

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Distinguished Members of the Security Council of the United Nations,

Illustrious Members of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. Chairman,

I would like to start by conveying our appreciation to you for holding this high-level session on peace and security in Africa.

I am greatly honored to participate in this forum on behalf of the President of the Republic of Angola, His Excellency José Eduardo dos Santos, who, for imponderable reasons, could not travel to New York. Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of my Government and on my own behalf, for the wise manner in which you have been conducting the work of the Security Council, in particular for the opportunity and pertinence of including in its agenda an issue that is vital to the good performance of the Council, and that is related to peace and security in Africa.

I would equally like to express my appreciation to the previous President of this Council for the constructive manner in which he, together with the UN Secretary-General, contributed to the realization of this important High-level Session, which happens at a juncture when both the UN and the AU are confronted with multiple and complex challenges linked to peace and development in the African continent.

Mr. Chairman,

On the occasion of the Security Council Session of 2007 on the same topic, under the French presidency, the Council recognized, among other aspects, the fundamental role of Regional and Sub-regional Organizations in the prevention and resolution of conflicts on the basis Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, as well as of resolutions 1625 and 1631, both from 2005, to which we can add Presidential Declaration 2005/39.

The Security Council reiterated the importance of the relevant paragraphs of the Declaration of the 2005 Summit (A/RES/60/1), on the need for development aid for Africa, and the strengthening of the African Union's operational capacity for peacekeeping operations for a 10-year period.

Africa is aware that the principal causes for the conflicts in the continent have a direct relationship with circumstances resulting from the complexity of its ethnic and linguistic phenomena; however they are also fundamentally linked to the underdevelopment that is a consequence of the undeniable legacy of a long period of colonization that dramatically marked the course of its history.

It is in that context that the African Union, along with Sub-regional Economic Communities, has been deeply engaged in the operationalization of its peace and security structures, namely the African Standby Force, the Early Warning System, the Panel of Wise and the Special Fund for Peace and Security.

We understand that in order for the UN and the AU to be able to adequately counter the constraints related to the efficiency of the necessary cooperation in the domain of conflict prevention, management and resolution, it is utmost necessary to address the issues of peace and security in an inclusive manner, not dissociating them from development problems.

The convergence of these elements is crucial for the success of peacekeeping operations. This is one of the lessons we learned while following and observing certain conflict resolution, peace consolidation, and economic reconstruction processes as the first president of the Peacebuilding Commission of the United Nations, in the period of 2006/2007.

Mr. Chairman,

As we have already mentioned, peace and social development are correlated elements that complement one another. Having achieved peace, the Republic of Angola has been undertaking enormous efforts towards the creation of subjective and material conditions for its reconstruction, with a view to reaching sustained development.

The accomplishments of my Government have deserved the recognition of all the Angolan society and the international community, in light of the tangible results already reached in the recovery of the economic and social infrastructures destroyed during the war, and the construction of new infrastructures. Judging from the positive trend in our economic growth, which is above of 19%, our perspectives are frankly encouraging.

It is in this perspective that the Angolan Government conceived and is implementing the National Strategy of Poverty Reduction in order to reach the human development indicators as avowed in the Millennium Declaration.

Our experience has demonstrated that in the African context, the consolidation of peace results from the combination of various factors, such as the conception and implementation of a coherent policy of national reconciliation; the implementation of economic reforms that favor the provision of ample space for free initiative on the part of national and foreign citizens; the constant reinforcement of the state authority as an imperative condition for the consolidation of democratic institutions; the respect for, and safeguard of human rights as a component of peace, democracy and development, among others.

Indeed, under the able leadership of His Excellency the President of the Republic, José Eduardo dos Santos, Angola has been removing the hurdles that hindered the smile of its People.

Today, only six years after the end of the internal conflict that dilacerated the country during several decades, peace and national reconciliation are consolidated, and with them democracy, whose consecration will be strengthened with the holding, for the second time in the history of Angola, of the legislative and presidential elections foreseen for 2008 and 2009, respectively.

The Republic of Angola reiterates, therefore, its firm commitment to working in a self-sacrificing and altruistic manner in the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, and in the sub-regional organizations of which it is a member, towards helping to find peaceful solutions for the conflicts that still persist in certain countries of our continent.

To this effect, my Government considers of extreme importance the cooperation between the African Union and the United Nations.

I would like to state that my delegation will support the deliberative text that will result from our debate.

Thank you very much.