

ANGOLA'S SECOND CHANCE

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The outlook for continued peace and post-war recovery in Angola is favorable. The country is finally in a position to realize the tremendous potential that its natural wealth makes possible. However, the most compelling humanitarian challenges directly impact the most at-risk population categories. If not addressed properly, they could perpetuate extreme underdevelopment and inequalities, and sow the seeds of future instability. The government of Angola and the international community must continue to elaborate strategies that at once address immediate humanitarian issues while at the same time build Angolan capacity to address the longer-term development challenges.

The intersection is clear between the immediate emergency needs of the most vulnerable – IDPs, UNITA ex-combatants and their dependents, and the populations of the former UNITA strongholds - and the longer-term development challenges involved in the clearing of mines, the rehabilitation and building of roads, the production and marketing of food, and the reconstruction of state capacity. If progress is not forthcoming on these priorities, then the potential exists for crime to increase in the short-run, while localized instability – likely in the form of factionalized warlordism – could return in the long run, especially in the UNITA strongholds of the Planalto.

The disparities involved reflect the gulf that has historically existed between the elites in the capital, Luanda, and the rest of the country, but that is particularly acute in former UNITA-controlled areas inhabited by the Ovimbundu people in the Planalto. Angola's pronounced regional and ethnic disparities were made worse by the long war. The country also suffers from inequitable resource distribution, overly concentrated political power and a general lack of transparency in governance. The agricultural populations in the areas that most strongly supported UNITA are those most seriously affected by economic policies that favor urban areas and those most severely penalized by oil-induced distortions.¹ If these disparities are not dealt with, more organized and strident opposition may eventually coalesce, whether through UNITA or some other political group. Although a renewed war is unlikely, a chronic humanitarian emergency is deepening among displaced populations and demobilized ex-combatants – while urban poverty increases – that could create the context for future instability and disaffection.²

POPULATIONS AT RISK

Angola will need years to recover from the systematic attacks that were directed against civilian targets over decades of insurgency and counter-insurgency. Over a year since the war ended, mortality rates remain at emergency levels and there are still overwhelming social problems that need to be tackled. A third of the population was displaced during the war. 400,000 refugees still remain outside Angola's borders.³ While the government estimates that 1.8 million IDPs had returned to their areas of origin by the end of March, only 220,000 of those had relocated

¹ Steven Kyle, "Oil and the Political Economy of Growth in Angola", paper presented to a U.S. State Department conference on African oil, 17 March 2003.

² International Crisis Group, *Dealing with Savimbi's Ghost*, 26 February 2003.

³ "Formal Refugee Return Begins", IRIN, 20 June 2003.

under an organized plan.⁴ The government's closing of the UNITA quartering areas by the end of June will cause further logistical problems for the ill-equipped transit centers. Further, the vast majority of IDP and refugee returnees have gone back to areas unsuitable for resettlement because of landmines, absence of government services, or inaccessibility by aid agencies. Thousands have taken refuge in crowded, abandoned buildings and tented camps because there are no sustainable living conditions in their home areas.⁵

The scale of concentrated population movement in Angola has few parallels. Up to two million people have been on the move since the end of the war, including IDPs, ex-combatants and their families, and refugees. Most seek to go home, although the level of rural to urban flows will be unpredictable. These massive movements ensure that at least a low-grade humanitarian emergency will continue. What makes matters worse is the land mine problem, which confronts every family trying to go home, as does the complete lack of government services and administration in most areas.

IDPs

According to the UN, thirty percent of the IDPs who had resettled or returned to areas of origin by the end of March 2003 had done so without any form of assistance from local authorities or international organizations. Most returned to areas lacking basic services and at risk of food insecurity due to inadequate agricultural inputs.⁶ The most significant return movements occurred in Huambo (439,292), Kuanza Sul (303,426), Bié (230,640), Malanje (131,937) and Huila (107,613) provinces.⁷

There will be a further influx of refugees from neighboring states. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, about 120,000 such refugees have returned since April 2002. Those that remain are in Zambia, Namibia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo⁸ and the pace of return is expected to increase now that the rainy season has ended.

Many IDPs have kept two residences, one at the return site where families built shelters and prepared land, and the other in provincial and municipal centers where households received assistance. Although the majority of those who returned to prepared land prior to the planting season did so voluntarily, the IDPs were frequently encouraged to resettle by promises of future assistance. In other instances, authorities had threatened to cut off aid to government-designated reception areas. According to OCHA, despite the availability of land to farm, an estimated 400,000 people never received the seeds and tools necessary for the seasonal cultivation.⁹

The government's occasional coercion of communities to move is an additional complication. Displaced people in some centers were told to go home, and in several instances UNITA ex-

⁴ "Steady Improvement in Humanitarian Conditions", IRIN, 23 May 2003.

