



Permanent Mission of
The Republic of Angola to the United Nations

STATEMENT BY

**H.E. AMBASSADOR ISMAEL A. GASPAR MARTINS
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

AT THE THIRD COMMITTEE

**ON AGENDA ITEM 28:
ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mr. Chair,

Since this is the first time that my delegation is taking the floor during this session, allow me to congratulate you for your assumption as chair of this committee, and to commend you for the well conducted work of the committee.

My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by Algeria on behalf of the member countries of the G77 and China, Camerouns on Behalf of the African Group, as well as with the statement delivered by Malawi on behalf of SADC.

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the comprehensive reports provided on this agenda item with special emphasis on violence against women and girls.

Mr. Chair,

Excellencies,

The situation of women in the World—and especially in developing countries remains much of concern, as there are enormous challenges related to the growing trend of feminization of poverty; the increase in single-parent families headed by women due to the migration of men to the cities; barriers arising from cultural issues that in most cases are discriminatory against women; the poor supply of basic social services such as education, reproductive health, water, sanitation, and basic habitability, coupled with production and livelihood problems, as well as access to technology, credit and micro-credit, and difficulties in the marketing of agricultural products, particularly in the case of rural women.

Gender equality has always been a priority issue for the government of Angola. In 1991, was created the Secretariat of State for the Promotion and Development of Women in order to ensure that Women and Gender issues were addressed by the Council of Ministers. In 1997, after the Beijing Conference, the Secretariat of State for the Promotion and Development of Women evolved to a Ministry, the Ministry for Family and the Promotion of Women.

Mr. Chair,

This decision propelled the Constitution to establish equality between men and women in the socio-economic, cultural and political spheres, and this principle is also embodied in the CEDAW's Charter on Human Rights as well as in all international and regional instruments relating to women's rights, gender equality and family.

In this connection, policies and programs have been adopted for the stability and welfare of women, and to ensure their full and equal participation in decision-making processes. With our last General Election in August this year, Angola keeps the growing numbers of women's participation in the parliament and in government, maintaining above 35% in Parliament, and 8 women heading ministries, numbers that we expect to keep increasing.

The Council of Ministers is considering the approval of the National Gender Policy, the revision of the Family Code and the Action Plan on Rural Women, having already approved the Land Law, which guarantees rural women access and control of land either by acquisition or by inheritance. Several other improvements include the increase of educational infrastructures from primary schools to universities, where female participation is above 50% at some levels.

Mr. Chair,

In Angola, rural women represent more than 53.5% of the rural population and are responsible for about 70 to 80% of agricultural production, 90% of basic products, 100% of the processing of basic products, and 90% of their marketing. In fact, rural women are the focus of the Angolan Executive Branch's attention and priority in all programs and projects targeting rural areas.

Combating poverty through the provision of different services to rural communities is, at this stage of the reconstruction of Angola, the biggest challenge not only for the Executive Branch, but in a general for all stakeholders—including the private sector, civil society organizations and international partners.

The NATIONAL MICRO-CREDIT PROGRAMME, under implementation since 1999, has directly benefited approximately 435,398 persons, and has indirectly benefited nearly 2,176,990 people, over 80% women.

The RURAL WOMEN'S FORUM -- A space for discussion of topics of interest to rural women in their multiple dimensions. Held every two years, it is preceded by provincial Forums and takes place in October, on the occasion of World Day of Rural Women.

The RURAL WOMEN SUPPORT PROGRAM -- In implementation since 2007, it is focused on creating small community services, increasing production and promoting the commercialization of surpluses. Thus, the following subprograms will be implemented:

- Productive Structuring and Community Organization
- Support to Entrepreneurship
- Assistance to Families
- Support to Rural Young Women.

The INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION MUNICIPAL PROGRAMS – is a convergence of all local projects and also seeks to create human and technical capacities.

Mr. Chair,

Reducing maternal mortality is one of the priorities of the Angolan Executive Branch, with a view to achieving Goal # 5 of the Millennium Development Goals. The policies and strategies adopted by the country, particularly the improvement of obstetric care (COE), universal access to quality services by qualified personnel to all pregnant women, is fundamental not only to the reduction of maternal mortality but also for reducing the incidence of obstetric fistulas. The Maternal Mortality Ratio has decreased, going from 1400 maternal deaths per thousand live births in 2001 to 610 deaths per thousand live births in 2008, and then to 450 deaths per thousand live births in 2010.

National strategies have been strengthened in order to facilitate positive investments that benefit society as a whole, allowing us to mitigate inequality and reduce social disparities, which will certainly reduce the incidence of this problem among Angolan women. The government is also putting all national efforts into achieving quick reductions in morbidity and mortality in 30 percent by 2013.

The National Obstetric Fistula Treatment Center opened in 2011 in the Province of Uige by The Ministry of Health and the Provincial Government of Uige, in collaboration with the United Nations Fund for Population Activities in Angola are developing actions with positive results on the prevention and treatment of obstetric fistula in the country. The center has **performed 244 Vaginal Fistula surgeries between October 2009 and October 2012, of which 111 were performed in 2012.** The cases were from 7 provinces; namely Uige, Luanda, Kwanza Norte, Malanje, Bengo, Huambo and Namibe. According to the same Hospital, of the total of women assisted, 70% had been abandoned by their husbands, 50% were first-time mothers at the time they contracted the fistula, and 66% had lived with a fistula for over 9 years.

Despite these encouraging numbers we appeal to the international partners to collaborate with us in these efforts to eliminate Fistula in Angola **access to obstetric care by trained staff is essential to the reduction of Maternal Mortality and to the decrease of Obstetric Fistulae.**

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Mr. Chair,

To conclude we'd like to reiterate the importance of the women in the Social Development programs in Angola. Allow me to reiterate the readiness of my Government to work in close collaboration and in partnership with UN Women, CEDAW and other international organization for the advancement of the women in Angola.

I thank you for your attention.