



**STATEMENT BY
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AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO TO
THE UNITED NATIONS
DURING THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST
COMMITTEE**

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PLEASE CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election as Chair of the First Committee during this 80th Session of the General Assembly. We assure you of our full support and look forward to working with you to ensure a successful outcome for the work of this committee. We thank the former Chair and Bureau for the great work done during the 79th Session.

Lesotho aligns itself with the statements made on behalf of the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement. Allow me to make a statement in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairman,

As we mark the 80th year since the establishment of the United Nations, we are called upon to reflect on the core principles that underpin its establishment and continued existence over the next 80 years. Core among them being the maintenance of international peace and security across the globe.

The last 80 years have yielded great achievements that must become the basis for a transparent, inclusive, good faith review process under the UN80 Initiative.

Lesotho is concerned about the rising geopolitical tensions manifesting in various regions, that threaten to setback the strides made to date. The increasing threat of use of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, emerging technologies, the development of lethal autonomous weapon systems and increases in defense spending in recent years shatter our hopes for a peaceful world.

Conventional arms continue to cause massive humanitarian devastation amidst the uncertainty that new technologies pose.

Chemical and Biological Weapons continue to pose a threat to global peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

The journey towards complete nuclear disarmament remains fraught with emerging challenges as we see the integration of artificial intelligence technology in nuclear weapons become more prevalent. Therefore, we support the maintenance of meaningful human control over command, control and communications systems of nuclear weapons, without full delegation to artificial intelligence systems, as we work towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Lesotho is concerned about the possible implications of the unregulated use of Artificial Intelligence in the military domain and supports dialogue and further research aimed at developing guidelines and compliance standards for the use of such technologies in the military domain.

Lesotho recognizes that further research and development into potential opportunities for the use of artificial intelligence systems in the detection, verification, transparency and accountability for disarmament and non-proliferation purposes, could contribute meaningfully towards nuclear risk reduction and eventual total elimination of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chairman,

We wish to underscore that Lesotho is strongly committed to the TPNW and will continue to support the principle of complete nuclear disarmament, as the utmost prerequisite for maintaining international peace and security.

Mr. Chairman,

Lesotho welcomes and supports all efforts towards ensuring the inclusive, meaningful participation of women and youth in the promotion and attainment of international peace and security within the disarmament and non-proliferation agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

We remain hopeful that the upcoming Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) Review Conference to be held in 2026 will provide a further opportunity for all Member States to build consensus to achieve the objectives of the NPT.

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to reiterate Lesotho's support for all United Nations Resolutions on arms control and disarmament and in particular, on the establishment of nuclear-weapons-free zones across the world, which aim to achieve nuclear disarmament objectives and thereby promote and strengthen regional and global peace and security. It is in this spirit that I wish to reaffirm my country's commitment to the Treaty of Pelindaba which paved the way for the African continent to be a nuclear-weapons-free zone.

Mr. Chairman,

Lesotho encourages good faith negotiations among Member States, particularly those having major outer space capabilities, towards mitigating the threat of an arms race in outer space, which the international community agree should be used for peaceful purposes for the benefit of humankind.

Finally, I take this opportunity to call on the international community to join hands in prioritizing negotiations aimed at reaching urgent consensus on the regulation of the use of emerging technologies including artificial intelligence in the military domain, especially in lethal autonomous weapons systems.

We reiterate our call to nuclear weapon states to sign and ratify TPNW to ensure that humanity lives in peace without fear of extinction.

I THANK YOU!!!

