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S T A T E M E N T

**by H.E. Ambassador Andrey I. Denisov,
Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the United Nations
at the plenary meeting of the General Assembly on the report of the UN
Secretary-General
“In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all”**

April 6, 2005

Mr. President,

The Russian delegation welcomes that the discussion of the UN Secretary-General's report "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all" takes place in the collective and transparent format of the UN General Assembly meetings.

The content of the report is in tune with the Russia's fundamental position aimed at strengthening the international system of collective security under the effective role of the United Nations and its Security Council as well as at streamlining the structures of the world Organization and enhancing efficiency of its work in all areas.

We fully share the conclusion made by the Secretary-General about the interdependence of specific tasks of neutralization of major contemporary challenges and threats. The United Nations is irreplaceable in addressing them.

The Organization, however, needs to be given all necessary resources and to be made more operational and efficient. This one is the principle goal of the UN reform which should lead to a greater consolidation of international community around the principles of multilateralism. That is why decisions on fundamental issues should be taken on the basis of a broadest possible agreement between the Member States and should rest upon the solid foundation of international law and the UN Charter.

The Secretary-General rightly reflected the common understanding that the socio-economic development is a priority, identifying the key areas to work in with a view to implementing the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). We share the logic of the Millennium Declaration and Monterrey consensus, which served as a basis for the report, recognizing the relevant commitments in the area of development of both developed and developing countries, which, in our opinion, is a constructive foundation for adopting decisions at the Summit in September this year.

We support the recommendations envisaging adoption without any delay of national, MDG-oriented strategies of development in the developing countries, successful completion of the Doha round of the trade negotiations within WTO, mobilization of resources to combat HIV/AIDS and other dangerous infectious diseases, increased financing of research in such areas as healthcare, agriculture, management of natural resources, energy and climate.

We share the necessity to work out measures to counteract global climate changes, including for the period after 2012, and to achieve a wider participation in those measures of all countries. We support the proposal to establish a worldwide early warning system for natural disasters prevention on the basis of the existing national and regional structures.

Financing for development is important. Constructive approaches and vigorous efforts of all interested parties are necessary to achieve realistic and universally acceptable decisions.

We support the idea that the ECOSOC reform should be aimed at more effective implementation of the decisions taken at global socio-economic conferences, strengthening connection between the normative-setting and operational activity of the UN system, building up the capacity of the Council in addressing socio-economic problems of post-conflict peace-building and development. We, however, are not convinced that a radical revision of the parameters of the ECOSOC functioning is necessary. In our opinion, all the reform initiatives proposed by the Secretary-General can be implemented in the present format of the Council.

One of the major elements of the “new consensus” mentioned in the report should include consent on the use of force. Russia assumes that the UN Charter remains the reliable legal basis for addressing any problems related to the use of force and does not require, in this part, a revision or a new interpretation. On the whole, we share the Secretary-General’s recommendations concerning adoption of a Security

Council resolution on principles of the use of force. Such principles, though, should not damage the UN Security Council's capacity to adopt corresponding decisions in specific situations.

The Secretary-General as well as the High-level Panel regards the concept of the "responsibility to protect" as an "emerging norm". Strictly speaking, establishment of an international norm supposes that there is a wide support by international community of this norm. We do not observe this level of support yet. It is clear, though, that situations involving large-scale violation of human rights or genocide can serve as a reason for interference by international community to address them. Such actions can be taken only when authorized by the Security Council which has qualified the relevant internal or regional crisis as a threat to international peace and security in accordance with Chapter VII of the UN Charter. Such decisions of the UN Security Council should rest upon reliable information and take into account positions of relevant regional organizations, while the use of force should remain the last resort.

On the whole, the proposed comprehensive strategy on terrorism, including its new, most dangerous manifestations like, first of all, access by terrorists to the WMD, deserves a positive assessment.

We support the willingness of the Secretary-General as well as the of High-level Panel to make a contribution to the elaboration of the universal definition of terrorism. However, the proposed elements of such definition have a political rather than legal nature. It is important to avoid wording which could be interpreted as equalizing criminal terrorist acts and anti-terrorist efforts of the States.

We share the Secretary-General's call to further improve mechanisms of anti-terrorist conventions and to make them universal. A major step in this area was made on April 1, 2005 when the Ad Hoc Committee on Terrorism adopted the draft International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism initiated

by Russia seven years ago. We expect the text of this Convention to be adopted by the General Assembly in the nearest future.

In the disarmament section of the report we would emphasize the justified focus on the need to take further effective steps to prevent the proliferation of WMD and means of its delivery, including in the context of the counter-terrorist aspect of the problem. The recommendation to adopt a UN Security Council resolution hindering acquisition or use by terrorist of man-portable air defense systems (MANPADS) should also be studied.

Nevertheless, at this stage it would be premature to speed up elaboration of a legally binding international instrument on marking and tracking small and light weapons and on brokerage in this area. Still there is no agreement on this issue and the work of the expert groups going on.

We share the opinion that protection of human rights should become one of the components of the UN strategy to fight terrorism. Nevertheless, one should also bear in mind the threat posed by terrorism for human rights at national and international levels as well as the problem of protection of victims of terrorism.

We concur with the Secretary-General that the work of the Commission on Human Rights often falters due to excessive politicizing, confrontations and practice of the “double standards”. Of course, changes have ripen here. What particular changes are necessary and how to keep the positive gains of the CHR is another story. It is obvious that the idea of the High-level Panel about universal membership in the CHR should not be scrapped.

We share the concern about the lack of appropriate resources in the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, especially in light of the proposals to broaden its area of responsibility.

One of the key components of the UN reform should be reform of the Security Council in order to make this main body in the area of security more representative.

Position of Russia on specific aspects of the UN Security Council enlargement is well-known and was repeatedly voiced by us during discussions of the High-level Panel report. It is necessary to continue the efforts to reach a broadest possible agreement in order to avoid a split in the United Nations fraught with serious negative consequences for the future of the world Organization.

As for amending the UN Charter, one should take a cautious approach here. We still believe that at the current stage it would not be justified to take out the articles concerning the Military Staff Committee.

We expect the Secretary-General's recommendations to provide additional impetus to the collective efforts aimed at enhancing the UN peace-keeping capacity, in particular, through deeper cooperation of the Organization with regional partners in accordance with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

We support the idea of establishing the Peace Building Commission with a view to strengthening coordination and integrity of the post-conflict international assistance to the countries emerging from crisis. Modalities of work of this body should be carefully discussed though.

We assume that the implementation of the reform proposals should not lead to an increase of the financial burden for the Member States. The agreed proposals should be implemented through more rational use of financial and human resources and priority-setting in the work of the Secretariat.

We regard the Secretary-General's recommendations on better accountability, transparency and efficiency of the Secretariat as relevant for today. We await for detailed proposals on this subject. We reaffirm the decisive role of the General Assembly in determining relevancy of Organization's resources, in selecting how they should be used as well as in exercising proper control over Secretariat's work.

On the whole, the proposals of the Secretary-General look as a good basis for successful holding of the UN Summit in September. The fundamental problems raised

in the report deserve a detailed consideration in their entirety without artificial deadlines. On certain issues, where there is a broad consent, better consensus, decisions could be made in the nearest future, including before the Summit in September. We share the opinion of Kofi Annan that it should be crowned with integral, far-reaching and ambitious decisions.

Thank you for your attention.