

STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR TAONGA MUSHAYAVANHU, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ZIMBABWE, AT THE GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE, 80TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY: NEW YORK, UNITED STATES; 10 OCTOBER 2025

Thank you, Chair.

Chair, I wish first to congratulate you, Ambassador Maurizio Massari, and your Bureau on your election to lead this 80th Session of the First Committee. Zimbabwe pledges its full support for your work.

Zimbabwe aligns with the statements of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, and will now deliver further remarks in its national capacity.

Chair,

This session is historic, coinciding with the 80th anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Charter, a Charter born from the devastation of two world wars and the existential dangers ushered in by weapons of mass destruction.

It is fitting to recall that the very first resolution adopted by this Assembly, on 24 January 1946, stressed the imperative of controlling atomic energy to ensure its use solely for peaceful purposes, and of eliminating all major weapons of mass destruction.

Later, the First Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament (SSOD-I) in 1978, observed, rightly, that the accumulation of such weapons **“constitutes much more a threat than a protection”** for the future of humankind. Crucially, SSOD-I also underscored that the decisive factor in achieving disarmament remains the **political will of States**, especially those that possess such weapons.

Chair,

Zimbabwe therefore implores all Member States to demonstrate the political will that has been absent for too long, and to take concrete steps toward the general and complete disarmament envisioned at the founding of our United Nations.

As we join calls for the early convening of a Fourth Special Session on Disarmament (SSOD-IV), we reiterate that both qualitative and quantitative measures are essential to ending the arms race. Above all, scientific and technological achievements must be harnessed exclusively for peaceful purposes.

We also call for renewed urgency and vigour in negotiations on nuclear disarmament; disarmament that is verifiable, legally binding, universal, and permanent. The international community cannot afford another failed NPT Review Conference in 2026.

Distinguished Delegates,

The illicit trade in small arms and light weapons continues to fuel conflict and armed violence across the globe. Zimbabwe urges the full and effective implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action, the International Tracing Instrument, and the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management.

We welcome the consensus adoption of the final report of the OEWG on ICT (2021–2025) and the establishment of the Global Mechanism. It is now vital that Member States sustain collaboration to mitigate risks in the international ICT domain.

At the same time, we cannot ignore the alarming intersection of Artificial Intelligence and weapons systems. Decisions over life and death must never be delegated to machines or algorithms. Such a course would gravely violate international humanitarian law. Zimbabwe therefore calls for urgent negotiations toward an international, legally binding treaty regulating lethal autonomous weapons systems.

Chair,

Zimbabwe reiterates that outer space must remain the province of peace, devoted exclusively to the common benefit of humankind. The placement of weapons in outer space constitutes a direct violation of this principle and poses a grave threat to humanity's shared future.

We further call for the strengthening of training and capacity-building programmes on disarmament, bilaterally and through the UN disarmament machinery, to ensure

the meaningful participation of all delegations, large and small alike.

In conclusion, allow me once again to assure you of Zimbabwe's constructive engagement in this session. We wish you and your Bureau every success as you steer our collective efforts forward.

I thank you.