

Returning Home to a Normal Life? The Plight of Displaced Angolans

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Introduction

The 4th of April 2002 signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by the Angolan Army (*Forças Armadas de Angola*, FAA) and the UNITA military forces (*Forças Militares da União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola*, FMU) marked the end of 27 years of civil war in Angola. Although low intensity warfare between the FAA and pro-independence armed groups (*Frente de Libertação do Enclave de Cabinda*, FLEC) still affects the northern enclave of Cabinda, the April ceasefire represents the greatest opportunity for the country to enjoy real peace since Independence from Portugal in 1975.¹

As the first successful attempt made by Angolans to end the conflict themselves,² the ceasefire fixed the starting point for the urgent addressing of a series of military, political and humanitarian priorities. In fact, it contributed to the rebuilding of confidence amongst the 4.1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs),³ at that time living in camps or scattered around urban areas throughout the country, and 450,000 refugees living in the neighbouring countries of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Zambia and Namibia.⁴ The millions of displaced Angolans represent important political and economic elements in the development and implementation by the government of reconstruction and regeneration policies throughout the country.

From a political point of view, such a large number of IDPs remains a crucial security concern and indispensable component for the success of the forthcoming electoral process expected to happen by the second semester of 2005. On the economic side, IDPs are essential for the revitalisation of the agriculture sector in order to grant the country long lost food security and self-sufficiency. Displaced people have crowded urban areas, and the absence of job opportunities in the formal sector has pushed thousands of them towards the informal economy. In

the provincial capitals, IDPs serve as cheap labour for local landowners, to collect firewood or fruit, and are involved in petty trading and small-scale markets. The pressure exercised upon service providers in urban areas coupled with severely damaged urban infrastructures has created a progressive deterioration of living conditions of the urban population, a situation which is unsustainable in the long term.

Moreover, the displacement of some 4.1 million people, one fourth of the Angolan population, caused a dramatic reverse in terms of population density, which shifted in three decades from an overwhelming rural majority to more than 60% of Angolans living in urban settings.⁵ The majority of the displaced population, perhaps as much as 75%, are women and children since men were either involved in the fighting, were killed or remained hidden in the forest and unpopulated areas, escaping the armies of both sides.⁶ According to government statistics, by mid-June 2003, 2.34 million IDPs had moved back to their areas of origin, primarily in the provinces of Huambo, Benguela, Kuanza Sul and Bié. Meanwhile, 1.4 million people still remained displaced

and were mainly concentrated in the provinces of Kuando Kubango, Moxico, Malanje and Huila.⁷

In the 18 months since April 2002, 3.8 million IDPs have gone back to their areas of origin, and 91,693 former UNITA combatants and 285,818 family members have been transported to areas of their choice.⁸ In addition, around 176,000 Angolan refugees have spontaneously crossed the borders adding to 43,323 people who were assisted in their journey back by the UNHCR-led repatriation programme.⁹ Now the challenge is securing their immediate survival and progressive reintegration into a peaceful Angola.

Causes for displacement

Displacement has been a recurrent phenomenon in

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Angola since the start of the struggle for independence from Portuguese rule in 1961. Several waves of refugees and IDPs resulted from the country's recent history of civil war. At the time of the Bicesse Accords there were some 800,000 IDPs, with only a small number of people returning home during the peaceful time between 1991 and 1992. The number of forcibly displaced grew by an additional 1.3 to 2 million because of resumed fighting after the unsuccessful electoral process of September/October 1992. Once again, during the window of relative peace between 1994 and 1998 generated by the 1994 Lusaka Accords, generalised insecurity and the lack of confidence in the sustainability of the peace process allowed only a few organized returns.¹⁰ Displacement again became significant in numbers when full-scale war erupted during the second half of 1998, with an average number of 20,000 new arrivals every month, increasing to some 50,000 people from November 2001 to February 2002.¹¹

Proximity to combat zones, fear of harassment and threats of reprisal at the hands of the fighting groups forced thousands of Angolans to flee their homes and search for safety elsewhere. During the last 4 years of war though, an additional and distinctive pattern constituted the principal cause of displacement. Villagers were deliberately used as a tool for pursuing military strategies. In UNITA controlled areas, populations were victims of protracted violence, including extra-judicial killings, mutilations and looting. Reprisals against civilians assumed to be government supporters or informers, caused massive displacement, sometimes of entire villages. Villagers hid in the bush for days or travelled exhausting distances to reach government-controlled areas where some assistance was available. During the journey, many died for lack of food, from landmine injuries or disease.¹²

