



**Permanent Mission of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste
to the United Nations in New York**

Statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Dionísio Babo Soares,
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Nations

**First Committee of the 80th Session of the General Assembly
General Debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items**

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Mr. Chair,

Timor-Leste aligns itself with the statement delivered by the Non-Aligned Movement and wishes to offer the following remarks in its national capacity.

Given our history, Timor-Leste understands that peace is not merely the absence of war; it is the presence of justice, cooperation, and respect for international law. Our history has shown us that absolute security is not built through armament or deterrence, but through trust, dialogue, and shared responsibility. For us, disarmament and international security are inseparable from the dignity of peoples and the sovereignty of States.

Mr. Chair,

Timor-Leste reiterates its unwavering support for the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), which serves as a cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. We welcome the Secretary-General's recent report, which encourages renewed momentum toward the universalization of its goals, especially in light of the increasing nuclear risks and technological developments in 2025. We call on the eight remaining Annex 2 States whose ratification is required for the Treaty's entry into force to do so without delay.

The continued existence of nuclear weapons is an unacceptable threat to humanity. It undermines global security, diverts resources from development, and contravenes the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. We therefore urge all nuclear-weapon States to fulfill their Article VI obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to heed the 1996 International Court of Justice advisory opinion, which affirmed the illegality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons and underscored the legal obligation to pursue and conclude negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament.

Timor-Leste supports the development of a legally binding instrument on negative security assurances to guarantee that non-nuclear-weapon States will not be

subject to the threat or use of nuclear weapons. Such a measure would strengthen confidence in the NPT, reduce asymmetries in the security landscape, and advance the cause of a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chair,

Timor-Leste welcomes the ongoing process to establish a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We commend the convening of the Fourth Session of the Conference (November 2024) and urge all regional stakeholders to engage constructively in the Fifth Session scheduled for 2025. Establishing such a zone would not only contribute to regional security but also reinforce the global non-proliferation regime.

More broadly, Timor-Leste recognizes the crucial role of regional and subregional confidence-building measures. These include transparency in military expenditures, prior notifications of military exercises, and conventional arms control measures. Such steps foster mutual trust, reduce misperceptions, and prevent escalation of the situation.

Mr. Chair,

In our own region, Timor-Leste reaffirms its strong support for the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (SEANWFZ). As a candidate for ASEAN membership, Timor-Leste is committed to fully upholding the principles of the Treaty and contributing to a region free of nuclear weapons. We urge nuclear-weapon States to sign and ratify the Protocol to SEANWFZ without reservations, which would strengthen the Treaty's integrity and enhance regional peace and stability. The SEANWFZ serves as a successful example of how regional cooperation can advance global disarmament objectives.

Mr. Chair,

Timor-Leste welcomes the continued operation and further development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and encourages all Member States

to provide greater reporting to enhance transparency in arms transfers. Transparency is not an end in itself; it is a critical measure for building confidence, preventing diversion, and reducing the risk of destabilizing accumulations.

We also commend the strong cooperation between the United Nations and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The Chemical Weapons Convention remains a landmark in multilateral arms control. Its implementation must be strengthened, including through accountability for violations and the universalization of the Convention. No State should be outside this norm.

Mr. Chair,

Timor-Leste remains gravely concerned about the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons (SALW), which continues to fuel armed conflict, destabilize communities, and impede sustainable development. While these weapons are small in size, their impact is devastating. Timor-Leste has taken concrete measures to address this challenge, including the adoption of national legislation, implementation of community-based disarmament initiatives, and close cooperation with regional partners to curb illicit trafficking.

However, national efforts alone are insufficient. We therefore recommend:

1. Enhanced international assistance for capacity-building, especially for developing States, focusing on border security, customs training, and stockpile management;
2. Full implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the International Tracing Instrument, including improved data collection and reporting;
3. Stronger integration of arms control with Sustainable Development Goal 16, recognizing that peace, justice, and strong institutions are mutually reinforcing with disarmament objectives.

Mr. Chair,

The rapid evolution of emerging technologies—including artificial intelligence, autonomous weapons systems, cyber capabilities, and space technologies—presents both opportunities and risks. Timor-Leste supports efforts to ensure that such technologies are developed and used in strict conformity with international humanitarian law, ethical standards, and multilateral oversight.

We welcome the work of the Open-Ended Working Group on ICT Security and encourage inclusive, transparent, and gender-sensitive participation in these discussions. The military applications of AI, if left unregulated, could lower the threshold for conflict, increase the speed of escalation, and undermine human accountability. Therefore, Timor-Leste calls for:

1. Greater transparency and reporting on military AI programs;
2. The development of norms and guidelines to ensure human control and accountability in the use of autonomous systems.
3. Inclusive international dialogue to ensure that developing countries can meaningfully contribute to norm-setting in this evolving domain.

Mr. Chair,

Verification and transparency remain at the heart of effective disarmament. Timor-Leste supports the work of the Group of Scientific and Technical Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification, whose efforts contribute to the development of robust and credible mechanisms that build confidence and ensure compliance. We emphasize that verification regimes must be inclusive, technically sound, and adaptable to evolving challenges.

Mr. Chair,

Timor-Leste strongly condemns any attempts by non-State actors to acquire or use weapons of mass destruction. We call for strengthened international cooperation

to prevent terrorism-related proliferation, including through full implementation of UN Security Council resolution 1540, enhanced border and export controls, and targeted capacity support for States with limited resources.

Finally, Timor-Leste reaffirms its support for the follow-up to the 2013 High-Level Meeting on Nuclear Disarmament, and we welcome ongoing efforts to revitalize the Conference on Disarmament and the broader disarmament machinery. The upcoming 2026 NPT Review Cycle represents a critical opportunity to rebuild trust, renew commitments, and chart a clear path toward a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Chair,

The challenges before us are immense, but they are not insurmountable. We must choose cooperation over competition, solidarity over silence, and justice over indifference. Disarmament is not a distant aspiration; it is a moral, legal, and strategic imperative for the survival of humankind.

Timor-Leste stands ready to work with all Member States to advance disarmament, uphold international peace and security, and ensure that future generations inherit a safer, fairer, and more peaceful world.

Thank you.