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Statement by
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Head of Delegation of Portugal to the
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Thank you Mr. President.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen

At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Mr Chairman, for your appointment as President of the First Review Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. I am sure that under your able leadership, we will once again be promoting the goals of the Convention with decisions that can gather an enduring consensus towards the future.

I would also like to address an ample word of appreciation to the Government of Croatia for hosting this Meeting and to extend the wishes of good cooperation to all participants in the Meeting.

Portugal fully shares the views expressed in the statement made on behalf of the European Union and would like to make some additional comments from a national perspective.

Mr. President,

Portugal considers the Convention on Cluster Munitions a step forward on ensuring the prevention of collateral victims in conflicts and post-conflict sceneries. The Convention on Cluster Munitions addresses the humanitarian consequences and the harm caused to innocent civilians by these types of weaponry. The synergies created between States, the international community and the civil society are essential to promote the humanitarian principals that are at the very core of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. We cannot forget the Humanitarian dimension of this treaty and its fundamental link with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Convention on Cluster Munitions has an impact on people's wellbeing and on the reintegration of innocent victims who have suffered the impact of the use of these kinds of weapons. It is

also important to remember the extraordinary impact that this convention may have on the prevention of gender-based violence.

On the present day, we are flooded by reports from all around the world regarding innocent victims that have fallen by the result of the use of cluster munitions. Reports of the use of this type of munitions in Sudan, South Sudan, Yemen, Syria and Ukraine are to be considered not only grave violations of International Humanitarian Law, but also an unacceptable consequence of the use of a type of weapon that has proven again and again to have caused grave injuries on innocent civilian populations. Portugal is equally appalled by the news that non-State actors may have also used cluster munitions and we fully condemn this practice.

The use of this type of munitions constitutes one of the most cruel faces of conflict, not only by the immediate lethality among civilians but also by the effects that perpetuate and leave deep scars in the lives of their victims and families but also in their communities. Let us be perfectly clear: the use of cluster munitions leaves a trail of unspeakable human suffering.

Mr. President,

The Vientiane Action Plan was an important and useful tool to turn the legal obligations of the Convention on Cluster Munitions into concrete actions. Portugal has successfully concluded all the actions regarding universalization and stockpile destruction. Not only Portugal has engaged in bilateral actions of outreach of the CCM, but also has promoted the topic of humanitarian consequences of the use of Cluster Munitions among the civil society and industry. Portugal has also promoted, mostly among the Portuguese speaking partners in Africa, risk reduction measures and has effectively exchanged information and technical know-how on this regard.

Since Portugal's ratification of this treaty we had the privilege and honour of working with Japan in 2012 and Ghana in 2013 towards the universalization of the CCM. We hold this experience dearly, and the lessons learned from these experiences helped us better understand the importance of the outreach activities related to the CCM.

Portugal continues to fulfil all its obligations regarding the implementation of the Convention, namely concerning article 3 and article 7, and fully accomplished the Transparency and information exchange actions foreseen in the Vientiane Action Plan. Still Portugal strives to promote its universalization among its partners.

Some of the main State producers of this kind of weapons still remain outside the CCM. Portugal believes that it is essential to continue to draw the attention of the major producers and users of cluster munitions on the indiscriminately lethal character of those weapons and thus to persuade them of the unlawful Humanitarian consequences of the use of such weapons.

Thus, efforts regarding the universalization of the Convention could tackle both ratification of the CCM and, if that is not possible, at least the promotion of a *de facto* situation that can eventually lead to the adherence to the CCM, such as a moratorium on the use, production and transfer of cluster munitions.

It is high time that we adopt a new Action Plan which may contribute for the development and implementation of the CCM. Moreover, time has come to think on how better we can organise our work, specially under the financial situation.

We hope the political declaration can be adopted by consensus. The agreed text, although not perfect, can be accepted by Portugal.

Finally, Mr. President,

Portugal takes this opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to the Disarmament efforts, in general, and to the CCM in particular. We remain convinced that if we keep working tenaciously together, peace and progress for the whole mankind may be reached faster.

I thank you Mr. President.