinitely extend the Treaty proves its effectiveness. We attach great importance to the successful functioning of all three NPT pillars: non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

In recent years, the NPT regime has been facing significant challenges. As the established system of arms control agreements has broken down, controversies between States Parties regarding the implementation of the Treaty have been growing. We hope that at the forthcoming 10th Review Conference as a result of joint efforts we will be able to break the "vicious circle" of accumulated mutual accusations and contradictions and reach generally acceptable solutions that will strengthen the NPT regime.

As one of the initiators and depository states of the NPT, we reiterate the need to implement the 1995 Conference’s decision to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery (WMDFZ). Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom, as co-sponsors of the Conference resolution on this issue, bear special responsibility for its implementation.

The first session of the WMDFZ Conference held in November 2019 had demonstrated the participants’ willingness to seek solutions through compromise. In this regard, we call on the United States to join the second session. We consider Israel's participation in the discussions to be important.

We support the work of the IAEA as the verification mechanism for the NPT. We encourage the universalization of the Additional Protocol to its Safeguards Agreement as an entirely voluntary measure. However, we note that the safeguards system should remain technically sound, non-politicized and unbiased.
The Russian Federation sees the CTBT as an essential instrument in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and strictly abides by its provisions. This year marks the 25th anniversary of opening for signature of the Treaty. However, the CTBT has not entered into force due to the position of eight Annex 2 states whose ratification is necessary for it to become a valid international legal instrument. We urge all those countries to ratify the Treaty without further delay.

Mr. Chair,

We look forward to a constructive and engaging dialogue on the full range of nuclear disarmament issues, aimed at achieving mutually acceptable outcome that is based on a balance of interests. The Russian delegation stands ready for such cooperation.

Thank you.
Mr. Chair,

Russia fully supports the international regime of prohibition of chemical, biological and toxin weapons and consistently advocates its universalization and strengthening.

We strictly adhere to our obligations under the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC), which outlawed an entire category of WMD. The BWC should remain a reliable instrument for reducing the threat of the use of biological agents as weapons and promote international cooperation in the biological field for peaceful purposes. The highest effectiveness of the Convention can be achieved only through the full implementation of its provisions by all States Parties. The adoption of the legally binding Protocol to the Convention with a credible verification mechanism would help solve this problem.

We call for productive use of the Meeting of States Parties to the Convention scheduled for November 2021 to consolidate consensus regarding certain proposals to improve the implementation of the Convention for their approval at the BWC Review Conference in 2022. Russia's initiatives seem rather useful to that end. I mean, in particular, the establishing within the BWC of mobile biomedical units to render assistance in case of the use of biological weapons, investigate such use, and to help in coping with infectious diseases of various origin and train personnel. Given the positive experience of Russian specialists, the concept of mobile units would ensure integrated implementation of a whole range of BWC provisions, including, but not limited to, international cooperation under Article X.
We also propose to establish a scientific advisory committee under the Convention, which will assess scientific and technological achievements related to the Convention and provide relevant recommendations. We expect consensus among the States Parties.

We note the increased military-biological activity of certain States beyond their national borders, which challenges the BWC regime as such activity is not controlled. With a view to enhancing transparency, we proposed to improve the format of confidence building measures by including in the report form data on military-biological activity abroad to ensure assurance that the BWC is complied with. We call upon everyone concerned to refrain from the militarization of public healthcare. Also, we expect the engagement of the consultative procedures established by the BWTC to resolve all issues that exist or are likely to arise in relation to the implementation of the Convention provisions.

The Russian Federation presented an initiative on the establishment of a group of governmental experts with the participation of all interested BWC States with a view to developing a concrete mechanism of the implementation of Article VI of the Convention on investigation of alleged violations of the BWC. There is a long-overdue need for elaboration of certain procedures for the implementation of this BWC provision.

Our proposal does not in any way prejudice the independent status of the UN Secretary-General's mechanism for investigating alleged use of chemical and biological weapons. On the contrary, these international instruments could complement each other in the context of the implementation of the BWC and the 1925 Geneva Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use in War of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare.

Russia reaffirms its interest in strengthening expert and technological potential of the UN Secretary-General's mechanism and intends to further contribute to common efforts of the world community. In terms of the practical use of the Mechanism, we attach importance to its principles and procedures contained in Annex
I to UN document A/44/561. However, those principles and procedures, except for annexes, have not been updated since their approval by UN GA resolution 45/57C of 4 December 1990. In this regard, there is high risk that they are outdated. With a view to starting work to ensure the effective use of the Mechanism, the Russian Federation submitted a draft relevant resolution to the First Committee. We ask your support and co-sponsorship.

