



REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA

STATEMENT

BY HIS EXCELLENCY JOÃO BERNARDO DE MIRANDA,

MINISTER OF EXTERNAL RELATIONS

AT THE 63rd SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE UNITED NATIONS

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 26th, 2008

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Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

I am particularly grateful to address this noble assembly on behalf of His Excellency José Eduardo dos Santos, President of the Republic of Angola.

I would like to start by warmly congratulating Mr. Miguel d'Escoto on behalf of my Government for having been elected to preside over this organ. We wish you a successful mandate and you may be assured of my country's support.

This session of the General Assembly takes place at a time of serious challenges for the international community such as:

- The food crisis;
- The rise in fuel prices;
- The unexpected climate change;
- The financial crisis;
- The escalation of Cold War rhetoric; and
- Terrorism.

The global dimension and the negative impact of these challenges on the lives of million of living beings in all continents indicate that we stand at a critical moment, which must be overcome with a collective response wherein the central role befalls on the United Nations. But above all, it is also necessary for each state to act individually.

Regarding the financial crisis, it is necessary to adopt measures that contribute to the prevention of serious consequences on the world economy, especially the economies of the more vulnerable countries.

These measures have to be effective and should favor the reduction of the negative impact on the progress that African countries have already attained through the implementation of reforms which have allowed for an annual growth of 5%.

We are also concerned with the rise in food prices, which is a hard blow to the efforts to fight poverty, and which affects more than 1 billion people. This rise in food prices is closely linked to climate change, which is not only causing the destruction of infrastructure and basic means of subsistence in many countries, but also forcing millions of people into poverty.

The elimination of distorting elements in international trade is also fundamental to solve the world food crisis. The agricultural subsidies provided by developed countries to their farmers are ruining the production of farmers in poor countries, limiting their access to international markets.

Further aggravating this scenario, we witnessed the failure of the World Trade Organization negotiations of last July during the Doha round. Their collapse eliminated the chances of concluding, in the short term, a general trade agreement that would remove such subventions and other obstacles to international commercial exchanges.

The Republic of Angola hopes that negotiations will resume as soon as possible and that their main actors will show the necessary flexibility so that countries that are underprivileged as a result of the lack of a global trade agreement, will not remain eternally marginalized from the global economy.

Reverting this extremely dangerous situation, particularly for the countries of the South, requires that this Assembly makes intense efforts hereafter. Our hope is that Your Excellency will steer the debate towards these concerns. The Republic of Angola commits itself to contribute, to the best of its capacity, to identifying solutions to these problems that affect all States.

Mr. President,

South-South cooperation, including triangular cooperation, have the potential to contribute towards the eradication of poverty through the establishment of partnerships for sustainable development, trade, investment, tourism, crime prevention, combating drug trafficking, illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and transnational organized crime.

In this connection, Angola is honored to chair the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic, an effective inter regional mechanism for cooperation in the areas of development, peace, and security among its 24 Member States in Africa and South America.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to assure our international partners that the Republic of Angola is more than ever motivated to assume the responsibilities that emanate from being a member of the institutions of the international community, both at the level of the African continent and of the United Nations.

Our engagement and commitment will, in the meantime, continue to be primarily in maintaining peace, security, the consolidation of democracy, respect for human rights and sustainable economic development, based on the social laws of a market economy that will safeguard the interests and the satisfaction of the majority of the population.

These were the principles that guided our trajectory as a country, especially since the end of the Cold War. A coherent application of these principles is the basis for the progress that Angola is building in the political, social and economic domains.

As a result, since 2002, a climate of peace prevails in the entire country with the eradication of conflict factors and important advances in national reconciliation, emergence of a highly entrepreneurial private sector, a dynamic civil society and a free, vibrant, and active press.

