

# Angola Peace Monitor

Published by ACTSA

Issue no.3, Vol.XIV  
7<sup>th</sup> January 2008

## Election date set

Angola's President, Jose Eduardo Dos Santos, on 27 December in Luanda announced that parliamentary elections will be held on 5 and 6 September 2008. The announcement was made during his New Year message to the nation in which he stated that "peace is being daily consolidated and war has become simply a painful memory of the past".

The President called for all to "cooperate in creating a modern and open society in which everyone can express his or her ideas freely and have his or her own convictions and beliefs, provided they respect others and understand their rights".

Announcing the election date, the President pointed out that these "must be held in a climate of peace, harmony and fraternity among all Angolans, without recourse to verbal or physical violence, with tolerance and respect for opinions and different ideas".

The announcement of the date follows a recommendation from the National Electoral Commission (CNE), which on 24 December met in Luanda. The CNE was only able to make this recommendation after formally receiving the electoral register from the Interministerial Commission for the Electoral Process (CIPE) on 21 December. CIPE is a governmental body that has been carrying out the registration process, whilst the CNE is an independent body charged with implementing free and fair elections.

The acceptance of the electoral register by the CNE is a major step forward, as the CNE includes representatives of the main political parties, including the largest opposition party - UNITA. It signifies that the CIPE has carried out the registration process in a professional manner, and that the inevitable complaints and appeals have been dealt with to a satisfactory level.

Registering the country's electorate took place between November 2006 and September

2007, during which 8,091,103 citizens were registered. The 10,365 electoral books were then made public for inspection, after which any errors and duplications were reported. According to Deputy Minister for Territorial Administration, Edeltrudes Costa, two thousand cases of suspected double registration have been identified and these are currently being checked. There have also been 41,000 complaints, representing half a percent of the total registered. Many of these involve lost voter cards, spelling mistakes of names and other minor mistakes that can be rectified.

The acceptance of the books by the CNE indicates that the main political parties consider that there have been no systematic irregularities. This is in contrast to the situation in October, when UNITA complained that registration had not reached all the districts in Angola and that the registration brigades did not spend long enough in some districts to register all those eligible to vote.

The books will only be finalised after a short extra registration period takes place between April and May 2008 for those who turned 18 after September 2007 and others who had failed to register.

The CIPE has also been tasked with suggesting to the CNE where the polling booths should be situated, based on data gathered during the registration process.

Edeltrudes Costa currently heads the CIPE whilst his superior, Minister Virgílio de Fontes Pereira recovers from a car accident on 23 November 2007.

Meanwhile, UNITA has turned its attention to complaining that the election is to be held over two days. Speaking to the AFP news agency, Adalberto da Costa Junior said that "if the President really wants transparent and free and fair elections they should be held in one day". He claimed, "we remember that in the 1992 election there was a power cut in all polling stations on the first night of the election. That's why we suspected there was rigging of elections".

## **Citizens to receive ID cards**

The Angolan government on 27 December signed an agreement under which DMG-Sistemas will provide biometric identity cards for eight million Angolans.

The cost of the project is put at over \$400 million, with the first eight million citizens receiving their cards over the next 15 months with the remainder receiving theirs over the next four years.

## **Angola normalises relations with Paris Club**

On 5 December the Paris Club of lending nations welcomed the official commitment by Angola to clear all its remaining arrears towards them. This will pave the way for the resumption of export credits, which will in turn improve international trade with Angola.

Angola has already paid to Paris Club creditors all its arrears, except for debts incurred on late interest, and has resumed repaying its outstanding debt. It has also committed itself to pay the outstanding interest charges in three instalments by January 2010.

At one point the outstanding debt to the Paris Club members rose to \$2.3 billion, but by March 2007 much of this had been repaid. However, \$800 million remained in late payment charges.

According to the *Diario da Republica*, the Angolan government's gazette, the first payment of \$800 million will take place by the end of January 2008, of which \$314 million will go to France, \$131 million to Spain, \$87 million to the Netherlands, and smaller amounts being paid to Italy, Sweden and Britain. The second instalment is due next January totalling \$600 million. A final payment is due in January 2009 totalling \$400 million.

