

Remarks by His Excellency João Lourenço – President of the Republic of Angola and current Chairperson of the ICGLR, at the UN Security Council Session | NY, June 23, 2021.

His Excellency Sven Jurgenson, President of the United Nations Security Council;

His Excellency Mankeur Ndiaye, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA;

His Excellency Bankole Adeoye, African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs;

Your Excellencies Ambassadors

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to congratulate the distinguished Permanent Representative of the Republic of Estonia to the United Nations, Mr Sven Jurgenson, on his election to the post of President of the Security Council for the month of June.

Excellencies,

On 20th November 2020, the Republic of Angola was elected as Chairperson of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR). During the two years of its term, Angola intends to dynamize and strengthen the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), to face the challenges of peace, security, stability and development in the region, with the support of bilateral and multilateral partners namely, the African Union, the European Union and the United Nations.

The Strategic Plan of Angola's chairmanship is enrooted in the Pact for Peace, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region of 15 December 2006 and is guided by the principles of International

Law, namely the Charter of the United Nations Organization and the Constitutive Act of the African Union.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The security situation in the Great Lakes Region, particularly in the Central African Republic, is characterized by active presence of armed groups, of which 14 groups are signatories of the Political Agreement of 6th February 2019 on Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, six out of them have denounced the Agreement.

The Government of Angola recognizes that international support is now increasingly important to contribute to the Central African Government's efforts to ensure peace and stability in the Central African Republic.

On 29th January of this year, we held in Luanda, capital of the Republic of Angola, an ICGLR Summit in reduced format on the Political and Security Situation in the Central African Republic. Besides Angola, the Summit was attended by His Excellency Denis SASSOU-N'GUESSO President of the Republic of Congo, His Excellency Marshal Idriss Deby ITNO President of the Republic of Chad and Chairperson of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD) as a special guest, His Excellency Faustin Archange TOUADERA President of the Central African Republic, senior representatives of the Heads of State of Rwanda and Sudan, as well as the Chairperson of the ECCAS Commission and the Executive Secretary of the ICGLR.

The Heads of State and Government renewed their commitment to favour dialogue and permanent consultation between political actors and civil society, with a view to bringing the Central African Republic out of the current crisis. They called on the rebel groups to observe an immediate and unilateral ceasefire and to abandon the siege of the city of Bangui and return to their initial positions, as well as to open the Duala-Bangui corridor to allow the free movement of people and goods. They also gave mandate to the

current Chairs of ICGLR and ECCAS to carry out the necessary steps with the United Nations Security Council in order to lift the arms embargo imposed on the Central African Republic.

The Republic of Angola, in its capacity as Chairperson of the ICGLR and in permanent consultation with the Central African authorities, has brokered political-diplomatic consultations with Cameroon, Congo, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo and Sudan, with the aim of collecting and share information needed to facilitate the process of contacting key political and military actors.

On 20th April, the second Summit on the Political and Security situation in the Central African Republic was held in Luanda, which, in addition to the aforementioned Heads of State, was also attended by President Paul Kagame of Rwanda and representatives of the Heads of State of Sudan, Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo. This Summit was marred by the sad news received during the meeting, of the death in battle of the President of the Republic of Chad, Marshal Idris Deby Itnó. During the proceedings, the Heads of State and Government were briefed on the results of the political-diplomatic consultations carried out by the Republic of Angola, regarding the political and security situation in the Central African Republic, which led the main armed groups to commit to abandon the armed struggle and join the Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation (DDRR) program.

Throughout this process, it is fair to recognize the role played by the Chad authorities, who have contributed greatly to the success of this mission. Political leaders welcomed the results obtained and mandated the Government of the Central African Republic to carry out the implementation of the conclusions of the Heads of State, through a ceasefire so as to allow the creation of a favorable climate for peace and national reconciliation. On the same occasion, the Heads of State and Government urged the armed groups not to carry out actions that may jeopardize the ceasefire, and called on the International Community, in particular the United Nations Organization, to encourage regional efforts with a view to

revitalize the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (APPR-RCA).

The Heads of State and Government also decided to establish a taskforce led by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Angola and the Republic of Rwanda, in collaboration with the Central African authorities, to work on the implementation of the recommendations resulting from the consultations carried out with armed groups. They also decided to engage the Heads of State and Government and international partners in achieving peace, stability and security in the Central African Republic, in the spirit of the Republican Dialogue roadmap.

Distinguished Ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In May and June, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic, the Republic of Angola and the Republic of Rwanda met on three occasions in Bangui, for the approval of the proposed Joint Roadmap for Peace in CAR, which defines the main activities to be developed.

Distinguished Ambassadors,
Ladies and Gentlemen

All States have the inalienable right to create their own capacity to defend themselves against internal and external threats by equipping their Armed Forces with the men, weapons and equipment that meet their needs and capabilities, unless there are strong objective reasons that lead to the international community, through the Security Council to curtail that right. The measure of the arms embargo taken by the Security Council, which makes it impossible for the Central African Government to acquire them, was taken in a situation very different from the present one and which was therefore fair and necessary at that time. Years have passed and the picture has changed, and it is unrealistic to consider that the same reasons that justified such a measure in the past still prevail in the current situation, if we take into account the fact that

the current government was legitimized at the polls in the last general elections, recognized by the international community as free and fair.

At a time when international terrorism has transferred its epicenter from the Middle East to Africa, aggravated by the fact that world powers have decided to expel mercenaries and foreign fighters from Libya, without having been disarmed, accompanied and repatriated, a situation that can exacerbate the proliferation of terrorism and increase the threat to peace and stability in the Sahel region and the countries of Central and Southern Africa, it is imperative that States acquire the capacity to defend themselves against this real threat. The army of heavily equipped mercenaries, which covered thousands of kilometers towards Djamena, would have continued its destructive path had Chad not invested in its Armed Forces, which only confirms the idea of the need for strong States in the fields Defense and Security.

Based on all these underlying reasons, the Luanda Summit mandated the Heads of State of Angola and Congo, current Chairpersons of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) respectively, to address the United Nations Security Council, on behalf of the States and peoples of the two sub-regions, to request the lifting of the arms embargo that still exists against the legitimate government of the Central African Republic.

Thank you for your attention