In the last five years, Angola has been registering high economic growth rates. During this period, the GDP grew at an estimated rate of 14,7% in real terms. The non-oil sector, which grew at a rate of 17,4%, grew faster than the oil sector, which reached an annual growth rate of 12,7%. This allowed the unemployment rate, which in the mid 90's was estimated at 45%, to decrease to an estimated 22,5% in 2007. The relative weight of the extractive industry, dominated by the oil and diamond subsectors, grew at a significant rate of 61,6%.

Moreover, Angola saw a reduction in inflation levels from 105,6% in December 2003 to 11,78% in December 2007, as well as a switch in public accounts from a deficit of 7,0% of the GDP in 2003 to a surplus of 11,4% of the GDP in 2007.

These figures encourage us to be optimistic in relation to the implementation of the MDGs.

Excellency,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On September 5th of this year, Angola added one more pillar to its democratic structure by holding Legislative elections in an environment of transparency and total freedom.

Despite the criticism and pressure on the Angolan Government to hold the elections earlier independently of the objective and subjective conditions then prevailing, the discernment of its leader, His Excellency Jose Eduardo dos Santos, demonstrated that the elections were held at the most adequate moment.

With the gradual, yet significant improvement of the quality of life of the populations, and with fully conciliated and peaceful spirits, the emergence of a climate of tolerance and political coexistence found its optimal space. The elections were indeed an expression of the reaffirmation of our dignity.

All the efforts that surrounded the complex electoral process and that led to the success of this historic feat were made with the very human and material resources of the Angolan Government.

We are proud to have once more given a good example of political maturity, civic discipline and inclusive popular participation. This gives us the joy to state before this Assembly that as other peoples of the world, Africans have the capability and the ability to craft their own destiny and develop participatory democracy.

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Armed conflicts continue to absorb resources from both the international community and the parties involved. These resources are better utilized for the well being of the populations in affected territories.

However, for the first time in many years, Africa is experiencing a significant reduction in conflict, allowing for an improvement of its economic indicators. The progress in the peace process in Cote d'Ivoire, as well as the consolidation of peace under way in Sierra Leone and in Liberia have brought about a new aura of hope.

Furthermore, despite some tension in the East of the DRC, the progress made in the country is manifestly encouraging.

We hope that the efforts currently being made by the United Nations, by the African Union, as well as by regional organizations will help resolve the conflicts in Somalia and Darfur in a peaceful manner.

Mr. President,

As Chair of the SADC's Political, Defense and Security Organ, Angola gave its maximum, together with the countries of this organization and the facilitator, to support the negotiation process with a view to putting an end to the political crisis in Zimbabwe.

Angola rejoices with the Interparty Agreement reached in Zimbabwe and will continue to make efforts in order to help the parties put national interests above all personal quarrels so as to ease the return to political stability and to revert the grim economic situation that prevails in the country.

We appeal to the international community, particularly the European Union, to support the program aimed at overcoming the crisis that will be elaborated by the Inclusive Government resulting from the Interparty Agreement, as well as the subsequent lifting of the sanctions imposed on this country.

We need, however, to remain vigilant due to the possibility of the eruption of new potential conflicts because of the political instability that exists in other countries of the continent. We must invest in preventive diplomacy and in strengthening of rapid alert mechanisms.

In the Middle East, the latest developments seem to bring a light at the end of the tunnel with regards to a definitive resolution of the Palestinian and the Israeli-Arab issue. Angola encourages the parties involved to engage in a dialogue that will lead to the *de facto* and *de jure* establishment of a Palestinian State, with recognized borders, coexisting side by side with Israel.

Mr. President,

My government remains solidary with the Common African Position and with all those who advocate the need to democratize the United Nations and to reform its system, including the expansion of the Security Council, so as to have reflected in it a fair and equitable regional representation with all the rights inherent to a member.

I would not like to end my statement without once more conveying my regret to this Assembly for the continuation of the embargo that Cuba is being subjected to by the U.S.A. This constitutes a situation that does not comply with the rules that govern the relations between States. This is an age of peaceful coexistence among peoples and nations. This embargo wounds the universal collective conscience of our time.

Thank You