## **Luanda Bay to be redeveloped**

The Luanda Bay project, with a budget of \$135 million, will over the next two years see the transformation of the waterfront in the capital, and make way for private investment of around \$2.13 billion. The bay will be dredged, decontaminated, and the Avenida 4 de Fevereiro will be widened.

It is estimated that over 2,000 people will be employed in the construction phase, with over 1,200 permanent jobs created.

## **LNG plant to be Angola's biggest ever investment**

The biggest single investment in Angola's history was approved by the Angolan government on 10 December, paving the way for a liquefied natural gas plant to be built in the northern town of Soyo, costing up to \$5 billion.

The agreement was announced by Angola LNG Ltd who also stated that it has entered into agreements over the supply and sale of gas. The construction of the plant will now begin, with the first gas to be delivered to the United States in 2012.

The project will use natural gas from the oilfields of the Cabinda Association along with blocks 14, 15, 17 and 18, along with the produce of the gas fields of Quiluma, Enguia North, Atum and Polvo.

The plant will greatly reduce the need for "flaring" whereby the gas is burnt off as oil is pumped from the oilfields. There is currently a huge global demand for liquefied gas that outstrips supply, and the plant in Angola will produce 5.4 million tones per year. There is enough gas to keep the plant going for forty years.

According to Minister of Petroleum, Desiderio da Costa, "Angola LNG will be the largest single investment ever made in Angola. The Angolan government is pleased to lend its support to this project, which will create significant new employment and economic benefits for the country".

Angola LNG is comprised of Sonangol Gas Natural (22.8 per cent), Chevron (36.4 per cent), BP (13.6 per cent) and Total (13.6 per cent). The Italian oil company, ENI, has also taken a 13.6 per cent stake in the project

ENI will also take part in the feasibility study on the construction of a second LNG plant. A report by the OECD in 2006 found that the first LNG plant would only use gas from south of the Congo River. Angola's largest source of gas is north of the river, off the Cabinda coast, but the technical problems associated with piping the gas across the Congo Trench were expected to be too large to be overcome – at least in the beginning.

The gas is earmarked for the United States, where in 2001 natural gas accounted for 45 per cent of residential energy demand, 38 per cent of industrial energy demand, and 40 per cent of commercial energy demand. It is estimated that by 2030 the United States will face a huge gap between demand and supply.

## Report highlights challenges facing former IDPs

A report by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), part of the Norwegian Refugee Council, highlights the fact that although former internally displaced persons (IDPs) generally have no specific needs beyond those of the non-displaced population, many are among the poorest people living in slums in the suburbs of urban areas.

The report "Former IDPs share the common challenge of recovery and reconstruction" ([www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org)) states that since April 2002 most of the four million IDPs have resettled or integrated into their host community. However, it points out that there are still IDPs who have fled their home as a result of the continuing low intensity conflict in the province of Cabinda.

Research by the IDMC found that the return and reintegration process has not always been organised in line with the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. Indeed, there is criticism that "the voluntary nature of the return and reintegration process has been frequently questioned". Most of the returnees did so spontaneously, with only 15 per cent moving through an organised process.

The report praises examples where the government involved local traditional leaders in the return process, such as in Cacaca in Huambo province, where sobas and other representatives of the displaced people assessed the security situation in the areas of return, and were given the choice to return or to remain in their area of refuge.

However, the report states that in many other cases, people were not able to take an informed decision about their preferred area of residence because they were forced to return to their areas of origin. It points to occasions when the Ministry of Social Welfare (MINARS) "ordered displaced groups to end their dependency on external assistance and return home". Furthermore, it states "several reports confirmed that in many cases, IDPs were forced to return to their areas of origin. Entire villages residing in camps were induced to relocate through misleading information about assistance entitlements in areas of arrival, or threats to suspend assistance in the camps".

The report gives the example of the local authorities of Trumba in Bie province in May 2002 forcing the entire displaced population to return to their area of origin without proper

assistance. The report states that "in the Cruzeiro camp, Huambo Province, threats to suspend assistance were given to approximately 15,000 IDPs resisting return to Samboto commune. Forced returns were also recorded in Huambo, Lunda Sul, and Kuando Kubango provinces".

The report estimates that 400,000 IDPs opted to try to integrate in their area of refuge, and many people who had returned home went back again to urban areas.

