



Statement by His Excellency Ambassador Dionísio Babo Soares, Permanent Representative of Timor-Leste to the United Nations, on behalf of the Member States of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries

**78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly
Resumed session on Crimes against Humanity**

(Agenda item 80)

Mister Chair,

I thank you for your stewardship of this week's discussions, which are of great interest to humankind as a whole. History is looking at us.

I deliver this short statement on behalf of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, the CPLP, which is composed by Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe and my own country, Timor-Leste.

We are a community of countries that, in its diversity, not only share a common language and a strong attachment to multilingualism, but also a common history, common cultural traits and common values.

We uphold a world order based on the rule of international law. We have a firm commitment to the UN Charter and its general prohibition on the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, its acknowledgment of the sovereign equality between states and its repudiation of interference in internal affairs.

We are adamant about the need to comply with international human rights law, to international humanitarian law and to international refugee law. This includes our unwavering support to the prevention and punishment of crimes against humanity.

We are also united in the belief that there is a gap in international law that the international community has the urgent task to fill. Unlike war crimes and genocide, there is no international convention allowing us to hold accountable in our domestic courts the perpetrators of crimes against humanity and to cooperate to this end. This worrying situation is compounded by the fact that a considerable number of countries do not have national legislation criminalizing such serious crimes of international law.

In the past, the international community was able to display concord and achieve universal instruments such as the Genocide and the Geneva Conventions. Today we witness a concerning trend of disregard for international law and the need to protect civilians in conflict settings.

We must recover our ability to smooth our differences without renouncing to our national interests. We believe that the draft articles adopted on second reading by the ILC may constitute a basis for negotiations on an international convention to prevent and punish crimes against humanity.

It is high time we launched negotiations of an international convention to prevent and punish crimes against humanity. During the negotiations, we will have the opportunity to address the concerns raised by states during the debates of this item of the agenda of the General Assembly.

Thank you.