

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF RWANDA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS NEW YORK**

**THE 80TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY
FIRST COMMITTEE GENERAL DEBATE ON ALL THE DISARMAMENT
AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AGENDA ITEMS**

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, my delegation warmly congratulates you on your election as Chair of the First Committee and we also congratulate the members of the bureau on their election. We assure you of our continued full support.

Rwanda aligns itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group and would like to make the following remarks in our national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

As we mark the 80th anniversary of the United Nations, we are reminded of the enduring value of multilateralism and the collective aspiration for peace, security, and human dignity that inspired the founding of this Organization. Yet, this significant milestone comes at a time of growing global uncertainty.

Conflicts persist in many regions, trust among states is eroding and the global disarmament and non-proliferation architecture is under increasing strain. In parallel, the rapid pace of emerging technologies is introducing new and complex challenges to international peace and security. Challenges that were difficult to foresee eight decades ago.

In this context, Rwanda welcomes the recent adoption of the Pact for the Future as a reaffirmation of our shared commitment to revitalizing the global disarmament agenda. We underscore the need for the First Committee to

evolve—honoring its legacy while enhancing its relevance in addressing today’s complex security challenges. This requires moving towards renewed action and progress that is inclusive, forward-looking, and grounded in consensus. A more adaptive, coordinated, and results-oriented approach—rooted in the principles of the UN Charter—which is essential to delivering meaningful progress.

Mr. Chair,

The total elimination of nuclear weapons remains the only absolute guarantee against their use or threat of use. Rwanda remains firmly committed to nuclear disarmament, non-proliferation, and the full implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

However, the continued modernization of nuclear arsenals and the lack of concrete progress under Article VI risk undermining the Treaty’s legitimacy. If disarmament remains only an aspiration and not an actionable goal, we risk weakening one of the cornerstones of our collective security architecture.

Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones (NWFZs) have played a vital role in advancing disarmament and non-proliferation objectives. They demonstrate how regional commitments can serve global goals. In this regard, Rwanda reaffirms its unwavering support for the Treaty of Pelindaba, which establishes Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. This Treaty not only prohibits the development, acquisition, and testing of nuclear weapons on the continent but also embodies Africa’s collective aspiration for peace and security.

Mr. Chair,

Disarmament must be understood not only as a matter of state security, but as a pressing humanitarian imperative. The detonation of even a single nuclear weapon—whether intentional, accidental, or due to miscalculation—would have devastating and irreversible consequences for human life, public health, the environment and the global economy. Such impacts would transcend borders and generations, far exceeding the response capacity of any single nation or international body.

Considering these risks, we underscore the urgent need to reinvigorate global disarmament efforts. As we approach the 2026 NPT Review Conference, we call on all States Parties to reaffirm their commitments through concrete actions. This includes ensuring balanced, measurable progress across all three pillars of the Treaty—disarmament, non-proliferation, and the peaceful use of nuclear energy. The Review Conference process must remain inclusive, transparent, and firmly guided by the shared goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chair,

We equally re-affirm the inalienable right of all States to develop and use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in line with Article IV of the NPT.

We commend the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) through its continued technical support and cooperation, as well as maximizing the use of science and technology for socio-economic development especially in the fields of health, energy, and agriculture. Rwanda also supports initiatives such as the “Rays of Hope” program, which help bridge the gap in access to life-saving nuclear applications in developing countries.

Mr. Chair,

Rwanda welcomes the Pact’s strong call for the total elimination of nuclear weapons, the strengthening of arms control and non-proliferation regimes, and the prevention of an arms race in outer space. We also commend its focus on addressing the risks posed by emerging technologies and curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which continue to destabilize communities, particularly in our region. Rwanda believes that meaningful progress on disarmament is inseparable from sustainable development and global stability, and we therefore urge all Member States to translate these renewed commitments into concrete action that builds trust, upholds international law, and secures a peaceful future for all.

In this regard, we commend the ongoing efforts of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC), and we note with appreciation the substantive session of the UNDC held in April 2025. We reaffirm our full support for the Commission’s work and stress the importance of renewed political will, while avoiding the creation of parallel or duplicative tracks to ensure that the current cycle delivers concrete and meaningful outcomes to advance the global disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

In this context, we welcome the successful conclusion and the valuable contributions of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on the security of and in the use of ICTs and commend the spirit of consensus and cooperation that shaped its outcome. We look forward to the establishment of the Global Mechanism in 2026, and the launch of its thematic working groups, which will provide a critical and inclusive platform for continued dialogue and implementation.

Mr. Chair,

Beyond nuclear weapons, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWs) continues to pose a significant threat to peace and stability, particularly in Africa. The unregulated flow of these weapons fuels conflict, exacerbates insecurity, and undermines development efforts. Thus, we call for enhanced international cooperation to combat the illicit trade in SALWs. This includes improved tracing and marking mechanisms, stronger implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty, and full support for the UN Programme of Action on SALWs.

We also emphasize the need to address the involvement of non-State actors in both the illicit arms trade and the potential proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The risk of these weapons falling into the hands of terrorists remains a real and present danger, and we must remain vigilant in implementing relevant Security Council resolutions, including Resolution 1540 (2004).

Mr. Chair,

We recognize that differences persist, however, a spirit of compromise, political will, and a renewed commitment to multilateralism, can revitalize momentum in global disarmament efforts. Thus, we urge all Member States to approach these discussions constructively and avoid politicization, which only serves to deepen divisions and delay progress.

In conclusion, Rwanda reaffirms its strong support to the work of the First Committee and our firm commitment to the global disarmament and non-proliferation agenda. Let us not only reflect on our achievements, but act with renewed purpose and unity to meet the challenges ahead and ensure that our institutions, treaties, and political commitments rise to the scale of the moment—and to the hopes of the people we serve.

Thank you.