

Mr. President

Dear Colleagues,

I am pleased to address today the High Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament under the Presidency of Ambassador Gonçalo Maurão of Brazil, to whom I address my congratulations for assuming this important role.

Portugal strongly believes in the power of effective multilateralism and international cooperation. This Conference has a unique role and place in the framework of international bodies dealing with non-proliferation, disarmament and related issues.

Allow me to express our deep regret that a Member State of the European Union and four other Members States of the United Nations have been denied the observer status in the works of this year's session. We invite both Turkey and Iran to review their positions in this matter.

Portugal strongly supports the efforts to overcome the stalemate in the Conference and to advance the multilateral disarmament agenda. If the Conference is to retake its place as a relevant negotiating body, countries need to take immediate action.

We remain committed to a progressive and pragmatic approach in achieving nuclear disarmament and we believe that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains the best route to work towards a world without nuclear weapons, with no shortcuts in the process.

The Review Conference of the Non-Proliferation Treaty is scheduled to take place this Summer and it is crucial to strive for a results-oriented process, that would better promote the universalization and strengthening of its implementation. The only credible way towards nuclear disarmament is a step-by-step approach that considers the wider security context.

That is why we all should make a serious effort to further strengthen its framework and contribute with practical, effective and future-oriented actions to the 10th Review Conference.

We also believe that one of the key steps towards an irreversible nuclear disarmament process is the negotiation of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty, as well as the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty.

On other non-nuclear matters also dealt by this Conference, some key areas are of particular concern to us.

First, the repeated use, in recent years, of chemical weapons, gravely undermining its universal prohibition, and also the increasing humanitarian

harm caused by the use of explosive weapons in populated areas and against civilians.

Second, we are concern because of the apparent trend of some countries acknowledging the relaxation of restrictions on the use of anti-personnel landmines; we take this occasion to invite all States to align with and implement without delay the provisions of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

To conclude, concerning the enlargement of the Conference's membership, I would like to remind you that Portugal is one of the longest-standing observer State that formally expressed its interest to join this body. I believe you would agree with us that there is no legitimate reason or moral justification to extend this limbo. That is why we expect to see a solution for this matter in the near future.

Thank you very much