

Check against delivery!

**STATEMENT BY H.E. MS. LACHEZARA STOEVA, PERMANENT
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA TO THE UNITED
NATIONS**

**77TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, FIRST COMMITTEE
GENERAL DEBATE, 10 OCTOBER 2022**

Mr. Chair,

Let me start by congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau on assuming the chairmanship of the First Committee. You can count on Bulgaria's full support in your efforts to steer us to a successful outcome.

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

Mr. Chair,

We are meeting under extremely challenging security environment. The illegal, unjustified and unprovoked aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine has severe repercussions not only for Europe but for the world as a whole. The actions of the Russian Federation are not only in complete violation of international law and of the United Nations Charter, they shake the very foundations of the global arms control and non-proliferation architecture. The Russian Federation, a nuclear weapon state, has violated the security guarantees provided to Ukraine in the 1994 Budapest Memorandum, undermines the safety and security of the nuclear power plants on Ukraine's territory and now threatens the world with the use of nuclear weapons. We decisively condemn this dangerous and irresponsible escalation of the conflict.

We also categorically reject the illegal annexation by Russia of Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions as blatant violation of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. This annexation follows sham referenda that were neither free nor fair, and we will never recognize it.

We once again call on the Russian Federation to stop this illegal war, to abide by its international commitments and to immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.

Mr. Chair,

It is deplorable that after four weeks of extensive negotiations among the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) the adoption of the draft outcome document of the 10th NPT Review Conference was not possible due to the Russian Federation blocking consensus.

The draft outcome document itself was not perfect but it represented the best effort of the Parties to the NPT to bridge their differences and to reiterate their commitments to the full and effective implementation of the three pillars of the Treaty in a highly volatile global security environment.

In preparing for the next NPT Review Cycle we must continue exploring ways to reaffirm and strengthen the Treaty as the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime, an

essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, and a framework for the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

As a newly elected member to the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Bulgaria will spare no efforts to counter the global non-proliferation challenges and the threats to nuclear security and safety, and also to promote the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

While we remain fully committed to the ultimate goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, we believe this is attainable only within the NPT framework, namely its Art. VI, and through a progressive and comprehensive approach based on mutual trust.

The entry into force and the universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT) remain a political imperative and a practical step towards nuclear disarmament. Bulgaria, as Annex II state that has signed and ratified the Treaty, call upon all States, particularly the remaining Annex II States, to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay.

Mr. Chair,

The current proliferation challenges need to be urgently addressed. DPRK's nuclear and ballistic missile programs continue to pose threat to the regional and global peace and security. We call on the DPRK to abandon all its nuclear and ballistic missile programs in a complete, verifiable and irreversible manner and to return to compliance with the NPT as a non-nuclear weapon State and with the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement.

Bulgaria continues to firmly support all diplomatic efforts to preserve and restore full and effective implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) as an important component of the global non-proliferation architecture that helps reduce regional and global security risks.

Mr. Chair,

This April we marked the 25th anniversary of the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). Bulgaria remains committed to the full and effective implementation of the CWC and all decisions taken by its States Parties. We consider the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances completely unacceptable and constituting a clear violation of the CWC and the international law. We stand ready to continue supporting the efforts of the Organization for the Prohibition of the Chemical Weapons (OPCW) aimed at ensuring that all perpetrators, organizers, sponsors or otherwise involved in the use of chemical weapons are identified and held accountable.

While the world continues to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic, we must remain vigilant about the potential risk that any future pandemics may be caused by engineered diseases. The Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) has a key role in the international efforts to prohibit and prevent the use of biological and toxin weapons. However, the BWC continues to face challenges that require the institutional strengthening of the Convention. The up-coming 9th Review Conference of the BWC provides a valuable opportunity for the States Parties to achieve concrete and meaningful outcomes in order to resolve these challenges.

Mr. Chair

We welcome the results achieved by the 8th Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects (PoA) that was held in June this year. We also strongly support the universalization and the full implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and believe that both the PoA and the ATT can benefit from synergies with other regional and

international instruments that share common objectives such as the Firearms Protocol, the ECOWAS Convention, the OSCE Document on SALW, to name a few.

Bulgaria believes that ensuring a globally accessible, free, open and secure cyberspace can be achieved through responsible state behavior, confidence building measures and transparency, within the existing international legal framework. We continue to contribute to the work of the Open-ended Working Group on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security and support the establishment of a UN Programme of Action on Advancing Responsible State Behavior in Cyberspace.

Lastly, we are encouraged by the fact that after three years of stalemate the UN Disarmament Commission managed to resume its work in April this year. We will continue to work on improving and modernizing the disarmament machinery and to seek common ground among the members of the Conference on Disarmament in order to make it deliver again, according to its mandate.

Thank you, Mr. Chair!