The FAA and the Angolan National Police (*Polícia Nacional de Angola* PNA) were also responsible for considerable displacement. A new strategy labelled as "cleansing operations" succeeded in emptying significant parts of the countryside, preventing UNITA forces from recruiting fighters and enjoying vital food support provided for by civilians. During these operations, villagers suffered harsh treatment, indiscriminate beating and sexual abuse. When concentrated in government-controlled municipalities, people were hardly supplied with food assistance or medicine, causing a progressive deterioration of their health. Finally, because of unbearable living conditions, thousands were transferred or spontaneously moved to camps and transit centres in the provincial capitals.¹³

Life in camps or with host families

The vast majority of the IDPs found immediate assistance and support with host families living in urban areas. Help was generally given for a few weeks only since the increased number of people absorbing

already limited resources was not sustainable for the recipient families. In provincial capitals many IDPs had to look for different kinds of accommodation and became engaged as workers for resident landowners or in the informal sector. In Luanda, many were forced to adapt quickly to the capital's economy, becoming street vendors and participating in petty commercial businesses, such as cleaning and washing for resident families.

The situation was quite different for those settled in formal camps. Camp residents always enjoyed some humanitarian assistance mainly delivered by UN operational agencies or national and international non-governmental organisations. Food rations were supplied monthly to heads of households. Access to water, primary health, and therapeutic feeding centres for malnourished children was also provided. In some cases, pre-school activities, soup kitchens and primary schools were running. Although government authorities firmly controlled these settlements, they were rarely able to provide significant direct assistance to needed people, mainly because of limited capacity in terms of human and financial resources available. At the height of the humanitarian crisis, in early 2002, there were some 300 camps, including 25 sub-standard transit centres,¹⁴ hosting a confirmed number of 1.2 million people. In April 2003, only 285,000 people still lived in settlements.¹⁵

A third distinct group of IDPs, consisting of several thousand families living in different provinces, found shelter in rundown warehouses, abandoned public buildings or temporary sheds. Although these people constituted the most deprived and vulnerable group, only in rare cases were they assisted or transferred to proper centres and camps with basic conditions in place. Even when this happened, solutions found were rarely sustainable and the old shelters were occupied again by recently arrived groups lacking any kind of support from family or friends in the surrounding communities.

Planning the processes

The Angolan government considered the transfer of IDPs from camps and urban areas to the countryside essential to the normalisation of the country. In fact, the return of these displaced populations represented and still represents one of the most important aspects of the wider post-war phase of normalisation and stabilisation of the country.

The return and resettlement process must be framed within a context of extremely difficult operational conditions characterised by lack of, or destroyed, basic infrastructures (roads, bridges and airstrips) and inaccessibility to several areas as a result of landmine infestation or due to the impassability of roads during the rainy season. However, while the magnitude of these problems certainly undermined the return and resettlement efforts of the competent authorities, it

does not fully justify what appeared to be an insufficient commitment to implement the plans efficiently and satisfactorily. Pragmatism and political priorities associated with the security concern represented by the UNITA soldiers led the channelling of existing resources first and foremost towards their assistance, and only then to other needy populations, the returning Angolan refugees and the internally displaced persons.¹⁶

After assessing the seriousness of the post-war humanitarian emergency,¹⁷ in July 2002, the Angolan government responded to the crisis devising an “Emergency Resettlement and Return Programme (ERRP)” that outlined the government policy to facilitate the return and resettlement of the displaced population. Structured in three phases¹⁸ and with the objective of benefiting almost 2 million of people, the programme included specific training in Luanda during July 2002 for delegates from 17 Provinces with the task of drafting plans of action for the return of IDPs¹⁹ as well as familiarise participants with the legal provisions to be applied during the implementation phase. In September 2002 additional technical training took place, aiming at the constitution of a national database regarding the return and resettlement process, while IDP protection training for provincial officers led by the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA) in 2000 and 2001 became instrumental to the process as a whole.

More training occurred during 2003 through the evaluation of the 2002 Provincial plans and the drafting of updated ones, and further training was given to provincial officers in August of that year. Significantly, the planning process shifted from a focus on beneficiaries to a community-based assessment of problems and resources. This time, one of the main objectives of the provincial planning process was to prioritise realistic resettlement and return in compliance with existing domestic legislation. Plans of action were developed at the provincial level and will serve as the basis of strategic and operational planning for 2004.²⁰

The legal framework

Through two major domestic legal instruments, the Norms for the Resettlement of the Displaced Populations (*Normas para o Reassentamento das Populações Deslocadas*, hereinafter called *Norms*)²¹ and the implementing regulations known as the Standard Operational Procedures (Regulamento)²², the Angolan government adopted a normative framework within which the resettlement and return processes should be implemented. These Decrees of the Council of Ministers are inspired by the Principles Relating to Return, Resettlement and Reintegration

included in the U.N. Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 1998.

