STATEMENT BY PORTUGAL
ON "NUCLEAR WEAPONS"

Delivered by His Excellency Álvaro Mendonça e Moura,
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FIRST COMMITTEE
OF THE 68TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS
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Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Portugal fully aligns with the statement delivered earlier by the European Union.

The importance of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) can never be understated, as the universalization of the NPT and the upholding of all of its provisions are our best chances of achieving lasting peace and dispel the gloomy shadow that nuclear proliferation cast upon our Peoples. This is why Portugal calls on States that have not yet done so to join the NPT as non-nuclear weapon states.

Unfortunately, the threat of nuclear proliferation remains real, as doubts over the nuclear programmes of the Islamic Republic of Iran and that of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) remain unanswered. Portugal urges both States to fully abide by their international obligations, including the relevant Resolutions adopted by the UN Security Council and the IAEA Board of Governors.

On Iran, we are confident that the negotiations that have started in Geneva will replicate in the IAEA and that this particularly positive momentum should not be left unanswered.
We also all call on the Syrian Arab Republic to comply with the Resolution 41, adopted in 2011 by the IAEA Board of Governors.

In this light, it is more than ever imperative to achieve full compliance with the current IAEA verification standard, including the measures contained in the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and in the Additional Protocol. Portugal has been working towards the universalization of such standard and is ready to assist the IAEA and its Member States in this endeavour, as it has done in the past.

Mr Chairman,

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) is of key importance to advancing the goals of nuclear disarmament and nuclear proliferation. We urge all those States that have yet to ratify it to do so at the earliest date possible and to observe a moratorium on nuclear test explosions. Portugal, along with the European Union, will continue to work towards this goal.

In addition, it is painfully clear that negotiations of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) must start at once, and that a moratorium on the production of fissile material should be observed in the meantime.

In a broad context, I would like to call your attention to the need for the Conference on Disarmament to work on a more inclusive basis, which would entail its enlargement.

Mr Chairman,

The establishment of a Middle East Zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction is an aspiration we must continue to strive for. Despite the setbacks, Portugal believes that it is crucial to remain seized on the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, guided by the Action Plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference. We thus urge all Countries in the Region to continue to engage with Ambassador Laajava and the co-conveners and to approach this issue in a spirit of cooperation and compromise, so that the Conference on the establishment of such zone can be convened as soon as possible.
Mr Chairman,

I would like to conclude by drawing the Committee’s attention to the issue of nuclear security, as it requires an approach that must be both comprehensive and inclusive.

Portugal follows this matter very attentively and already takes part in several initiatives of a global scale, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. As a Member State of the European Union, we also contribute to the Nuclear Security Fund. Portugal stands ready to play an even more active role in these matters, as the security of our Peoples require more than ever broad collaborative action.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.