Statement by
Mrs. Cristina Pucarinho, Deputy Permanent Representative
of Portugal to the United Nations

Alternate Head of Delegation of Portugal to the
Third Preparatory Committee of the Revision Conference of
the Non-Proliferation Treaty, New York, 29 May 2014
Mr. President,

At the outset, I congratulate you on your appointment as President of this Preparatory Committee. I am confident that under your able leadership, we will be promoting the goals of the TNP with decisions that can foster a lasting consensus. I also would like to extend my wishes of good cooperation to all participants in the Committee.

Mr. President,

We are gathered for the third time to prepare the Conference in 2015, which we do hope will contribute (I quote) "to avert the danger of a nuclear war and to take measures to safeguard the security of peoples" (end of quote). The Non-Proliferation Treaty remains the basis of the non-proliferation regime and, therefore, its three pillars of non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy must be equally promoted, as they are altogether the object and purpose of the Treaty.

Following on the positive outcome of the two first Preparatory Committees, we are confident this meeting will succeed defining an agenda and a program of work for the 2015 Conference, which can lead to a valuable outcome of that important event.

The 2010 Action Plan, which was agreed by all participants in the 2010 Review Conference, sets the work for the following years and the goals to be achieved. Some of its benchmarks are still to be achieved and we are convinced that in order to succeed in the near future, a renewed commitment and the engagement of all of us is required.

Mr. President,

We call on all States that are still not party to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear States, thus contributing for the reinforcement of the non-proliferation regime inaugurated in 1968. A world free of nuclear weapons - the major goal of the NPT –remains a collective major aspiration to basically guarantee the preservation of humanity. Portugal believes it is an ambitious but attainable goal, requiring therefore the commitment of all of us.
As far as disarmament is concerned, we acknowledge the progresses made since 2010 regarding Article VI. We remain convinced that progress will linger on the agenda of the States involved. We are of the view that the starting of negotiations of a Treaty banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT) would be an important step forward, meaning that negotiations would finally start and that the stalemate of 19 years of the Conference on Disarmament would see a breakthrough. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is a benchmark which must be equally triggered by all.

As regards nuclear proliferation, we remain very concerned with the actual status quo involving DPRK and Syria. On Iran, we welcome the progresses in the JPA (Joint Plan of Action) and AIEA negotiation framework. Moreover, the ongoing ballistic and missile programs in North Korea, Syria and Iran add up to the international concern over its potential use in their respective nuclear programs.

As many others we believe that the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime, including its additional protocol, is a fundamental instrument in the non-proliferation efforts and the verification standards. Moreover, the logic of progression established by the Treaty must be retained, as any breach of the safeguards means a breach of article III and therefore the deprivation of the rights guaranteed by article IV.

The negative assurances created by the zones free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems have an added value in the non proliferation regime and in this regard we endeavour, in particular, the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East. We have been supporting all parties involved in the negotiations, specially the efforts of the facilitator, Ambassador Jaakko Laajava.

Mr. President,

We support the inalienable right of all Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and to the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination and in conformity with the Treaty provisions. In this regard and however the primary role lies
with States Parties, it must be stressed the importance of keeping the nuclear energy issues in an inclusive multilateral framework, notably those regarding safety and security issues.

Portugal is actively engaged in a number of relevant nuclear security initiatives, notably the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), the IAEA Safety Action Plan, the IAEA Nuclear Security Plan 2014–2017 and the 2013 IAEA International Conference on Nuclear Security: Enhancing Global Efforts at the Agency’s Headquarters. We believe the AIEA should have the leading role in nuclear security beyond national competences.

The IAEA Peaceful Uses Initiative (PUI) launched in 2010, to which Portugal contributes through the EU, should deserve an enhanced attention by all States Parties as it supports activities that otherwise could be problematic to pursue.

In the eve of the 2015 Revision Conference of the NPT it is worth recalling some of the remaining challenges worldwide that could be addressed, such as: cyber security, the reliability of early warning systems, the possibility of miscalculation or a decision based in wrong information by the national command authorities and, finally, the implementation of measures to reduce the proliferation risks.

Thank you, Mr President.