

**STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ZIMBABWE TO THE UNITED NATIONS, AMBASSADOR T. MUSHAYAVANHU, AT THE UNITED NATIONS DISARMAMENT COMMISSION: 8 APRIL 2025**

Thank you Chair,

Allow me to congratulate you on your election as Chair of this 2025 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission. We also extend our congratulations to the Members of your Bureau and the Chairs of the Working Groups. Zimbabwe offers its full support to this important process.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered on behalf of the African Group and the Non-Aligned Movement. I now wish to offer remarks in our national capacity.

Chair,

The United Nations Disarmament Commission continues to be a cornerstone of multilateral disarmament. As the sole deliberative body exclusively focused on disarmament, its role is both unique and urgent. This year's Working Groups, on nuclear weapons and emerging technologies, speak directly to the global disarmament challenges that we face today.

Nuclear disarmament remains our highest priority. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is not just a moral necessity, but a legal obligation. Zimbabwe underscores the close link between nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. At the same time, we reaffirm the importance of promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, ensuring that nuclear power is a force for peace, not destruction.

We call on Nuclear-Weapon States to honour their legal commitments under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and take tangible steps toward disarmament. The continued reliance on nuclear deterrence and the placement of nuclear weapons in non-nuclear-weapon States undermine the NPT. Pending complete elimination, we urge the delivery of legally binding negative security assurances to Non-Nuclear-Weapon States.

In this regard, Zimbabwe reaffirms the critical importance of the Treaty of Pelindaba, which established Africa as a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The Pelindaba Treaty is a landmark in reinforcing both regional and global nuclear disarmament norms. It exemplifies Africa's collective commitment to ensuring that our continent remains free from the threat of nuclear weapons. We urge all relevant parties, particularly Nuclear-Weapon States, to respect and uphold the obligations and spirit of the Treaty. Universal adherence to such regional instruments enhances international peace and security and strengthens the global non-proliferation regime.

Zimbabwe also calls for concrete bilateral and multilateral efforts to reduce and ultimately dismantle nuclear arsenals. We remain firmly committed to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and reiterate our call for the total, unconditional, and irreversible elimination of nuclear weapons.

Chair,

We must also contend with the implications of emerging technologies. The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence and digital systems presents both promise and peril. We welcome initiatives that ensure that these technologies are developed and used solely for peaceful purposes.

However, in the military context, the deployment of AI, especially in lethal autonomous weapons systems, raises profound legal and ethical concerns. These systems must remain under meaningful human control, subject to full accountability and compliance with international law. The Disarmament Commission must play a central role in shaping international consensus on these issues.

Lastly, Zimbabwe calls for increased capacity building, equitable technology transfer, and knowledge sharing to ensure that all countries benefit from the peaceful applications of emerging

technologies. Bridging the digital divide is essential to achieving a fair and secure technological future.

Zimbabwe looks forward to engaging constructively throughout this session. You can count on our full cooperation as we strive toward meaningful and consensus-based outcomes.

I thank you.