

Statement by his Excellency

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Angola

at the General debate of the

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Nations



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Madam President,

On behalf of my government, allow me to congratulate you on your election to the presidency of the 61st Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. We are confident that under your guidance and leadership, this session will be productive and it will reach the objectives set for. Let me assure you my delegation's full cooperation.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express my country's appreciation to the Secretary General Kofi Annan for the valuable work done during the 10 years of his ending mandate.

Mr. Annan placed an indelible mark in the history of the United Nations by paying special attention to the most pertinent problems affecting our planet, especially the African continent. Angola praises the role Mr. Annan played during the most critical phase of its history. I want to believe that the future Secretary General of our organization will find in Kofi Annan's legacy an impressive reference for the reinforcement of the United Nations' capacity to deal with the main problems facing humanity.

Madam President, Excellencies,

The aspirations of the peoples of the Member States of this Assembly to stability, security and social justice continue unfulfilled. The persisting armed violence in some states and the faint results in the fight against world poverty have been contributing to this picture, which consequently makes them two of the chief challenges for the United Nations.

We face new tendencies in areas afflicted by violence: It is more indiscriminate; it emerges not only from inter-state or internal conflicts; instead it arises increasingly from actions that seek to alter the way of life of societies through intimidation and the brutal destruction of human lives.

In recent times alone, at least over a dozen countries in four continents were severely hit by acts of terror, which have become the most direct and immediate threat to international peace and security.

In spite of political or ideological differences, the international community has demonstrated firmness and unity in the fight against acts of terror. We are of the view that this form of collective action must continue to be the most appropriate road to work with the threats to international security, including terrorism.

Madam President, Excellencies,

Poverty indexes around the world are also a contributing factor for the bleak present-day international situation. Half of the world's population, the equivalent to about three thousand million people, continues to live with less than two dollars a day; 640 million people are without appropriate housing; 400 million people do not have access the drinking water, and 270 million people lack medical assistance, not to mention that close to 1 thousand million people have entered the 21st century as illiterates and with few hopes of emerging from spiritual and material poverty.

Africa is the most affected by this scourge and not even the potential for economic growth in the coming years for some of our countries encourages hope for a drastic reduction of the poverty indexes.

Notwithstanding this unwelcoming picture, the recent period has registered important progresses in the domain of peace and security, democracy, and respect for human rights.

For instance, the resolution through dialogue of the Angolan internal conflict, which was one of the longest conflicts in Africa,

constitutes one of the most significant cases of success in the world in this matter.

Recently, the Angolan Government undertook the road of dialogue and negotiation in order to extend the peace process to the territory of Cabinda, where some insecurity still persisted.

The establishment of peace in Angola was the supreme objective of a sensible and principled political process led by the President José Eduardo dos Santos, whose goals were to liberate, together with some forces in our region, the people of Southern Africa from the dominance of oppressor regimes; to resolve the conflicts in Central Africa through negotiation; to extinct the threat that some States represented to their neighbors, and to economically develop and integrate the region.

The fruits of this political endeavor are visible today: the people of the region who before were under oppressing regimes now live in freedom and have built democratic societies. With the support of Angola, one State in Central Africa overcame its internal conflict and its people recuperated their sense of peace and stability, having, once in freedom, taken charge of their destiny. Still in Central Africa, another State overturned the dictatorship that oppressed its people and that created a permanent focus of regional tension, since it acted as a source of instability for neighboring countries. Today, the people of this country are engaged in the construction of a democratic society by means of transparent elections and national reconciliation.

Madam President, Excellencies,

Now that peace has become a reality, the fundamental objective of Angola is the complete elimination of conflict factors.

In this context, we have prioritized the pursuit of political reforms in the context of the consolidation of a democratic regime and of a

righteous state, aware that these constitute pre requisites for the maintenance of peace, political stability, for guaranteeing respect for citizens' rights and economic development. This is a serious commitment that my government will not forsake, and whose main stage is the normalization of the regularity of elections.

The next electoral process is in a very advanced phase of preparation and voters' registration will begin next November. My government is creating all the necessary conditions to make the next elections transparent and credible so that their results are accepted by all parties, and so that they mark an early phase in the road to prosperity instead of a new decline. Therefore, the organization of the next elections is being carried out with safe and firm steps.

Also within our priorities is the reintegration of the displaced population, refugees and former combatants, as well as the rehabilitation of the economy and the reduction of poverty.

These areas have registered important progress: in only four years of peace, roughly 4,5 million displaced people and more than 400 thousand refugees have been resettled. Nearly 200 thousand former combatants and members of their families have been socially and productively reintegrated; countless infrastructures that were destroyed by the conflict are being rehabilitated.

The national economy is characterized by a solid macroeconomic stability that resulted from a coherent monetary and budget policy, placing it among the fastest growing economies in the world. For 2006 and coming years, we foresee a continuous and significant economic growth, in the order of 20 percent.

Moreover, the 4 years of peace have produced encouraging results in the social domain: poverty was reduced from more than 80% to 56%. With the continuous application of the existing poverty reduction programs and the solid investment in capital goods, we

foresee a gradual improvement of social well being and employment indexes in the short term.

The global advances my country achieved in 4 years of peace are evidence that the new Angola constitutes a compelling source of hope for its people. The international community can count on Angola as a dependable partner.

Madam President, Excellencies,

Important progresses have equally been made in other parts of the African continent. The Democratic Republic of Congo, a neighbor and brother of Angola, is steadily approaching normality, which is likely to contribute to the lessening of tensions in Central Africa and in the Great Lakes region. Recently, and for the first time in its history, the people of this country have exercised the right to freely choose their legitimate representatives.

Such an act marks a crucial stage in the process of democratic transition and consolidation of internal stability, and it became possible with the support of the international community, particularly of Angola, who supplied 30 million dollars as well as some logistical means for the electoral process.

Angola has, and will always stand by the Congolese people, having in the past contributed to the ceasing of the internal conflict that devastated the country, and presently, contributing to the capacity building of the Congolese institutions in charge of guaranteeing internal peace, security and order.

Now, it is the Congolese parties' responsibility to demonstrate that they are truly committed to peace and democracy. We want to believe that they will not disappoint the expectations of their people and of the international community, and that they will respect the verdict of the votes.

Excellencies,

The situation in Cote d'Ivoire remains volatile. The Ivorian people continue to be the main victim of a conflict that compromises the country's future. Angola associates itself with the efforts of the international community in order to identify a definitive peaceful resolution of the conflict in this brother country.

In the Middle East, the persistence of a climate of violence is rendering ineffective any peace blueprints that aim to resolve the conflict between Israel and Palestine. Angola defends the right to existence of all States in the area, and their right to live in peace with their neighbors.

The return to a process of peaceful resolution of the conflict based on the road for peace can represent an appropriate basis for the pursuit of a global solution that leads to regional stabilization.

Furthermore, Angola hopes that the people of Iraq and of Afghanistan can in the short term fulfill their aspirations of living free from violence and from tension as long as they are respected as sovereign people and genuine States.

To conclude, we would like to reiterate our desire to see accelerated the process of reform of the United Nations, mainly of its Security Council. The present composition of this organ is anachronistic and fails to reflect the contemporary structures of the international community.

In line with the reform of the United Nations system, we would like to stress the importance of the recent creation of the Commission for Peace Consolidation, and of the Human Rights Council. In this context, I would like to express my gratitude for

the trust deposited in my Country to preside over the Commission for Peace Consolidation in the first years of its existence.

Thank you very much.