

The Peace Dividend in Angola: Strategic Implications for the Okavango Basin Cooperation

By

João Gomes Porto with Jenny Clover
African Security Analysis Programme, Institute of Security Studies
www.iss.co.za

OVERVIEW OF THE PEACE PROCESS: CURRENT REALITIES, FUTURE POSSIBILITIES

INTRODUCTION

...while the war has unquestionably been the single most important constraint on development, as well as the immediate cause of the humanitarian emergency, other factors, of an institutional and policy-related nature, have exacerbated the serious situation experienced by Angola's people. The new situation therefore requires two types of action. The first is a series of peace-building measures in the short to medium term, aimed at promoting national reconciliation, demilitarisation and recovery. Second, however, there is an urgent need for policy reforms and institutional measures, including measures regarding the management and allocation of public resources, in order to address the other deep-seated problems that have contributed to the situation of economic malaise, widespread poverty, high mortality and social exclusion.¹

Five months have passed since the historical ceremony at the National Assembly in Luanda on 4 April brought to an end the longest running civil war in Southern Africa. The signature of the 'Memorandum of Understanding' by the military leaders of the two belligerent parties and their unequivocal commitment to the 1994 Lusaka Protocol paved the way for what many analysts considered the most promising 'window of opportunity' for the resolution of this 27 year old civil war. Several factors contributed to the perception that this classic textbook case of 'complex, deep rooted and protracted conflict' was in fact coming to an end. This situation was the consequence of UNITA's impending military defeat, its leadership crisis following the death of Jonas Savimbi and other prominent UNITA leaders and finally, UNITA's awareness that this could be its last opportunity to secure a legitimate political role in a democratic Angola. Moreover, the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) undeniable victory over a severely weakened UNITA must be considered as central to this conflict's ripeness for resolution.²

Intended to replace annexes 3 and 4 of the 1994 Lusaka Protocol, which remains for both parties the accepted and legitimate framework for peace in Angola³, the

¹ United Nations System in Angola. Angola: The Post-War Challenges. Common Country Assessment 2002, p.iv.

² For an in-depth discussion of these issues refer to, *inter alia*, João Gomes Porto with Richard Cornwell and Henri Boshoff. Death of Savimbi renews hope for Peace in Angola. African Security Analysis Programme Situation Report, Institute for Security Studies, 26 March 2002 as well as João Gomes Porto. Angola at DD+04Q. Preliminary Assessment of the Quartering, Disarmament and Demobilisation Process. African Security Analysis Programme Situation Report, Institute for Security Studies, 04 June 2002.

'Memorandum of Understanding' defined: an amnesty law for all crimes committed within the framework of the armed conflict; the modalities of the cease-fire; the disengagement, quartering and conclusion of the demilitarisation of UNITA's military forces; the integration of UNITA generals, senior officers, captains and junior officers, sergeants and men in accordance with existing structural vacancies; the integration of generals and senior UNITA officers into the national police; the demobilisation of excess UNITA military personnel and disbanding of UNITA military forces and finally, the vocational re-integration of demobilised personnel of the ex-UNITA military forces into national life. Two institutional structures were created to oversee the coordination and management of this process: a Joint Military Commission (JMC) with the responsibility to promote and oversee the application of the 'Memorandum of Understanding' and a Technical Group (TG) with the responsibility to assist the JMC in the performance of its duties, including the drawing up detailed timetables and definition of specific activities to be carried out to guarantee the application of the provisions of the 'Memorandum of Understanding'.

The process that began with the signature of the 'Memorandum of Understanding' on 4 April has largely been carried out in accordance with the objectives agreed by the parties as regards the resolution of 'all outstanding military issues under the Lusaka Protocol'. The quartering, demobilisation and disarmament process has been officially completed and the re-integration of UNITA's armed forces has already begun. This process can be seen in the table below:

Quartering of UNITA's Forces and Family Members on 2 July 2002

	24 April	1 May	5 May	8 May	11 May	15 May	17 May	21 May	24 May	28 May	2 July
UNITA Soldiers	11,868	24,553	32,208	39,250	42,153	51,354	55,618	65,343	67,967	76,654	84,618
Family Members	12,202	33,697	57,073	71,575	73,800	91,234	106,763	145,819	159,659	212,881	264,225
Total	24,070	58,250	89,281	110,825	115,953	142,588	162,381	211,162	227,626	289,535	348,843

The table above makes patently clear that the QDD process in Angola was completed at an unusually fast pace. On a political level, several observers consider that this was a result of considerable and credible political will from both the government of Angola and UNITA in successfully conducting this process. In fact, UNITA's Management Commission has been consistent in its desire to put an end to the war and comply with its obligations under the 'Memorandum of Understanding'. No breaches of the cease-fire have been reported and the quartering, demobilization and disarmament of UNITA's military forces proceeded largely in an orderly fashion. Nevertheless, and to a large extent this was a result of the military conditions prevailing at the end of the war. At the time of Jonas Savimbi's death on 22 February,

³ The parties reiterate their unequivocal acceptance of the validity of the relevant legal and political instruments, in particular, the Lusaka Protocol and the resolutions of the United Nations' Security Council relative to the Angolan Peace Process.

UNITA's military forces were severely weakened, its regional commands uncoordinated, its troops facing critical shortages of food and fuel supplies among others. War weariness, disorientation at the loss of its top leadership, hunger and disease left UNITA with no alternative but to sit at the negotiation table and swiftly agree to a comprehensive cease-fire agreement in Luena. That the implementation of the 'Memorandum of Understanding' is proceeding at a similar pace should therefore not come as a surprise, for the same conditions apply.

Nonetheless, whether out of necessity or a genuine willingness to comply with its obligations under the cease-fire agreement (or in fact both), the fact is that the speed at which troops and family members have been assembled has created a dire humanitarian situation in the camps and surrounding areas, where a total of 348,843 people are currently located. The JMC recognised that UNITA's military forces and family members were showing serious levels of malnutrition and disease upon arrival in the assembly areas. According to a recent IRIN report, relief workers operating in the quartering camps' family areas have described the humanitarian situation there as critical.⁴ Reports from a number of humanitarian agencies present in areas previously inaccessible due to the war confirm alarming levels of malnutrition, hunger and disease. This has been corroborated by a preliminary report from the ongoing United Nations' common assessment of new accessible areas, particularly in Bie, Huambo, Huila and Moxico Provinces.⁵ The horrifying conditions found by Medicins Sans Frontieres in some of these previously inaccessible areas have led them to term this Angola's 'Grey Zones Emergency'.⁶ According to this organisation's latest report,

...the current emergency is also due to the fact that negotiated access for humanitarian assistance was not pursued in Angola, and the government and UNITA exhibited a complete disregard for standards of international humanitarian law...in spite of the starvation, neither the government of Angola nor UNITA delivered food to tens of thousands of people in need and held under their respective control...*this pattern of neglect is repeating itself with regard to the quartering and family areas (QFAs), to which UNITA troops and family members must now report as part of the demobilisation process.* Early indication from the QFAs are that high numbers of UNITA family members are in extremely poor condition...MSF has visited 13 sites with a total population of more than 61,109 people (military and civilians combined). Gross food shortages, severe malnutrition, and alarming death rates have been found in most of the QFAs MSF has visited so far [my emphasis].⁷

