**Security Council Open Debate**

Ministerial meeting regarding the situation in Syria

18 December 2015

**Statement**

Mr. President,

We thank the US Secretary of State Mr. John Kerry for presiding over this meeting.

The conflict in Syria became one of the most appalling situations confronting the international community, with far-reaching political, humanitarian and economic repercussions.

The Security Council has addressed this issue on innumerous occasions, with a feeling of despair prevailing due to the grim situation faced by the Syrian people. The Angolan delegation, during the debates on the Syrian situation, often acknowledged its disappointment with the lack of political will by the major stakeholders to search for effective, real and durable solutions to end this war, which has claimed the lives of so many innocent people while displacing millions.

Now, as we reach the end of the year, we look forward with a sense of renewed hope, due to the apparent determination, by the international community, to defeat terrorism and the positive momentum for a political resolution to the conflict in Syria.

Mr. President,

The recent upsurge of brutal terrorist attacks, namely in Paris, Beirut, Iraq, Ankara, Egypt, Bamako and elsewhere, and the staggering refugee crisis from Syria, seem to have played the role of a game changer, by making the international community understand the implications of allowing conflicts to degenerate to such extents as has been the case of the crisis in Syrian.

People suffering under such deplorable conditions, for such prolonged period of time, while international organizations and world powers are unable or unwilling to protect them, are an easy prey for recruitment by radical and extremist elements.

Exclusion, poverty and armed conflict are breeding grounds for these violent extremist groups to spread their ideology of hatred and intolerance, as is the case with ISIL or Daesh, and other terrorist organizations operating in the Region.

It is reassuring, that the international community has began to turn the tide, by taking positive steps towards a political transition in Syria, that meets the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people and will, hopefully, enable them to independently and democratically determine their own future, while repudiating extremist elements such as ISIL/Daesh and Jabhat al-Nusrah among others.

Mr. President,

We welcome the outcomes of the recent Syria talks in Vienna, and the specific steps outlined, with regard to the political process in Syria, notably the request for UN Secretary-General’s Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura to convene a meeting with the Syrian government and opposition by January 2016.

In this regard, we stress the importance of identifying members representing the entire spectrum of opposition forces, and that both sides start discussing, without further delay, the end of hostilities, the establishment of a sustainable cease fire as the first step towards a meaningful political process enabling a new future for Syria.

It is also imperative that the parties to the conflict begin implementing confidence-building measures on the ground, in order to attain the set deadlines for the political process, agreed by the International Syria Support Group, on a joint national unity government, on the drafting of a new constitution, and on the holding of elections based on that constitution.

Mr. President,

One of the most pressing issues, at the moment, is to put an end to violence. As the refugee crisis demonstrates, the humanitarian catastrophe needs to be reversed, by creating conditions for a ceasefire, permitting the safe return of displaced people and refugees to their homes.

In the meantime, however, we shouldn’t forget the collective obligation to continue providing humanitarian aid, until life can be restored back to normal in Syria.

In conclusion, M. President, we would like to reiterate our support to the principles of the Geneva Communiqué, and the constructive measures adopted at the Vienna meetings regarding the way forward in the resolution of the Syrian conflict.

We also welcome the broad-based international coalition to fight the so-called Islamic State or Daesh and other terrorist groups. Auspiciously, it became evident that inaction was no longer suitable, given the dangerous proliferation of extremism throughout the world and its impact on the daily lives of peoples everywhere.

A unified stand in the fight on terrorism is crucial. Terrorists can't prevail anywhere in the world. The more the international community is divided or States selfishly pursue their national interests, the more the terrorists prey on vulnerable and alienated communities in conflict ridden areas, thereby swelling their ranks and increasingly threatening international peace and security.

Thank you, Mr. President