STATEMENT BY

MR. ANTONIO COELHO RAMOS DA CRUZ
CHARGÉ D’AFFAIRES, A.I.
PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

AT THE SECOND COMMITTEE

ON

ITEM 22: GROUPS OF COUNTRIES IN
SPECIAL SITUATIONS
SUB-ITEM (A): FOLLOW-UP TO THE
FOURTH UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE
IN THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

NEW YORK, 21 OCTOBER 2013

Check Against Delivery
Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Representatives,

On behalf of my country, Angola, I am pleased to take the floor under this agenda sub-item to share and express our vision and efforts on the Follow-up to the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. Angola aligns itself with the previous statements made by Fiji, on behalf of the G77 and China, as well as Benin, on behalf of the LDCs.

Mr. Chairman,

The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) continue to confront structural handicaps and constraints in their development efforts and remain highly vulnerable to external shocks. It’s, therefore, obvious that the LDCs continue to suffer from the negative consequences of the ongoing world financial and economic crisis. This situation undermines, clearly, the development efforts of the Least Developed Countries.

We welcome the Secretary General’s report titled “Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020”.

The report highlights that the Least Developed Countries have made some progress regarding many of the goals and targets agreed on in Istanbul, and also notes that several of them have been prioritizing these same goals and targets into their national development strategies and programmes. Yet, unfortunately, as we are all aware of, for the majority of the LDCs extreme poverty is still prevailing, inequalities are still rising, manufacturing is still insignificant towards an increase in GDP, economies still endure the consequences of vulnerability due to their undiversified sectors, and youths are still suffering because of the lack of decent jobs.

To overcome the structural challenges faced by the LDCs, we call for full, timely and effective implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011-2020 with the aim of enabling at least half of the LDCs to meet graduation criteria by 2020 through a renewed and strengthened partnership for development.
Mr. Chairman,

As noted by the Secretary General in the above mentioned report, despite the Angolan Government’s efforts to reduce poverty and improve the living conditions of its citizens, Angola’s economy has slowed down in the last four years due to the deterioration of the global economy. But fortunately, Angola is experiencing a swift economic and political transformation process.

According to various entities, this year, Angola’s economic growth is expected to reach 8.2% due to the strong performance of the energy, transportation and construction sectors. We are now gathering momentum, with robust GDP growth supported by strong fiscal and external balances, a stable exchange rate, and moderate inflation.

We have further improved the quality of our fiscal controls and tightened public financial management to enable the government to accelerate public investment to support broad economic diversification and a more rapid job creation, while simultaneously reducing Angola’s considerable vulnerability to external shocks. Significant progress was also registered in the education and health sectors. As a consequence, the number of students in primary education has more than doubled and child and maternal health has improved tremendously.

Mr. Chairman,

These improvements were possible due to the successful implementation of the National Strategy on Combating Poverty, aimed at halving the number of people living in extreme poverty by 2015, and also by the government’s 5-year National Development Program 2013-2017, which has the specific objective, among others, to eradicate poverty in order to accelerate progress towards attaining the MDGs. The National Development Program focuses especially in the rural sector by promoting access to quality of food other basic goods such as drinking water, health, education, energy, sanitation and housing.

The Program will identify and adopt measures related to infrastructures that directly interfere with the basic living conditions of citizens, and it will also identify and adopt economic activities capable of generating employment and increasing the average income of the population. The instruments being used to reach these objectives are the following: (I) Integrated Municipal Programs for development and poverty alleviation; (II) Minimum Income Programs and other
forms of social protections; and (III) Housing Perspective Programs towards economic and social integration.

Mr. Chairman,

Angola was found eligible for graduation for the first time by the Committee for Development Policy of UN DESA at its 14th session, in March 2012, and since then it has been deeply engaged in the graduation process through a National Multisectoral Commission, created by His Excellency President José Eduardo dos Santos.

But I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows are fundamental and indispensable for LDCs to attain internationally-agreed goals. The support of all development partners to facilitate a smooth transition and mitigate possible reductions in technical assistance and ODA, as well as some privileges attached to the LDC status—especially the fulfillment of the international commitments related to financial resources is of high importance.

My delegation would like to invite our developing partners to strengthen their commitment and engage politically for much more determined efforts to fulfill and enhance their aid across a wide range of economic, social and environmental issues, consistent with the objectives of the Istanbul Program of Action.

At the same time, Angola understands that it will require a stronger commitment by LDCs themselves toward graduation, including ensuring national leadership and ownership of the graduation process, in line with their national development strategies and priorities.

Thank you.