

ENGLISH



**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF ANGOLA**

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF ANGOLA, DR CAROLINA CERQUEIRA

ON THE OCCASION OF THE SUMMIT OF WOMEN POLITICAL LEADERS

8 June, Brussels, Kingdom of Belgium - Parliament of the Kingdom of Belgium

Madam President of the Parliament of Belgium

Madam President of the Forum of Women Political Leaders,

Dear Sisters,

Allow me to associate my voice with that of our sisters who from various parts of the world are together for two days in the hospitable city of Brussels to talk about peace, understanding, dialogue and cooperation for freedom and democracy, for equal rights for women in various fields.

We are convinced that the strengthening of solidarity between the institutions we represent and the strengthening of understanding and friendship between us women are fundamental if women are to be the generators and promoters of change at local and global level in favour of peace, reconciliation and the building of a better world for our children.

The action of political women of the world should make their role and intervention felt at all levels so that we can be, in all our countries and at the level of institutions where we are present and represented, consistent activists for women's rights, uncompromising defenders of non-violence and have a voice to denounce political, economic and social discrimination, To have a voice to denounce the political, economic and social discrimination that still affects the rise and representativeness of women in political decision-making bodies, to be able to be decisive in the adoption of policies in favour of women's equality and to promote legislative initiatives in favour of women, so that they have more opportunities for access to education, to decision-making in various fields, and have a voice in deciding on the welfare and prosperity of their families and the future of their countries.

This future must be one of peace, sustainable development and justice, social integration and inclusion, respecting fundamental human rights and equal opportunities for men and women.

Women are the fundamental support of democratic societies and uncompromising defenders of justice and the law.

In Angola, women's activism is very dynamic and the advances of women in politics are encouraging.

I am leading the delegation from the Parliament of the Republic of Angola, a unicameral parliament with representation from 5 political parties and 38% women in a universe of 220 Members of Parliament.

Our Parliament reflects the diversity and gender and generational balance of my country, where more than 60% are young people and women make up the majority of the population. We have a group of women parliamentarians and of the 10 committees, women chair the most important ones - the Committee on Defence and Security, the Committee on Economy and Finance and the Committee on Social Action, Children and the Family.

The Constitution of the Republic of Angola recognizes the full equality of women, the political parties in their programmes encourage at least 30% of women as candidates and women today in Angola occupy important positions in the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government.

Through intense parliamentary and humanitarian diplomacy, the Angolan Parliament has prioritised the agenda of peace, stability, security and the promotion and preservation of a culture of peace as the basis for development and justice. At parliamentary level we have promoted high-level debates and also with civil society in favour of promoting peace and gender equality, and denouncing violence against women and girls.

There have been evident initiatives in favour of peace in the Great Lakes region, where the situation of conflict in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo is very worrying and the intervention of parliamentarians in favour of peace and stability in the region has been intense, through permanent dialogue and the laying down of arms by rebel forces who, through military actions, have provoked inhuman crimes against defenceless civilian populations, cross-border crimes and the permanent violation of human rights.

We have also been monitoring the unstable situation in northern Mozambique and the women parliamentarians of our countries have played an important role in defending peace, protecting the victims of these conflicts and denouncing their consequences in increasing the fragmentation of social and family stability, damaging above all the safe and healthy growth of children and the future of young people, particularly young girls, who are victims of physical and sexual violence, victims of forced marriages and deprived of their fundamental rights and freedoms.

We leave this Conference aware that we will continue to denounce the obstacles that prevent the full and free exercise of the freedom of women to participate on an equal footing in the politics of our countries at all levels, to continue to fight for decision-making and to promote initiatives for the permanent education of girls, to contribute to promoting equal opportunities for all women to improve the situation of millions of other women who expect from us, political leaders, more solidarity, more opportunities and above all more recognition of the important role they can play for a better future for all.

May we women continue to be the generators and promoters of peace and equality.