⁴ In this regard see IRIN. 'Angola: Focus on Quartering Areas'. [http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=27878&SelectRegion=Southern Africa&SelectCountry=ANGOLA](http://www.irinnews.org/report.asp?ReportID=27878&SelectRegion=Southern%20Africa&SelectCountry=ANGOLA)

⁵ UNICEF. Angola Situation Report Apr 2002. According to a USAID report, though the demobilisation and reintegration have been underway for only one month, logistical constraints and limited capacities with the QFAs have prevented the delivery of adequate food, water, sanitation and health services'. IRIN. Angola: Donors prepared to assist 'sensitive' demobilisation process. 8 May 2002. www.irinnews.org

⁶ According to Anne Fouchard, 'MSF staff has discovered horrifying conditions: 'grey zones', containing thousands of people in a state of severe malnutrition and appalling health. These people were virtual prisoners in areas that became inaccessible when the war resumed in November 1998. These areas represent nearly 90% of the country and are today characterised by complete destitution and starvation'. Anne Fouchard, 'End of War , Beginning of Hunger', in MSF Article, 8 May 2002. www.msf.org

⁷ See Medicins Sans Frontieres. Emergency in Angola- An Operational Update, 28 May 2002.

Although the remoteness and inaccessibility of a large number of these quartering locations may partially explain the difficulties involved in tackling the critical situation described above, the fact of the matter is that the majority of these locations (27) as well as the scheduling of QDD itself were decided by both parties in the cease-fire agreement. That at the time a number of observers questioned the feasibility of such an ambitious endeavour did not discourage either the government of Angola or UNITA, with the quiescence of the 'troika' of observers and the United Nations, from proceeding with QDD as planned in the 'Memorandum of Understanding', that is, as soon as possible. As a matter of fact, all parties involved in the JMC have claimed the need to sustain the momentum of the peace process as the primary justification for pursuing QDD in the present circumstances. A pre-requisite for the maintenance of the cease-fire as well as a litmus test of UNITA's compliance with demilitarisation, QDD has therefore proceeded largely in an ad-hoc fashion, more dependent on political considerations than on humanitarian concerns and without proper planning or systematic (not to mention prior) assessment of needs.

Nevertheless, the current quartering, disarmament and demobilisation process corresponds to a critical aspect, of what one could term in a generic sense, the Angola Peace Process. Consequently, given the context in which the cease-fire agreement was achieved and the lessons learned by previous Angolan attempts at conflict resolution, it would be premature and perhaps irresponsible to judge positive developments within the Peace Process solely on the basis of compliance with the military commitments agreed in Luena and ratified on 4 April. This should not be taken to imply that there is a possibility of a return to war in Angola. In none but the most unrealistic scenarios is the possibility of a return to large-scale war in Angola discussed. In fact, for the first time in decades, the majority of analysts, policy-makers (Angolan and foreign), donors, non-governmental organisations and humanitarian agencies agree that this time a return to war by UNITA is not only unlikely, it is a logical impossibility.

While both the government and UNITA have demonstrated a strong public commitment to peace, reconciliation between the two former adversaries has been confined largely to the institutional structures created by the 'Memorandum of Understanding'. To be sure, confidence-building through conciliatory statements and practical gestures are an important part of rebuilding trust and dissipating what has been a profound climate of suspicion between the two parties. In this regard, emphasis should be given to the President's swift and unilateral declaration of a cease-fire soon after Savimbi was killed. Following this, on 14 March the President announced a '15 Point Peace Plan', which included the halting of offensive military activities, guaranteed a 'blanket amnesty' covering all individuals involved in the war and a comprehensive re-integration programme for all demobilized soldiers. The President's peace agenda also promised the rapid approval of the new Constitution currently being discussed in Parliament that will define the necessary conditions for elections to be held. The announcement of this plan assured UNITA that it would not be treated merely as *'the loser'*, and this paved the way for the negotiations that followed in Moxico Province between the military delegations of the government and

UNITA. In addition, the government has shied away from openly claiming victory, repeatedly stating that in this war 'there are no winners or losers'.

Outside the realm of public statement and in terms of practical action designed to achieve the difficult and elusive goal of 'national reconciliation', the institutional framework designed to implement the 'Memorandum of Understanding', and in particular its Joint Military Commission (JMC), has been until recently the only body where the two former adversaries officially meet. However, this structure's mandate is specifically related to the promotion and application of the 'Memorandum of Understanding', and therefore deals only with matters of a military nature.⁸ Consequently, while unquestionably having an important role in confidence-building between the military leaderships of both sides in that its members are senior military officers of the FAA and FALA (UNITA's armed forces), the JMC lacks the mandate and format that would allow for true national reconciliation to be discussed.

That, several timetable revisions notwithstanding, the current quartering, demobilisation and disarmament process has been observed should therefore not be taken as definitive and conclusive proof that the Angolan Peace Process is moving, swiftly and unhindered. The successful completion of this process, in itself a task of enormous proportions as will be discussed below, indicates at best that the Angolan Peace Process is taking its first steps. Taken as one among several of the conditions necessary for sustainable peace in the short and medium term in Angola, the resolution of the military aspect does not in itself provide protection from potential pitfalls that may undermine the successful completion of the Peace Process in Angola. The challenges are as great as they are varied. The extension of the central administration to areas previously controlled by UNITA is among the major problems the government faces at present. The conflict potential of restoring state administration, in a country that has been *de facto* under two different political and administrative systems, is great.

In addition, outside the political-military field, Angola faces enormous challenges of a social, economic and humanitarian nature. According to the United Nations System Common Country Assessment, some of these medium to long term challenges are⁹:

- the reduction of urban and rural poverty through policies that promote improved access of the poor to employment, land other resources
- an adequate response to the high levels of urbanisation and the country's other demographic problems
- the diversification of the economy, away from extreme oil dependence through policies that promote development of the non-oil sectors

⁸ The Joint Military Commission (JMC) has the responsibility of promoting and overseeing the application of the 'Memorandum of Understanding'. The JMC is headed by a military representative of the government (president and executive member) and a military representative of UNITA (executive member). As Permanent Observers, the JMC includes a military representative of the United Nations as well as a military representative of each of the 'Troika' of observer countries (Portugal, United States and Russia). In this regard see João Gomes Porto, Angola at DD+040: Preliminary Assessment of the Quartering, Disarmament and Demobilisation Process, African Security Analysis Programme Situation Report, Institute for Security Studies, 04 June 2002.

⁹ United Nations System in Angola. Op. Cit. p.50.

- the rebuilding of the social sectors, with particular emphasis on basic social services
- the mounting of an effective national response to HIV/AIDS
- the development of political participation and democratic accountability, and the strengthening of public administration, including systems for ensuring rigour and transparency in the management of public resources.

