Statement by
H.E Mr. Alvaro Mendonça e Moura
Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary
Permanent Representative

Thematic Discussion on the
“Nuclear Arms”
First Committee

20th October 2014
Thank you, Mr Chairman

Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union on the “Nuclear Weapons” thematic discussions.

Mr. Chairman,

The Treaty on Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regime. The 2015 NPT Review Conference will deal with sensitive issues and will require hard work by all State Parties, in order to reach a comprehensive and balanced progress of the three pillars of the Treaty - disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We call on all States that have not yet done so to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear weapon States.

The strive for a world without nuclear weapons requires tireless determination and concrete, consistent and sustainable action. This is about Humanity and its own survival, therefore it can only be at the very heart of our concerns and endeavours.

Mr Chairman,

While acknowledging progresses made in nuclear disarmament, Portugal cannot but recognize that much remains to be done to achieve the ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapons-free world.

The catastrophic consequences for Humanity that would result from accidental or deliberate use of nuclear weapons call for resolute, urgent and appropriate action. Together, we must do our utmost to ensure that nuclear weapons are not used and do not proliferate.

Non-proliferation and disarmament are indeed mutually reinforcing processes which should be resolutely pursued in a balanced manner within the implementation of the 2010 TNP Action Plan.
We should also continue to work closely together to strengthen confidence and transparency measures and address the serious existing challenges to international peace and stability. Only through joint efforts the international community - all of us, States and Peoples – will be able to ensure that generations to come will not be threatened by nuclear weapons related-risks.

It is our expectation that the forthcoming Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons will provide an inclusive and productive debate on this important matter and effectively contribute to a successful outcome of the 2015 NPT Review Conference.

Mr. Chairman,

Nuclear proliferation remains one of the most pressing concerns of the International Community.

DPRK’s development of nuclear weapons and ballistic missile programs continues to pose serious challenges to international and regional peace and security. We urge DPRK to comply with the relevant Security Council resolutions as well as to fully cooperate with the IAEA.

On the Iranian nuclear program, we reiterate our encouragement to all Parties involved in the ongoing negotiation process, to address all outstanding issues, leading to a comprehensive and long-lasting agreement.

We also call on the Syrian Arab Republic to fully comply with the 2011 IAEA Board of Governors’ Resolution.

Mr. Chairman,

The right of States to develop civil nuclear capabilities must be accompanied by strict adherence to relevant international agreements and commitments in a transparent and responsible manner. Rights come along with duties and accountability.

In this context, it is more than ever imperative to ensure full and universal conformity with the current IAEA verification standards, 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 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 the advancement of nuclear non-proliferation goals and we urge all those States that have yet to ratify it, to do so at the earliest possible date and, pending it, to observe a moratorium on nuclear test explosions.

Negotiations of a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT) must start and a moratorium on the production of fissile material should be observed in the meantime. It is indeed regrettable that the Conference on Disarmament has been so far unable to start this important negotiation process.

Mr Chairman,

The implementation of the 1995 NPT Review Conference on the establishment of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction free-zone in the Middle East, is an aspiration we must continue to strive for. Portugal urges all countries in the region to further engage with the Facilitator of the Middle East Conference, Ambassador Laajava, and the co-conveners in a spirit of cooperation and compromise.

I thank you, Mr Chairman.