The Ministry of Assistance and Social Reintegration (*Ministério da Assistência e Reinserção Social*, MINARS), through its 18 Provincial Directorates, is the institution formally in charge of the implementation of the resettlement and return process. In addition, the operational regulations stipulate the provincial authorities’ overall responsibility for the implementation of the resettlement process and incorporate bodies like the Provincial Commission and an Ad-hoc Group for Technical and Administrative Support, previously established through the 4th June 2002 Presidential Dispatch that created the National Commission for the Social and Productive Reintegration of Demobilised Military Personnel and IDPs (CNRSPDD).²³

The *Norms* list detailed preconditions to be met before the relocation of displaced people to an area can occur, such as safe access to the resettlement/return areas, security, availability of arable land, and acceptable living conditions (shelter, clean water, health and educational services). Furthermore, displaced populations must receive sufficient assets to build shelter and prepare the soil for planting.

The *Norms* also apply to UNITA former combatants and their dependants. In fact, since the formal completion in July 2002 of the quartering process, 360,000 former combatants and their dependants living in 35 camps and seven satellites were also incorporated in the IDP caseload. As a result, they became entitled to receiving assistance as displaced persons, adding to the whole exercise the funds granted by the MOU and the special reintegration projects supported by the World Bank.²⁴ While not formally included in the original ERRP and considered in a separate programme, former combatants were later included in Phase II of the ERRP.

Finally, the *Norms* are also relevant for returning Angolan refugees both within the United Nation High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) organised repatriation process that formally started in June 2003, as well as within the spontaneous return which had started by mid 2002.

What really happened?

Almost immediately after the April 2002 MOU, the rapidly improving security situation and the increased access to several areas isolated throughout the 1998–2002 period, unveiled a horrific humanitarian crisis. Some 500,000 people, including villagers who

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were prevented from fleeing fighting zones, and UNITA soldiers accompanied by their dependants, could only now be reached. High levels of malnutrition and mortality figures well above emergency thresholds were verified by humanitarian agencies.²⁵ The lack of preparedness of humanitarian organisations due to the sudden military changes; the overstretching of their capacity and the alleged misunderstandings between the Angolan authorities and some operational UN agencies, resulted in delays in the humanitarian response that was nevertheless stabilised by early June 2002. While at that time the number of assisted people was around 2 million, it would grow to almost 3 million at the end of the year.

By June/July 2002, taking advantage of both the improved security situation and the conducive weather conditions, some groups of IDPs, particularly the ones displaced during the last phase of the war, started to venture back to their areas of origin, with the principal purpose of assessing the state of their homes and fields. While hoping to recover what was left in their areas of origin, IDPs were at the same time cautious, allowing only one family member to travel back, often either a young male or the head of household. The others remained to secure the recently gained access to some form of assistance and because it was not clear yet that villages were ultimately safe and the ceasefire would hold.

Stranded and separated, and after years of terror and humiliation as a result of their condition, displaced families intensely desired to return home. Yet, destroyed villages, looted houses and fields either burned or left unattended for a long time, represented the reality of many return areas. Despite this, the numbers of returnees increased progressively, reaching during September 2002 an astonishing 10,000 IDPs living the areas of refuge every day.

Movements slowed down significantly only as a result of the seasonal rains in November and December, which also cut off some 250,000 persons who had been receiving assistance.²⁶ Although malnutrition rates among vulnerable groups in some areas had stabilised by the end of 2002, the humanitarian situation remained serious. WFP confirmed that 1.8 million people were still dependent on food assistance, but the number was expected to increase due to significant additional distribution impediments that had developed over the rainy season such as unsuitable runways in some of the provincial capitals, and the abundant rainfalls that rendered many of the principal roads unusable. At the end of November 2002, the global number of IDPs was 2.8 million with the major concentration in Kuando Kubango (597,227), Benguela (408,887) and Lunda Norte (391,519).²⁷ The government reported also that 1.1 million had returned, with larger movements in Huambo (245,121), Bié (231,379) and Kuanza Sul (146,257).²⁸

Major constraints

After three decades of war and a combination of UNITA sabotage of major infrastructure and FAA 'scorched-earth' military tactics, the reality in the Provinces proved to be harsh, overshadowing the government's laudable effort to generate a modern and comprehensive logic through the legal framework adopted for the return and resettlement process. Rebuilding minimum living conditions for millions of people represented an obviously daunting challenge although the impediments were well known by the central government authorities at the time they drafted the *Norms*, resulting in an overestimation of its own capacity.

Moreover, weak provincial capacity can be considered one of the main reasons for the failure in the respect of the *Norms*. Equally important were the financial problems and lack of resources for establishing a minimum of social services in the return areas that seriously hindered their implementation, leaving to the U.N. operational agencies, and national and international NGOs, almost all the burden of responding to people's basic needs.

