Statement on CBRN Disinformation
UNGA First Committee | October 2026

Distinguished representatives:

For the past three years, the Global Partnership's initiative to counter WMD disinformation has been examining how disinformation affects chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear security.

Our research increasingly points to one central conclusion: WMD disinformation is not simply about getting facts wrong. It is about weakening trust.

It exploits the characteristics that make the WMD field particularly vulnerable: technical complexity, uncertainty, dual-use science, secrecy and public fear. Legitimate activities in health, energy, industry, agriculture, scientific research and international cooperation can be stripped of context and misrepresented as evidence of prohibited CBRN weapons programmes.

And these narratives do not remain confined to social media or national information environments. They travel.

Our recent research shows how a broad allegation can move through different layers of the information ecosystem: from official statements and state-aligned media, through domestic political actors and local networks, and ultimately into multilateral institutions themselves. At each stage, repetition and amplification can make the allegation appear more established than the evidence warrants.

This matters profoundly for the First Committee.

When unsupported allegations are repeatedly introduced into arms-control and disarmament fora, the danger is not only that individual claims may be believed. Repetition can create uncertainty, distort diplomatic debate, cast suspicion on legitimate cooperation and weaken confidence in the institutions and treaties intended to reduce WMD risks.

Our research also suggests that countering this challenge requires more than rebutting misleading or demonstrably false claims after they appear.

We need to anticipate recurring narratives. We need clear, accessible explanations of legitimate scientific, public-health, and other peaceful applications before they are manipulated. We need stronger connections between arms-control experts, scientists, technical and public-health communities, journalists and civil society. We also need to ensure that unsupported allegations do not acquire credibility merely through repetition in multilateral forums.

Within their respective mandates, multilateral institutions also have a role. Treaty mechanisms must remain places where genuine compliance concerns can be raised and examined. But they should not become vehicles through which unsupported allegations acquire legitimacy simply through repetition.

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Information integrity is now part of the infrastructure of arms control.

Protecting it means protecting the conditions that allow verification, cooperation and confidence-building to function.

The GP Counter WMD Disinformation Initiative will continue to provide evidence, analysis and practical tools to support that effort.

We thank you for your attention.

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UNGA First Committee Primer

CB Disinformation Tracker

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