



*The Permanent Mission of Portugal  
to the United Nations*

**71 UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY  
GENERAL DEBATE OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE**

**STATEMENT BY PORTUGAL**

**Delivered by Mrs. Cristina Pucarinho  
Deputy Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations**

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**Mr. Chairman,**

**At the outset, allow me to congratulate you on your appointment as Chairman of this Committee. I assure you of my delegation's full cooperation.**

**Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement previously delivered by the European Union and would like to make further comments in its national capacity.**

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Portugal believes that achieving a safer and more peaceful world requires a robust framework of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and institutions that fully respect the key principles of inclusiveness and multilateralism, in strict abidance to the Universal Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. Those are pre-conditions to promote a common understanding of the current security challenges and achieve progress towards our goal of achieving sustainable international peace and security.**

**The UN is the key actor of effective multilateralism. In these complex and troubled times, the role of this Organization is essential, and must be increasingly relevant, to address common security challenges, manage shared disarmament responsibilities and devise collective non-proliferation actions.**

**Mr. Chairman,**

**Portugal reaffirms its commitment to the common objective of a world free of nuclear weapons. While this goal is a moral imperative, how to realistically achieve it remains an open question. In our view, a progressive approach, combining parallel and simultaneous effective measures, both legal and non-legal, while**

taking into account legitimate national and international security concerns, continues to be the best way to make concrete progress in multilateral disarmament negotiations.

Such negotiations should not undermine the **Non-Proliferation Treaty**, which remains the cornerstone of the non-proliferation regime. The inability to reach a consensus on a Final Document at last year's NPT Review Conference is regrettable, but should not detract from the credibility and relevance of the Treaty. We underline the importance of achieving a substantial outcome during the next NPT review cycle, as well as the understanding that its three pillars - non-proliferation, disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy -, must be equally promoted, in a balanced way. Portugal therefore reiterates its appeal to all States that have not yet done so to accede without delay to the NPT as non-nuclear weapons States.

Mr. Chairman,

The recent nuclear test carried out by **North Korea** - its second this year and fifth overall -, is a deeply troubling development, which was firmly condemned by the Portuguese government. This new provocation by the DPRK's regime is a violation of several United Nations Security Council Resolutions and poses a grave threat to regional and international peace, underscoring the urgency of achieving a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We urge North Korea to refrain from further conducting any nuclear tests, to cease all its nuclear activities, implement the Joint Statement of the Six-Party Talks (of 19 September 2005), and return to the NPT and IAEA safeguards.

This year marks the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the **Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty**, a Treaty that regrettably has not yet entered into force. The current moratorium on nuclear tests, cannot replace a universal legally binding instrument in force. Portugal therefore continues to urge the countries that have not yet signed or ratified the Treaty to do so, in particular the Annex 2 countries.

We must however recognize some successes achieved over the past two decades. Besides the almost universal moratorium, progress was made on accomplishing the verification and monitoring systems, ensuring that nuclear tests don't remain undetected. We also welcome the recent ratifications of the CTBT by Angola, Myanmar and Swaziland as important steps towards the universalization of the Treaty.

Mr. Chairman,

Portugal takes this opportunity to express its support to the ongoing implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on **Iran**'s nuclear program. This historic agreement proves that highly complex issues can be resolved through diplomacy if there is political will and determination from all parties do so.

Mr. Chairman,

There is a clear need to move forward multilateral disarmament negotiations in an inclusive way. The **Conference on Disarmament**, created in 1978, clearly upheld this need in the final document of the UNGA Tenth Special Session. 16 years have passed since the last enlargement of the Conference's membership. Ever since the door remained closed to the admission of new States, like mine, which throughout the years reaffirmed their interest in becoming full Parties to the Conference.

Besides the issue of the membership enlargement, the Conference remains in an agonizing stalemate, requiring a renewed commitment and a constructive joint work to overcome it.

Mr. Chairman,

It is also certain that in a number of crucial areas, the framework of disarmament and non-proliferation treaties, norms and regimes, continues to be strengthened.

