



PORTUGAL

Statement by

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**Mr President of the General-Assembly
Mr. Secretary-General
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Mr. President, at the outset I would like to congratulate you on your election, which bears testimony to the strong commitment of Africa to the United Nations and to multilateralism. I wish also to express my appreciation for the dedication devoted to this Assembly by your predecessor, Ambassador John Ashe.

I reiterate my gratitude to the Secretary-General for his leadership at the helm of our Organization and for his relentless efforts in favour of peace in such a difficult and complex time. I commend him for the convening of the Climate Summit, which has renewed political support towards the achievement, in 2015, of a fair, universal and legally binding climate agreement. Portugal - and the European Union as a whole - will continue to work tirelessly, and in an inclusive manner, towards the achievement of that goal.

During this session we face the enormous challenge of renewing and building upon the Millennium Development Goals, with a view to the adoption of the post-2015 Development Agenda.

Mr. President, you may count with the support and commitment of Portugal on this and other issues and in the ongoing work of the General-Assembly, which is the first home of multilateralism and a main source of legitimate international collective action. The commitment of Portugal to the United Nations, to the Charter and to its principles and values is firm, resolute and enduring.

During the course of this GA session, Portugal is a candidate for the Human Rights Council, for the term 2015-2017. We hope to have the support of all of you in this upcoming election. If elected, Portugal will be serving for the first time as a member in such an important body.

Last April, Portugal underwent its Second Universal Periodic Review by the Human Rights Council. Our positive national human rights record was widely acknowledged. Portugal has actively participated in multilateral human rights *fora*, in particular in the Human Rights

Council, submitting annual resolutions on the right to education and on economic, social, and cultural rights.

We hope to be able to make an even greater contribution to the Human Rights Council over the coming three years, as we deeply believe in the Council's ability to strengthen the capacity of States to comply with their human rights obligations.

In this context, Portugal has submitted a bold set of pledges and commitments that will guide the discharge of our mandate, with the purpose of promoting and protecting the universality, indivisibility, inalienability and interdependence of all human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social.

Through our actions, we demonstrated, during our last mandate in the Security Council, in 2011-2012, that consistently promoting and upholding human rights is one of our priorities.

If elected, Portugal will engage in the work of the Human Rights Council fully committed to a strong, independent and effective multilateral human rights system. Portugal is, in fact, a Party without reservations to eight UN Human Rights core treaties and all their optional protocols.

Mr. President,

We continue to witness events which we expected to see eradicated in the XXI century – large scale human rights violations, the deprivation of vast populations of their most elementary dignity and the disregard of basic international principles such as the territorial integrity and the sovereignty of States.

Today the Charter of the United Nations, remains as relevant as it was 69 years ago. In order to deal with the crises we face today, we must base our search for fair, legal and lasting solutions in the generous and ambitious principles and norms of the Charter. The Charter offers the necessary institutional mechanisms. But their functioning and effectiveness depend on the political will of all members of this Organization.

Mr. President,

Terrorist, extremist and radical groups deserve our most vehement repudiation and condemnation. They constitute, in the first instance, a threat to the States and to the populations of the territories in which they are based. But they also present a risk to regional and global peace, security and stability. This menace requires concerted and firm responses from the international community.

The self-proclaimed "ISIS" is currently a sinister example of that kind of criminal and barbaric action. It must be fought and neutralized. The Security Council Summit and the resolution it adopted on the worrying phenomenon of "foreign terrorist fighters" were important steps in that direction.

The Middle East continues to require special attention. In Iraq we have been witnessing inhumane terrorist actions targeting defenceless populations and victimizing mainly women, children and persons belonging to ethnic and religious minorities.

The situation in Iraq cannot be disconnected from the prolonged conflict in Syria, where the levels of violence and suffering of the Syrian people are, by their dimension and duration, beyond words. All parties must assume responsibility for searching a political transition towards a democratic and pluralistic society.

Once again we come to this Assembly without progress in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The expectations that we all shared here a year ago have been dashed. The recurring cycle of hostilities must come to an end. The conflict we witnessed in Gaza this summer must not happen again. I wish to seize this opportunity to congratulate Egypt for brokering the ceasefire and to recognize the efforts of other regional and international partners, including the United Nations Secretary General and the Secretary of State John Kerry.

There will be no lasting peace or stability in the Middle East without a solution to this question. I reiterate my country's support to a solution, based on the United Nations resolutions, establishing a sovereign, independent and viable Palestinian State, living side by side with the State of Israel, whose legitimate security concerns must be guaranteed.

The positive signs that we witnessed a year ago regarding the Iranian nuclear program were confirmed with the signing of the Geneva "Joint Action Plan". A new political impetus is now needed. Portugal supports and encourages the ongoing negotiations with a view to a comprehensive agreement.

Mr. President,

The events of 2010 and 2011 in Northern Africa had an unprecedented political, economic and social impact on the countries of the region. These countries are now confronted with significant challenges regarding the consolidation of political reforms, sustainable economic growth and security.

Portugal is currently co-chairing the "Western Mediterranean Forum", also known as the "5+5 Initiative", which brings together 10 countries from the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. We wish to strengthen the contribution of this platform to the enhancement of cooperation and confidence-building between its countries.

Libya is an important partner of this Forum and it is with great concern that we witness the deterioration of the situation in this country. The international community must give its assistance to the political transition process but it is paramount that all Libyan stakeholders commit to an inclusive, genuine and fruitful national dialogue.

