Mr. Chairman,

On behalf of Portugal, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Chairman of this Committee and to assure you of my delegation’s full cooperation.

Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement earlier delivered by the European Union.

Mr. Chairman,

Portugal strongly believes that multilateralism, based on universal rules and values, is the most effective way to address our common security challenges, manage shared disarmament responsibilities and devise collective non-proliferation initiatives.

More than ever before, multilateralism is essential to address new and old threats to peace and security, as they become increasingly global. We therefore need a strong UN, as the key actor of effective multilateralism, the main agent of multilateral cooperation and promoter of peace and security. This is why Portugal strongly believes that the UN should play a more relevant role.
Mr. Chairman,

There is a growing anxiety about nuclear weapons, as we are being confronted with a very serious challenge to the global non-proliferation regime. The Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) is accelerating its nuclear and ballistic missile programme, in total defiance of international law, in clear violation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions and posing a grave threat to regional and international peace and security. Last month, North Korea carried out its sixth nuclear test, which was firmly condemned by the Portuguese government. DPRK’s nuclear and ballistic missile programme underscores the urgency of achieving a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearization of the Korean peninsula and we strongly urge North Korea to cease all its nuclear and ballistic activities and to open the way for a diplomatic resolution of the crisis.

Recent developments underline the crucial importance of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), of its verification regime and remind us all of the urgency of its early entry into force. Once again, Portugal reiterates its appeal to all States that have not yet done so, especially the eight remaining Annex 2 States, to sign and ratify the CTBT.

Mr. Chairman,

Portugal reaffirms its support to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) on Iran’s nuclear program. It proved that highly complex issues can be resolved in good faith, through diplomacy, provided there is political will from all parties to do so. It should be ensured that this historic Agreement is strictly implemented by all parties and that conditions are met to continue monitoring Iran’s nuclear programme after 2025.
Mr. Chairman,

Portugal reaffirms once again its commitment to the **goal of a world free of nuclear weapons**. It is a moral imperative. My country shares some of the concerns, and the frustration about the lack of concrete steps on nuclear disarmament, that led many of the countries here present to reach agreement on a Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, but we are not convinced that it represents a realistic way to achieve our common goal. In our view, a process of gradual reduction of nuclear weapons, taking into account legitimate national and international security concerns, continues to be the best approach to ensure sustainable progress in multilateral disarmament negotiations.

Mr. Chairman,

Portugal considers the **Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty** (NPT) to be the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, the foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and an important element in the future development of nuclear energy peaceful applications. We will undertake every effort to achieve a substantial outcome at the 2020 NPT Review Conference.

Portugal is convinced of the urgent need to start negotiations on a **Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty** (FMCT) and achieve progress on nuclear disarmament verification.

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. Portugal, once again, urges all States to address the issue of membership of the CD as a decisive step towards its renewal, thus contributing to overcome the Conference’s agonizing stalemate.
Mr Chairman,

Portugal commends and supports the continuation of the work carried out in a very complex and challenging security situation, by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) in Syria. The confirmation by the Fact Finding Mission of the OPCW of the use of chemical weapons in 2016 and 2017 is cause for grave concern. We reiterate that any use of chemical weapons is intolerable, must be condemned in the strongest terms and those responsible must be held accountable.

Mr Chairman,

The 20\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the signature of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention reminds us that, despite the remarkable progress achieved, we are still far from granting the objective of an anti-personnel mine free world, without victims by 2025. Portugal calls upon every State to do its utmost to support and promote the universalization and implementation of the Convention and the Maputo Action Plan.

The Arms Trade Treaty (ATT) has the potential to be a very effective instrument against the illicit trade of conventional arms and ammunition, especially to regions in conflict and to countries with high levels of armed violence. The Treaty will also contribute to Human Rights protection and to the advancement of the sustainable development goals. We would like to particularly highlight the need for implementation of the ATT provisions on gender-based violence, as part of the broader effort to consider a gender perspective in disarmament discussions. Portugal urges all States that have not yet done so to join the ATT.

Small arms and light weapons (SALW) are the more significant and widespread instruments of violence and death worldwide. Its illicit
traffic causes tremendous human suffering and fuels organized crime, terrorism and regional instability. Portugal shares the International Community concerns about the very negative consequences of unregulated flows of arms on some of the more vulnerable countries and regions.

Mr. Chairman,

On **new and emerging threats**, such as armed drones, autonomous weapons, cyberspace and militarization of outer space, we should encourage transparency and adapt applicable international law or develop new regulatory multilateral security frameworks responsive to the objective of protecting civilians and Human Rights.

Mr. Chairman,

To conclude, I would like to reiterate Portugal’s unequivocal belief in the need to consider and uphold International Humanitarian Law and Human Rights in all disarmament and non-proliferation discussions and initiatives, a duty trusted upon us by our shared humanity and the principles of this Organization.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.