

A moment of full-scale jubilation it was. Angolan community living, working and studying in Rwanda and friends of Angola from different walks including members of the diplomatic corps celebrated the country's 47th Independence anniversary that coincided with the centenary anniversary of the Father of the Nation, first President and fallen hero, Antonio Agostinho Neto.

H.E Eduardo Filomeno Bárber Leiro Octávio, Angola's Envoy to Rwanda told hundreds of celebrants convened, November 15 at the Kigali Serena Hotel in the capital, Kigali that: "at zero hours of November 11, 1975 Antonio Neto proclaimed before the people and the world the new African nation."

Eduardo Octávio recalled that his country was until 1975 occupied by foreign forces.



H.E Eduardo Filomeno Bárber Leiro Octávio, Angola's Envoy to Rwanda during his address

Antonio Agostinho Neto (1975 to 1979) led the Popular Movement for the Liberation

of Angola (MPLA) in the struggle for independence (1961–1974), efforts that led to Angola's independence from the Portuguese colonial rule.

The Envoy paid tribute to Antonio Agostinho Neto for liberating the country, which he said was still "in predicament until 1975".

Ambassador Eduardo Octávio, *also, paid tribute to President José Eduardo dos Santos* who succeeded Antonio Neto for his record in achieving peace through a democratic process, reconciliation and national reconstruction lives on to the day.

"After ending civil strife and stamping out instability largely traced to foreign interference by April 2002, *President José Eduardo dos Santos spared no efforts to start and take forward* democratic process, reconciliation and national reconstruction," said H.E Eduardo Octávio.

In the same vein, the Envoy recognised the immense contribution of the H.E João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço, the President of Angola for consolidating the country's gains since he took charge of the country's administration.

"In 2017 and 2022, H.E João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço won both the 4th and 5th general Presidential election of the Republic of Angola, and continued to consolidate democracy, reconciliation and national reconstruction as well as reinforcing the fight against corruption, political adulation and nepotism," observed H.E Eduardo Octávio.



Meanwhile, the Envoy commended Rwandan President H.E Paul Kagame and his Angolan counterpart for presiding over excellent economic cooperation between the two African nations on top of the strong political ties.

“In addition to the agreements and memorandum of understanding signed and in force since 2014, 2019 and 2020 between Angola and Rwanda, we’ve signed nine legal instruments, four of them related to the avoidance of double taxation, extradition, mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and transfer of people sentenced to jail,” said H.E Eduardo Octávio

“The remaining five memorandums of understanding were signed in the fields of mineral resources, oil and gas, agriculture and livestock development, health, local administration, cooperation between the National School of Administration and Public Policies (ENAP), and the Rwandan Management Institute,” added Eduardo Octávio.

The Envoy extended gratitude to the two Heads of State H.E Paul Kagame and his Angolan counterpart for extending cooperation to other domains of the economy, a move he described as benefitting both the Angolan and Rwandan people.



“Under the leadership of H.E João Lourenço, President of the Republic of Angola and H.E Paul Kagame, President of the Republic of Rwanda significant steps were made to improve more dynamic cooperation in the fields of defense and internal order, culture, hospitality, tourism, and finance,” he said.

He underlined other areas of cooperation include banking and business, industry and trade, education, science and professional technical training, social action, family and women promotion, the creation of the chamber of trade and industry and air link between both countries.

Representing the GoR, Prof. Manasseh Nshuti, Minister for State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in charge of East African community

elaborated the meaning of celebrating independence.

Prof. Nshuti said that Rwanda was grateful to Angola's peace initiatives in the region.

"Independence Day is an opportunity and time to reflect on and celebrate a country's liberation journey, to pay respect for the sacrifices, devotion and efforts of our leaders and heroes," observed Nshuti.



Prof. Manasseh Nshuti, Minister for State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in charge of East African community

"Today, we take pride in honouring the people of Angola for their resilience and strength. We celebrate the remarkable courage of the people of Angola, the deep-rooted culture and unshakable identity," the minister added.

He remarked that Angola and Rwanda continue to enjoy strong diplomatic, economic, political and social ties.

“This is clearly evidenced in high-level visits and political consultations that our two countries have had for some time and most importantly the establishment of permanent diplomatic missions in Kigali and Luanda,” noted Nshuti.

“We applaud the Republic of Angola for the role they’ve played in seeking peace in this region. Indeed, the Republic of Rwanda is committed to peaceful resolution of the Kigali-Kinshasa crisis through political means,” he added.

This year’s Independence Day attracted celebrated professors that gave profound speeches particularly on the essence of liberation and independence. They included the UAN Professor and Director of the Center for the Study of Legal, Economic and Social Sciences (CEJES) at the Agostinho Neto University, José Octávio Serra Van-Dúnem and Dr. Ismael Buchanan, CEO Rwanda International Affairs Institute (RIAI) based in Kigali and Senior Lecturer of Politics and International Relations at University.



UAN Professor and Director of the Center for the Study of Legal, Economic and

Social Sciences (CEJES) at the Agostinho Neto University, José Octávio Serra Van-Dúnem

Besides diplomats, the colourful ceremony was attended by students from many universities including Adventist University of Central Africa (AUCA) and the East African University.