In Europe, the Ukrainian crisis and the illegal annexation of Crimea brought back tensions that we thought outdated. We welcome the ceasefire agreement and we appeal for its full implementation. Portugal encourages the parties to actively seek a comprehensive and lasting political solution respecting the sovereignty, territorial integrity, unity and democracy in Ukraine.

Mr. President,

Africa is a significant partner for Portugal. African States are not only political partners but also, increasingly, business and investment partners, by means of a relationship based on parity and mutual benefits, which drive job creation and economic development.

While fully respecting Africa's ownership, we also seek to contribute to international efforts, notably those of the United Nations, aimed at stabilizing conflicts or preventing security risks in Africa. Therefore, Portugal is participating in the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). We also stand ready to engage in multinational efforts seeking to strengthen the security of the Gulf of Guinea and, in this respect, we are willing to cooperate in the reinforcement of the maritime capacities of the countries of the region.

In recent months we have received good news from the Republic of Guinea-Bissau, a friendly country and member of the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP). The restoration of the constitutional order, the holding of free elections and the inauguration of legitimate democratic institutions, two years after the April 2012 coup, are surely signs of hope that deserve to be praised.

The enormous socio-economic difficulties and the recurrent and severe political instability that Guinea-Bissau has been suffering for one and a half decades did not prevent the Bissau-Guinean people to elect their new leaders through free, fair and orderly elections. The opportunity to "turn the page" on history must now be seized. The Guinean-Bissau people and authorities are taking the right steps. The consolidation of the progress achieved requires support from the International Community.

International partners can and must play a decisive role in areas such as capacity building and financial assistance, underpinning the priorities identified by Guinea-Bissau. Besides, we believe that a stabilization force based on ECOMIB, possibly enlarged to new African partners and mandated by the United Nations, would be appropriate. Therefore, we welcome the initiatives supporting Guinea-Bissau undertaken by the United Nations, together with, in particular, the African Union, the CPLP, ECOWAS and the European Union.

Mr. President,

At the Millennium Summit, Heads of State and Government made the historic and inspiring decision to adopt the Millennium Development Goals. We now have the responsibility to accelerate the achievement of those goals whilst preparing a new development

agenda. Portugal is strongly committed to the definition of this new agenda.

We need a transformative new global partnership which mainstreams human rights and combats inequalities. It should also promote peaceful, stable and just societies, advancing also the important issues of population and development.

Universality and shared responsibility are key concepts in this regard. But the universality of the post 2015 agenda should not be synonymous with insensitivity to the specificities of the least developed and most vulnerable countries, such as the Small Island Developing States.

New challenges such as climate change, illicit trafficking, piracy and pandemics are major threats in today's world.

The outbreak of Ebola in Western African countries demand strong combined efforts by the International Community to contain and eradicate this plague. Portugal is participating in the current urgent global effort, notably in Guinea-Conakry and in the framework of the United Nations operation.

Mr. President,

Despite the efforts of your predecessors, the reform of the United Nations Security Council has not yet materialized. Portugal's position on this subject is well known. In spite of persistent differences of approach among the membership, we must not give up. Together we must find a solution, making the Security Council a body better representing today's world. The 70th anniversary of the UN is also an opportunity to bring about Security Council reform.

Portugal is, by tradition, a sea-faring nation and has recently adopted a new National Maritime Strategy focusing on "blue growth". We actively support the United Nations' efforts on a sustainable management of the oceans and its resources. We co-chair the working group that will complete the first Global Report of the Marine Environment and we advocate the adoption of an international instrument, in the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, on conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction.

Portugal will organize, in June 2015, a major international event on Oceans – the “Blue Week” – to promote debate on maritime issues in all its dimensions. We look forward to a broad participation at this event.

Mr. President,

The Portuguese language is the link that brings together the States belonging to the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries. It is a vehicle for global communication, spoken by about 250 million people in their everyday life, in commerce, trade, business, culture and social networks.

It is also an official or working language in many international organizations, including specialized UN agencies. CPLP has the ambition of having Portuguese as an official language of the United Nations. The recent summit in Dili, last July, confirmed the vitality of CPLP. On that occasion, East Timor assumed the Presidency of the Community thus lending a whole new dimension and scope to the CPLP by having its Presidency located, for the first time, in Asia.

Mr. President,

I would be remiss to not refer to the fact that on November 20th we will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Portugal is a party to this legal instrument, without reservations, as well as to its three optional protocols. I would like to seize this opportunity to call for the universal ratification of this Convention and its optional protocols.

During this 69th General-Assembly session we will also have before us the resolution on the establishment of a moratorium on the death penalty. We hope it continues to enjoy significant and increased support this year.

If we become members of the UN Human Rights Council, as we hope, we will act in accordance with the principles of cooperation and dialogue. We will engage with all States and other stakeholders in order to build bridges for the full implementation of human rights norms and standards.

If we garner the trust of this Assembly in the forthcoming elections, it will be a privilege to work, as a Council member, with the new High

Commissioner for Human Rights, Prince Zeid Al-Hussein, to whom I would like to reiterate our full support. I would also like to pay a special tribute to the former UN High Commissioner, Ms. Navi Pillay, for her outstanding job, often accomplished in particularly difficult circumstances.

I conclude with a reference to World War I, a tragic event mentioned in the very beginning of the UN Charter when it affirms the determination *"to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind"*.

As we mark the centenary of World War I and prepare the celebration of the 70th anniversary of our Organization, we must bear in mind and reflect carefully upon those words.

You may count, Mr. President and Distinguished Delegates, with Portugal's commitment to the principles and purposes of the Charter in the pursuit of peace, development and respect for all human rights.

Thank you very much.