The Peace Process Today: an Overview

...the objective of National Reconciliation is to re-establish a just and lasting peace in Angola and to enable all Angolans to participate in promoting a social climate of tolerance, fraternity and mutual trust...¹⁰

...I am very pleased to chair this important meeting of the Joint Commission. The last meeting, held in 1998, was chaired by my representative, the late Maitre Beye. The fact that we are meeting today is powerful testimony to the progress that Angola has made. At this point, the military tasks set out in the Lusaka Protocol have been completed, as have the demilitarization of UNITA and the beginnings of its transformation into a political party. I congratulate the people and leaders of Angola on this historic achievement...It is my hope that the work of this Joint Commission, over time, can go beyond implementation of the Lusaka Protocol and lay a broader, firm foundation for a future of good governance, real democracy, transparency, security and peace.¹¹

The Joint Military Commission's (JMC) lack of a mandate to deal with the political aspects of national reconciliation was recognised by all parties involved, including the 'Troika' of observer countries (Portugal, United States and Russia). Because at the centre of the current Peace Process is the completion of all outstanding issues stemming from the 1994 Lusaka Protocol, the parties have agreed on the need to 'move one level up' and create an institution that will allow for the resolution of all issues of a non-military character. Consequently, the government and UNITA's Management Committee agreed on the resurrection of the Joint Commission envisaged in the Lusaka Protocol, as soon as the QDD process was complete and UNITA's military forces disbanded. While the first meeting of the Joint Commission was held on 26 August last, to date the government and UNITA have not provided any information regarding its specific mandate, membership and operating procedures under the current circumstances, which are substantially different from those prevailing in 1994 when the Protocol was signed. Consequently, following the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol, the Joint Commission has the following composition¹²:

- Members:
 - the government of the Republic of Angola

¹⁰ Annex 6, Agenda Item II.4 'National Reconciliation', General Principles, Lusaka Protocol.

¹¹ Kofi Annan, as quoted in Reuters, 27 August 2002.

¹² Annex 8, Agenda Item II.3, 'The UN Mandate, the Role of the Observers of the 'Peace Accords' and the Joint Commission'. C. The Joint Commission. 1. Composition.

- UNITA
- Chair:
 - The United Nations. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Angola shall assume the functions of good offices and mediation
- Observers:
 - The government of the United States of America
 - The Government of Portugal
 - The Government of the Russian Federation

In terms of its functions, the Lusaka Protocol envisaged that the Joint Commission would¹³:

- Watch over the implementation of all political, administrative and military provisions of the Peace Accords for Angola (Bicesse) which had not yet been implemented, and of all provisions of the Lusaka Protocol, in conformity with what was agreed in the areas of military issues, the National Police, National Reconciliation and the completion of the Electoral Process;
- Monitor the implementation of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council of the United Nations;
- To take the final decision on allegations of violations. In case of a violation of the Accords, to take the necessary steps for establishing the identity of the offender and to take the final decision on how to address the violation in question.

In terms of the current situation, the Joint Commission's functions will relate to all aspects of a non-military or police nature. Of relevance for the current situation and in respect of national reconciliation, the following provisions of the Lusaka Protocol should be considered, for they indicate the nature and type of activities that will characterise the activity of the Joint Commission in the months to come:

- Implementation of social welfare and reintegration programmes throughout the national territory.¹⁴
- Implementation of a real administrative decentralisation and deconcentration of the country.¹⁵ Provincial authorities shall have their own powers in the fields of administration, taxation and the economy, including the possibility to attract foreign investments.¹⁶
- Adequate participation, in the pursuit of the national interest, of individuals coming from UNITA in the different levels and institutions of the political, administrative and economic life.¹⁷ The principle of participation of individuals

¹³ Annex 8, Agenda Item II.3 'The UN Mandate, the Role of the Observers of the 'Peace Accords' and the Joint Commission'. C. The Joint Commission. 2. Functions.

¹⁴ Annex 6, Agenda Item II.4 'National Reconciliation'. II. Specific Principles. 11.

¹⁵ Annex 6, Agenda Item II.4 'National Reconciliation'. I. General Principles. 4.d).

¹⁶ Annex 6, Agenda Item II.4 'National Reconciliation'. II. Specific Principles. 5.

¹⁷ Annex 6, Agenda Item II.4 'National Reconciliation'. I. General Principles. 4.c). In this regard, and for a complete list of the posts at Central, Provincial and Local Government Level please refer to the Lusaka Protocol's 'Document Relating To UNITA's Participation In The Central, Provincial and Local Governments and in the Diplomatic Missions Abroad, Pursuant to No.1 of the Modalities of National Reconciliation'. Within the Central Administration UNITA is given 4 Ministerial posts; 7 Deputy Ministerial posts; 6 Ambassadorships. At Provincial level UNITA is given 3 Governorships and 7 Vice-Governorships.

coming from UNITA shall be implemented (including those professionally qualified to perform functions in the public administration, particularly teachers, health workers and technicians, at the various levels of administrative and economic activity of the State- including the mass media and public enterprises).¹⁸ UNITA leaders installed in office in the various political, military and administrative structures of the State, shall enjoy the advantages and benefits attached to their office and UNITA shall receive adequate party premises and appropriate residences for its leaders.¹⁹

- Guarantee the security of all citizens without distinction; the freedoms of speech, professional association and organisation of unions, as well as the freedom of the press in conformity with prevailing legislation and the Lusaka Protocol.²⁰

Finally, as regards the completion of the Electoral Process, while the Joint Commission is entrusted with significant responsibilities under the Lusaka Protocol, the death of Jonas Savimbi has rendered invalid the completion of the 1992 electoral process. In fact, the Government has repeatedly expressed its commitment to holding general elections, probably in 2004 and outside the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol. It must be remembered that following the adoption in 1991 of two Constitutional Amendments, 12/91 and 23/92, Angola's one-party system was ended and Article 2 of the Constitution states that,

...the Republic of Angola is a democratic state based on the rule of law and founded on the principles of national unity, the dignity of the human person, pluralism of expression and political organisation, respect and guarantees for fundamental human rights and freedoms, both with respect to the individual and as a member of organised social groups.

Subsequent to these Amendments a number of other laws instituted reforms relating to political parties and the multi-party system (15/91); associations allowing for the creation of NGOs (14/91); right to assembly and demonstration (16/91) among others. In 1992 a new electoral law was approved opening the way for the first democratic elections in Angola at the end of 1992 (5/92). In addition, two important pieces of legislation were passed in 1997: the Law on Political Parties (2/97) and the Law of Political Party Finance (3/97). Nevertheless, since the 1992 elections, no further national elections have taken place. In fact,

...technically, the 1992 elections were not fully concluded, because the presidential context did not produce an absolute majority of votes for any candidate: the legally required second round could not be held because of the slide back to war. In addition, the unstable state of 'neither war nor peace' in 1994-98, during the period of the post-Lusaka peace process, made it impossible to hold new elections when the four year mandate of the National

¹⁸ Annex 6, Agenda Item II.4 'National Reconciliation'. II. Specific Principles. 10.

¹⁹ Annex 6, Agenda Item II.4 'National Reconciliation'. II. Specific Principles. 16.

²⁰ Annex 6, Agenda Item II.4 'National Reconciliation'. II. Specific Principles. 2.

