Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

My brief statement on behalf of Portugal is fully aligned with the one earlier delivered by the European Union on this cluster.

Mr. Chairman,

The UN integrated structure of bodies aiming at pursuing multilateral international efforts on disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control remains crucial and irreplaceable.

The actual and emerging complex security challenges require an effective and inclusive UN disarmament machinery. In this regard the General Assembly’s First Committee, the UN Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament should work in mutually reinforcing ways.

It is regretful that in the past decades the UN disarmament machinery has been unable to deliver as it should and is failing to
fulfill its mandate. The longstanding deadlock remains and it can only be overcome with political will.

Mr. Chairman,

17 years have passed since the last enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament. Ever since the door remained closed to the admission of new States, like mine, which throughout the years consistently reaffirmed their interest in becoming full Parties to the Conference. The CD’s agenda encompasses global concerns that should be dealt by a wider UN membership than the current 65 members, which we do not consider to be sufficiently representative. Portugal, once again, urges all States to address the issue of membership of the CD as a decisive step towards its revitalization, thus contributing to overcome the Conference’s agonizing stalemate.

Enlargement modalities of the CD should be promptly examined and, in this regard, Portugal strongly supports the appointment of a special coordinator for continuing consultations on the expansion of its membership.

Mr. Chairman,

On the Disarmament Commission - the crucial UN General Assembly deliberative body on disarmament -, we welcome the adoption at this year’s session, of recommendations on “Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons”. It represented an important breakthrough, ending a stalemate for the past 18 years! Regretfully, the Working Group on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation was, once again, not able to reach a consensus.
Mr. Chairman,

Portugal reiterates its call for the immediate start of the negotiations of a verifiable and non-discriminatory Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. In this regard, Portugal welcomes the ongoing work of the High Level Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty Expert Preparatory Group. In the meantime, a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons should be observed.

To conclude, Mr. Chairman,

Taking concrete steps to preserve the leading role of the UN disarmament machinery, including by enlarging the Conference on Disarmament, would substantially contribute to address the challenges we face and provide fresh impetus to disarmament diplomacy. This should be the path to follow.

I thank you.