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Ministra da Defesa Nacional

Intervenção da Ministra da Defesa Nacional, Helena Carreiras, na Cerimónia de Encerramento e Entrega de Prémios do *1st Military Running Challenge*.

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Vocativos

As the 1st edition of the Military Running Challenge draws to a close, I would like to state that it was an honour for Portugal to host and organise this important international military sports event.

The challenge was organised by the International Military Sports Council, a crosscutting global organization created after World War II, which brings together almost 140 countries and of which Portugal has been a proud member since 1956.

Allow me to congratulate the organisation for the support to the Portuguese Association of the Disabled people of the Armed Forces, an important gesture of solidarity that only underscores how we can go beyond the pure competitiveness often associated with sports competitions. Indeed, this is also the spirit of National

Defence: bringing together teams from different countries from several continents; moments of friendship, and comradeship; while not losing sight of the support that our disabled military personnel rightfully warrant.

These competitions also carry a significant historical-military component, since they take place at the “Linhas de Torres”, a set of military buildings constituted by forts and roads that protected the kingdom of Portugal at the beginning of the 19th century and that contributed to the current geopolitical configuration of Europe.

This competition is new within the International Military Sports Council. And while it has already achieved a relevant status in the context of civilian athletics, it can continue to grow and affirm itself in the context of other military sport initiatives. In addition,

it also allows for people to find out more about the region, the places, the military buildings and the history of the “Linhas de Torres”. With further international support and the commitment of the municipalities and local authorities that are involved with this Historical Route, we can make sure that the Military Running Challenge truly becomes a winning project.

Therefore, I would like to thank the Portuguese Directorate-General for National Defence Resources, the General Staff of the Armed Forces, the three branches of the Portuguese Armed Forces – especially the Army –, the Portuguese Association of the Disabled people of the Armed Forces, as well as the Historic Route of the “Linhas de Torres Vedras”. And a special word of appreciation for the work carried out by the Portuguese Military Physical Education and Sports Commission.

All these entities were instrumental in hosting this successful event and in embracing this project in a unique way, allowing it to reach a singular level of projection. I would also like to express my appreciation for the involvement of the Portuguese National Republican Guard and the Portuguese Public Security Police.

Finally, a special word of recognition to the athletes for their participation. I hope you had a positive experience. This event has certainly fostered new bonds of fellowship, and solidarity, based upon the spirit of fair play that I am certain is shared by all of you.

But I think the most important element for National Defence is the opportunity for reaching out to society and allowing people from outside the defence universe to get to know better our values in an informal setting.

I hope that we have met your expectations and that you take home with you excellent memories of this 1st Military Running Challenge, thus honouring the International Military Sports Council motto: "friendship through sport".

Thank you.