Assembly expired in 1996. The return to war at the end of 1998 resulted in the further postponement of the elections.²¹

A number of feasibility assessments concerning the next general elections in Angola have already been carried out. Following President dos Santos request for United Nations assistance, a technical team undertook a preliminary assessment of the needs and challenges of organising elections in Angola. Among other matters, this team considered that in the current post-conflict situation, the main challenges concern:

- The establishment of an appropriate legal framework for elections: a new Electoral Law and the appointment of an Independent Electoral Commission;
- Constitutional Revision
- The strengthening of the Government's capacity to actually administer the elections, voters registration and education as well as confidence building and national reconciliation programmes

It is still unclear whether the next elections in Angola will be held under the current Constitution or the new Constitution under discussion in the National Assembly. A joint study by the International Foundation for Election Systems, the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute, has found that the Government of Angola will need at least 18 months to organise elections according to existing laws and regulations.²² This study points to a list of key benchmarks that can be used to measure the progress of election preparation. These are:

- Relocation of Internally Displaced People
- Reauthorisation and activation of the National Electoral Council
- Financial Support for Elections
- National Identification System
- Voter Registration
- Political Parties
- Civil Society
- Media
- Election Observation and Monitoring
- Polling stations/ Voting procedures

Will the soon to be created Joint Commission provide the necessary platform for monitoring the election process?

What Role for UNOA, the 'Troika' and Civil Society?

....let me also re-emphasise that prospects for durable peace and economic reconstruction require that we create a political space that is stable, ensure that national unity is not just an agglomeration of forces but an effective

²¹ See United Nations System in Angola. Angola: The Post-War Challenges. Common Country Assessment 2002, p.42-43.

²² Consortium for Elections and Political Process Strengthening. Angola. Pre-Election Assessment Report. International Foundation for Elections Systems, International Republican Institute and National Democratic Institute, March 2002, p. iii.

integration of the peoples that constitute the nation of Angola. To achieve this, we need to put in place mechanisms of transition from the experiences of war to those of peace. It is therefore crucial that we engage in a participatory transformation process that should enable us to come out with a new and better vision and project of life for all. *This is only possible if all participate actively in the national debate, which should start by our revisiting the ashes of Lusaka, so that we correct what made it fail.* [our emphasis].²³

The 4 April 'Memorandum of Understanding' included no provision for a formal third party monitoring or verification role. In this sense, this agreement departs from the Lusaka Protocol concerning the establishment of external verification mechanisms, as was the case in the United Nations' mandate which established UNAVEM III. This time the government and UNITA chose an institutional structure similar to that used in 1991-1992, assuming full responsibility for verification and compliance with the QDD process under way. Nevertheless, even though the current process is centralised at the level of the JMC, the United Nations (UN) as well as the 'Troika' of observer countries (the governments of Portugal, the United States and Russia) were invited as observers and have played a critical role in terms of technical and political input within the JMC. Now that this phase of the Peace Process is close to completion, and with the soon to be re-instituted Joint Commission, what role will the United Nations and the 'Troika' of observer countries play?

Under the Lusaka Protocol, as was previously discussed, the United Nations assumes the role of Chair of the Joint Commission. In this sense, the Secretary-General will certainly appoint a Special Representative to the Joint Commission and provide good offices and mediation as regards the issues of national reconciliation mentioned above. This can only be achieved once the Security Council reviews UNOA's (United Nations' Office in Angola) mandate so that it can implement these provisions. Consequently, in addition to continuing to provide all necessary assistance (both technical and political) as regards the implementation of the 'Memorandum of Understanding', UNOA will have additional functions in the next phase of the Peace Process. In this regard, it is expected to assist in the promotion and protection of human rights, a function that will undoubtedly require additional personnel. Nevertheless, UNOA will remain a relatively small operation and will not become a large-scale mission.

As regards the 'Troika', the Lusaka Protocol explicitly creates the role of 'Observers of the Peace Process' giving each of these countries a seat in the Joint Commission. With particular relevance is the provision that the 'Troika' shall 'monitor the implementation of all political, administrative and military provisions of the Lusaka Protocol'.²⁴ If the procedures defined in the Lusaka Protocol are followed, the 'Troika' will be invited to attend all meetings of the Joint Commission and may give their opinion on any matter being discussed there. Consequently, the 'Troika' of observer countries will remain deeply engaged in the Angolan Peace Process,

²³ Testimony from Reverend Dr. Daniel Ntoni-Nzinga. United States House of Representatives, Angola: Prospects for Durable Peace and Economic Reconstruction, Committee on International Relations, Sub Committee on Africa Open Hearing, 13 June 2002.

²⁴ Annex 8, Agenda Item II.3. 'The UN Mandate, the Role of the Observers of the 'Peace Accords' and the Joint Commission'. B. Role of the Observers in the Implementation of the 'Peace Accords for Angola' (Bicesse) and the Lusaka Protocol. 2.3.

particularly in phase two concerning the implementation of all outstanding issues in the Lusaka Protocol. All three governments constituting the 'Troika' have repeatedly expressed their commitment to the current QDD+ Re-integration process as well as their continued support to national reconciliation in Angola.

In his '15 Point Peace Plan', President Eduardo dos Santos specifically calls on civil society, namely the churches, political parties, civic and socio-professional associations to help in the 'pacification of souls, tolerance and mutual respect and the mobilisation of resources and willingness for a quick resolution to the problems affecting the country'. Angolan civil society actors (Christian churches, Angolan NGOs and the media) interpreted this as a critical departure in terms of the possibility of its involvement in the Peace Process. This opening is considered by several civil society actors to represent the culmination of a process that has developed in the last three years and in which civil society has enjoyed an increasingly important political role. In fact, the creation of the Movement for Peace launched in 1999 represented the beginning of this radical transformation in the role of civil society. This Congress brought together for the first time the principal churches of Angola (Catholic and Protestant) as well as many NGOs and other civil society organisations. For the first time, the issue of peace between UNITA and the MPLA government was openly discussed outside the confines of elite level politics. Although the development of civil society organisations in Angola is recent and has proceeded at a slow pace, in the last three years, what was once a sector dominated by either religious or development assistance/emergency relief organisation has been enlarged to incorporate political issues such as peace building or human rights. At the same time, the independent press has assumed a progressively important role in channeling popular grievances against the government and stimulating the political debate.

THE CURRENT HUMANITARIAN CRISIS

Structural Indicators of Crisis

While a peaceful Angola is often considered as having all the necessary conditions to become an economic powerhouse in the Southern African region, the rate of socio-economic development will be severely constrained by present structural conditions. Mainly as a result of the war, Angola is placed at the bottom of the development ladder, described as an 'economy under siege', with an economic performance that is at its lowest level since independence in 1975. And this is where the paradox as well as the challenges lie, for Angola possesses an unparalleled natural resource endowment in the form of fertile and varied agricultural lands, rich fishing and forestry resources, large reserves of oil, gas, diamonds, iron ore and gold, as well as a strong hydro-electrical potential.

