STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY
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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA
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AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
Thank you, Mr. President,

Allow me congratulate you for your election to President of the First Committee. My congratulations are extensive to your work team. I would like to assure you of the collaboration and support of my delegation for the success of the work of the First Committee.

Angola remains deeply concerned with the issue of the illicit traffic and proliferation of small arms and light weapons due to their negative impact on the security and stability of countries. In Africa, this are indeed even more harmful and the cause of widespread loss of human lives.

As in any country emerging from conflict, combating the proliferation and the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is one of the priorities of the Angolan Government's peace and national reconciliation policy.

The development of the national program of action for the reduction, prevention, and management of the problem of small arms and light weapons, is based on an international commitment to address this scourge.

By unanimously adopting in 2001 the Program of Action, Member States of the United Nations committed themselves to collecting and destroying illegal weapons, and that was an important decision to the control of conventional arms.

However, there is a pressing need for a greater commitment from the international community, culminating in the negotiation, conclusion, and entry into force of a future Arms Trade Treaty.

Mr. President,

At the national level, my Government has taken a set of measures to address this problem. In April 2008, the Government adopted the Program of Action for the Disarmament of the Civilian Population,
which defined the strategy of collecting illicit weapons, focusing on the following target groups:

- Disarmament of civilians in possession of weapons of war;
- Disarmament of delinquents;
- Disarmament and military Police in illegal possession of weapons of war;
- Replacement of the weapons of war used by Private security companies; and,
- Removal of weapons of war from hidden stockpiles.

For its implementation, the program was divided into four phases, namely, organization and awareness, voluntary surrender of weapons, compulsory collection of weapons, and control and balance.

The organization phase included reviewing the legislation related to the trade in firearms, as well as hunting and recreation weapons, the laws on private security companies, and regulations on the use of weapons of war by the Armed Forces and the National Police.

The awareness phase included the organization of seminars and mass information campaigns in the media for the collection of weapons. The populations surrendered 1,939 weapons of several calibers.

During the phase of voluntary surrender of weapons, the populations surrendered 32,986 weapons of different calibers, including the voluntary surrender of 4,675 weapons held illegally by the military and the police.

During the phase of compulsory collection of weapons, 8,666 weapons of different calibers were collected. As a consequence of the coercive action, criminal lawsuits were started, in which 58 persons were tried for illegal possession of firearms, and offenders were given prison sentences ranging from 6 to 7 months.

After a year of implementing the Program of Action for the disarmament of civilians, the results are as follows:
• Weapons surrendered and collected: 55,064;
• Ammunition surrendered and collected: 200,266;
• Gun chargers surrendered and collected: 35,665;
• Explosives surrendered and collected: 15,781;
• Gun stockpiles found: 49.

From the total of weapons collected, it was found that 34,015 are in good technical condition, and 21,049 in poor condition. The ones that are in good condition have been and will be forwarded to the Armed Forces and National Police, depending on their caliber, while the obsolete ones are being destroyed.

The results though a good indication of an ongoing work show however that we still have a long way to go. Unfortunately, Angola does not have an accurate estimate of the number of weapons in illegal possession of civilians. However, the Government of Angola has spared no efforts in the struggle to disarm its population, placing and reinforcing the responsibility of its relevant law and order institutions to the urgency of these important task.

Mr. President,

Before concluding, I wish to inform you that in the above endeavor, my country counts on the valuable contribution of national and international Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as Angola 2000, the Hallo Trust, the Center for Strategic Studies of Angola and religious institutions.

In this ongoing process, we also highlight the following achievements:

• Organization of seminars with the help of the UN in order to train instructors in the field of disarmament of the civilian population;
• The exchange of experiences in this area with neighboring countries who live the same reality;
• Signing of a protocol with the Center for Strategic Studies of Angola to carry out an inquiry on the impact of disarmament in the country; and,
• Signing of a protocol of cooperation with the NGO The Halo Trust for the destruction of obsolete weapons.

Furthermore, Angola is aware of the long road that lies ahead and would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the appeal to the international community, in particular the traditional partners in this fight, to continue to provide all the support necessary to the attainment of disarmament goals.

Thanks to the brave actions carried out by the Angolan Government in the first phase, we have registered a reduction in the proliferation of firearms and the consequent reduction of crimes committed with the use of these which has been a significant contribution to a greater sense of security of our citizens.

Thank you.