To address the needs of the former IDPs, the non governmental organisation calls in the report for the government to "speed up the rehabilitation and reconstruction of public infrastructure and social services, especially in the province of Kuando Kubango which was formerly under the control of UNITA, and implement community development projects to provide adequate standards of housing and access to social services".

The report laments that the Angolan government failed to meet the standards it set out for assistance for returning IDPs. It states that IDPs only received sufficient to cover a limited part of their needs. This was explained by the provincial authorities only having a limited capacity and being either absent or inoperative in many of the peripheral municipalities affected.

The researchers found that given the lack of assistance available, priority was given to those returning at the expense of those deciding to integrate within host communities.

For some of those who have returned home, the risk from landmines has hampered access to villages in the remote areas of provinces such as Kuando Kubango. Some areas are still inaccessible to the returnees for farm work. The report warns that despite ongoing demining efforts, Angola remains one of the most heavily mined countries in the world, with landmines contaminating almost 2,000 communities with an impact on around 2.4 million people.

The report states that former IDPs do not face discrimination in access to police, courts and other protection mechanisms. However, difficulties in accessing these public services are shared by everyone because of the limited infrastructure and state institutions available. The report points out that as of September 2007, only 14 out of 165 municipalities have municipal courts and there is still a shortage of qualified judges in the country. The same is true of access to other public services.

The report found that the standard of living of former IDPs had improved steadily, along with most Angolans, but found that " the reconstruction process is proving very slow especially in remote areas of return and originally controlled by UNITA such as Kuando Kubango province. Among the major obstacles to the rehabilitation and development of the country are the limited number of schools, water pumps and health centres with competent health workers, the lack of livelihood opportunities and the slow introduction of state institutions and public services into remote areas. Despite some improvements, deplorable road conditions, broken bridges and the remaining mines all hamper the access to farm land".

The authors of the report found that international development assistance has become increasingly scarce, with donor nations being reluctant to contribute aid, in part because they expect the Angolan government to be able to provide for its people from its large oil revenues.

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) was established in 1998 by the Norwegian Refugee Council to monitor conflict-induced internal displacement worldwide.

### **German airline to fly to Luanda**

The German airline Lufthansa has announced that from April it will be flying once a week to Luanda using an Airbus 340-300 with 221 seats.

Currently British Airways flies weekly from Heathrow to Luanda, Sabena flies weekly from Brussels, and Air France flies weekly from Paris. The Portuguese airline TAP flies daily to Luanda.

The Angolan national airline, TAAG, is currently unable to fly to Europe after being banned by the European Commission on safety and security grounds in July 2007.

In response to the slow pace in removing the ban, President dos Santos on 3 January created an Inspection Commission for TAAG. It is headed by Deputy Minister for Home Affairs Sebastiao Jose Antonio Martins, and includes the Deputy Ministers of Finance and Transport, Severim de Moraes and Helder Preza, the head of the National Institute of Civil Aviation, Antonio Pombal and Cruz Lima from the President's Office.

### **ADB loan for water and sanitation project**

The African Development Bank on 28 November approved a loan of \$18.86 million for the Sumbe Water Supply, Sanitation and Institutional Support Project. Sumbe is the capital of Kwanza Sul province, and the project will rehabilitate and extend the water supply and sanitation systems. The loan will also be used to set up a functioning water and sanitation company for the town.

The project will benefit 140,000 people living in Sumbe and its surrounding towns of E15 and Chingo. As well as improving the provision of safe drinking water and improved sanitation, it will provide hygiene education, raise environmental awareness, protect the river basin catchment area, and educate the population on the dangers of water borne diseases. Of particular concern is the fishing sector, where the processing of the catch in facilities with a lack of clean water and sanitation gives rise to health and hygiene problems.

The loan will cover half of the projects cost, with the rest being funded by the Angolan government.

The African Development Bank (ADB) is a multilateral development bank set up in 1964. Its primary objective is to promote sustainable economic growth to reduce poverty. Since the Bank began operating in Angola in 1983 it has supported 33 projects at a cost of \$211 million.

The *Angola Peace Monitor* is produced every month by  
**ACTSA – Action for Southern Africa.**  
ACTSA, 231 Vauxhall Bridge Road, London, SW1V 1EH  
tel +44 20 3263 2001, fax +44 207 931 9398