

Check against delivery!

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MS. LACHEZARA STOEVA, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS
79TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, FIRST COMMITTEE
GENERAL DEBATE, 10 October 2024**

Madame Chair,

Let me start by congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau on assuming the chairmanship of First Committee. It is a particular pleasure to see the Committee work led by a woman and even more so by you. You can count on Bulgaria's full support.

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. I would like to highlight several points of particular importance to my country.

Madame Chair,

It is deeply concerning that we convene once again under dire security circumstances, and an ever more deteriorating security environment with raging conflicts in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa.

The ongoing Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine in blatant disregard for the principles enshrined in the UN Charter and international law has brought about tremendous suffering, has contributed to global food insecurity and economic instability. The Russian Federation has also undermined the global arms control and non-proliferation architecture by withdrawing from key treaties, most recently withdrawing its ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), and by threatening nuclear safety, particularly regarding nuclear facilities in Ukraine. Bulgaria strongly condemns these reckless actions and urges Russia to cease its war of choice, respect international commitments, and withdraw all military forces from Ukraine's internationally recognized borders.

Madame Chair,

The arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament architecture as we know it is at risk. The challenges are clear, and solutions can only be through multilateralism and collective action as the recently adopted Pact for the Future demonstrates.

The need for progress in nuclear disarmament and a robust non-proliferation regime is more critical than ever. Bulgaria reaffirms its commitment to achieving a world without nuclear weapons. We believe that disarmament must be effective, verifiable, and irreversible, achievable only within the framework of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), specifically Article VI, through a progressive approach grounded in mutual trust.

The lack of a consensual report from the Second Session of the NPT Preparatory Committee is regrettable. However, we must persist in our efforts to bridge differences among NPT States Parties during this review cycle. We simply cannot afford another missed opportunity to reinforce

the Treaty as the cornerstone of global non-proliferation and a framework for peaceful nuclear energy use.

The entry into force of CTBT remains essential for advancing toward a world free from nuclear weapons and as an Annex II country, Bulgaria calls upon all states that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the treaty without delay.

Bulgaria remains committed to the promotion and strengthening of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the Biological and Toxic Weapons Convention (BTWC) as powerful key international instruments legally prohibiting the development, production, stockpiling and use of such weapons and indispensable elements of the global arms control and non-proliferation architecture. We, as international community, must ensure that there is no impunity for their use and that all perpetrators are brought to justice.

Madame Chair,

Progress in conventional arms control is equally crucial. The increased use of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions, particularly since the onset of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, poses severe threats to civilians and disrupts economic stability.

Bulgaria will continue to champion the control of conventional arms, taking into account the outcomes of the Review Conference of the UN Program of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and the upcoming review conference on the Anti-Personnel Mine-Ban Convention . We acknowledge the Political Declaration aimed at enhancing civilian protection from explosive weapons in populated areas and will build upon this momentum. Furthermore, we are committed to addressing the implications of emerging technologies, while advocating for responsible military applications of AI.

As Bulgaria assumes the chairmanship of the Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons in November this year, we are committed to spare no effort to support the universalization of the Convention and its Protocols and to uphold its principles and the objectives which provide an effective multilateral platform for responding to present and future challenges emanating from the developments of weapons technologies, including the lethal autonomous weapons systems (LAWS).

Finally, we underscore the significance of adhering to international law governing outer space and promoting its peaceful use, anchored by the Outer Space Treaty. We advocate for universal compliance with the Treaty's obligations and support the establishment of norms to prevent an arms race in outer space.

Thank you, Madame Chair!