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STATEMENT

BY

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TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

AT

**THE SECURITY COUNCIL SESSION ON
'THE AFRICAN DIMENSION IN THE WORK OF THE SECURITY
COUNCIL'**

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Mr. President,

My delegation commends your initiative in convening this open meeting of the Council to discuss an issue of great importance not only to Africa, but also to the membership of the UN. The African continent challenges the international system in many ways, not least, through the many conflicts it has spawned over the years. Little wonder therefore, that the Council has had to devote so much of its time on conflict, peace and security issues affecting Africa. It is therefore fitting that we pause to take stock and to decide on new ways forward.

That there have been such frequent eruptions of conflict on the African continent is really a matter of concern. It would be important to undertake a special analysis of the antecedents and causes of these conflicts in order to identify the common strands, and with a view to addressing the causal factors at the root. It is true that there has been an on-going debate on the broad causes of conflict globally. What is now required is an effort focused specifically on the peculiarities of the African scene, from DRC to Cote d'Ivoire, to Sudan and elsewhere.

Some conflicts have been satisfactorily resolved as was the case in Angola and Mozambique; others have been stuck in a "no-war-no-peace" state of limbo; while yet others keep raging on. It would be important to ascertain what the countries in each of these three categories have in common, with a view to drawing lessons that would help us prescribe more effective antidotes to African conflicts.

From the outset we must acknowledge the important initiatives taken by the Council, whose effects on conflict situations have been very positive. The measures taken to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in West Africa stand out for special mention. My delegation hopes to see these measures strengthened even further, perhaps to culminate, ultimately, in an international convention that would be binding on all states.

The Council did collaborate well with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in elaborating the small arms initiative. It did the same in mediating the situation in Liberia and Cote d'Ivoire. Elsewhere in Africa we have seen the tremendous promise collaboration of this type with

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regional and sub-regional bodies holds for conflict resolution and peacekeeping. Perhaps this strategy should be employed more systematically not only in resolving conflicts, but also in peace building and conflict prevention.

Post-conflict interventions need to be given more attention. Programmes for disarming, demobilizing and reintegrating combatants have to be better conceived, planned and resourced if they are to be enduring. In addition, consideration should be given to the need to evolve such programmes on a sub-regional basis, in recognition of the strong sub-regional dimensions of conflicts in Africa.

The way certain conflict situations have erupted suggests the need for the Council to be more pro-active in its handling of emerging conflict situations. We must strengthen our early-warning systems as well as our response capacities. Above all, the Council must be able to intervene to ward off conflicts before they flare up. Ways must be found to engage adversaries in dialogue and negotiation, before they slide into violence.

Finally, my delegation would like to see this exercise undertaken on a regular basis to afford us an opportunity for an evaluation of our efforts in order to improve on our impact and effectiveness in mediating conflicts in Africa.

I thank you for your attention.