Mr. Chairman,

The well documented catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, should remind us all that we must remain steadfast in seeking a world free of nuclear weapons.

In Portugal’s view, such vital goal must be unwaveringly promoted through a balanced but concrete approach to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

In this regard we consider it essential to preserve the integrity of the NPT, as the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with Article VI, but also to achieve a substantial outcome the next NTP review cycle. Once again we reiterate our call on all States that have not yet done so to accede to the NPT as non-nuclear weapons States.
Mr. Chairman,

Portugal is gravely concerned by the growing challenges to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

As proved twice this year, North Korea continues to pursue its nuclear program. The Portuguese government firmly condemned both nuclear tests by the DPRK, in violation of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions, and considers these developments to be a grave threat to regional and international peace and security. It is meaningful that DPRK is the only country that conducted nuclear tests in this century, clearly underscoring the urgency of achieving the complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We appeal to all parties involved to do its utmost towards resuming dialogue.

Mr. Chairman,

The historic agreement reached last year on Iran’s nuclear program proved that highly complex issues can be resolved through diplomacy if there is political will and determination from all parties to do so. Portugal reiterates its support to the ongoing implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA).

Mr. Chairman,

Portugal continues to support a progressive approach to nuclear disarmament, firmly anchored on the NPT process.

Our commitment to inclusiveness and our emphasis on consensus have guided our participation in the work of the Open-ended Working Group on nuclear disarmament which has met throughout the year. We regret that despite the constructive efforts by the Chair of the OEWG and by many countries, including Portugal, the Group did not produce a consensual report.

The entry into force of the CTBT is a crucial step to advance nuclear disarmament and nuclear proliferation and we urge again all those States that have yet to ratify it to do so without delay, in particular the
Annex 2 countries, and, pending their accession, to observe a moratorium on nuclear test explosions. We acknowledge progress made on accomplishing the verification and monitoring systems, ensuring that nuclear tests do not remain undetected. We also welcome the most recent ratifications by Angola, Myanmar and Swaziland as relevant steps towards the universalization of the Treaty.

Negotiations of a **Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty** must start, and a moratorium on the production of fissile material should be observed in the meantime. It is highly regrettable and disappointing that the Conference on Disarmament has been unable so far to deliver on this matter.

There is a clear need on taking forward multilateral negotiations in an inclusive way. I would like to reiterate the importance for the **Conference on Disarmament** to work on a more inclusiveness basis, notably by enlarging its membership.

Portugal would also like to urge all countries to join the **Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation**, with a view to its universalization.

The reinforcement of confidence building measures, such as full compliance with existing instruments, including the **INF Treaty**, remains crucial.

Mr. Chairman,

The International Community must continue to seek the establishment of a **Middle East Zone free of nuclear weapons** and all other weapons of mass destruction. We must remain seized of the implementation of the 1995 Resolution on the Middle East, guided by the Action Plan of the 2010 NPT Review Conference.
Mr. Chairman,

There is a widespread frustration about the slow pace of effective nuclear disarmament. The specific responsibilities of the NPT nuclear-weapons States require their full engagement in advancing nuclear disarmament. There is a very real obligation incumbent upon nuclear-weapons States to take concrete steps to major reductions in nuclear arsenals. As we already stated last year, there is no justification for delaying or, even worse, justifying the absence of any concrete step on nuclear disarmament.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman,

Portugal looks for renewed resolve by the International Community to confront common nuclear challenges, and advance for a peaceful, nuclear weapons free world.

I thank you.