Address to the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly

PRESIDENT OF RUSSIA DMITRY MEDVEDEV: Mr President, ladies and gentlemen,

Today I would like to highlight five topics that are, as it seems to me, important for all of us and for our common approaches to the international agenda.

The first topic is the timing of this meeting as regards the global situation.

The current UN General Assembly session is taking place at a very crucial and uneasy point in time. Without exaggeration, we are living through one of the breaking moments of the modern history. Besides the economic crisis - the first wide-scale crisis of globalisation era - global development continues to be threatened by regional and local conflicts, terrorism and trans-border crime, food shortage, and climate change.

The impact of this crisis continues to be suffered by the majority of the countries around world, even though the downturn has slowed down. Albeit so far we were able to avoid the worst-case scenario, the question is still pending: how the huge disbalances and deficits accumulated in the global and national economies amounting to trillions of dollars will be overcome?

The unification agenda has been dictated by life itself, resulting in growing demand for the UN to serve as a time tested mechanism for harmonizing the interests of different counties and peoples.

As never before, we are feeling the need for informal collective leadership, increased role of such formats as G8, and recently, G20, as well as other negotiation and mediation, especially since they are not intended to act against anyone – rather, they work to advance their participants’ common interests.

At the morning session the President of the United States spoke and I would like to support an idea brought up by Mr Barack Obama who said that no country is able or should try to dominate over other nations. This idea is absolutely correct. We should agree on common approaches which should be afterwards implemented via various mechanisms, including those of the UN.

Another distinctive feature of the modern time is the increasing role played by regional organisations. They are becoming more active on every continent. This trend is absolutely consistent with the principles of the UN. Russia, on its part, will continue to strengthen the mechanisms of regional interaction together with its partners across the CIS and within the framework of the SCO and BRIC. These mechanisms help respond collectively to common threats, and mitigate the consequences of the crisis for our peoples and increase the sustainability of national economies.

The second point I would like to address is that of the current problems.

Let me dwell on those which cannot be effectively addressed without and beyond the United Nations.

The first one is the insufficient coordination of currently existing mechanisms for governing the world economy, inadequacy of their "rules of the game", the gap between the financial markets and the real sector of economy. We
need to make joint efforts to establish such financial and economic model that would guarantee everyone from such turmoil in the future.

In fact, nearly all countries have confronted a drop in volumes of production and in the living standard of millions of people. The crisis has exacerbated social problems, it became a trial for the young people at the start of their life, and caused significant growth in unemployment throughout the world including Russia.

A painful blow was delivered to the plans to alleviate poverty. Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals is under threat. We must do our utmost to prevent this from happening.

Donor assistance to the countries in need cannot be put off for late. The problems deemed as priority areas by the world community must be addressed by all means. The arrangements made at the G20 Summits and the UN Conference on world financial and economic crisis and its impact on development must be fulfilled within the timeframes we have set.

The second major task here is to address the issues of global energy security. Three years ago at the St Petersburg G8 Summit, principles of a new legal framework for such cooperation were formulated. The goal is to harmonise the interests of all participants in the energy "chain": suppliers, consumers and transit countries.

Recently, we have detailed these principles and we now invite everyone to engage in their further constructive discussion. We believe that these discussions should be conducted with active involvement of profile multilateral institutions including the UN and its agencies.

The third task that Russia deems important is to thoroughly strengthen the United Nations potential. The UN must rationally adapt itself to new global realities. It should also strengthen its influence and preserve its multinational nature, as well as the integrity of the UN Charter provisions.

The reform of the UN Security Council is an essential component of its revitalisation. The time has come to speed up the search for a compromise formula to expands the Security Council and improve its efficiency.

Another aspect of my address relates to disarmament.

A highly challenging task is to move forward the process of multilateral disarmament under the auspices of the UN. You are aware that positive trends have emerged in overcoming the protracted crisis in this area. The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva has adapted its program of work. I would like to mention the Russian-Chinese initiative to sign a treaty to prevent the placement of weapons in outer space as well as our proposal to universalise the Russian-American Treaty on the Elimination of the Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles.

Russia will steadily follow the path of verifiable and irreversible reductions in nuclear weapons as an essential element of the reset in our relations with the United States. President Obama and I signed a relevant document in Moscow last July. A mandate for further negotiations was agreed upon - to elaborate a legally binding treaty. This treaty should replace the Treaty on the Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, which expires this December.

I would like to emphasise the objective relationship between strategic offensive and defensive arms. There is another aspect to it relating to the recently announced adjustments in the US plans of antimissile defense system development. As I said to President Obama at our meeting earlier today and as I would like to reiterate now, such decision was, in our view, a constructive step in the right direction, one that deserves a positive response from the international community. Russia is prepared to engage in a thorough discussion of the US proposals and relevant Russia's initiatives regarding cooperation in this area to reach generally acceptable arrangements.

Unless we address problems such as anti-missile defence and the creation of strategic nuclear forces in non-nuclear armament plans, we cannot make any real progress in disarmament. I expect that the work on a new treaty will be fully consistent with relevant provisions of the joint document endorsed by the US President and myself during our meeting in Moscow.

We believe that other nuclear states should join the disarmament efforts of Russia and the United States. It is not necessary for them to wait for further progress in the Russian-American disarmament process. We can already begin to discuss acceptable and practical arrangements that take into account the differences in the size of nuclear potentials. For instance, we can use as an example the decisions of the 1921-1922 Washington Conference on the naval armaments when the participants agreed on the maximum size of their fleets without trying to achieve their
equal levels. If we use the same approach today, based on the actual volumes of nuclear arsenals, we will give the rest of the world a necessary signal of certainty that the unaccounted numbers will be added to the "equation" of strategic stability.

