



*Permanent Mission of Portugal
to the United Nations*

Statement by

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the United Nations

*Head of Delegation of Portugal to the Review Conference of the
Non-Proliferation Treaty, New York, 27 April 2015*

Madam President,

Firstly, I would like to extend our condolences to the people and the Government of Nepal in the wake of the recent tragic events.

I thank the Secretary-General for the report presented to this review conference and I wish to take advantage of this opportunity to thank Mrs. Ângela Kane for the excellent and very important work done as High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Madam President,

On behalf of the Portuguese Delegation, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as President of the 2015 NPT Review Conference. I am confident that under your able leadership this Conference will have, as we all wish, a substantial and constructive outcome. In this regard, I also wish to assure that you can count on the full support and cooperation of Portugal.

I align myself aligned with the statement made earlier by the European Union but I want to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.



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Madam President,

70 years after the first and only ever use of nuclear weapons in Nagasaki and Hiroshima, the NPT remains the cornerstone of the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and the most valuable instrument at our disposal to achieve nuclear disarmament and its ultimate objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.

This Conference provides us the opportunity to assess, in a pragmatic and realistic way, the implementation of the ambitious 2010 Plan of Action which, in our view, remains a valid benchmark to build upon in our discussions and prospects for the near future. Portugal, as many other States, has submitted to the Conference in due time its report on the national implementation of the 2010 Plan of Action.

The international community is faced with some long standing and other new demanding challenges and threats to the international security. Its magnitude, its complexity and its evolving nature, do actually require collective efforts to ease tensions, build or renovate trust and to find a common language to address all those pressing issues.

I believe we all agree that strengthening the NPT in all its three pillars, notably by promoting its universalization and credibility, is a crucial task that remains underperformed, therefore requiring further collective engagement. Difficulties proven in this process must serve as a strong encouragement to double efforts, to renew determination and political will until it is achieved.

Madam President,



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What we strive for is to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons, where the nuclear resources will be available exclusively for civil purposes. In this regard all three pillars of the NPT – nuclear disarmament, nuclear non proliferation and peaceful uses of nuclear energy – must be simultaneously pursued and advanced in a balanced way, so benefiting from mutually reinforcing synergies.

On the nuclear disarmament dimension, Portugal fully shares the frustration of so many other states for the slow pace of progress, notwithstanding being well aware of the broad range of challenges involved in the global process.

Portugal acknowledges the relevance of the ongoing international debate, including in the framework of three international Conferences, on the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of the use of nuclear weapons, either intentional or by accident and follows with great interest the evolving approaches to this issue.

An effective, verifiable and irreversible nuclear disarmament is indeed key to prevent all the risks of such catastrophic consequences. Portugal considers that a step by step approach, complemented by a building blocks' focus, offers the most practical and realistic strategy to achieve that common objective. But let me be clear: step by step has to mean that concrete steps are taken and cannot be an excuse for any type of stagnation or to simply keep the status quo.

Portugal firmly supports the complete fulfillment of obligations contained in Article VI of the NPT through all appropriate measures, *inter alia*, further reductions of nuclear arsenals, particularly by the countries with the largest arsenals, the de-alerting measures, the entry into force of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the beginning of the negotiations of a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty based on the document CD/1299 and on the mandate contained therein.



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In this regard, I would like to stress that Portugal strongly believes that all interested States should be able to participate in those negotiations. We are firmly convinced that the membership enlargement of the Conference on Disarmament would additionally contribute to overcome its long lasting stagnation.

Madam President,

Portugal remains concerned regarding the proliferation activities that have been reported during the last five years. We call on North Korea (DPRK) to definitely abandon its nuclear program and to fully comply with the NPT framework as a non-nuclear state. We also call and urge Syria to fully co-operate with the IAEA.

On the other hand, we welcome the agreement on key parameters of a Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action recently reached by the E3/EU+3 and the Iranian authorities. This step does actually confirms, once again, that diplomacy offers the best option to resolve the differences, no matter how far apart the starting point is. We strongly support the further required efforts to fulfil the obligations deriving from the preliminary agreement reached, so actively and constructively contributing to make the completion of a final agreement possible by the end of June.

The full implementation of the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime by all States would greatly contribute to a world free of nuclear weapons. It is our understanding that a comprehensive safeguards agreement, and the additional protocol, remain altogether the current IAEA verification standard and that any breach of the safeguards means a breach of article III, therefore implying the deprivation of the rights guaranteed by article IV. Furthermore, Portugal considers



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the proposal by the IAEA Director General, Yukiya Amano, on a state level approach, a very positive development on the understanding of safeguards, also effective to ensure undiminished security for all.

I also wish to recall the importance of export control mechanisms, notably the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Zangger Committee and the Missile Technology Control Regime.

On what concerns negative security assurances, I recall the UN Security Council resolution 984 (1995), as well as statements by the five nuclear weapon States recognising the value of such assurances. As regards the Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction and its delivery systems, Portugal regrets that, so far, it has not been possible to convene the Conference, despite the tireless efforts by the facilitator, Ambassador Jaakko Laajava. We call once again on all States of the region and the Co-Conveners to ensure that such Conference can take place soon.

Madam President,

Portugal supports the inalienable right of all Parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, without discrimination and in conformity with Articles I, II and III, in order to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

The discussion of questions regarding nuclear energy related issues should be kept strictly within an inclusive multilateral framework, namely when it comes to global safety and security issues, without ignoring the prime role of the States. The Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT), the IAEA Safety Action Plan, the IAEA Nuclear Security Plan 2014–2017 and the IAEA International Conference on Nuclear Security:



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Enhancing Global Efforts at the Agency's Headquarters from 1 to 5 July 2013, are some good examples of truly multilateral approaches to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. They also obviously reflect the NPT article IV spirit, "All the Parties to the Treaty undertake to facilitate, and have the right to participate in the fullest possible exchange of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy".

Portugal believes there is a need to further work on a common understanding on the content of article X regarding a State Party withdrawal from the NPT. We also believe there is an important role for the Security Council in addressing promptly any State Party's notice of withdrawal from the NPT.

Madam President,

Portugal remains confident that the major goal of the NPT, a world free of nuclear weapons, remains attainable. I would further stress our hope and again, our confidence that this Review Conference will offer a precious opportunity to expand common ground in order to strengthen the NPT regime.

Thank you.