⁵ Correspondence, January 2003.

⁶ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Humanitarian Situation in Angola, Quarterly Analysis, 1 – 15 May 2003.

⁷ "Steady Improvement in Humanitarian Conditions", IRIN, 23 May 2003.

⁸ "Preparation for Refugee Returnees Underway", IRIN, 27 May 2003.

⁹ United Nations, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Humanitarian Situation in Angola, Quarterly Analysis, 1 – 15 May 2003.

combatants had been forced to leave quartering areas. The lack of co-ordination between the government and the international aid organizations makes matters worse and hampers the ability of the system to respond to people's needs. This is an area where improved government/NGO coordination would result in better program delivery.

UNITA Ex-Combatants and their Dependents

One of the most potent fault lines in the country today is the logistical nightmare that is being created by the June closing of the quartering areas that have housed the 480,000 ex-UNITA combatants and their families. Over the next 24 months, organizing and underwriting the reintegration of the UNITA rank-and-file back into civilian life is the principal means by which to prevent future instability in Angola. There are reports of increasing disenchantment among the former rebels as in some areas promised reintegration support does not materialize and in others transit centers are not equipped to hold the large numbers of people in need of housing.¹⁰ Despite announcing that it is committing U.S. \$125 million to a two year reintegration plan,¹¹ government payments to the UNITA ex-combatants have been "irregular and not universal", according to the UN, and twenty per cent of the ex-combatants have not yet been included on the payroll.¹² Seeds and tools programs promised by the government did not materialize in many locations, ensuring another year of aid dependency for the majority of the ex-combatants.¹³ A top UNITA official warned:

How these people are treated will determine the stability or instability of the country. The government must be willing to pay the price of peace and stability. These men are still soldiers without guns. If the government fails in its reintegration program, everything in life has its price. The causes of social conflict are still alive.¹⁴

A Western diplomat agreed: "If it doesn't go well, this will put in jeopardy the peace process and the stability of the country".¹⁵ Even a top Angolan government official conceded, "If we don't do this right, we could return to war".¹⁶

The challenges – security, economic, psychosocial, capacity and political – are enormous. Land and property issues must be resolved; transport back home must be arranged; areas must be prepared for reintegration, and programs must be established both for those being reintegrated and the communities that are absorbing them. Any of these elements could undermine the entire effort.

Implementation has thus far been uneven. The government says in its rhetoric that it is willing to pay the price, but the evidence in the provinces is that no infrastructure is yet in place to begin a process of reintegration. "We don't have the experience on this issue, and we need help", said a

¹⁰ "Quartering Areas Closed, Resettlement Problems Continue", IRIN, 19 June 2003.

¹¹ IRIN, 30 January 2003.

¹² UN Security Council, op. cit., p. 3.

¹³ IRIN, 3 February 2003.

¹⁴ Interview in Angola, December 2002.

¹⁵ Interview in Luanda, December 2002.

¹⁶ Interview in Luanda, December 2002.

senior government official. “We have money, but we need to construct relevant programs”.¹⁷ An aid agency official noted, “The government promised heaven and earth to the UNITA ex-combatants, but haven’t delivered much of anything”.¹⁸ An outside military observer added:

Conceptually the government can talk a good game, but their capacity to implement is minimal, and they don’t really care. The FAA [the Angolan Army] wanted to get this right, and complain about the central government not giving the resources to make it work. The government has given the FAA an impossible mission with no resources. This is antagonizing the FAA leadership”.¹⁹

This is puzzling given that the government passed its first major test in the way it organized the camps for UNITA soldiers to demobilize, although there were serious humanitarian problems in some of these quartering areas. Within 90 days of the cessation of hostilities, the FAA and UNITA together had built and opened quartering sites all over the country and the FAA was trying to feed 400,000 people. In comparison, in 1994, when the UN was charged with establishing quartering areas, it took them eight months to establish the first quartering area for 800 people.²⁰

The distribution of resettlement/reintegration packages to the former UNITA fighters has been irregular, thus complicating an already difficult situation.²¹ The first test, the provision of reintegration “kits” including tools and other basic necessities, failed when the contract for the procurement of the kits was botched, and after the kits were purchased, the lack of provincial government capacity to deliver the kits stymied the program.²² Most Angolans, including UNITA representatives, do not think that in the short run UNITA would go back to the bush as an organized fighting body. They do, however, believe that banditry and more organized criminal activity could unfold if needs are not addressed.²³ (The actions of many UNITA units had degenerated into precisely this kind of activity in the year before Savimbi’s death, as their logistics slowly eroded.²⁴) The threat of banditry could become reality, as there are still many weapons in circulation amongst the ex-UNITA soldiers who may start selling their guns in order to support their families. Mine laying would also be a possibility.

