

**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  
THEMATIC DEBATE ON NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

**17 OCTOBER 2022**

Mr. Chair,

Bulgaria aligns itself with the statement by the European Union. I would like to add a few points in my national capacity.

Mr. Chair,

We are meeting in difficult circumstances. The nuclear threat is at its highest level since the Cold War. The Russian Federation's illegal war against Ukraine, its irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, and its blatant violation of the 1994 Budapest Memorandum seriously undermine all efforts invested in nuclear arsenals reduction since the end of the Cold War. We decisively condemn this dangerous escalation and we call upon Russian Federation to refrain from any threats with nuclear weapons.

The need for urgent progress on nuclear disarmament is more than evident.

Bulgaria reiterates its commitment to the shared goal of a world without nuclear weapons. We believe that nuclear disarmament should be effective, verifiable and irreversible, and that it can be attained only within the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) framework, namely its Art. VI, and through a progressive, step by step approach.

We deeply regret the fact that the Russian Federation blocked the adoption of the outcome document of the 10<sup>th</sup> NPT Review Conference. However, far from being perfect, the draft outcome document did represent many points of convergence that need to be brought forward. The NPT remains 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. Now it is more critical than ever that we focus our efforts on ensuring progress in the implementation of the previous commitments of 1995, 2000 and 2010 Review Conferences and on seeking new pathways towards reaffirming and strengthening the Treaty's regime during the next review cycle.

Mr. Chair,

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban-Treaty is among the building blocks in the construction of a world without nuclear weapons. More than 25 years after its opening for signature, the efforts of the international community are still required for its entry into force. Once in force, the CTBT will provide a legally binding global ban on nuclear explosions of any kind. Therefore, we call upon all States, particularly the remaining Annex II States, to sign and ratify the CTBT without further delay.

The commencement of negotiations on a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT) within the Conference on Disarmament and in accordance with the “Shannon mandate” remains among our main priorities in the nuclear disarmament field. Pending an FMCT entry into force all States should abide by a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons.

The development of effective multilateral nuclear disarmament verification is yet another pragmatic building block that directly contributes to the achievement of a nuclear-weapon free world. Bulgaria supports the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Nuclear Disarmament Verification (GGE) as a valuable contribution to the multilateral efforts on nuclear disarmament and we look forward to the outcome of its important deliberations.

Mr. Chair,

Bulgaria considers the safety and security of nuclear facilities as a major factor for the development of nuclear energy. As a newly elected member to the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) we will spare no efforts in countering the global non-proliferation challenges and the threats to nuclear security and safety. We strongly condemn the illegal seizure by the Russian Federation of Chernobyl and Zaporizhzhia nuclear power facilities thus posing at risk their safety and security. We call for the full implementation of the IAEA Director General’s Seven Pillars for ensuring safety and security during an armed conflict. We once again reiterate that the only sustainable guarantee for the safety and security of the Ukrainian nuclear facilities is the immediate and unconditional withdrawal by the Russian Federation of all its troops and military equipment from Ukraine’s territory within its internationally recognized borders.

Thank you!