Unofficial translation

Input of the Russian Federation to the Secretary-General's 'New Agenda for Peace' Initiative

At present, the world is living through a deep-reaching systemic crisis. Its root cause is the willingness of some state to interfere with the objective process, whereby unipolar order is declining, and a new equitable system of international relations is emerging. This situation has an overarching influence both on Member-States and the UN system at large. The latter is being tested for resilience and efficiency in implementing its mandate, the key element of which is conflict prevention. Regrettably, it has become obvious that against the backdrop of this watershed period and challenges that are associated with it, the United Nations is failing to deliver on this task.

The deep rift among Member-States' positions in the General Assembly and Security Council, a lack of trust and unifying agenda are evident.

Some stakeholders undertake attempts which are projected onto the UN platform to preserve the unipolar world order, and for that purpose – to engage in dialogue from a position of superiority, impose the "might is right" principle, replace the universal norms of international law with a "rules-based order", and multilateral mechanisms – with clubs of states that are "shaped" to match their geopolitical interests. This undermined the ability of the global Organization to elaborate responses to strategic challenges of today's era.

One of the major challenges is steep deterioration of the situation in the area of global security that is caused by the desire to review the strategic balance and ignore other states' security interests. Approaches that are based on the principle of a zero-some game, have a negative impact on the multilateral arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation architecture. Unilateral steps towards escalation erode this architecture, lead to a loss of trust among the sides, build up strategic risks, and instigate the arms race.

International efforts are required to establish a revitalized, more reliable international security architecture based on predictability, equality, indivisible security, and reciprocal account for interests of the sides.

Against the backdrop of this deficit of trust and a rapidly growing confrontation both at the regional and global level, we need to reject the "bloc" logic, provocative actions that infringe on others stakeholders' security interests, including irresponsible "pumping up" of adjacent states with weapons and attempts to achieve domination by force, through inflicting a "strategic defeat".

There is a pressing need to come up with a "new security equation" that should take into account all factors that have implications for strategic stability and include the whole range of offense and defense weapons bearing a strategic potential, both nuclear and non-nuclear. Thereby adherence to the formula that a nuclear war can never be won and therefore must never be started remains crucial. Prevention of any military confrontation of nuclear powers is an imperative, because this kind of a

confrontation is fraught with disastrous consequences.

As one of the initial steps, parameters and principles of co-existence must be agreed on that should minimize conflict potential and risks of escalation. Any agreements should be based on the principles of equality and strong parity. In high demand are the initiatives that aim at providing security guarantees and implementing confidence-building measures in the interests of mitigating tension.

Obviously, the formation of a new and more equitable world order may turn out rather protracted. The New Agenda for Peace should take into account the abovementioned trends and offer concrete solutions to fundamental security problems that should create conditions for an comprehensive dialogue among states to run on a mutually respectful and equal basis, whereby mutual account for each other's security interests is mandatory.

This global crisis can only be resolved through dedication to multilateralism and creation of a truly multipolar world.

To achieve this, all states need to recommit to the goals and principles of the UN Charter as part of the process to build a multipolar world order, ensure cultural and civilizational diversity, democratize international relations. The activities of the United Nations must address the root causes rather than just symptoms of crises in international affairs.

The principle of zero interference in internal affairs of states is crucial. It is equally important to not let Security Council's prerogatives be undermined and make sure that the Council retains its central role in

conflict settlement and maintenance of international peace, as was envisaged by the UN's founders. Further to this, there is special responsibility that befalls the Security Council's P5, who must cast aside their contradictions and work collectively in order to ensure a maximum seamless transition to the new world order.

As far as **preventive action**, we consider it unacceptable to introduce some "universal indicators of conflict", because they can be used as a pretext for the interference in internal affairs of sovereign states. Besides, The New Agenda for Peace refers to such notions as "conflict-inducing factors" and "conflict-supporting systems of influence" when elaborating approaches to conflict settlement. They need to be clarified. Each crisis has a unique set of causes, and attempts to unify those, especially when based on unobvious aspects (such as climate, human rights, or gender) are inefficient and more likely to undermine, rather than promote, UN efforts in conflict prevention and resolution. Besides, risks are high that in practical terms, such indicators may be used for patronizing and interference in internal affairs of states (which in its turn constitutes a fundamental factor of most modern-day crises).

Speaking of **conflict prevention and peacebuilding**, it shall be noted that peacebuilding support should be provided with due account for the entire "spectrum" of concerns of Member-States and be focused on promoting reconciliation and related tasks in the area of development, to the exclusion of non-core aspects, e.g. climate change, mental health, etc. Expanding of the geography of the Peacebuilding Commission should be

carried out in accordance with UNGA resolution 60/180.

The UN Peacebuilding Fund can be financed from the UN budgets only if the Fund is reformed to increase the transparency of its work and ensure Member States' control of the spending of its funds.

We need to preserve the **inter-state and inter-governmental nature of the United Nations**. Granting NGOs with the same rights as official representatives of Member-States in resolving problems of peace and security (a so-called multi-stakeholder approach) is unacceptable.

Planned inclusion of the civil society and "other interested stakeholders" in the work of all inter-governmental bodies without exception and convening of annual congresses of the civil society, coupled with introducing offices of civil society focal points in all UN mechanisms threatens to further erode the inter-governmental character of the Organization and infringe on sovereign rights of the states.

