

**Statement by Ambassador Koonjul on the Situation on Angola
on 13 February 2002**

I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting today. We are very grateful to Mr. Kenzo Oshima for his briefing on the humanitarian situation in Angola. We would also like very warmly to welcome to this Chamber the Vice-Minister for External Relations of Angola and to thank him for his important and comprehensive statement. We are also very pleased to see here among us Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari, whose presence we salute and whose contribution to the search for a solution in Angola can never be overemphasized.

My delegation remains very concerned about the very precarious humanitarian situation in Angola today — a situation that is continuing to worsen day by day and is being further exacerbated by the atrocities committed by those who continue to reject peace and every effort at reconciliation. We had the opportunity to witness the gravity of the situation from the video projection that we watched this morning, as well as the one we watched in the Chamber last September. Those video projections showed the extent of the violence and suffering being inflicted upon innocent Angolan civilians.

Nobody could remain insensitive to the scale of impunity in Angola. There is little doubt that the primary responsibility for the situation lies with Mr. Jonas Savimbi and his UNITA group. The terrorist activities of UNITA and its leader remain the major cause of the large number of refugees and internally displaced persons there. Given what we saw in the videotape this morning, I think it is very appropriate that we place the activities of Jonas Savimbi in the same context as the attack on the World Trade Center and the tremendous international coalition to fight terrorism. I think that that is where we need to take the question of Savimbi.

The innocent people of Angola have been held hostage by UNITA for too long. It is important that every effort be deployed to spare them further suffering and to prevent UNITA from carrying out any further attacks on civilians. We believe that one way of doing that would be to tighten still further the sanctions against UNITA.

The statistics on the humanitarian situation in Angola are alarming. Last year, the Government and the United Nations estimated the total number of internally displaced persons to be approximately 3.8 million, of which 1.9 million were receiving assistance. With the recent fighting reported in the province of Mexico and elsewhere in Angola, the number of displaced people continues to grow. The United Nations Children's Fund has reported that a quarter of Angola's population is internally displaced and that most such people are living in camps. This has led to a plethora of problems. The food security situation remains fragile, and malnutrition is a significant underlying factor in the deaths of thousands of children and women in Angola.

We recognize the tremendous efforts being made by the Government of Angola in improving the humanitarian situation through its resettlement plans and by making available additional funds to tackle the increasing influx to urban areas of internally displaced persons. We also congratulate the Government for incorporating the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement into its national legal framework. We also commend the local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and the churches, which are playing an important role in providing humanitarian assistance to people in need. We encourage the Government, local NGOs and the churches to continue providing such assistance to the needy people.

We also greatly value the contribution of the United Nations agencies and other international organizations in relieving the dire humanitarian situation of millions of Angolans. We call on them to continue the delivery of much-needed emergency relief assistance. We also call on the international community to render the necessary financial support.

In this regard, I refer to Vice-Minister Chikoti's statement that the response of international donors to the 2001 Consolidated Inter-

Agency Appeal represented only 46.8 per cent of the expected amount. This indeed constitutes an important setback for the expectations of the Angolan Government. We call on the international community to contribute generously to this appeal fund.

The frequent acts of violence by UNITA and the problem of access are major obstacles for the agencies as they continue to deliver assistance to that in need. The international community should make it clear that those responsible for hindering the access of humanitarian personnel to the needy will be held responsible for their actions. We also wish to stress the importance of guaranteeing the security and safety, as well as the freedom of movement, of humanitarian personnel.

We would like to express our gratitude for the courage and determination of those who are working to relieve the human suffering in Angola, including the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the World Food Programme, the United Nations Children's Fund and other agencies. It is vital that all these humanitarian agencies work in close cooperation and in coordination with the Government of Angola, as well as with the civil society, to effectively alleviate the suffering of the population.

Finally, I would like to ask OCHA whether it thinks the Security Council can do more to improve the humanitarian situation on the ground in Angola.