For the last three decades, what was once a diversified and prosperous economy (Angola produced surplus coffee, sisal and cotton for export; had a growing light industry as well as a strong mining sector) has been gradually destroyed as a consequence of almost uninterrupted war as well as bad policy choices at central level. These have resulted in escalating macro-economic instability. According to the Economist intelligence Unit, Angola has 2.1% of real GDP growth and a consumer price annual inflation of 325%. The bulk of Angola's GDP is however related to the

off-shore oil industry which contributes with 60.3% of GDP, as will be discussed below.

Both the oil sector and the diamond sector have grown exponentially in the last thirty years, making Angola one of the largest diamond producers and the second biggest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa. The oil sector in particular has benefited from a number of new discoveries placing Angola in the coveted position of having the largest reserve growth in the world and first place among the world's top 15 oil finders. A vast number of oil companies are involved in Angola's oil business, and side by side with the *'supermajors'* (Total Fina Elf, Chevron, Exxon Mobil, British Petroleum, Texaco and Shell), we find a large number of *'independents'* (ENI, C-T, BHP, Ranger, Conoco, Ocean, ROC, PetroGal, among others) as well as a number of NOCs (National Oil Companies). Production forecasts for 2001 are of 755.000 barrels per day, for 2005 1.4 billion barrels per day and for 2008, 1.8 barrels per day, placing Angola among the world's top producers of oil. Coupled with an important number of new discoveries, the opening of the Girassol field has substantially increased production levels. In addition, the projected construction of a new refinery in the coastal city of Benguela with a forecasted production of 200 million barrels per day has created new opportunities and excitement around this very lucrative and dynamic field. Furthermore, the government's intention of developing natural gas exploration with the construction of a LNG (liquefied natural gas) terminal in Luanda has made LNG a very attractive business opportunity for foreign investors.

Yet, although Angola's oil sector has operated with considerable success for the last three decades and has been relatively unaffected by the war, the growing revenues of the oil sector have not trickled down to the society as a whole, having been used to finance the war effort in detriment of all other areas. Controversy surrounding extra-budgetary spending and lack of transparency in public finances and particularly in the oil business have prompted strong international pressure from bilateral donors as well as the 'Bretton Woods Institutions' (World Bank and IMF) for greater transparency in public finances. The government of Angola finally agreed to a nine-month SMP (staff monitored programme) in April 2000, which was subsequently extended to June 2001. While the findings of the SMP reflect possibly the central challenge facing Angola, the pace of state reform has been disappointingly slow and macro-economic stability as well as greater transparency have not been attained.

Nevertheless, while the oil industry has consistently grown, the formal economy in Angola has progressively shrunk, and is at present largely dysfunctional and stagnated. As a consequence, the informal economy and therefore non-regulated sector has grown exponentially. A paradigmatic example is the largest open-air market in Africa, the 'Roque Santeiro' located just a few miles from the centre of the capital city, Luanda. Moreover, the protracted and long duration civil war that has just ended, has had catastrophic consequences for all other sectors of the economy, in particular agriculture. The country's annual cereal consumption stands at 1,3m tones, yet it manages to produce only 500,000 tons of food a year. Paradoxically, while agriculture accounts for 76% of Angola's labour force it contributes a mere 12% to Angola's GDP. The balance is imported and donated by international aid agencies such as the World Food Programme. In fact, more than one million people, and in particular the internally displaced, survive on the basis of food assistance provided by international relief agencies. Targeting and monitoring of food assistance is guided by

the inter-agency vulnerability assessments conducted under the Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping Unit of the World Food Programme. Because agriculture assistance is required in almost all locations, the government is attempting to kick start the agricultural sector.

The war has seriously affected the road and rail link infra-structure in Angola as well as made a large proportion of fertile agricultural areas inaccessible. A road network that totaled 75,000 km in 1994, of which 8,000 km are asphalted (EIU), is in a state of disrepair making it very difficult and highly dangerous to transport people and goods by land. The same applies to the rail network, one of UNITA's favorite targets during the civil war. Port facilities are still operating, in Luanda, Lobito and Namibe, catering for an economy that is highly dependent on imports following the collapse of the domestic manufacturing and agricultural sectors. Transportation by air has become the only viable connection for humanitarian aid delivery as well as for the oil and diamond industries.

The Current Humanitarian Crisis

...according to Government figures, 4 million people (almost one third of the total population) were internally displaced, as of May 2002. Of these, over 1.4 million were confirmed IDPs, registered for humanitarian assistance...although the ending of the war paves the way for the return of IDPs and refugees to their areas of origin, this will take time. *The humanitarian crisis will remain extremely serious at least until returning IDPs and refugees harvest their first crops-* and in the short term the humanitarian caseload is actually increasing as humanitarian agencies reach severely distressed populations in previously inaccessible areas... [our emphasis].²⁵

Angola's population totals some 13.1m million with a growth rate of approximately 2.9 and an estimated urban population of around 60%. As a result of the war, Angola which is currently ranked 161 out of 173 countries on the UNDP's Human Development Index, faces a critical humanitarian situation. Indicators show that the incidence of poverty in Angola is among the worst in the world – not only in terms of income levels, but also in terms of the provision of public services such as health and education. Life expectancy stands at 42 years, lower than the average of 48 years for Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole. Inadequate nutrition, contaminated water, and rapid urbanisation in a context of virtually no urban planning or urban infrastructure, have created an environment in which the risk of disease is high. Children under 15 years comprise over half of Angola's population and 20% are under the age of five. It is they who have borne the brunt of displacement and growing impoverishment, suffering catastrophic loss in terms of family members, of basic education and health services. More than one million children are believed to have no access at all to education or health facilities.

The health situation in Angola continues to worsen. Public health services are so severely debilitated as to be effectively non-existent, with most healthcare provision of only the most basic services outside of the main centres having been left to NGOs

²⁵ United Nations System in Angola. *Angola: The Post-War Challenges*. Common Country Assessment 2002.

and church groups. There is only one paediatric hospital in the whole of Angola (situated in Luanda) but even its facilities and resources are limited, children often forced to share a bed with two or three others, and no meals are provided. According to UNICEF and the UNDP Human Development Report 2000, Angola's basic indicators were among the worst in the world – one mother in five died while giving birth, 42% of all Angolan children were underweight for their age. Among the displaced, rates of infant and under-five mortality (236 and 395 per 1,000 live births) are much worse than the already catastrophic national rates of 166 and 292 out of every 1,000 live births respectively, which are themselves among the highest in the world. Malaria is a leading cause of mortality for children under the age of five, followed by diarrhoeal infections, malnutrition and respiratory infections. More than 50% of children are stunted. In the past two years, because of continuing insecurity, conditions have deteriorated further. An increasing number of moderately malnourished children have appeared at supplementary and therapeutic feeding centres, including a disturbingly high percentage of children between 5 and 12 years, a vulnerable group often undetected by the routine nutritional surveys. Vaccination campaigns have not reached many areas, especially during the past few years, resulting in periodic outbreaks of polio and measles. Fewer than 40% of children receive routine immunization for vaccine-preventable diseases. Access to basic services is extremely poor with 69% of the population having no access to clean water and 60% without access to sanitation.

