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Statement by Senator A. J. Brooks, P.C., Q.C., Vice-Chairman of the Canadian Delegation in Plenary Session of the General Assembly, on January 26, 1962.

The Situation in Angola

Mr. President:

The Government and people of Canada have viewed with deep concern the course of events in Angola over the past year. That this concern was shared by the great majority of Members of this Assembly is evident from the decision to appoint the Sub-Committee whose report we are now considering. The appointment of this Committee reflects, too, the widely held conviction that there is an appropriate, and indeed essential, role for the United Nations in trying to resolve this unhappy situation.

My Delegation wishes to commend the members of the Sub-Committee for the conscientious and objective manner in which they have approached their difficult task. Of course there will be differences of view on particular points. But the general lines of the report, in the Canadian view, merit the support of this Assembly. In particular, it seems to me that there can be no reservation about the Sub-Committee's emphasis on its hope that "the United Nations and its member states will take further action as appropriate to persuade and assist the Government of Portugal and the Angolan peoples to embark on a policy of peaceful settlement in conformity with the Charter." Canada commends the report

and notes with satisfaction that the Sub-Committee's recommendations have been closely followed by the sponsors of the Afro-Asian draft resolution.

The Sub-Committee has appropriately emphasized that attention should be focussed on the situation of Angolan people. In the uprising which took place last spring in Angola we know that many thousands of persons were killed, that even more were wounded, that 150,000 Angolans took refuge in Congo (Leopoldville), and that there was widespread destruction of homes and villages in northern Angola. Reports have been received by churches in Canada of the destruction of Christian missions, and of the suffering of the Angolan people. The Sub-Committee has expressed its belief that the conflict which has torn Angola during the past year arose from the Angolan people's dissatisfaction with existing conditions. As the Sub-Committee recognizes, Portugal has recently introduced reforms which, when implemented, will provide some measure of satisfaction of these grievances. We welcome this action. The reforms, however, fall short of the requirements of the Assembly's resolution last April.

It would have been unrealistic to expect the people of Angola to remain unaffected by the wave of pressure for independence, freedom and equality which has swelled over Africa in the past few years. The prerequisite to satisfactory political development is that there should be broad general agreement on ultimate objectives between the people of a non-self-governing territory and its administering power. This entails, in Africa today, a clear acknowledgement that self-determination is the goal of political development. The result need not be a sharp disruption of long established ties with the administering power; we have seen how economic and cultural links

may survive and grow after the achievement of independence, and even a continuing political association need not be excluded. But the people of dependent territories - and the people of Angola will not allow themselves to be made an exception - insist on being able to look forward to deciding their own political destiny.

In the opinion of the Canadian Delegation, that part of the resolution which asks the Government of Portugal to undertake political, economic and social reforms with a view to the transfer of power to the people of Angola constitutes an essential step towards the restoration and preservation of peaceful conditions in Angola. While the means of achieving self-determination, and the timing of progress toward that goal are negotiable, the definition of that goal will not wait.

My Delegation shares the Sub-Committee's judgement that, in view of the provisions of the Charter, the International repercussions of the situation and its significance for peace in Africa and in the world, the United Nations cannot but continue to be concerned with the working out of a peaceful solution of the problem of Angola.

The resolution which has been sponsored by forty-three members of the Assembly enables the United Nations to keep under review the problem of Angola and the implementation of its recommendations. Constructive cooperation by the Government of Portugal offers the best hope of bringing the conflict to an early end, of promoting peaceful evolution towards the objectives stated in the United Nations resolutions on Angola, and of restoring a harmonious relationship between Portugal and the people of Angola.

It is my deep conviction, Mr. President, that there is a compelling urgency about embarking upon this cooperative effort. Portugal has made substantial contributions to the material development of Angola. A wrong decision could destroy all that has been accomplished. A wise decision now could lay the foundation for a new and prosperous nation, with a close relationship to Portugal based on friendship and mutual interest.