**Dialogue on the 7th periodic report of the Republic of Portugal on the implementation of the United Nations Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading treatment or Punishment**

Closing speech of the Portuguese delegation

Mr. Chairperson,

I avail myself of this moment to share our appreciation to the relentless commitment of this Committee and its honorable members to the noble task of enhancing human rights and banning all forms of Torture,Cruel, Inhumane or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

Portugal views this demanding experience as an opportunity to learn and improve our practices towards higher standards of protection of human rights.

We took good notice of your remarks, observations and suggestions and we look forward to the concluding observations to be rendered by this Committee. They will be thoroughly assessed with a view to their possible implementation. This constructive dialogue will enlighten many future political and legislative decisions.

We welcome the positive aspects acknowledged by the Portuguese National Prevention Mechanism as an example of good practices followed by my country, such as awareness-raising campaigns to protect particularly persons in vulnerable situations, to tackle domestic violence and trafficking in human beings.

Mr. Chairperson,

The delegation was invited to express its views on alternative measures to detention. Some years ago the Portuguese prison system had high rates of overcrowding. The judicial culture underwent a dramatic change, which can be summarized as follows (data of 2019):

- The incarceration rates have been consistently dropping since 2016 to 2019 (13.780 in 2016, 13.440 in 2017, 12.870 in 2018 and 12.840 in the current year).

- electronic tagging offers secure alternatives to imprisonment and has reached the number of 2000 individuals, including 511 of house arrests;

- provisional suspension measures of criminal proceedings *(“suspensão provisória do processo”)* increased to 7800;

- community service was extended to 4400 persons;

- suspended prison sentences reached the amount of 6000;

- probation cases increased to 1127.

These figures confirm that Portugal has a clear and steady policy on increasing alternative measures. We renew our commitment towards the promotion and implementation of these measures.

**Senhor Presidente, passo agora a palavra ao Representante Permanente de Portugal, Embaixador Rui Macieira.**

Gostaria de reiterar o total compromisso de Portugal para com o respeito, a proteção e a realização de todos os direitos humanos para todos sem discriminação.

Esta é uma tarefa sem fim e em que há sempre margem para melhorias. Contamos com o apoio e as recomendações dos Órgãos dos Tratados de Direitos Humanos das Nações Unidas.

Toda a Administração Pública Portuguesa estará envolvida na análise e execução das recomendações que este Comité nos dirigirá. Valorizamos muito também o papel das organizações da sociedade civil neste exercício e, bem assim, da nossa Instituição Nacional de Direitos Humanos.

Por fim, gostaria de agradecer a toda a equipa de intérpretes por todo o trabalho efectuado.

Muito obrigado.