We commend the work carried out by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations in **Syria**, in a very complex and challenging security situation. In spite of the Organization's continued effort, the Syrian authorities have yet to provide sufficient and verifiable evidence that they do not retain chemical capabilities and that their chemical weapons programme is fully declared and completely and irreversibly dismantled. It is now widely recognized that the international community lacks a precise, credible and complete picture of the Syrian's chemical programme; the definitive dismantling of Syria's chemical programme remains a priority, only possible if based on the cooperation of all parties.

In **Libya**, we welcome the recent removal and destruction of the declared chemical materials, through the coordinated efforts of the International Community and the OPCW. This is a very positive development for the stability of Libya and the entire region.

On a less positive note, the possibility of non-state actors gaining access to means and expertise related to the different types of weapons of massive destruction remains particularly disquieting. That is a threat that must be urgently and effectively addressed by the international community in a coordinated way.

Mr. Chairman,

The negotiation and entry into force of the **Arms Trade Treaty (ATT)** was in itself a major achievement of the international community, setting the standards for the regulation of the international trade of conventional arms. All efforts must now be focused on the implementation and universalization of the Treaty. The Second Conference of State Parties of the ATT held last August was an important step in that direction. Portugal, once again, renews its appeal to all States not yet Parties to the Treaty to ratify it and accede to it as soon as feasible.

On behalf of my country I would like to particularly highlight the need for implementation of the ATT provision on gender-based violence, as part of the broader effort to consider a gender perspective in disarmament discussions.

Portugal is confident that a transparent and effective implementation of the ATT will have an important positive impact, particularly in countries and regions affected by conflict, extremist threats or emerging from conflicts. For the first time, the General Assembly of the United Nations has at its disposal a legally-binding instrument that will formally regulate the conventional arms trade in direct benefit of global security and regional stability, so contributing to enable Human Rights protection and the development goals.

The illicit traffic and production of **small arms and light weapons (SALW)** has a significant human cost and fuels crime, terrorism, conflict and regional instability, threatening international peace and security. Portugal shares the International Community concerns on the very negative consequences of this phenomenon, particularly affecting some of the more vulnerable, fragile and unstable countries and regions in the world.

My country is contributing to several EU initiatives and programmes to reinforce capacities to address this traffic, including the EU funded iTrace initiative and fully supports the UN instruments designed to prevent, combat and eradicate the diversion and the illicit trade of SALW and their ammunitions.

Mr. Chairman,

The use of **Cluster Munitions**, as pointed out in recent reports, deserve our strongest condemnation and it is with great concern that we face the possible use of those weapons by state and non-state actors. The same applies to the

indiscriminate use of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), in particular in densely populated areas.

We would also like to highlight the importance of the 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties of the **Ottawa Convention** [Mine-Ban Treaty], to be held in Chile next November, and the Review Conference of the Convention of Certain Conventional Weapons, on December 5<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Chairman,

As new challenges emerge, we should consider how the existing disarmament and non-proliferation instruments can be improved. On current and future developments related to the so-called "new era warfare tools", notably armed drones, fully autonomous weapons, cyberspace offensive use and militarization of outer space, we encourage the continuation of ongoing international work on these subjects, both at political and technical levels.

These discussions should take into account, in our view, the need to promote transparency and the applicable international law or, when needed, the establishment of regulatory multilateral security frameworks responsive to the objective of protecting civilians and Human Rights.

Mr. Chairman,

From weather forecasting to arms control treaty verification, we have become increasingly reliant on space applications. As human space activities steadily increase every year, so does the need to ensure their safety, security and sustainability. As we approach the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the **Outer Space Treaty**, next year, Portugal continues to support multilateral and inclusive efforts towards that end.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman, and while recalling the resolutions adopted during the 32<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent, I would like to reiterate Portugal's unequivocal belief in the need to consider and uphold Humanitarian Law and Human Right's values in all disarmament and non-proliferation discussions and initiatives. The principles of this Organization demand nothing less.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.