

Mr. Chairman,

Allow me to express, on behalf of the delegation of Angola, my warmest congratulations to you and to the other members of the bureau on your election. I would like to assure you my delegation's full cooperation in the deliberations and work of this committee.

My Delegation aligns itself with the statement made by the distinguished representative of South Africa on behalf of G77 and China, and also by the distinguished representative of Malawi on behalf of Southern African Development community.

Mr. Chairman,

We thank the Secretary General for his comprehensive reports on these two important agenda items. It is our view that the study on all forms of violence against women provides useful insight into the progress and contains many crucial and action oriented recommendations. This issue constitutes a serious obstacle to equality, development, and peace.

Therefore my government reaffirms that the full implementation of the goals and objectives of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the Outcome of the 23rd Special Session of the General Assembly is an essential contribution to achieving world development goals. Our leaders declared: "We remain convinced that progress for women is progress for all."

Our leaders agreed to promote gender equality and eliminate pervasive gender discrimination with several measures. These measures would include:

- Eliminating gender inequalities in schools;
- Guaranteeing the free and equal right of women to own and inherit property;
- Ensuring equal access to reproductive health;
- Promoting women's equal access to work;
- Eliminating all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls;
- and
- Promoting increased women's representation in governmental decision-making bodies.

My Government joins those that believe that improving women's education, reproductive health, and economic opportunities is of great strategic value, and also an essential factor for the attainment of the Millennium Development goals. The elimination of violence against women is of vital importance. Investments in this domain can bring immediate benefits that will have a positive impact in the coming generations.

Mr. Chairman,

According to the international engagement and the need to provide populations with better basic services and to promote social harmony, and in line with the social sector policies of the process of National reconstruction, the Government of Angola dedicates 28,5% of its budget to the implementation of measures that seek to guarantee women's participation in prominent positions and that reinforce women's professional qualifications.

To that effect, the Government is implementing a country-wide increase of schools, as well as sensitization campaigns in rural areas seeking to reduce the disparities between men and women with regards to illiteracy rates, extension of family planning centers to less accessible and poorer areas, implementation of programs of promotion of women's development, continuation of the politics of personal micro-credit with a view to reducing women's economic dependence, and implementation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

Even without fixed participation quotas, women in Angola have always had a central role in all the levels of our society. However, there continue to be active efforts in order to reinforce this participation, with a highlight to the constitutional revision of 1992, which has provided a step forward towards equality between men and women.

Mr. Chairman,

It is not possible to dissociate internal conflicts from the difficulties afflicting women. My country, which has recently emerged from a conflict that caused serious physical and emotional losses, has levels of violence against women that are characteristic of societies that have lived in a culture of violence.

However, we would like to point out that we have registered much progress in the fight against violence against women, which are the result of several educational campaigns on violence against women and children. We are aware that there is

much to be done, and in this context, my government's social policies prioritize the family as the pillar of our society, as well as youths and children.

Intent on creating an atmosphere that fosters the progressive implementation of the Declaration of Beijing and its Platform for Action, the Government has activated a process of revision of the criminal and civil procedural codes, foreseeing the integration and harmonization of traditional common laws into the juridical system in order to eliminate the existent discrimination, but safeguarding the traditions of our people.

In its post-conflict phase, Angola registers very encouraging figures in relation to violence against women. From 2003 to 2005, the several forms of violence against women have suffered a reduction of 50 percent. This number is connected to the constant training on human rights that the Government, in conjunction with the United Nations and NGO's, has been developing together with the police, the armed forces, and the population in general.

Mr. Chairman,

The reconstruction period offers us the opportunity of building our society again, to address inequalities, and to promote policies and programs focused on women, turning more effective their full participation in the social development of Angola.

To conclude, we would like to assure you that our country will utilize all resources available in order to accelerate women's full participation in all sectors of society, and to eliminate all forms of violence against women and children.

I Thank you