The government closing of the quartering areas in June will move the ex-combatants and their families to transit centers, ultimately depositing them back in their areas of origin or resettlement. Most ex-combatants are either unpaid or have not received the over-promised resettlement packages (skills training, money, agricultural support, etc.). According to the UN Humanitarian Coordinator in Angola, Erick de Mul, the “plan was to resettle people and the kits

¹⁷ Interview in Luanda, December 2002.

¹⁸ Interview in Lobito, December 2002.

¹⁹ Interview in Angola, December 2002.

²⁰ Interview in Luanda, December 2002.

²¹ “Quartering Areas Closed, Resettlement Problems Continue”, IRIN, 19 June 2003.

²² IRIN, 3 February 2003.

²³ Interviews in Huambo, Kuito and Lobito, December 2002.

²⁴ Organisational cohesion was partially restored, ironically, when UNITA units went to the quartering areas by mid-2002 and had a semi-regular logistical supply line. In some places this is beginning to degenerate again, which is where much of the banditry is concentrated.

would come later...we are still hoping that will happen”.²⁵ A major survey by the International Organization of Migration found that the desires of the ex-combatants were rather simple. Half had farms before joining UNITA and wanted to return to farming. The other half wanted some kind of professional training.²⁶

The World Bank’s entry into the equation is key in refocusing attention on reintegration. In January the Bank agreed to implement with the government a multi-donor program aimed at demobilizing 167,000 FAA and UNITA ex-combatants and paying reintegration benefits to over 100,000 of them. Implementation of the Bank’s U.S. \$125 million Transitional Support Strategy (TSS) to provide needed lending for immediate post-war stability and reconciliation took effect in mid-June to last a period of fifteen months.²⁷ More than half the funding is for the reintegration of UNITA ex-combatants, part is for the ongoing Social Action Fund (FAS), and the rest is technical assistance. The full disbursement is predicated on performance criteria that the government will have to meet during the implementation process. Some analysts view this as an alternative set of economic conditions at variance with those of the IMF. They believe that this kind of discontinuity between major donors gives mixed signals to the Angolans and undermines reform. Others argue that World Bank officials have made clear to the government that there will be no follow-on programs in the absence of an agreement with the IMF and that if there are no results in the current program they will pull out. Furthermore, the World Bank will not provide large-scale assistance, for example to infrastructure projects, unless there has been compliance with IMF terms. The IMF, in turn, will discuss the current situation in Angola at its July board meeting, but is still waiting to hear back on government adherence to transparency practices and the release of more current data on external debt figures before it will come to any decision.

The government’s Commission on the Social and Productive Reintegration of Demobilized and Displaced People seeks international assistance to help transport the ex-combatants back to their areas of origin and to fund reintegration kits. The government’s motivation for closure of the camps is inherently political. Some see an opportunity to break the back of UNITA’s armed wing and further weaken its organizational cohesion by dispersing the remaining ex-combatants and further distancing them from their leadership. These officials do not want pockets of UNITA strongholds to continue, either for future military activity or to provide cadres for UNITA as a political party. Savimbi is dead; the remaining top military and political leadership is in Luanda; the next level of leaders is largely under control in provincial capitals, recipients of cars, houses and cash; but the grassroots leadership remained in the quartering areas with the rank-and-file. Therefore, although the old hierarchical system was destroyed at Savimbi’s death, command and control still exist to some degree at the basic operational level.

In Luanda, some UNITA leaders – attempting to increase their leverage – have implicitly threatened that if things go very wrong, its rank and file will threaten Angola’s stability. Others say that this is impossible. Nevertheless, even with the deterioration of its command and control and broader organizational coherence, some within the MPLA leadership and key FAA officers continue to believe that UNITA could act as a lightning rod for more general dissatisfaction with

²⁵ “Quartering Areas Closed, Resettlement Problems Continue”, IRIN, 19 June 2003.

²⁶ IRIN, 30 January 2003.