The central role of the United Nations in maintaining the international peace and global security consists i.a. in promoting multilateral principles in the world affairs and helping UN Member-States to seek for collective solutions to global problems. They include the issues of **arms control, disarmament, and non-proliferation (ACDN)**. The task of strengthening of the existing effective regimes in this area should be implemented on a consensus basis in the framework of relevant treaties and mechanisms. Elaboration of new treaties of this kind should be carried out under the auspices of the UN disarmament machinery. Only this principle can ensure reliability of the ACDN regimes and their all-encompassing universal

nature.

The need has become ripe to boost constructive functioning of all elements of the unique disarmament "triad", namely the First Committee of the General Assembly, the UN Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament, in order to enhance their effectiveness and coordination. The international community can only be successful and effective in the ACDN area if it commits to a productive agenda in order to preserve and further improve the effective system of agreements, and also if it fully abides by the mandates and rules of procedure of specialized mechanisms while keeping all discussions depoliticized.

The work of the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament should be result-oriented and carried out in full compliance with the UN Charter and other norms of the international law, as well as respective authorities of these bodies. Secretary-General of the United Nations bears special responsibility to oppose all attempts at revising the UN disarmament machinery, reforming the fundamental working principles and rules of procedure of UN disarmament fora.

Speaking of ensuring **security of space activities**, all states should conjugate efforts in order to prevent an arms race in outer space (PAROS), keep space free from any weapons, not let space be turned into an arena for armed confrontation. It is only through collective action that the global community is able to ensure the peaceful exploration of outer space on an equal and non-discriminatory basis for all countries without exception, as

well as contribute to resolution of many global problems, including those related to economic development.

There is a need to galvanize efforts to implement the decisions of the 1978 first special session of the United Nations General Assembly on Disarmament, aimed at exploration and exploitation of space only for peaceful purposes, PAROS and launch of relevant negotiations in the spirit of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty; and also to act in accordance with UNGA resolution 76/230.

Space must be completely excluded from the arms race area and preserved for peaceful purposes, which must be the immutable norm of Member-States' national policies and a universal international obligation. To facilitate this, UN membership needs to recommit to the effective international legal norms and principles promoting PAROS.

Only guaranteed prevention of the arms race in space and preservation of space for peaceful purposes can ensure that space is explored to the benefit of humanity and for creative, rather than destructive, goals.

The UN Committee on Outer Space (COPUOS) must remain the key instrument in inter-state regulation of issues that pertain to exploration of near-Earth space.

On the issue of limiting **lethal autonomous weapons systems** (LAWs), we proceed from the understanding that international law, including international humanitarian law (IHL), is fully applicable to advanced weapons and equipment with a high degree of autonomy, and

does not need to be modernized or adjusted due to their specifics.

The existing international law does not have a consensual definition of LAWs. Since these are advanced weapons, the definition of LAWs should not be interpreted in a way that may limit the technological progress and detrimental to the research in the area of peaceful robotics and artificial intelligence.

We confirm that the optimal platform for discussing LAWs-related issues is the Group of Governmental Experts of states-parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We proceed from the assumption that transferring these topics to any other international fora would be counter-productive.

We specifically underscore the need to consolidate efforts of the international community in **countering the terrorism threat** – without politicizing, double standards, and hidden agendas. In this context, we would like to remind of the call made by President V.Putin at the 70th session of the General Assembly about the need to build a broad international anti-terrorism coalition of states that should act on the basis of the UN Charter and other applicable norms and principles of the international law. This proposal remains relevant today. Firstly, here at the UN counter-terrorism agenda ranks among the most unifying ones.

Secondly, being a violent practice, terrorism denied the values, in the name of which the United Nations was created back in the day to become a universal platform for dialogue of representatives of all peoples and civilization regardless of race, gender, language, and religion. Therefore,

consolidation of international efforts in this area and a call to create such a front could make a significant contribution to defeating this evil.

Thirdly, the phenomenon of terrorism is often characterized by high degree of adaptiveness to changing environment – terrorists drag young people, who will build the future of humanity, in illicit activities; use latest technologies; encroach on universal human rights and freedoms; challenge not only states who bear the main responsibility for combating terrorism, but even the global Organization as such.

We believe that the key reason for emergence of **conflicts in the information space** is not climatic, human rights, or gender aspects, but rather the lack of proper international legal regulation in this area. Russia is pursuing a strategic course towards the establishment of a universal legally binding security regime in the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs). This regime should lay down the groundwork for effective cooperation of states and prevention of conflicts, guarantee respect for principles of sovereign equality and non-interference in internal affairs.

We do not agree with a position that the effective international law is fully applicable and sufficient for regulation of the information space. We proceed from the assumption that among UN Member-States, there is no universally agreed understanding of how the existing norms and in particular the international humanitarian law can be applied to the ICT area. We oppose the idea, that ICTs can be used as a weapon. In this regard, it is unacceptable to divide the ICT infrastructure into civilian and

non-civilian, and moreover – to speak of preventive activities.

Creation of conditions for a safe and harmonious development of future generations is our shared responsibility.

There should be a clear understanding that establishment of inclusive multilateralism, polycentric world order, and changes in the UN are inter-connected processes. However, a path to such a world can hardly be found when there is disunity between nations and states, a crisis of confidence and accumulation of confrontation potential in international relations.