**Statement made by H.E. Ambassador Ismael A. Gaspar Martins**

 **Permanent Representative of the Republic of Angola to the United Nations**

 **On the occasion of the 40th Anniversary of the Independence of Angola**

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you here to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the independence of Angola.

I thank you all for joining us in this celebration.

40 years ago, on the night of November 11, 1975, Dr. Agostinho Neto proclaimed the independence of Angola, becoming its first President.

The declaration of independence was part of a long struggle waged for over 500 years by Angolans of all origins, with Queen Njinga Mbandi of the Matamba Kingdom standing out as one of the most heroic figures.

The long struggle for independence was hard and painful. The proclamation of independence was a turning point for Angola and for Africa. Tonight, in this celebration, we express our gratitude to all peoples and countries that, by their solidarity, contributed to the end of colonialism in Angola.

The years that follow independence were equally challenging, as the country had to face a four-decade civil war, which ended 13 years ago.

Since the signing of the Peace Agreement in 2002, Angola embarked with determination on a program of national reconciliation and national reconstruction, while the Angolan people was set in consolidating economic independence with ensuing impressive economic growth.

Nowadays, the Angolan people are proud of their history and achievements:

* Angola went from a torn-war country to build a dynamic and vibrant democracy.
* It quit the Security Council Agenda to serve as a non-permanent member of the Council, now for the second time.
* Being a country heavily dependent from international aid, Angola became a prosperous economy.

Angolan keeps moving forward. The current generation is now enjoying the dividends of peace that we are intent to preserve.

War and violence are things of the past. Political issues are addressed through peaceful and democratic means.

In light of this, Angola will hold its next general elections in 2017.

The democratic and national unity processes are fully consolidated.

The Government is determined to build a fair and equitable society, based on sustainable and inclusive economic development, in accordance with international standards.

Thanks to the political stability that Angola currently enjoys, it is actively engaged in contributing to regional and international peace, stability and economic development.

I will give you some examples:

* As President of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region, we continue working with other countries for the stabilization of the region.
* Angola has an active participation in the UN Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.
* As a non-permanent member of UN Security Council for a second time in 13 years, we are working to advance Global Peace, Security and Development.
* Angola and Australia are co-facilitating the 2015 review of the UN peace building architecture and, in this capacity, we are committed to work with the UN membership and relevant partners to advance our collective efforts to sustain peace worldwide. We are very honored to undertake this endeavor, as Angola was the first President of the PBC when it was created, in 2005, and was at the forefront for its establishment.

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

As a young country, Angola still has a long way to go. The country still faces huge challenges, either political, social or economic. However, the Angolans are confident that in peace and with stability they will be able to overcome these challenges.

To that end, the Angolan government has adopted policies to accelerate the economic diversification aimed at gradually reducing the dependency in oil.

Investment in human capital, in agriculture, industry and in the rehabilitation of economic and social infrastructure are key priorities.

As a result, thousands of roads have been built, landmines have been cleared and the people can now return to their land. The repair and reconstruction of ports and airports now makes it possible for Angolans to travel within their country. The growth of the telecommunications sector—along with the rehabilitation of the railroad networks, are all instances of the push for economic recovery and diversification.

 In addition, we are increasing investment in the social sectors, particularly in health and education, in order to boost social indicators, while the social reintegration of ex-soldiers into the Defense and Security Forces and into society has made remarkable advances. So far, over 112,000 ex-soldiers have been reintegrated.

Moreover, the private sector and its investment law have just been reformed to create a climate that is more conducive to investment and to attract FDI (Foreign Direct Investment).

Nevertheless, in the current year, Angolan economic stability has been disrupted by several sources of uncertainty, imposing a sharp reduction in resources and public spending. However, all efforts are being deployed by the State to continue providing the bulk of public and social services.

To conclude, let me stress that the Angolan economy is well underway to becoming even more competitive at the regional and international levels. We kindly invite you to mobilize the private sector in your respective countries to consider investing in such a promising country.

I wish you all a very enjoyable evening.