


Permanent Mission
of the Federal Republic of Germany
to the United Nations
New York

08 October 2025

General Statement
General Debate of the First Committee
of the 80th UN General Assembly

**Delivered by Susanne Riegraf, Deputy Federal Government Commissioner for
Nonproliferation, Disarmament and Arms Control, German Federal Foreign
Office**

Chair,

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement of the EU.

Distinguished colleagues,

In a world of high tensions and unprecedented instability with the established international order under increasing pressure, our goal should be clear: We need to strengthen multilateralism and we need it to function better. We need strong international organizations, such as the United Nations to be fit for purpose. – knowing that they are foundation and the forum in which we meet and discuss matters that affect us all. Germany is, therefore, a strong proponent of a more efficient UNGA First Committee, and we welcome an open exchange on ideas to this end here in the First Committee.

We usually speak about the challenges and impediments on disarmament and arms control, and for good reasons. But it is our task as diplomats to explore where avenues for mutual cooperation exist and where progress, even small steps, can be made. I therefore want to start with a success story, namely the

progress that we have all been able to make on small arms and light weapons – weapons that wreak havoc on a distressingly high number of people around the world every day.

The UN Program of Action on Small and Light Weapons remains on an encouraging path after its successful Review Conference last year. In a time of growing polarization, it was possible to maintain consensus on how to strengthen international efforts to tackle the illicit proliferation, diversion and misuse of SALW.

Another potential success story is in the making: The political change in Syria has opened a historic window to rid the country of all remaining chemical weapons of the Assad regime in Syria. We welcome the determination of the Syrian government to start this task and the efforts of the OPCW to once and for all verify and destroy these toxic weapons of mass destruction. We stand ready to contribute financially, with personnel and expertise, to help turn this into its own success story.

These successes show that agreement and progress in arms control are still possible – a much needed ray of hope against the backdrop of the severe throwbacks to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament efforts – first and foremost by Russia.

Russia's all-out war of aggression against Ukraine, now in its fourth year, has accelerated the erosion of our arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament architecture.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is one such example. Russia's uses of Riot Control Agents as well as the forbidden choking agent chloropicrin in Ukraine are blatant violations of the CWC that must stop. If Russia is not held

accountable, we risk an erosion of the global norm against chemical weapons use.

We are also firmly committed to strengthening the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention BWC. Addressing potential threats from state and non-state actors as well as biosecurity challenges from newly emerging technologies is ever more urgent. Germany supports improving the operational readiness of the UN Secretary-General's Mechanism for investigation of alleged use of chemical and biological weapons, the only independent international instrument available to investigate alleged uses of bio-weapons. Pressure on the international arms control and disarmament architecture is also a direct consequence of China's rapid expansion of its nuclear weapons' arsenal. In order to do its part to preserve global stability and reduce risk, China must show greater transparency about its nuclear build-up and engage in risk reduction or arms control talks, in particular with the United States. Concrete steps by China in this regard would also greatly help in the context of the NPT which is facing its own serious challenges:

The unresolved crisis about Iran's nuclear programme still presents an enormous challenge to the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Together with our partners, we have been engaging Tehran on its nuclear program for decades. We successfully concluded the JPoA and the JCPoA in 2013 and 2015, which was designed to build trust in the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear activities. Unfortunately, Iran decided to depart from its commitments six years ago. After having tried hard to bring Iran back to compliance, and the United States back into the deal in 2021 and 2022, we, the E3, continued to engage Iran in dialogue to address our strong concerns through diplomacy, and even went the extra mile and offered Iran a limited extension of the snapback mechanism to enable substantial talks. Unfortunately, these efforts failed and

the decision to trigger the snapback of UN SC resolutions was taken as a consequence of Iran's continuing non-compliance with its JCPOA commitments.

Having said that, we remain firm in our resolve and determination to find a diplomatic solution to Iran's nuclear program.

Chair,

In our current deteriorating security environment, we need to stay committed and forward-looking to shape (future) arms control. Threats to peace and stability in outer space are outpacing the existing normative framework.

Within only a few years, we have witnessed an astonishing multiplication of satellites in orbit, serving civilian and military purposes, but also reports about plans to deploy nuclear armed satellite in outer space. For arms control, outer space presents a unique set of challenges beginning with situational awareness, but certainly not ending with verification. Against this backdrop, we urgently need to strengthen and expand the existing international framework to prevent an arms race in outer space. If we don't, the consequences for everyone on Earth could be severe.

The acceleration of technological development from artificial intelligence to quantum computing can pose challenges to strategic stability and peace. We must be both vigilant and creative as we explore and mitigate the risks of these emerging technologies. At the same time, new technologies also offer unprecedented possibilities, for instance for verification of arms control or disarmament. Let us have an open conversation on these difficult topics in the appropriate fora of the UN.

Chair,

[Closing remark]

Thank you!