Mr. Chairman,

Portugal fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union in this cluster.

Mr. Chairman,

We must ensure the relevance of three mutually reinforcing fora: the UN General Assembly First Committee, the UN Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament.

It is unhelpful that in the past decades the UN disarmament machinery has been unable to deliver as it should and is failing to fully fulfill its mandate.

Almost two decades 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. Portugal regrets that consensus was not reached on a negotiating mandate for more than 20 years and believes that addressing the issue of membership of the CD will be a decisive step towards its revitalization. We also recall that all Member States contribute to CD’s costs, irrespective of being members or not of this body.

Portugal reiterates that enlargement modalities of the CD be promptly examined and strongly supports the appointment of a special coordinator for continuing consultations on this matter.

Mr. Chairman,

On the Disarmament Commission - the crucial UN General Assembly deliberative body on disarmament -, we were encouraged by the adoption, at last year’s session, of recommendations on “Practical confidence-building measures in the field of conventional weapons”. For the current cycle of our deliberations, we must build on that success and work together to reach consensus on the adoption of recommendations on both items of the agenda. Portugal particularly welcomes the inclusion of “TCBM’s in Outer Space activities” as a new topic on the UNDC agenda.

Portugal reiterates its call for the immediate start of the negotiations of a Treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the report of the High-Level FMCT Expert Preparatory Group chaired by Canada. In the meantime, a moratorium on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons should be observed.
Mr. Chairman,

The full and effective participation of women in all decision-making processes related to disarmament is essential. Portugal strongly believes that incorporating gender perspectives will help to revitalize the disarmament machinery.

To conclude,

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, Mr. Chairman.