²⁷ World Bank, Angola: Transitional Support Strategy, 6 March 2003, p. 2.

the government, and create the foundation for future instability. It appears that the government does not want to take any chances and is dispersing this population as quickly as possible.

The government has a point. It is important to encourage the return of this population to their families, although many were with their families in the quartering areas and thus less committed to a return to a specific location. The biggest mistake would be to keep them together and treat them as a group. The case of post-war Mozambique is instructive. The formal rebel insurgency, RENAMO, constituted a threat to security but its rank-and-file were very quickly returned to their family networks, and numerous initiatives were undertaken to support reconciliation and traditional justice at the local level. In Angola, these local mechanisms of reconciliation and justice have been deeply compromised over the years and thus will be more difficult to resurrect for the purposes of long-term conflict resolution.

Another factor to watch closely is the degree to which UNITA rank-and-file lose their confidence in – and thus loyalty to – their superiors in Luanda. Reports of commanders who went to the capital and were rewarded with houses and cars have caused unhappiness among those left behind in the quartering areas with little assistance.²⁸ Luanda-based UNITA leaders, including General Gato, are unlikely to attempt to confront the government militarily. However, it is more plausible that had officers been left in the camps any longer they might create small gangs to engage in banditry in the absence of delivery of promised support. The likelihood of this scenario increases proportionate to the perception of the ex-combatants that the government is not delivering. This is closely linked to another problem, that of soldiers not understanding what their benefits actually are, which in turns led a UNITA leader in central Angola to say, “The UNITA rank-and-file feel like the government is swindling them”.²⁹

The psychological state of many of the erstwhile fighters is especially worrying. For years they have seen and been subjected to a variety of horrors. “These men have been in the bush for years, and have been radicalized by their life experiences”, said one military observer.³⁰ When ex-officers in the quartering areas have been paid, drunken terror has sometimes resulted, apparently mostly among those who were in the bush longest. Scores are settled in a frightening manner. “It is a form of social retribution”, said one humanitarian official. “High levels of social deprivation combined with extreme levels of social control, including maiming and torturing to ensure conformity, produce madness borne of the depredations and terrors of war”.³¹

In many cases local populations do not want UNITA ex-combatants to return home because of the abuses they committed and fear that increased violence and banditry would result. Many of their homes and properties have been taken, which could produce localized conflict around the country as these populations come back home. An Angolan church official reported, “Angolans are not ready to forgive. It is dangerous to bring the ex-combatants back to their home areas. Returnee conflicts will be a major problem”.³² A senior aid official warned, “Reintegration

²⁸ Interviews in Angola, December 2002. Key UNITA military leaders were made three-star generals in the FAA when they joined the government in August, a move some believe was aimed at driving a further wedge between UNITA leaders and rank-and-file. *Africa Confidential*, 11 October 2002.

²⁹ Interview in Angola, December 2002.

³⁰ Interview in Luanda, December 2002.

³¹ Interview in Angola, December 2002.

³² Interview in Angola, December 2002.

programs targeting only ex-UNITA, such as that designed by the World Bank, will aggravate this feeling and might also add an additional level of resentment and rejection”.³³ Consequently, programs should seek to support the communities to which the ex-combatants are returning, in addition to whatever direct assistance they receive. Local human rights NGOs, civil society, and a few international organizations have begun addressing the difficulties involved in resettlement but more collaboration on the part of the government is still necessary for the context of reintegration to be successful.

Developing State Capacity

Long-term stability will be determined by the degree to which the Angolan state, at all levels, can be rehabilitated. After Portuguese colonial rule, a Cold War-driven Marxist-Leninist ideology, and 30 years of post-colonial warfare, there has been virtually no investment in the development of state administration at the national, provincial or municipal levels. Administrative capacity is minimal at best. One of the most immediate problems is that many government workers are not paid a living wage and not paid regularly. This forces many to take second and third jobs as well as to seek cuts from normal government transactions.³⁴

The need to rebuild effective state administration is imperative for several reasons:

- ❑ Expectations for the government to become more involved and more efficient in delivering social services will grow. That Angola has one of the lowest rates of life expectancy (45 years) and literacy rates for adults (42 per cent), and ranks 161st of 173 countries in human development indicators,³⁵ underscores the urgency with which the government will have to address the delivery of services.
- ❑ The divide, and widespread perceptions of the divide, between government officials and political leaders in Luanda and both officials and ordinary citizens in the provinces, continues to hinder peace consolidation. This could lead to social dissatisfaction and protests in rural areas as well as – in the not-too-distant future – increased instability and potential conflict.
- ❑ One of the most challenging aspects of rebuilding the state is in the rural areas where ex-combatants return to live in villages among citizens against whom they only recently waged war. As one member of civil society put it, “It is easier to forget in the cities”.³⁶

The government is doing very little to support the delivery of aid and services, particularly in UNITA’s former strongholds. The causes are mixed, and include a lack of organization, inadequate logistical capacity, low priority, and corruption. The possible exception is announcement – but not yet implementation – of a U.S.\$20 million infrastructure investment program in each province.

