**Check against delivery!**

**STATEMENT BY AMBASSADOR GERGANA KARADJOVA,**
**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK**

**81ST SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**
**FIRST COMMITTEE**
**GENERAL DEBATE**

**12 October 2026**

Mr. Chair,

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your assumption of the Chairmanship of the First Committee. I assure you of Bulgaria's full support.

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and would like to make several remarks in its national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

We once again meet at a time of serious deterioration of the security environment marked by heightened geopolitical tensions, armed conflicts raging in Europe, Middle East and Africa, and WMD proliferation risks. For Bulgaria, this is precisely the moment when multilateralism, international law and the principles of the UN Charter matter most.

Russia's continued full scale invasion of Ukraine is a direct challenge to the principles of the UN Charter and to the international security architecture.

We remain deeply concerned by the permanent risks to the nuclear safety and security in Ukraine and the wider region emanating from Russia's invasion. We strongly support the work of the International Atomic Energy Agency (AEA) and its Director General in monitoring the situation on the ground and providing assistance to Ukraine. Russia must withdraw its military forces, equipment and other personnel from the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant and return the plant to the sovereign control of Ukraine.

Bulgaria reiterates its call for an immediate cessation of hostilities and stands in steadfast solidarity with Ukraine in the pursuit of a just and lasting peace based on the UN Charter and international law.

Mr. Chair,

Bulgaria remains firmly committed to the goal of a world free of nuclear weapons.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime. The outcome of the 2026 NPT Review Conference was regrettable. The absence of consensus on a substantive final document must not weaken the Treaty or diminish the legal obligations undertaken by its States Parties. We must

continue to implement all three pillars of the NPT and to preserve the integrity of the review process.

Bulgaria supports a step-by-step approach to nuclear disarmament that is realistic, effective, verifiable and irreversible, grounded in Article VI of the NPT and taking into account the prevailing international security environment.

2026 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty – a key element of the step-by-step approach. Bulgaria, as an Annex II State that has signed and ratified the Treaty, calls on all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT without delay. We also call on Russia to re-ratify the CTBT, to stick to its commitments to the Treaty, and to refrain from any actions incompatible with it.

Likewise, we urge the DPRK to return to full compliance with all its NPT and IAEA safeguards obligations as a non-nuclear weapon state, to sign and ratify the CTBT, and to engage in meaningful dialogue aimed at complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

We also reiterate our firm stand that Iran must never be allowed to acquire a nuclear weapon and must comply with its legally binding obligations under the NPT and Security Council resolutions, and return to full and effective implementation of verification activities by the IAEA. We continue to support all diplomatic efforts aimed at reaching a viable nuclear deal with Tehran that could provide assurances that Iran's nuclear programme is exclusively peaceful, under the IAEA's strict verification.

Mr. Chair,

Bulgaria remains committed to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) as indispensable pillars of the global non-proliferation architecture.

Bulgaria is deeply concerned by confirmed findings concerning the use of riot control agents as a method of warfare in Ukraine. Such use is prohibited under the CWC and must not be normalised or left without accountability.

We also welcome constructive international cooperation aimed at addressing Syria's remaining chemical weapons obligations and support the OPCW's efforts towards the complete and verified elimination of all remaining elements of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

With regard to conventional weapons, Bulgaria reaffirms its strong support for the Arms Trade Treaty and the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. We also welcome the Global Framework for Through-life Conventional Ammunition Management and look forward to its effective implementation.

Equally, Bulgaria remains committed to the humanitarian disarmament and to the objectives of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

As new and emerging technologies are rapidly transforming our security environment, we support responsible international engagement on artificial intelligence, lethal autonomous weapons systems and other emerging military technologies.

In that regard, we welcome the adoption by consensus of the final report of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (GGE on LAWS). We look forward for the Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)

to adopt a negotiating mandate for the GGE to take forward its work on a multilateral instrument on LAWS.

Mr. Chair,

Bulgaria will continue to work constructively to preserve and strengthen the international disarmament and non-proliferation architecture. We support efforts to make the UN disarmament machinery more effective and responsive, including practical steps to improve the efficiency of the First Committee.

I thank you, Mr. Chair.