HIV/AIDS threatens to overshadow these traditional health problems, and as in the rest of Southern Africa, "is likely to become the single most serious threat to the health and well-being of Angolans". The development of the disease will place further strain on health services, further impoverish households, and create yet more orphans. Although exact figures are not available and the incidence of the pandemic is probably grossly under-reported, especially outside of Luanda, close on 8,000 children are thought by UNAIDS to be infected with the virus and an estimated 98,000 of under 15s have lost a mother or both parents to the disease.

Education levels also present a serious situation with 58% percent of people over 15 being illiterate and school enrolment as a percentage of the total school age population standing at a mere 25%. Since 1998, 80% of the schools in Angola have been destroyed or abandoned. Some teaching at under-staffed and under-equipped schools takes place in the provinces, though most of these schools are in an advanced state of disrepair. There is a general scarcity of teachers. It is only in Luanda that children stand a chance of getting an adequate education, but here too there are severe constraints -- less than half the teachers are adequately trained, there is a serious lack of classroom space, and teacher/pupil ratios can be as high as 1:80. Failure rates are high, and few children enter high school. Only 5-10% of children are registered at birth, lack of documentation limiting access to education, health facilities and employment. Aside from this, in a country that has an official poverty rate of 67%, few parents can afford schooling. The government has reported that 70% of children between six and 14 years old run the risk of being illiterate. The government has consistently spent below 15% of its budget on the social sector, and in some years below 10%, and most of this goes to salaries and administration in the health and education sectors.

The pervasiveness of the conflict over the past two decades has resulted in a near continuous movement of people, resulting in cyclical waves of displacement. During the period between 1992 and 1994 between 1.3 million to 2 million Angolans fled their homes, mostly to provincial centres and to Luanda. By the end of 1997, humanitarian agencies estimated that over 1 million were still displaced, despite the limited resettlement that had occurred after the two peace agreements. In fact, since 1998 when hostilities erupted again, an additional 3 million people, (mostly young families, unaccompanied children, and the elderly) have been forced from their homes and been on the move almost continuously. The magnitude of the problem is now shocking – a third of the population, or some 4,3m people, are currently displaced and the conditions under which they exist unimaginably appalling. Only 1,4 million of the Internally Displaced People's (IDPs or 'deslocados') have been confirmed by humanitarian organizations for assistance, and of these some 600,000 are living in temporary resettlement sites and more than 436,000 are in camps and overcrowded transit centers. In at least 17 sites in nine Provinces there are more than 27,000 people living in sub-standard conditions in transit centers and warehouses. IDPs are currently widespread throughout all 18 provinces, with the largest concentrations (running along a vertical axis from Uíge south toward Huíla) in the provinces of Malanje, Huambo, Huíla and Bie. The concentration of IDP's in urban areas under government control has been the primary cause of rapid urbanization – an estimated 60%, and a dramatic humanitarian situation in urban areas. According to the United Nations Common Country Assessment 2002,

...in the urban areas, 63% of the population was living below the poverty line (equivalent to \$1.65 a day) in 2000...the proportion of the urban population living below the extreme poverty line (equivalent to 75 US cents a day in 2000) doubled between 1995 and 2000, reaching almost 25%. This dramatic increase in extreme poverty was closely related to the influx of destitute IDPs into the cities, in a context where urban jobs and income-generating opportunities have been limited by the depressed state of the non-oil sectors of the economy.²⁶

Since the start of 2002, over 100,000 have been newly displaced, aggravating further the constraints faced by full camps and feeding centres which were already exceeding maximum capacity. Food and medical supplies are in short supply and basic water and sanitation lacking in most centres with only 30% having access to potable water and limited access to land (max 1ha per family). Before the 'Memorandum of Understanding', aid reached only 10-15% of the country largely as a result of logistical constraints (the poor state of airstrips and roads) and because of precarious security conditions, in the form of attacks on civilians and vehicles, and land mines. Humanitarian organizations had access to only 60% of the 272 locations where IDPs are concentrated, and to approximately 73% of reported displaced populations. With the ending of the war security and accessibility have increased significantly (approximately 40-50 percent of all the humanitarian assistance must still be delivered by air), resulting in a new set of opportunities and challenges for the humanitarian community. Despite this, logistical constraints continue to hamper humanitarian operations – airstrips, roads, and bridges need repair or rebuilding, and

²⁶ In this regard see See United Nations System in Angola. Angola: The Post-War Challenges. Common Country Assessment 2002, p.ii.

demining activities must continue. Agencies estimate that only 25% of the basic needs of vulnerable populations, both resident and displaced, are currently being met.

Although the peace process has advanced rapidly, the level of internal displacement has remained high with thousands of IDPs emerging from the bush, often in appalling conditions having suffered extended periods of hunger and been subjected to harassment, looting and physical assault. In many areas, catastrophic malnutrition rates of more than 45% were recorded among the newly arrived populations. Reason for the starvation was not just conflict, but the particular way in which the war of counter-insurgency was fought, especially in the six months prior to the end of the war. Tens of thousands of civilians living in military contested areas were systematically attacked by armed elements and relocated, sometimes forcibly, into municipal and provincial centres where international agencies provided life-saving assistance. People were not able to settle and they were not able to cultivate.

While a limited number of IDPs are returning to their areas of origin, a considerable proportion continue to move towards areas where humanitarian operations are underway in search of assistance. In many cases spontaneous return movements are temporary, with family members returning to villages to gather information about the situation or to build shelters and prepare agricultural land. By August more than 100,000 IDPs had already started to return to their areas of origin throughout the country; an additional 450,000 are likely to return home by the year end. Demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, return and resettlement of displaced populations, and increased threats of landmines have resulted in a rise in the need for humanitarian resources in the short-term. As of the end of August, OCHA reported that approximately 80,000 ex-combatants, accompanied by 300,000 dependents, remained in the family reception areas.

In order to tackle the current emergency, an inter-agency Rapid Assessment of Critical Needs (RACN) was conducted. This rapid assessment was conducted in 28 locations in 12 provinces and in the process several important road corridors were cleared for humanitarian operations.²⁷ In addition, the Ministry of Agriculture and FAO have recently surveyed humanitarian organizations regarding their plans for assisting resident and displaced populations. Some 200,000 families are expected to require seeds and tools among populations in newly accessible locations, resettled IDPs and returnees and families of demobilized soldiers.

The number of Angolan refugees is also a cause for concern. At the beginning of the year there were some 467,000 Angolan refugees in neighbouring countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia and Namibia. With renewed prospects for a durable peace there is growing interest among refugees in returning home. To date an estimated 20,000 have returned since the ending of hostilities, and indications are that spontaneous repatriation may reach 80,000 may before the end of the year.