The 2010 NPT Review Conference will focus on the issues of nuclear disarmament, the reinforcement of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and peaceful atom. We are looking forward to its success.

The Global Nuclear Security Summit scheduled for next April will provide a good opportunity for a more detailed discussion of these issues.

We have also agreed with the US Administration on joint steps to further progress in such aspects of nuclear security as prevention of nuclear terrorism, and the expansion of access for all good faith NPT Members to the achievements of peaceful atom.

We call for collective cooperation on these matters.

In order to reach a common understanding on these important issues, we must engage all nations and influential international organisations in the above-mentioned negotiation processes.

The international community has multiple well-tested measures at its disposal for increasing the level of regional and international security, such as nuclear-free zones. In particular, one of our most urgent tasks today is to establish a zone in the Middle East that is free of WMDs and the means to deliver them. This is a long-standing issue. And the 1995 NPT Review Conference had adopted a relevant resolution in this regard.

As a member of the Quartet of international mediators on the Middle East settlement, Russia consistently supports the efforts aimed at strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime in the Middle East. Russia has made specific proposals in the framework of the NPT review process to search for generally acceptable ways of implementing the relevant NPT decisions. But in order to progress, all of the region's nations must take an active stance on this issue and demonstrate their willingness to ensure real progress in establishing a nuclear-free zone.

We also need to speed up the work towards a mechanism to ensure peace and security in Northeast Asia. Russia made its proposals in this regard to the participants in the Six-Party Talks. Given the present circumstances this task becomes even more urgent.

Concern number four on our agenda is regional conflicts and regional security.

We intend to continue participating in the search for efficient options for resolving regional conflicts.

We are convinced that the use of force can only aggravate the situation. This was demonstrated by a reckless attempt of the Georgian authorities to resolve the problems in their relations with South Ossetia by military means.

In August 2008, we came very close to seeing a local armed conflict grow into a full-scale war. I am certain that everyone present understands this, and in order to avoid repetition of such developments we need to have clear and effective mechanisms to implement the principle of indivisibility of security. Without it, we will not be able to step over the legacy of the past era, to overcome its instincts and prejudices. Moreover, the irresponsible political regimes should not have any opportunity whatsoever to cause disputes among other counties.

The role and place of the modern nations in ensuring global security is one of today's most relevant topics. We have repeatedly witnessed situations when the problems emerging within individual states take on a regional or even global character. The incompetence and inefficiency of national government institutions can provoke consequences representing a risk for many nations. Of course, the prevention of such consequences is a complex issue. But it is something that we must think over together.

These issues were at the focus of discussion in a Russian city of Yaroslavl where a representative international conference was held recently. The outcome of this discussion was quite clear: smart politics will be of utmost importance in the future. The current global crisis is not only the crisis of economy but also the crisis of ideas caused by reaching a "critical mass" of accumulated outdated policies and development models.

Russia has come up with the initiative to sign a European security treaty and proposed a fresh look at this problem so as to abandon the outdated policies. The Cold War is over, as we all believe, but the world has not become more secure. Today we need genuinely modern solutions. We also need clear legal framework for already existing political commitments. We need no declarations, or appeals, or empty talk, but really clear legal frameworks which will, among other points, strengthen one of the principles of the international law, the principle of not ensuring one's
own security at the expense of security of others.

Our initiative concerns the Euro-Atlantic space. However, its key provision on indivisibility of security is a universal principle applicable to all regions of the world that is fully consistent with the letter and spirit of the UN Charter. The principle of indivisibility of security should become an integral part of international law.

Now, the final point I would like to raise here, the values.

Ladies and gentlemen, colleagues,

The protection of human rights and interests, and the universal application of generally recognised norms and principles in this area, should become a basis for strengthening confidence and stability in international relations.

We all share values that are rooted in the norms of morality, religions, customs and traditions. I am referring to essential concepts, such as the right to live, tolerance toward dissent, responsibility toward one’s family, charity and compassion. This is the basis both for individuals’ daily lives and for relations among states.

However, we are witnessing an increase in nationalism, as well as religious intolerance and animosity. Therefore, we consider it to be extremely useful to establish a High-Level Group on Interreligious Dialogue under the UNESCO Director-General. This is especially relevant on the eve of 2010, the UN’s Year for Rapprochement of Cultures.

And finally, I cannot but touch upon one more topic as I stand on this podium, the topic of special significance to the Russian people and to great number of people throughout the world. Next year we are going to celebrate the 65\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the end of the World War II.

Russia has made a proposal to adopt a relevant UN GA resolution and hold a special session in May of next year to commemorate all the victims of that war. We cannot allow its horrible lessons to be forgotten.

However, from time to time we see the neo-Nazi organisations rearing their head. Racial, national or ethnic crimes are being committed. Attempts are being made to whitewash the Nazism, to deny Holocaust, and to revise the decisions of the Nuremberg Tribunal.

I am convinced that the United Nations must make it a priority to firmly and jointly resist manifestations of neo-Nazism and attempts to revise the outcomes of World War II, which are enshrined in the UN Charter.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The creation of the UN was one of the global community’s main achievements in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. This organisation and its fruitful work have become a symbol of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, which has no alternative. We have no right to forget that the UN possesses a unique international legitimacy. And we all must preserve and strengthen this shared wealth of the peoples of the world.

Thank you for your attention.