STATEMENT BY

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THE FIRST COMMITTEE

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Thank you, Mr Chairman.

1. Allow me, from the outset, to congratulate you on your election as Chairman of this Committee and let me assure you of my delegation's full cooperation. The statement delivered earlier by the European Union fully reflects our national views, which will allow me to be brief and to focus on some items at which we attach special importance.

Mr Chairman,

2. This year's adoption of the Arms Trade Treaty by the General Assembly is an important sign that multilateralism works and International Community's actions are able to achieve significant and successful results, through dialogue and negotiation. We must now work hard towards the Treaty's universalization and its early entry into force.

3. In this field, Portugal wishes to draw attention to the issue of cluster munitions.

4. Cluster munitions affect indiscriminately military targets and the civilian population, continuing to make victims many years after the end of the conflicts in which they were used. Recent reports on the use of cluster munitions in Syria are very alarming, and cast a gloomy shadow over the prospects of an already deeply embattled population. Portugal strongly condemns the use of these weapons and urges all parties involved to refrain from their use.

5. For the past two years, along with Japan and Ghana, Portugal (has) worked hard to promote the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). The CCM remains the only legally binding instrument governing the production, the stockpile and the use and transfer of these weapons. Portugal remains committed to the CCM's effective implementation.

6. Landmines, just like cluster munitions, have long lasting effects in affected territories and populations. In 2014 - fifteen years after the entry into force of the Ottawa Convention on Anti-personnel Landmines - its State Parties and Observers will meet in Maputo, Mozambique, to review what has been achieved on our path towards a Mine-free world.
7. We strongly believe that this goal is as important as it was when the World took the decision to ban the use of landmines. All that has been accomplished so far should not only be praised but also inspire us to go further and beyond. Portugal looks forward to participating in the Maputo summit and actively contributing to a new set of measurable, realistic, but nonetheless ambitious commitments.

Mr Chairman,

8. The agonizing impasse of the Conference on Disarmament (CD) risks turning a body with such an honourable past into something completely irrelevant.

9. The fact that a significant number of States is barred from constructively participating in the decision-making process of the multilateral disarmament machinery, only adds to this untenable situation. Portugal, along with several Observer States to the CD, continues to call for the appointment of a Special Rapporteur to examine the CD’s enlargement modalities. The seriousness of the issues we ought to be discussing there requires the attention of the International Community as a whole.

Mr Chairman,

10. Nuclear proliferation remains one of the most pressing issues that the International Community has to tackle. At this respect, we share the serious international concerns raised by the nuclear programmes of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) which must be fully addressed.

11. Portugal urges both the DPRK and Iran to abide by their international obligations, including Resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council and IAEA Board of Governors, and take steps to build confidence among parties, an essential element in negotiation.

13. In this regard, we welcome the recent round of talks between Iran and the E3+3 and between Iran and the IAEA. Yet, words must be matched by deeds, as the World waits
apprehensively for assurances that atomic energy is strictly used according to the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Mr Chairman,

14. Portugal is deeply distraught by the use of chemical weapons in Syria. The appalling attacks have met the strongest condemnation and the appropriate response by the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. It is now imperative to fully implement UN Security Council Resolution 2118 (2013). Portugal calls on Syria to cooperate without reservation and delay and to provide all necessary conditions for the total elimination of its stock of these heinous weapons.

Mr Chairman, my delegation hopes that our deliberations in the forthcoming weeks will progress to meet the goals of peace and security, which are common aims of all our Peoples.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.