The humanitarian operation in Angola is substantial and is currently the most expensive in the world. There are 10 UN Agencies, 100 international NGOs and more

²⁷ Landmines, both anti-tank and anti-personnel, have taken a heavy toll on Angola's women and children as they forage for food and firewood, and also on the delivery of humanitarian assistance. There are an estimated eight to ten million landmines in Angola covering nearly 50% of the country making this the most heavily mined country in the world. In 2001 alone 70% of mine related injuries were suffered by civilians, and half of these were IDPs.

than 420 national NGOs, either active or registered in 13 sectors, providing assistance to two million Angolans. Eleven technical ministries and departments and all Provincial Governments are involved in humanitarian assistance. Overall coordination is undertaken by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Reintegration (MINARS) on the part of the government and the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) which serves as the Coordinator's secretariat. The government and humanitarian partners adopted a rights-based strategy in the 2002 appeal to ensure that assistance is provided in accordance with core constitutional principles and on the basis of international standards. With approximately one-tenth of all Angolans reliant on external food assistance to meet basic food requirements and agencies estimating that more than three million people will require some form of emergency aid by the end of the year, agencies are severely constrained - as of August, only 47% of requirements of the 2002 Appeal totalling US\$233m had been received.

THE OKAVANGO PILOT PROJECT: A STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

'The Lands at the End of the Earth': Overview of the Cuando-Cubango Province

...the Okavango River Basin remains one of the least human impacted basins on the African continent. Mounting socio-economic pressures on the basin in the riparian countries, Angola, Botswana and Namibia, threaten to change its present character. It is anticipated that in the long term this may result in irretrievable environmental breakdown and consequent loss of domestic and global benefits.²⁸

...very little is known about the water use in the upper catchment, because the Angolan civil war has prevented any baseline data from being collected...ironically, *a possible peace dividend will be the development of the upper basin, which in turn will negatively impact on one of the last pristine river systems in Africa* [our emphasis].²⁹

Angola strategic importance stems from the fact that it is the main contributor to the Okavango river basin. As can be seen in the map below, the Kubango and Kuito headwater rivers originate in the Angolan Province of Kuando Kubango. Flowing southwards, these two tributaries converge on and run along the border with northern Namibia. At the point the Kubango and Kuito rivers meet they become the Okavango River, entering the Caprivi Strip in Namibia 50km downstream before flowing into Botswana. In fact, as pointed out by UNDP, 'the economic and ecological vitality of the Okavango River Basin and its associated wetlands depends upon the detailed character (timing, volumes, duration) and quality of the annual flow regime generated in the source catchments of Angola'.³⁰ The Okavango basin straddles sub-humid

²⁸ Global Environmental Facility, Environmental Protection and Sustainable Management of the Okavango River Basin, UNDP Project Brief.

²⁹ Green Cross International. 'The Okavango River Basin', in Transboundary Basin Sub-Projects: The Okavango . www.gci.ch/GreenCrossPrograms/waterres/pdf/WFP_Okavango.pdf

³⁰ Global Environmental Facility, Environmental Protection and Sustainable Management of the Okavango River Basin, UNDP Project Brief, p.2.

climatic zones in Kuando Kubango to arid climatic zones in northern Namibia and Botswana.

The high-altitude and vast province of Kuando-Kubango covers an area of 200,000 and is sparsely populated. Often referred to as '*the lands at the end of the earth*', Kuando Kubango Province has a variety of different climates, ranging from tropical in the north to semi-desert in the south. Most of its 140,000 inhabitants engage in subsistence agriculture (growing massango, massambala, corn, cassava, and beans) and cattle, sheep and goats are the main livestock. In terms of water usage, as highlighted by UNDP, 'current use of the basin's water resources are limited to water supplies to small regional centers and some small scale floodplain irrigation'.³¹ In addition, since independence in 1975, there have been no considerable developments and investments related to the Kubango and Kuito headwater rivers. A 1995 Provincial re-habilitation plan indicated that the Province's development would entail a considerable investment in water supply, sanitation, agriculture and transport. These are still to be undertaken.

Traditionally a UNITA stronghold, this province was subject to a major government offensive during 2001 and early 2002. Having ensured that the borders with Namibia and Zambia were cut off as supply routes to UNITA, FAA hunter battalions implemented follow-up operations sending UNITA forces into Moxico province. A large number of landmines were laid along the borders as a precaution, and mine infestation has been reported throughout the Province, including in areas near Menongue and Kuito Kuanavale. Largely as a result of this last phase of the war, there are now 66,431 confirmed internally displaced peoples (IDPs) and 204,024 unconfirmed IDPs in the Province.³² Humanitarian organizations have had a presence only in Menongue (the capital) for the past two years. All roads outside of the existing security perimeters are in poor condition and the Kuito Kuanavale airstrip requires repair. Only in April this year was OCHA able to enter Caiundo, Mavinga and Savata to conduct a Rapid Assessment of Critical Needs, during which the roads from Menongue and Kuito Kuanavale to these locations were opened for humanitarian operations. Access to Mavinga is very difficult as a result of destroyed infrastructure and the fact that roads are heavily mined.

The assessments conducted by OCHA revealed high levels of malnutrition, in particular in the quartering and family reception areas in the Province. In addition, although recent mortality and morbidity rates are unavailable for the Province, the assessment found that the main causes of death and illness are malaria, anaemia, tuberculosis and malnutrition. OCHA reports that since January 2002, 2,307 new IDPs have been confirmed. Temporary resettlement continues for new arrivals at Menongue.³³ These waves of de-population and displacement in the Province of Kuando Kubango have the potential to affect the hydro-environmental integrity of the source. In fact,

³¹ Global Environmental Facility, Environmental Protection and Sustainable Management of the Okavango River Basin, UNDP Project Brief, p.2.

³² Official government figures currently under review. See OCHA Angola, IDP Fact Sheet, 1 July 2002.

³³ OCHA Angola, Angola, Humanitarian Overview by Province, June 2002.

...the main threats to the Okavango River Basin arise from patterns of unsustainable development...key factors in the trends are: overgrazing which is already resulting in accelerated land and soil degradation in Namibia and Botswana; unplanned developments in Angola along the de-mined transport routes/ corridors in the Cubango and Cuito sub-basins as post-civil war resettlement occurs; and pressure for new and increased abstraction of raw water to service urban expansion and irrigated agriculture.³⁴

In order to face the current situation, the Provincial government has identified the following priorities under a Provincial Emergency Plan of Action :

- Agriculture and Food security – to improve food security by distributing land and providing agricultural inputs and technical support, and to promote reforestation in resettlement areas.
- Health and Nutrition – reduce child morbidity and mortality for malaria
- Water and Sanitation – improve sanitation by constructing pit latrine in areas with high concentrations of IDPs, and conduct awareness and information campaigns on safe water and excrement disposal.
- Education – expand access to education by building emergency schools in resettlement areas.
- Protection – provide IDPs with proof of identity
- Mine action – reduce mine accident by demining resettlement sites and access routes and conducting mine awareness campaigns.
- Resettlement – support the resettlement of 4,000 families in compliance with the Norms, and establish a reception area for new IDPs arriving in Kuito Kuanavale.

The Peace Dividend in Angola: Strategic Implications for the Okavango Basin Cooperation

...the national development policies of all three countries are centred on maintaining or increasing rates of growth while also addressing poverty alleviation and sustainable livelihoods. Freshwater resources are critical to pursue these national interests. The relevant national policies in Angola are associated primarily with the development priorities in Cuando Cubango Province as peace becomes re-established...³⁵

Water is one of Angola's richest assets and its efficient use holds the key to equitable social and economic development. Most specialists consider that Angola will not face serious water scarcity problems in the foreseeable future, at least until 2025. However, because the Okavango basin is increasingly unlikely to fulfill the combined demands of a peaceful Angola, Namibia and Botswana, and because activities in the headwaters can significantly affect flows, stakeholders are taking a keen interest in Angola as it emerges from war. In this respect, Angola's medium-term development plans for the region are being carefully monitored.