In the absence of any visible progress in strengthening the BWC, ideas still emerge aimed to build parallel formats, not based on the BWC provisions. They include so called "peer reviews" of dual-use microbiological facilities. The ideas are rather dubious as they lack impartial criteria for assessment and selection of participants. We cannot agree with such concepts that are unclear in terms of practical implementation.

Mr. Chair,

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is a key instrument of chemical disarmament and non-proliferation. The Russian Federation stood at the origins of the CWC and has consistently supported its strengthening.

We scrupulously and fully comply with our obligations under the Convention. A vivid depiction of this is the early destruction by Russia in 2017 of its chemical weapons stockpile, which was confirmed by the Technical Secretariat of Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We call on the United States, the last country in the world possessing the declared chemical weapons, to destroy its stockpiles promptly. The US side has all financial and technological resources to do it.

The OPCW is in a difficult situation. This once reputable international structure, which received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2013, where all decisions were always taken by consensus, divided due to politicization, dilution of its mandate and derogation from the CWC provisions. A number of States have in fact reformatted the OPCW to serve their self-serving geopolitical agendas. This could not but affect the OPCW reputation and confidence in its expertise.
In April 2021, several countries forced through, via voting in the OPCW, an unprecedented for the Organization decision on the suppression of Syria’s rights and privileges under the CWC. It was based on biased and unsubstantiated conclusions of the illegitimate Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) created in violation of Article XV of the Convention.

Two reports of the IIT – on the chemical incidents in the towns of Al Lataminah and Saraqib – are partial, factually unreliable, technically ignorant and methodologically void. Obviously, the objective of the Team was not to sort out professionally and objectively what had happened but to forge conclusions so to lay the blame exclusively on Damascus. Thus, for the first time in the OPCW history and in violation of the CWC norms and the principle of consensus, the mission to accuse a diligent State Party to the Convention in non-compliance with its obligations was accomplished. Such an approach is completely unacceptable.

In the same vein is a draft decision on the Aerosolised Use ofCentral Nervous System-Acting Chemicals for Law Enforcement Purposes, which is contrary to the CWC provisions and ignores the opinion of many OPCW Member States and which is proposed to be approved at the 26th session of the Conference of the States Parties of the CWC in November 2021. In accordance with its Article XV, such amendments may be made to the CWC only by absolute consensus. Russia does not associate itself with this decision in any way. We call on the CWC States Parties to vote against this ineligible proposal, stop further politicization of the OPCW activity and take joint measures to preserve the integrity of the Convention.

The Syrian Arab Republic regularly provides the UNSC and the OPCW with information about the preparation by militants of chemical attacks and provocations. Terrorists possess their own technological and production capacities to synthesize chemical warfare agents and have extended channels for procuring their precursors. There is a risk of recurrence of chemical terrorism outside Syria. We believe the information provided by the Syrian side should be treated seriously in order to counter the real threat of chemical terrorism via coordinated efforts.
In this context, back in 2016 the Russian Federation submitted to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva draft basic elements for the suppression of acts of chemical and biological terrorism. Our proposal, which enjoys wide support at the Conference, is still valid.

Thank you.
Statement by the Representative of the Russian Federation in the First Committee of the 76th Session of the UN General Assembly at the Thematic Debate on "Outer Space (Disarmament Aspects)"
(13 October 2021)

Mr. Chair,

This year the whole world celebrates a landmark date – the 60th anniversary of the first manned space flight. On 12 April 1961, our compatriot Yuri Gagarin orbited the Earth on the Vostok spacecraft, ushering in the era of manned cosmonautics. His feat marked the beginning of human use and exploration of outer space.

The peaceful exploration of outer space serves as an effective means for solving many global challenges, including those related to social and economic development. This includes, for example, the study and wider use of the Earth's natural resources, natural disaster management, food security, improved transportation and communications, and the creation of advanced materials and technologies.

With the exploration of near-Earth space, new challenges emerge that require collaborative responses from the global community. Particular attention by the UN Member States should be paid to the perception of outer space by some countries as an arena for combat operations due to the implementation of unilateral policies for the placement of weapons in outer space, and for the build-up of capacities for the use of force (both kinetic and non-kinetic) against outer space objects. Extensive programs are underway to develop weapon systems designed for the threat or use of force in outer space, from outer space, and against outer space.

Their goal is to achieve military dominance to the detriment of all other acting or potential participants in space activities. As a result, we face negative consequences that could destabilize the situation and lead to an arms race in outer space, which would also undermine the prospects of the arms limitation regime as a whole.