There are a few encouraging signals. In some provinces the government has begun to pay regular salaries for the Health Department, which demonstrates that the system can be made to work.

³³ Correspondence with authors, February 2003.

³⁴ International Crisis Group, *Angola’s Choice: Reform or Regress*, 7 April 2003.

³⁵ “Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World”, Human Development Global Report for 2002, United Nations Development Program (UNDP).

³⁶ Interview in Angola, December 2002.

Regular readjustment of salaries in response to inflation is also occurring. Another example is the strong cooperation Halo Trust says the government is providing to its demining efforts. Many observers and foreign agencies note that the armed forces (FAA) are a more willing, more efficient, and better resourced partner in development than other branches of government.³⁷ President dos Santos is taking key cabinet officials to all regions to meet with provincial officials and traditional authorities to get a better sense of needs and priorities outside Luanda. Personnel of international organizations and NGOs active in the country report other such small signs, but the overall picture of the government's commitment to building social service infrastructure and demonstrating concern for the welfare of the Angolan people remains unpromising.

DEVELOPING INFRASTRUCTURE

Despite the country's vast resources, decades of attacks on civilians and infrastructure coupled with inflated military spending have left the economy in shambles. The humanitarian situation in Angola has improved but the statistics paint a grim picture: the lowest 10 per cent of countries ranked in the UN human development index; unemployment estimated at over 50 per cent; life expectancy 45 years; more than half the population malnourished and without access to clean water or adequate health facilities;³⁸ per capita GDP down 48 per cent over 25 years, and annual military spending accounting for twenty per cent of GDP during the war.³⁹ Further, interior regions of the country are still plagued by landmines, poor roads and broken bridges, all of which impede humanitarian access to the neediest areas.

Landmines and the Rehabilitation of Roads

The biggest challenge to resettlement and one of the most significant crises facing the country, is the legacy of landmines. Not only are up to fifteen million planted in Angola's roads, farming areas and walkways, but at least 76 different types, manufactured in 22 countries, have been found.⁴⁰ This has resulted in more than 70,000 mine-disabled people – one in every 415 Angolans.⁴¹

Angola is one of the worst places in the world for landmines. Explosions during the last year are the result of various factors. These include the sheer number of mines laid during the war, the increased volume of traffic on the roads since the end of fighting in April 2002, the opening of new roads for returnees and ensuing commercial traffic, and the rainy season which has removed soil and exposed undetonated mines. The explosions have had a chilling effect on those delivering vital services to millions.

³⁷ Interviews and correspondence, January and February 2003.

³⁸ UNDP Human Development Report 2002, op. cit., CIA World Fact Book 2002.

³⁹ Military spending was 21.2 per cent of GDP in 2000 – an immense figure in comparison with other African states, particularly given Angola's oil-inflated GDP. Mozambique, for example, spent 2.5 per cent, Rwanda 3 per cent, Sudan 3 per cent, Zimbabwe 4.8 per cent, Sierra Leone 1.4 per cent and Burkina Faso 1.6 per cent. UNDP Human Development Report 2002, op. cit.

⁴⁰ Hartley, "Halo Trust in Angola", op. cit., p.13.

⁴¹ Helen Long, "Angola, An Eyewitness Report of the Landmine Crisis", *Journal of Mine Action*, Issue 3.3, 1999, p. 17. International Campaign to Ban Landmines, Landmine Monitor Report 2002, Human Rights Watch (2002), p. 74.

If incidents do not decrease, aid agency operations will face further restrictions, both impacting deliveries to current populations in need and preventing assessments for aid deliveries that will be needed after the harvest. Additionally, all this unnerves nascent commercial traffic. If the agencies are forced to cut food aid, there will be serious repercussions because dependence is high in certain provinces.

There are two groups of mines: first, those used for classic perimeter defense of strategic areas; second, those on roads to prevent access to and from strategic areas or targets. The risk to civilians is enormous, as both strategies were aimed at reducing civilian traffic as well as impeding opposing forces.