³⁴ The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, *A Framework for International Cooperation for the Management of the Okavango Basin and Delta*, Ramsar COP7 DOC. 20.5, Paper presented to the 7th Meeting of the Conference of the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Wetlands, San Jose, Costa Rica, 10-18 May 1999.

³⁵ Global Environmental Facility, *Environmental Protection and Sustainable Management of the Okavango River Basin*, UNDP Project Brief, p.2.

At the moment, the basin's source in the Angolan Province of Kuando Kubango Province is relatively undeveloped with 'few wholesale water demands made upon the watercourses of the source sub-basins'.³⁶ Nevertheless, will Angola's development require significant increases in water use? Will land use activities in the headwater areas affect the quantity and quality of water flows? Could these have negative environmental consequences?

These are critical questions for the main threat to the Okavango River Basin has been identified as that posed by uncoordinated patterns of development, in particular regarding agriculture and the building of any dams in the catchment area. W.N. Ellery and T.S. McCarthy have identified some of the potential threats to the Okavango River Basin as being eutrophication that may result from agricultural development in the catchment which 'may profoundly affect the nature of vegetation communities in the upper reaches of the fan, and thus the patterns of sediment and water dispersal'. In addition, 'sustained removal of vegetation may result in salinisation of surface water, and would have a large impact on the ecosystem'.³⁷ In this sense, 'the root causes lie with patterns of socio-economic development- population growth, urbanization and industrialisation'.³⁸ As highlighted by Green Cross International,

...the development of any dams will alter the pulsed nature of the flooding, with detrimental environmental effect in the delta. Agricultural runoff will change the nutrient loads, impacting on one of the basic elements of the aquatic ecosystem functioning in the delta.³⁹

The need for inter-state coordination concerning the Okavango River Basin led the three riparian countries to meet in Windhoek in 1993 and establish the Permanent Okavango River Basin Commission (OKACOM) in September 1994. OKACOM represents the most important institutional structure where, through negotiation, all transboundary water issues are resolved. OKACOM counts with the presence of high level inter-ministerial representation to advise on technical and policy issues. Until recently, the civil war and UNITA's effective control of the Province of Kuando Kubango, have mitigated against a stronger involvement of the Angolan government in OKACOM. Nevertheless, 'the countries have made it clear that they intend to continue this reliance on OKACOM to address technical and policy issues regarding water resources in the basin'.⁴⁰ Furthermore, OKACOM's mandate entails the

³⁶ Global Environmental Facility, Environmental Protection and Sustainable Management of the Okavango River Basin, UNDP Project Brief, p.1. In Angola this is the Ministerio da Energia e Aguas. Meetings are held in rotation at national capitals and GABHIC (The Kunene River Basin Authority) in Angola service the secretariat function within OKACOM. In Angola, the Direccao Nacional de Aguas of the Ministry of Energy and Water and Ministries of Environment and Planning play strong roles at the national and international levels for all Angola's shared river basins through the GABHIC.

³⁷ In this regard see W.N. Ellery and T.S. McCarthy, Principles for the Sustainable Utilisation of the Okavango Delta Ecosystem, Botswana. Biological Conservation, 70, 1994, p.159-168.

³⁸ Ibid. p.4.

³⁹ Green Cross International. 'The Okavango River Basin', in Transboundary Basin Sub-Projects: The Okavango. www.gci.ch/GreenCrossPrograms/waterres/pdf/WFP_Okavango.pdf

⁴⁰ Global Environmental Facility, Environmental Protection and Sustainable Management of the Okavango River Basin, UNDP Project Brief, p.2. In this sense, at regional level, the 1994 OKACOM Agreement, the 1995 SADC Protocol on Shared Watercourse Systems and the 1997 UN Convention on the law of the non-navigational uses of

involvement of relevant non-governmental organizations for the monitoring, research, awareness raising, advocacy and policy development.

The need for coordination at regional level as well as coordination at national level between the relevant agencies has been recognized as a critical priority. However, in Angola, the sector faces considerable constraints. The country's water resources' potential, both surface and groundwater, have not been properly assessed, and water policy and the necessary regulatory framework are not properly defined. The World Bank has found that almost all of the 187 hydrometric stations that existed in 1975 have been out of service and that today, only 5 hydrometric stations, most of them in and around Luanda, are operational. In addition, the situation as regards trained manpower and institutional capacity is very poor, and the Bank found that less than 10 Angolan hydrologists work in the country's public sector. In addition, basic services such as water supply and sanitation are in a very poor state as a result of the lack of infra-structural investment, shortages of replacement equipment and inadequate maintenance. As highlighted by the Bank, the institutional situation is further complicated by a lack of technical and managerial capacity in the operating entities and limited commercial experience. Consequently, despite Angola's prominent role in water contribution to the Zambezi, Kunene and the Okavango international rivers, its lack of capacity has limited its involvement in riparian dialogue for regional cooperation in integrated water resource management.⁴¹ This lack of capacity is also felt at a regional level,

...while OKACOM has the mandate to convene all relevant agencies and institutions, in practice this has been difficult to effect since governments' professional resources are severely stretched. Effective consultation and co-ordination at national and regional level is therefore an essential pre-condition for the successful formulation and implementation of an integrated management plan.⁴²

As a result, World Bank support was requested by the Ministry of Energy and Water (MINEA) to launch a water resource management project within a larger Angola Water Sector Development Project which was under preparation for a World Bank credit. Following discussions with the ministry, the National Directorate for Water (DNA) and with representatives of the government of Norway, a new programme of support was agreed. The World bank and the Norwegian Energy and Water Resources Administration will provide technical assistance to the DNA to undertake a review of policy, as well as legal and institutional issues towards the development of a cross sectoral policy in Angola.

The three riparian countries now have the opportunity for the first time to look at cross-sectoral issues such as poverty reduction, health, power, food production (agricultural productivity, livestock) and also to develop environmentally sound, equitable and mutually beneficial management. Activities such as collaboration on

watercourses provide a framework for national policy initiatives to converge on an agreed programme of joint management.

⁴¹ African Water Resources Management Initiative. AFTU1, Africa Region, The World Bank, p 25.

⁴² Global Environmental Facility, Environmental Protection and Sustainable Management of the Okavango River Basin, UNDP Project Brief, p.3.

improved drought management and mitigation strategies; exploration of HEP; promotion of tourism; and economic integration can all be explored in the interests of an integrated, cross-sectoral and participatory basin approach. Basin wide cooperation necessitates strong co-operation mechanisms. The implications for this, however, is that there must be capacity at national level alongside the promotion of inter-riparian dialogue between the three countries, including joint management and development of the shared watercourse. Negotiations and opportunities for joint development are currently constrained by considerable capacity imbalances among the countries, uneven inability (limited in the case of Angola) to analyse and inform policy positions and decisions.