Mr. Chair,
The Russian Federation proposes that the UN GA should proclaim the historic responsibility of all States to ensure that the exploration of outer space is carried out exclusively for peaceful purposes and for the benefit of humankind.

An arms race in outer space, if not prevented in time, will consume enormous material resources and create insurmountable barriers to international cooperation in the peaceful exploration of outer space and to the use of the results of scientific and technological progress in this field for peaceful purposes.

It is therefore more critical than ever that the prevention of an arms race in outer space, as an essential prerequisite for preserving it for peaceful purposes for the benefit of all humanity, becomes a norm for national policies of UN Member States, a generally recognized international principle. The decisions of the First Special Session of the UN General Assembly devoted to Disarmament of 1978, aimed at the exploration and use of space for exclusively peaceful purposes, the prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS) and the launch of the relevant negotiations in accordance with the 1967 Outer Space Treaty should not be allowed to be reconsidered. These goals are reaffirmed in the annual Egyptian-Sri Lankan UN GA resolution on PAROS, which the Russian delegation has consistently supported and co-sponsored.

The UN Member States are required to reaffirm their commitment to the existing international legal norms regulating outer space activities. Furthermore, a common understanding should also be formalized that no weapons of any kind should be placed in outer space (including in orbit around the Earth and on celestial bodies). A prohibition on the threat or use of force against or with outer space objects is also required.

We invite all UN Member States to make the following commitments in any convenient form for them:

- not to use space objects as a means to hit any targets on Earth, in the air, or in outer space;
- not to destroy, damage, disrupt functioning or alter the trajectory of space objects of other States;
- not to build, test or place space weapons of any type of basing for any purpose, including for ballistic missile defense, as counter-satellite systems, for use against targets on Earth or in the air, and to eliminate such systems that States already have;
- not to test or use manned spacecraft for military, including countersatellite purposes;
- not to assist or encourage other States, groups of States, international, intergovernmental, or any non-governmental organizations, including non-governmental legal entities, established, registered or located in the territory under their jurisdiction and/or control, to engage in the above activities.

Building on the decisions of the First Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament in 1978, the Russian Federation proposes to agree on a fundamental solution to the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and preservation outer space for peaceful purposes, that is, to introduce a total and comprehensive ban of space strike weapons, as well as all land-, air- or sea-based systems designed to hit objects in outer space.

In this regard, we have consistently advocated the launching of negotiations to elaborate an international legally binding instrument to prevent an arms race in outer space and to preserve it for peaceful purposes that would prohibit the placement of any type of weapon in outer space and the use or threat of force in, from or against outer space.

Thus, in 2008 the Russian Federation and the PRC submitted for consideration by the Conference on Disarmament (CD) the draft Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects, and in 2014, its updated version taking into account the comments and suggestions made by a number of States. The document is still on the negotiating table of the CD, is comprehensive and provides a good basis for the elaboration of the
relevant multilateral instrument. We are well aware of the criticism by several States in relation to the PPWT, but no alternative in the sphere of PAROS has been proposed yet. We reaffirm our willingness to consider them.

The Russian initiative/political commitment on no first placement of weapons in outer space (NFP), which has already become international, is intended to stabilize the situation while such a multilateral instrument is being elaborated. It already enjoys the full-fledged participation of thirty States, and the number of supporters continues to increase.

The initiative is a unique measure to prevent the weaponisation of space. As one of transparency and confidence-building measures for PAROS, the NFP initiative has become a significant political factor in recent years, contributing to international peace, ensuring equal and indivisible security for all, and increasing predictability and sustainability in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space by States.

Only the guaranteed prevention of an arms race in outer space and its preservation for peaceful purposes will ensure the use of near and deep outer space for the benefit of the mankind and its exploration for the purposes of creation.

The Russian delegation submits to the First Committee a UNGA draft resolution entitled "No First Placement of Weapons in Outer Space". The document has already become traditional within the United Nations adopted annually by the General Assembly since 2014 on the initiative of the three initial co-sponsors – Brazil, the PRC, and Russia. Draft resolutions "Further Practical Steps for PAROS" and "Transparency and Confidence-Building Measures in Outer Space Activities (TCBMs)" have been prepared for consideration by the First Committee. We would like to remind you that the document on TCBMs co-sponsored by Russia, China, and the United States has been adopted by consensus since 2013. We regret that in 2018 the United States did not just refuse to co-sponsor it, but voted against it for no apparent reason.

