59TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS
GENERAL ASSEMBLY

STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY
AMBASSADOR ISMAEL A. GASPAR MARTINS
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT THE GENERAL DEBATE
OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

NEW YORK, 11 OCTOBER 2004
Mr. Chairman,

At the outset, please accept the congratulations of the Angolan delegation upon your election to chair the work of the First Committee; I extend the congratulations to the other elected members of the Bureau.

I wish to assure of the support of my delegation.

Mr. President,

The Republic of Angola, which has recently emerged from a protected conflict, follows with great concern the increasing threats to international peace and security posed by the existence of weapons of mass destruction and particularly by nuclear weapons. The number of countries with capabilities of producing and put into operation programs of nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them continues to grow, hence the need for a concerted effort at the international level in order to deter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Multilateral Cooperation is the most appropriate and effective
means to prevent the traffic and production of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and related material, and, in this context, Angola warmly commends Libya's decision to discontinue its programs in the production of weapons of mass destruction.

Mr. President,

The international instruments approved by the international community to combat the illicit production and traffic of weapons, ammunition and related material are valuable tools in the struggle for peace, by addressing the concerns of States and peoples that experience and endure, on a daily basis, the direct and cruel effects of such means of death, which are responsible for the destruction of social and economic infrastructures, for the physical disablement and death of innocent people, for the spreading of misery, pain, and sorrow to millions of persons who should have the right to live in peace.

It is established the year of 2001, 16 thousand billions of ammunition units were manufactured all over the world, which means 2 bullets for each person in the planet. The proliferation of
light weapons is an insidious phenomenon, and one that has been in the center of governmental concerns due to its close connection to civil deadly wars, of political destabilization, and international organized crime.

The Bamako Declaration, dealing with the common African stance on the illegal proliferation and traffic of small arms and light weapons, which Angola fully supports, is at the bottom line of my Government’s actions with a view of reverting such damaging practices. A National Committee has been established by the Angolan Government, and legal measures have been introduced to sustain and monitor the Government’s actions in this domain.

Mr. President,

The convention on the prohibition, use, storage, production, and transfer of land mines and on their destruction, known as the Ottawa Convention, is the result of efforts at the international level by States and Organizations, stemming from the high
number of innocent lives lost, everyday, around the world.

As a Member State party to the Convention, Angola is firmly engaged in all actions aimed at the destruction and eradication of these weapons at the national, regional, and international level. Therefore, we salute the adoption of an African common position on land mines.

As part of the continent most heavily affected by this scourge, Angola established demining as a priority of its national policies and is very grateful to its 20 partners, namely international and national NGOs engaged in the network for education on prevention of mine-related accidents, which have physically disabled more than 150 thousand persons and for which concrete projects are needed in order to reintegrated them in society. Furthermore, 3,000,000 land mines are still planted in Angola and a huge international effort is absolutely needed in order to make Angola a country free of land mines.

Thank you.