



# STATEMENT

Delivered by

**Ms. Neishanta Benn, Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission  
of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana to the United Nations  
during the General Debate of the First Committee  
80<sup>th</sup> United Nations General Assembly**

*October 9, 2025*

Thank you, **Chair**,

I wish to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election to lead the First Committee during the 80<sup>th</sup> Session and assure you of Guyana's full cooperation and support.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by the distinguished representatives of Belize on behalf of CARICOM and Indonesia on behalf of NAM. In my national capacity, and in the spirit of commemorating 80 years of the United Nations, I offer the following additional reflections.

I will make three points.

My **first point** concerns the complex dilemma created by the ongoing technological evolution, which has shaped our deliberations in the First Committee for quite some time and will become more complex in the years ahead.

The dual nature of new and emerging technologies presents both profound opportunities and considerable risks for disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. In terms of the former, the use of Artificial Intelligence, for example, offers a myriad of possibilities in the areas of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, disaster prediction and response, and cybersecurity, among others.

However, as has been the case since the Stone Age, advancements in technology are frequently leveraged to enhance the tools of warfare. The proliferation of nuclear weapons, coupled with the emergence of advanced delivery systems like hypersonic missiles, has heightened the risks of a global catastrophe, making scenarios once considered unthinkable increasingly plausible. Meanwhile, advancements in conventional weapons also contribute to this escalating threat. The development of long-range precision-strike weapons, autonomous weapons systems, as well as the AI-driven modernization of older weapons systems and the weaponization of outer space, further amplify the potential for a catastrophic escalation during conflicts and complicate our efforts at arms control and the implementation of global non-proliferation regimes.

Closer to home, the rapid development of new technologies, such as the use of polymers, 3-D printing, and modularity in weapon design, presents new challenges to traceability and to our overall efforts to stem the flow of illegal

arms and ammunition. For the Caribbean region, the proliferation of illegal arms and ammunition, especially small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, represents a grave threat to the peace, safety, security, and stability of our countries, by fuelling organised crime, gang crimes, and gender-based violence. They also pose a threat to gains made in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Looking ahead, at the prospect of another eight decades of multilateral action by the United Nations on disarmament and arms control, it is imperative that we carefully consider these risks posed by new and emerging technologies and how to collectively respond to them, ensuring that the disarmament agenda remains at the centre of our efforts at the UN.

Turning to my **second point, Chair**, and the need for solutions. My delegation supports the view that our approaches to regulating the arms trade need to be brought in line with the magnitude of the problem and underpinned by international law.

For some time now, we have realized that advancements in technology are intensifying the global arms race in more ways than one, including by introducing new complexities to arms control and disarmament frameworks. We have also long recognized that in addressing these challenges, the establishment of treaty-based obligations and limitations is essential. The strengthening of international law and reinforcing global norms regarding the military application of new technologies, particularly in the context of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as conventional weapons, must therefore remain our foremost priority.

Only through a robust legal framework and firm and collective commitment to implementing them can we hope to curb the accelerating arms race and advance the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation.

This approach also requires upholding commitments already made under existing instruments, including the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Arms Trade Treaty, the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions, *inter alia*, as well as strengthening the international legal framework by finally bringing the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) into force and promoting the universalization of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW).

In our search for solutions, we must also recognize the value of civil society engagement and ensure the full, equal, meaningful, and effective participation of women at all levels in decision-making processes. Experience has shown that disarmament initiatives have been most successful when they involve effective partnerships between Governments, the expert community, and civil society. The priority must therefore be on ensuring better coordination and the integration of their expertise into our work.

My **third and final point, Chair**, relates to the UN80 Initiative and the opportunity it offers to reinvigorate the disarmament agenda with a stronger UN. One where the vital work undertaken in establishing norms is matched by concrete action and firm political will toward their implementation.

My delegation maintains the view that there must be equal focus on both aspects to truly realize the goal of global peace and security and progress in disarmament and non-proliferation.

Every Member State of this organization, by virtue of accepting to be bound by the United Nations Charter, has a duty and an obligation to commit to peace, diplomacy, and cooperation. This is our only means of overcoming security risks and conflicts.

Last year, the world's military expenditure was **2.7 trillion dollars**.<sup>1</sup> This year, the global humanitarian appeal is **only 47 billion dollars**. This could provide life-saving aid to one hundred and ninety million people across 72 countries. Redirecting even a portion of the global military expenditures to the humanitarian cause could address critical development challenges, including poverty, economic instability, and inequality. Think about it. A fraction of current arms spending could significantly improve lives.

Guyana calls upon the international community to summon the necessary political will to make this transformation and to ensure the responsible application of modern technology so that advancements serve to enhance our security and well-being rather than exacerbate existing risks. By making these changes, we can take meaningful steps towards a safer, more equitable future for all.

Finally, as I close, **Chair, Excellencies**, I wish to reaffirm Guyana's commitment to disarmament, non-proliferation, and arms control, and to

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sipri.org/publications/2025/sipri-fact-sheets/trends-world-military-expenditure-2024>

working with all Member States to further the cause of global peace and security.

I Thank You!