STATEMENT BY

HIS EXCELLENCY
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TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT THE FIRST COMMITTEE

ON THE ISSUE OF CONFIDENCE BUILDING
MEASURES AT REGIONAL LEVEL

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Mr. Chairman,

Let me start by congratulating you and all the members of the Bureau for the wise manner in which you have been conducting the work of our Committee. My delegation associates itself with the statement delivered by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group.

I am particularly delighted by the opportunity I am offered today, in my capacity as Representative of the Chair of the Permanent Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, to update the distinguished delegates on the activities of the Committee.

This body was established by the Secretary-General on May 28th, 1992, under the terms of General Assembly Resolution 46/37 B, and is composed of the 11 Member States of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). Its main goal is to put in place confidence building measures, work towards the decrease in armament in the region and to promote the economic and social development of the Central Africa sub-region. The Committee is therefore an instrument of preventive diplomacy, with a view to preventing conflicts within and between its Member States.

The Committee regularly meets twice a year: on each occasion, it meets initially at the experts level, with civil and military high ranking officials, and subsequently at the ministerial level, with the participation of Ministers of External Relations and Defense. It can also meet at the level of Heads of State and Government.

At its ministerial meetings, the Committee has examined and adopted recommendations aimed at preventing the eruption or resurgence of conflicts, restore peace in situations of open conflict. The Committee also discusses measures or initiatives to promote interactive cooperation in the security domain, share experiences on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes for ex-combatants, as well as examine ways and
means of implementing the various international instruments relating to disarmament and non-proliferation in Central Africa.

In addition, a number of seminars or conferences on various topics related to issues of peace and security in Central Africa have been organized by the Committee.

The following are some of the Committee's achievements so far:
- the signing of a Non-Aggression Pact in Yaoundé (Cameroon) on July 8th, 1996;
- the creation of Early Warning Mechanism of Central African Countries (MARAC), with headquarters in Libreville (Gabon);
- the creation of the Central African Multinational Force (FOMAC);
- the creation of the Peace and Security Council of Central Africa (COPAX);
- the creation of the Sub-regional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy.

Since its inception, the Committee has undeniably played a pivotal role in the prevention of conflicts by Member States with an adequate venue where civil and military senior executives, as well as ministers in charge of foreign affairs and security, meet regularly to exchange views on the relevant issues of peace and security. These meetings set the stage to prevent or alleviate tensions and to strengthen the confidence among Member States and for the adoption of measures or initiatives aimed at ensuring the safety of regional borders.

At the 27th Ministerial Meeting of the Committee held in Luanda from May 13th to 15th, 2008, Angola was elected Chair of the Advisory Committee. I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to again thank the countries of Central Africa for the confidence deposited in my country. We commend Cameroon for the outstanding work it carried out as our Committee's retiring Chair.
The Luanda meeting focused particularly on the situation prevailing in countries emerging from conflict. Pertinent recommendations were formulated, aimed at strengthening the cooperation of the sub-region with the international community in the promotion and consolidation of peace.

Other relevant questions were also addressed, such as the problem of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and the disarmament of civilians, the implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative, which consists in the elaboration of a Code of Conduct for security and defense forces of Central Africa, and of a Legal Instrument for the control of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa.

During its mandate, Angola will continue to encourage Member States to spare no effort in dealing with any relevant situation that constitutes a threat to peace, stability and security of the sub-region. The harmonization of the activities of the Committee with those of the CEEAC is also an aspect which will be at the center of the Angolan Chairmanship.

At the initiative of Angola, a deliberation on the future of the Committee and the rationalization of its activities was launched. This will be further reviewed during the 28th meeting which is due to take place in Libreville. Given the importance of the Tomé Initiative, this will be a central point of the agenda that the Angolan presidency intends to implement.

I would like to conclude by thanking once more the United Nations Member States, as well as the intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations for their support to the activities of the Advisory Committee. In this connection, I encourage all the Member States to adopt without a vote, as it has been in previous years, the draft Resolution which I have the pleasure of submitting for your consideration, entitled: <Confidence building measures at the regional level: activities of the Permanent Advisory Committee of the United Nations in charge of questions of security in Central Africa>.

I thank you for your attention.