Mr. Chairman,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is indeed an honor and a pleasure for me to have this opportunity to address the Third Committee on this agenda item on behalf of the 14 Member States of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) namely: Republic of Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, the Kingdom of Lesotho, Republic of Malawi, Republic of Mauritius, Republic of Mozambique, Republic of Namibia, Republic of South Africa, the Kingdom of Swaziland, United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Zimbabwe, Republic of Zambia and my own country The Republic of Angola.

Mr. Chairman, since this is the first time I am taking the floor, allow me to congratulate you on your election as chair of the 3rd Committee of the 66th Session of the General Assembly and reassure you of Angola’s commitment as vice-chair of the bureau

Mr. Chairman,

In our region, the burden of crime persists but is gradually under better control by the authorities despite a more complex world with digital and improved communication platforms. Prevention and mitigation policies and more effective strategies are helping our region to become better prepared for these realities, working with different organs and institutions locally and internationally to respond to offenders head-on and prevent their criminal activities.
Mr. Chairman,

While human trafficking remains a major concern in the region, drug trafficking continues to pose even more significant treats specially if not dealt effectively through a coordinated effort.

It is for this reason that SADC attaches great importance to the Political Declaration adopted at the Twentieth Special Session of the General Assembly, which constitutes a high level commitment to comprehensively address the world drug problem, likewise the importance of the international drug control conventions and the international legal instruments addressing transnational organized crime given the fact that these instruments provide the legislative framework to support international cooperation and coordination to combat drug trafficking. SADC is mindful that drug trafficking and abuse is related to other crimes including corruption, violent crime and pervasive violence against women and children. These challenges threaten economic development and pose severe challenges to the security and stability of the region.

If the fight against drug trafficking is to be won then the commitments we make must be transformed into concrete and effective action. It must be highlighted, however, that this is a common and shared responsibility of all the International Community.

As our attention is centered on the target date of 2015, and the pressure increases on us to show results for our commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, there is growing recognition that organized crime and illicit drugs are major impediments to their achievement. If we are to meet the challenges that face us in a comprehensive manner,
we must reduce the demand for drugs and fight transnational organized crime at all levels.

Mr. Chairman,

The phenomenon of trafficking in persons, especially women and children is growing in the SADC region. This represents a new, sophisticated and aggressive form of slavery. Trafficking in persons is a criminal activity that requires clear and comprehensive legislation to prevent and combat this kind of crime.

In view of the challenges that our region is facing, the Ouagadougou Action Plan to combat trafficking in human beings especially women and children - and adopted by the African Union in Tripoli in November 2006 is being seriously pursued by SADC member States. This plan clearly lays out methods and areas of cooperation to combat all forms of human trafficking, especially of women and children. The regional plan of action addresses trafficking from a comprehensive perspective focusing on: (1) Legislation and policy measures; (2) Training for skills enhancement and capacity building; (3) Prevention and public awareness; (4) Victim support and witness protection; (5) Coordination and regional cooperation; (6) Research and information sharing; (7) Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the Plan of Action at regional and national levels; and finally (8) Mobilization of resources for the implementation of the Plan of Action as outlined in the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, and in line with SADC protocol on gender and development. The United Nations Global Plan of Action to combat trafficking in persons of 2010 and reviewed this year in May 13th is also of boundless importance to SADC.
Mr. Chairman,

SADC member States recognize and appreciate the critical role played by regional mechanisms in combating organized transnational crime and the pivotal role of the United Nations in initiatives targeted at addressing crime. Further our region appreciates and supports the activities of the UNODC, particularly in the development of global legal instruments and the provision of technical cooperation to developing countries like ours.

Mr. Chairman,

The SADC Protocol on Combating Illicit Drugs provides the necessary framework for drug control activities in the region. The protocol aims to reduce and eliminate drug trafficking, money laundering, corruption and the illicit use and abuse of drugs through the cooperation and coordination of cross-sectoral programmes and activities in the region. It should be noted that one of the provisions of the protocol requires that SADC members accede to the United Nations drug control Conventions. I am pleased to report that most of the SADC members are State parties to these Conventions and are actively implementing their provisions while national level ratifications are underway.

There are several activities that have been implemented by SADC Member States including; the development, implementation and evaluation of strategies aimed at establishing comprehensive and integrated demand reduction programmes as well as the development of community prevention, public school education and research activities to address the underlying causes of drug abuse. Some Member States have also established appropriate facilities for treatment, rehabilitation and social integration of drug dependent persons.
Regarding information, research and data on drug abuse and drug trafficking, it is encouraging to note that Member states are sharing systematic information in order to facilitate regional cooperation and coordination. Despite these efforts, however, much more remains to be done. The need for the availability for adequate training opportunities for personnel involved in all aspects of demand reduction activities and programmes as well as the provision of adequate human and financial and technical resources for the implementation of activities to combat drug abuse cannot be overestimated. SADC therefore calls for substantial resources and technical assistance of the international community in this regard.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the SADC region remains committed to the fight against drugs and crime. It is only by making this fight a central pillar in the development agenda that we can all promote an effective and sustainable response.

I thank you.

Mr. Chairman,

If I may, in my national capacity, I would like to provide some additional information about my own country, Angola.