

76th United Nations General Assembly

Thematic discussion on clusters 1 to 4 in the First Committee

Statement by PORTUGAL

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Mr. Chairman,

In addition to the statement made on behalf of the European Union, we would like to share the following remarks on clusters 1 to 4 in our national capacity.

In his recent report on “Our Common Agenda”, the Secretary General describes some of the growing risks to peace and security, including technologies able to disrupt global stability, increasingly fragile agreements on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction, as well as emerging domains of potential conflict or lawlessness, which highlight gaps in our governance architecture.

Therefore, on the one hand, we need to enforce and reinforce already existing instruments. On the other, we need new instruments to address governance gaps.

A case in point of a governance gap is the outer space, which we recognize as a global commons, which is to be used peacefully by all and for the benefit of all.

As we unfortunately still lack a legally binding instrument to ensure a safe and secure space environment, we commend the work being carried out with a view to reducing space threats by means of voluntary norms, rules and principles of responsible behavior. We trust that this work may contribute to addressing the challenge of monitoring and verification, as well as to preventing an arms race in space. And we welcome the involvement of different stakeholders committed to outer space policies, namely academia, NGOs and the private sector.

Mr. Chairman,

Regarding existing instruments we need to enforce, we immediately think about the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, which we usually refer to as the cornerstone of the non-proliferation and disarmament architecture.

We look forward to a much-awaited 10<sup>th</sup> Review Conference, which we regard as an additional opportunity to promote the full and universal implementation of the NPT and to contribute to attaining, in a progressive manner, the vision – which we believe is shared by all states – of a world free of nuclear weapons.

On the occasion of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the opening to signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, we urge all remaining states who have not yet joined this important instrument, to do so without further delay.

Mr. Chairman,

Other two pillars of the effective rules-based multilateralism we strive for are the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, whose full implementation we continue to wholeheartedly defend.

We reaffirm our support for the United Nations Secretary General's Mechanism for the Investigation of Alleged Use of Chemical and Biological Weapons.

And we remain staunch supporters of the work of the OPCW and its Technical Secretariat in investigating the worrying chemical attacks throughout the world.

As participants in the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons, we are committed to ensure accountability for perpetrators.

Mr. Chairman,

Finally yet importantly, there are equally relevant international instruments in the field of conventional weapons that we also need to enforce and reinforce.

The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is such an instrument. We actively anticipate its 6<sup>th</sup> Review Conference, in hoping that High Contracting Parties achieve a successful outcome. In particular, we welcome the work of the Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems, while hoping for a set of solid consensual recommendations regarding the development of a normative and operational framework for this subject.

We also plea with a sense of urgency for the full and universal implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty and call upon all remaining states to sign and ratify it.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.