Illustratively, an unexploded antitank landmine was discovered in June on an Angolan road that refugees coming from Zambia would soon need to access to return home. The road was immediately closed to refugee, UN and humanitarian traffic for further inspection. As a result, the World Food Program (WFP) had to shift from land transport to using cargo flights to distribute repatriation materials, focusing more on recovery-oriented activities and less on emergency operations.⁴² It was on an old landmine, but one of the constant reminders that mines will continue to cause problems for years to come in Angola, especially for the large numbers of returning refugees and IDPs, and humanitarian aid accessibility.

The FAA's mine clearance capacity is poor. Reportedly, there have been instances when its personnel prematurely declared an area safe for the return of civilians, only to have a mine go off soon thereafter, resulting in casualties. This is because the standard for the FAA's military demining is much lower than that for humanitarian de-mining, which seeks to eliminate all devices from a given location in order to ensure total safety for civilian populations. In other instances, both the FAA and UNITA have been helpful to NGOs in identifying minefields.⁴³

The government's mine action office, the National Institute for the Removal of Landmines and Unexploded Ordnance (INAROOE),⁴⁴ reportedly suffers from lack of proper mandates, poor overall planning and co-operation between key organizations, contradictory messages to donors, and gradually increasing international distrust in its work.⁴⁵ To rectify this, the government established the National Inter-Sectoral Commission on Demining and Humanitarian Assistance for Mine Victims (CNIDAH) in 2001. Angola hopes to restore donor confidence over time by clearly separating policy, co-ordination, and fund-raising on the one hand, and implementation of mine action activities on the other.⁴⁶

⁴² "Levels of Vulnerability Remain the Highest in the World", IRIN, 3 June 2003.

⁴³ Interviews in Lobito and Huambo, December 2002.

⁴⁴ INAROOE was established in 1995 with UN support as the primary national organisation responsible for mine activities in Angola. However, in 2002 (according to the Landmine Monitor Report 2002), "the organisation was reportedly in crisis and has reduced its activities to a minimum. A severe lack of confidence in the institution on the part of donors, mine action NGOs, and others led the UN to suspend its technical assistance in August 2000. Its minimal government funding covers salaries, but very little in the way of mine action operations. With the creation of CNIDAH, a major restructuring of INAROOE will take place, but its future role has yet to be defined".

⁴⁵ International Campaign to Ban Landmines, Landmine Monitor Report 2002, Human Rights Watch, (2002), p. 74.

⁴⁶ Ibid. p. 74.

Infrastructure is severely decayed. Roads, many of which are impassable because of landmines, have not been repaired since the 1970s. As one top government official explained, “It is difficult to imagine economic development without basic infrastructure, such as roads and bridges. We can’t transport our agricultural products to markets. The result is that we are highly import-dependent. We need the preconditions of infrastructure to create competitive domestic industries. That is the responsibility of the state”.⁴⁷ Telephone lines reach only five out of 1,000 people in the country and only half that figure outside Luanda.⁴⁸ Slowly, roads and bridges are being repaired. A bridge in the Lunda Sul province was recently restored allowing humanitarian partners to resume activities in the area after a two-month stoppage.⁴⁹

In general, more comprehensive mine clearance and enhanced information sharing between localities and the center would permit the process to go exponentially faster. However, capacity is limited by lack of resources, including lack of government capacity in humanitarian demining. Addressing these constraints would have very positive implications for humanitarian access, intra- and inter-provincial trade, agricultural development, and even the political process, as the election likely in late 2004 will need much greater freedom of mobility to succeed.

The Survey Action Center is beginning to implement a Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) of Angola, with results to be available in 2004. The survey involves CNIDAH, UN agencies and partner NGOs. By visiting and assessing every mine-impacted community, the LIS will prioritize on-going demining efforts. Additionally, the Angola Red Cross with the support of the International Committee of the Red Cross launched a mine-awareness programme in early June to reduce the casualties caused by mines and other unexploded ordnance⁵⁰ and provides assistance to mine survivors and effected communities.

Revitalising the Agriculture Sector

Production in the coffee industry – Angola’s chief export earner before oil and employer of over six per cent of the population – has plummeted from 400,000 tons per year in the early 1970s to around 2,000 today.⁵¹ Agricultural production as a whole fell from 29 per cent of GDP in 1991 to just under six per cent in 2000, and the country will need to import more than 725,000 tons of cereals in 2003.⁵²

Malnutrition levels are rampant in areas where populations have been unable to establish food security, including thirteen return sites, and as a result the levels of vulnerability in Angola remain some of the highest in the world.⁵³ OCHA’s first quarterly report for 2003 stated that,

⁴⁷ Interview in Luanda, December 2002.

