Statement by
H.E. Ambassador Jorge Torres Pereira,
Head of Delegation of Portugal to the Eleventh Meeting of States
Parties to the The Ottawa
Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and
Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

(Phnom Penh, 27 November 2011)

Mr President,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your appointment as President of the
11th Meeting of States Parties to the Ottawa Convention. I am sure that under
your leadership this meeting will further our goal of bringing to an end the
destruction and the fear caused by landmines.

As for our host, I take this opportunity to thank the Kingdom of Cambodia, a
country that has worked hard to minimize the humanitarian disaster caused by
these weapons.

[Portugal aligns itself with the EU statement earlier delivered.]

Mr President,

The tragic consequences of anti-personnel mines have for long concerned
Portugal. Landmines have an enduring, destructive effect, killing and maiming
innocent civilians, including those that were born after the end of the conflicts
in which they were used. In addition, economic and social development also
becomes seriously compromised, further punishing already impacted
communities.

This is why, Portugal has been involved, from the outset; in the process leading
to the adoption of the Ottawa Convention, actively participating in the drafting
of the text and swiftly signing it and further ratifying it. In fact, Portugal had
already stopped producing landmines well in advance of the Convention's entry
into force. Portugal has thus complied with all relevant provisions of the Ottawa
Convention from a very early stage.

Mr President,
One of the most disheartening features of landmines is, indeed, their prolonged destructive effect on people's lives. It is therefore clear that banning the production and the use of these weapons is but a beginning of a pathway we all here engaged in. Others, we hope, should join us in this journey.

In this regard, we are fully committed to the Cartagena Action Plan for 2010-2014, in particular to the thereof goals of assistance in demining and universalization of the Convention.

Concerning the former goal, Portugal has contributed both financially and with know-how, in the framework of the Portuguese cooperation and development policy.

As for universalization, Portugal notes with satisfaction the current membership of 157 States Parties to the Convention. This is an important achievement. However, efforts must continue until full universalization is completed.

Mr President,

Last year, Portugal hosted a Seminar, in Lisbon, attended by senior officials of all the Portuguese Speaking African Countries as well as Timor-Leste, which was an important opportunity for stock-taking and sharing of experiences in implementing the Ottawa Convention.

We are studying ways of further following up to this positive experience, so we can assist others in fulfilling the Convention's goals and work for a better and safer world.

Thank you, Mr President.