We expect that Russian drafts will receive widespread support and co-sponsorship.

Thank you.
Mr. Chair,

Russia is one of the most active Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW). We call for further strengthening of its regime, via universalization of the Convention and its Protocols as well as implementation in good faith of their provisions.

We note with satisfaction that after a long pause due to the coronavirus pandemic, a full-fledged work within the CCW has resumed this year. Sessions of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (GGE on LAWS), the Preparatory Committee for the Sixth Review Conference, as well as meetings of experts under Amended Protocol II and Protocol V have been held in in-person format, which we have consistently advocated.

We hope for the successful preparation and holding of the Sixth CCW RevCon. We are set for interaction with all State Parties in order to make mutually acceptable decisions.

We continue to believe that consideration of new topics in the framework of the CCW should be approached in a sensible manner, taking into account the balance between humanitarian concerns and the legitimate defense interests of States. Such approach is particularly relevant against the background of active attempts of certain countries and civil society representatives to appeal to humanitarian aspects as the only absolutely sufficient condition for imposing restrictions and prohibitions on specific types of conventional weapons.

The Russian Federation assumes that norms of international law including international humanitarian law fully apply to emerging technologies in the area of
LAWS, and are sufficient. There is no need for their modernization or adaptation given the specifics of these weapon systems. The mentioned systems, their technical characteristics and features resulting from their autonomous capabilities as well as their use during combat operations must comply with the principles (enshrined, in particular, in the CCW Preamble) of the civilian protection against the effects of hostilities, superfluous injury (including long-term and severe damage to the natural environment) or unnecessary suffering. Moreover, the use of LAWS should meet the adequacy and proportionality criteria.

Since prototypes of such systems are non-existent and LAWS basic characteristics and conceptual frameworks remain uncertain and, moreover, there is a considerable divergence in positions among State Parties. Under these conditions any precipitate steps may only damage scientific and technological progress in areas related to information technology, artificial intelligence, peaceful robotics, etc. At this stage, we see no necessity for a legally binding instrument on such systems containing a ban or a moratorium on their development, use and related technologies. We believe that instead the dedicated GGE, which, in our opinion, is the best platform to discuss LAWS issues, could focus on analyzing existing international legal norms.

The discussion on the use of explosive weapons in populated areas (EWIPA) is in the focus of our attention. We are convinced that one has to be cautious when it comes to elaboration of some «political declarations» on the prohibition of this type of weapons. Such weapons may be later used in order to discredit any military operation that employs explosive weapons as well as to pigeonhole those weapons into categories of «acceptable» and «unacceptable».

Any issues related to use of explosive weapons can be solved through implementation in good faith of already existing provision of international legal instruments, first of all, of the 1977 Additional Protocol I to the 1949 Geneva Conventions, as well as the active engagement of political and diplomatic means of resolving armed conflicts. We consider the existing legal regulation sufficient, inter
alia in order to neutralize humanitarian risks associated with the use of this type of weapons. The solution to the problems regarding use of explosive weapons lies exclusively in the implementation of the already existing norms of IHL in good faith.

We note that the use of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), posing the most significant humanitarian threat in the modern world, has, unfortunately, only increased over the recent years. The statistics of the Russian Engineering Troops obtained on the territory of Syria clearly confirms it: a third of all explosive devices neutralized by our military were precisely IEDs.

Relevant UNGA and UNSC resolutions represent the basis for coordination of international efforts to counter IEDs. We fully support further discussion of the IEDs topic within the CCW Amended Protocol II. We proceed from the fact that these efforts should be consistent with the subject and purposes of the Convention.

Mr. Chair,

We attach great importance to the issue of illicit traffic of conventional weapons. We stand for a more efficient implementation of the UN Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, which aims to reliably curb transfers into illicit trade. This work requires concerted efforts of the entire international community with the UN playing the central role.

We pay great attention to the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms as one of the key mechanisms for ensuring transparency and international security through tracking and detection of destabilizing stockpiles of arms in some regions of the world. At the same time, we are cautious about attempts of a number of States to expand the scope of the Register, taking into account the past precedents when this mechanism was used for non-prescribed purposes, such as by defining the parameters of the arms embargo imposed by the UN SC.

We still believe it is inadvisable to accede to the Arms Trade Treaty in its current form and participate, even as observers, in official events held under its
auspices. We assume that the Treaty-established standards are way below the Russian ones. The Practical implementation of the Treaty raises serious questions. It is unacceptable when its individual State Parties continue supplying military products directly or indirectly to the zones of armed conflicts.

Thank you.