⁴⁸ UN National Information and Communication Infrastructure Background Report on Angola, www.un.org; *The Sunday Times* (Johannesburg), 12 January 2003.

⁴⁹ “Humanitarian Situation in Angola”, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations, 1 – 15 May 2003, p.3.

⁵⁰ “Mine Awareness Programme Launched”, IRIN, 5 June 2003.

⁵¹ Special Angola Report, www.washingtonpost.com; *Angola Peace Monitor*, Vol. VI, No. 9, 14 May 2000.

⁵² The food needs data is according to UN Food and Agriculture Organisation officials. “Angola Country Report”, *Economist Intelligence Unit*, November 2002; World Bank data, 14 September 2002, www.worldbank.org.

⁵³ “Levels of Vulnerability Remain the Highest in the World”, IRIN, 3 June 2003.

A large majority of returning refugee, IDP and ex-combatant populations are at risk of food insecurity due to lack of agricultural inputs and one of the most pressing needs at the moment was to get seeds and inputs to returnees in time for the next planting season. Further, if the populations were forced to remain dependent on assistance for more than two harvests, the recovery transition period would be longer than expected.⁵⁴

The repercussions of not providing the needed seeds and tools affect not only the nutritional livelihoods of the returnees, especially children, but the lack of food security also increases the spread of disease. If the goods are not distributed, the threat of banditry is more likely to arise. Further the World Food Program (WFP), charged with delivering the repatriation materials recently warned that its transportation programs are critically underfunded at a key time in Angola's post-war recovery process.⁵⁵

Diversification of an economy in which oil accounts for 90 per cent of exports and 80 per cent of tax revenues is a prerequisite for development and fundamental to creating the kind of economic growth that has wider economic benefits for the people of Angola. In coordination with its international partners, the government needs to formulate and prioritize a poverty reduction strategy – a key IMF requirement for any country undertaking structural adjustment. Coordinated planning to lay the groundwork for development that will benefit more than just the wealthiest segment of the population is essential in a country where poverty is endemic, and should be part of the larger effort at preparing for the promised donors conference.⁵⁶ Giving the agricultural sector a higher priority is a prerequisite not only for immediate recovery but also for obtaining the longer-term benefits of diversification. “Agriculture is the key to development”, said one top UNITA official.⁵⁷

There are numerous questions about who is receiving the major land concessions and for what purpose (ranching, large-scale commercial agriculture, etc.). The process lacks transparency, despite its centrality in any larger economic development strategy. The government must develop an equitable, consistent land use policy balanced between agri-business and smallholders. Coastal people should not end up stereotypically owning most of the land in the interior, as one skeptical diplomat predicted: “On the Planalto, the mestiço coastal people will own the land of the black Ovimbundo people. Herein lie the seeds of the next conflict in Angola”.⁵⁸ Also an issue is the fact that Angolan farmers are predominantly women and their voices have yet to be heard in this debate.

Current legislation, if passed and enacted as is, could contribute to precisely this outcome. The Land Forum, a coalition of Angolan NGOs, persuaded the government in 2002 to put aside a controversial draft land bill and engage in lengthy consultations. But in his 2003 New Year's message, President dos Santos ordered a halt to this process, saying the existing draft must go before parliament without further amendment.⁵⁹ Private ownership should be codified but not at the expense of small farmers, as the Forum alleges, and should allow for community ownership in rural areas where that is the reality. Further consultation could result in an agreed way forward involving all of the principal agricultural stakeholders in Angola. At their meeting on 5 February 2003, they called for continued discussion on the draft bill with communities and other interested parties; for the law to recognize the

⁵⁴ “Levels of Vulnerability Remain the Highest in the World”, IRIN, 3 June 2003.

⁵⁵ “Logistics Operation in Jeopardy”, IRIN, 17 June 2003.

⁵⁶ *Africa Confidential*, Vol. 44, No. 4, 21 February 2003.

⁵⁷ Interview in Angola, December 2002.

⁵⁸ Interview in Luanda, December 2002.

⁵⁹ Correspondence, February 2002.

rural community, rather than only individuals, as a legal entity able to hold title to land; for a clear definition of the concept of rural community; for the definition of the nature of state land title; and for the creation of a regulatory mechanism for the law itself, once it is approved. In addition, the U.S. has been actively assisting the Angolan government in devising a comprehensive land title system.

CONCLUSION

Sustainable peace and post-war recovery will not come quickly to Angola, and the processes leading to progress will be hard-fought. This reality calls for a long-term strategy of international engagement. Civil society should be liberally supported to increase accountability and address issues of reconciliation; government should be engaged and pressed to deliver the fundamental humanitarian goods they have promised as well as the economic and political reforms progressive officials say they want to make. Ambassador Paul Hare, former U.S. Special Envoy to Angola, concluded, “The important point should always be ‘what is the trend line?’ Is Angola moving forward, however slowly, erratically, and incrementally, or is it mired in the status quo?”⁶⁰

Now at a crossroads, the government needs to convert its oil wealth into poverty reduction. Those with influence in Angola – whether donors or oil companies – can play a positive role in influencing the commitment to reform and development of the areas most in need of assistance. Quiet engagement and partnership is most effective, particularly when there is focused effort on specific issues. But when bottlenecks have arisen, the government has clearly reacted – albeit bitterly – to external public pressure, particularly if focused and coordinated.⁶¹ The government’s strong desire for a donor’s conference in 2003 offers significant early leverage. However, the distrust expressed by a number of donor countries in the Angolan government’s ability (or even willingness) to channel fund to those in need implies that they prefer to entrust Angolan humanitarian aid to the UN.⁶²

Angola’s government is rather unique in Africa in that it cares so little about whether individual aid agencies stay or leave, and has yet to internalize the strategic importance of building domestic support through the provision of basic human services. The practice of reciprocity between rulers and ruled is nascent, in part due to the legacy of the colonial and Cold War experience. This needs to change or the seeds of future instability could be planted in areas where the inhabitants most acutely perceive themselves to be marginalized, particularly in the old UNITA stronghold of the Planalto. Thus, agricultural development is a priority in ensuring the food security of the population, especially, those inhabiting the most at risk areas. This cannot be achieved without the rebuilding of infrastructure, the clearing of mines and reconstruction of roads and bridges.

There are promising new factors, however, that suggest the government may indeed be reviewing its priorities. It is increasingly sensitive about its international image for a number of reasons. It sees itself as finally free to assume its rightful place on the African and world stages. “There is a sense of Angolan exceptionalism”, noted one long-time analyst. “They see themselves as regional kingmakers, having involved themselves in both Congos, Equatorial Guinea, Sao Tome, and Cote

⁶⁰ Correspondence, 11 February 2003.

⁶¹ For example, when the government announced that it was going to close the quartering areas for UNITA ex-combatants in October 2002, the external criticism was critical in reversing the decision.

⁶² Neuma Grobbelaar, Greg Mills and Elizabeth Sidiropoulos. Angola: Prospects for Peace and Prosperity. Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2003, p. 59.

d'Ivoire".⁶³ The government's new regional and international responsibilities in the UN Security Council, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union will shape its strategy of engagement. At the same time, President dos Santos by many accounts is increasingly interested in protecting and expanding his legacy, which will require more robust domestic liberalization.⁶⁴ The upcoming elections will increasingly focus attention on the political environment. These new attitudes and opportunities create a new environment for coordination between aid agencies, the Angolan government, and Angolan civil society organizations.

After decades of war, many areas must be prioritized if peace is to be consolidated. The government cannot do everything, but it must do much more than it currently is. Civil society must continue to organize and network, but also seek ways to contribute concretely to national reconstruction and reconciliation. UNITA and other political parties need to diversify their bases, move into the provinces, and make their contribution to a more substantive national dialogue. The role that a restructured UNITA, other political parties, and civil society organizations can play in pressuring the government of Angola to engage in a more inclusive style of government is crucial for the country's immediate future.⁶⁵ International organizations and other governments should point out shortcomings, but – equally importantly – support positive trends when they appear, diplomatically and financially. It is necessary that they recognize the inputs as needed while allowing for the central players to be the local governments and organizations by paying more attention to the communities outside of Luanda, like Bie and Huambo, building up the human and institutional capacity within these areas.

⁶³ Interview in Luanda, December 2002.

⁶⁴ Interviews in Angola, December 2002.

⁶⁵ Neuma Grobbelaar, Greg Mills and Elizabeth Sidiropoulos. Angola: Prospects for Peace and Prosperity. Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 2003, p. 44.