Delivering assistance was often impossible due to landmine infestation cutting off entire communities of returnees. Landmines planted on major roads,²⁹ paths, farming areas and access points to water supplies³⁰ represent a security threat for returning populations causing death and injuries, including those to humanitarian workers. The large number of people moving back complicated the situation causing an increase in landmine accidents and high number of casualties.³¹

Protection concerns

As a whole, because of the end of the hostilities, war-related violations of human rights, including forced displacement, violent attacks on civilian communities and abductions of women and children have ended in 'mainland' Angola. Nonetheless, returning populations have suffered human rights abuses. The progressive domestic legislation providing for minimum standards of resettlement and return and several training sessions given to provincial officials did not prevent frequent instances of abuses in connection with the return and resettlement process.³² These violations included harassment, looting, extortion, property dispossession, rape and arbitrary detention, particularly in areas where state administration is weak.³³ For the overwhelming majority of the reported cases the individuals responsible for the abuses were granted virtual impunity. Unable to fulfil its duties because of logistic constraints, the National Police is often only present in provincial capitals, failing therefore to secure vast areas of the countryside. When relocated to major municipalities, the Police lack appropriate

equipment and vehicles.³⁴ Finally, the Angolan judicial system is almost non-existent in many of the country's provinces, with no infrastructure and personnel, impeding any required criminal proceeding and ultimately obtaining redress for the victims³⁵.

Forced or actively induced returns?

On various occasions, MINARS stressed that the displaced should terminate their dependency on external assistance and return home.³⁶ Although many Angolans genuinely wanted to return to their villages and improve the conditions in their areas of origin, the unrealistically high expectations for the resettlement and the rushing of the relocation of IDPs put tens of thousands of people at great risk in terms of food security, exposure to deteriorating health conditions and increased vulnerability.

The issue of whether there has been forced resettlement or not, when the *Norms* clearly establish its voluntary and/or spontaneous nature, is not always easy to ascertain. In this regard, local particularities conditioned by historical and political factors, as well as local government capacity, have certainly affected the process. In fact, the voluntary nature of some of these movements can be questioned. For instance, several reports confirmed that entire villages residing in camps were induced to leave through false information regarding the entitlements of assistance in the areas of arrival or threats of the suspension of assistance in the camps in case of resistance. In many cases, traditional leaders among the IDPs or MPLA party committee members just ordered that it was time to go back home, without allowing family members to visit the return sites beforehand.³⁷

In the Cruzeiro camp, Huambo Province, for example, threats to suspend assistance were given to approximately 15,000 IDPs if they did not move back to Samboto commune. In early October 2002, some 200 families in Bié Province, approximately 1,000 people, were stranded in the Cangala commune without any assistance, halfway to their final destination in Chinguar. A similar situation occurred when 3,000 people were stranded during their return to Catabola municipality. In Huila province, 2,500 returning IDPs were abandoned without assistance in Cherequera village on their way from Matala to Cutenda, and were promised assistance that was never delivered. Another group of 2,200 had the same fate when, after leaving Visaca, they found no support in Chicomba municipality.

There were infrequent, but real, cases of violent forced returns.³⁸ In such cases, national authorities responded that the main responsibility for these acts should be attributed either to the local head of

police or army commander. In practice, neither was called to account for these actions.

Population movements that considerably diminished during the rainy season ending in April/May 2003, restarted afterwards with major flows in the provinces of Huambo, Benguela, Kuanza Sul and Bié. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the majority of people on the move continued to benefit from approximately 500 assistance distribution points around the country, which were established in the aftermath of the ceasefire. As of July 2003, some 1.4 million IDPs were concentrated in the Provinces of Kuando Kubango, Moxico, Malanje and Huíla.³⁹

At the start of the 2003 dry season, improvements in the humanitarian situation were reported, and although emergency pockets still existed in the interior,⁴⁰ particularly in areas with mine infestation and damaged infrastructure,⁴¹ numbers decreased steadily, reaching less than 100,000 in July. In those isolated communities returnees urgently needed food assistance, health facilities and essential medicines, none of which were forthcoming.⁴² As of June 2003, the food insecurity was concentrated in the provinces of Bié, Huambo and Kuando-Kubango. Humanitarian access was re-established progressively and the general nutrition situation stabilised. However, new difficulties were posed by the breakdown in the pipeline of essential drugs in Benguela, Kuanza Sul and Huambo Provinces and the difficulties of preparing communities for the forthcoming agricultural season. In Benguela, Kuanza Norte, Kuanza Sul, Lunda Sul and Moxico Provinces seeds and tools were delivered only partially, because of logistic constraints, lack of funds for transportation and lack of implementing partners.⁴³

Throughout the 2002–2003 process, several groups of IDPs returned to areas that were inaccessible to humanitarian organisations. In some cases returnees were forced by the complete lack of basic services in the areas of return to either go back to the Provincial capital or closest municipality, in order to survive or access health assistance. As already mentioned, during the last stages of the war, fields were either destroyed or left uncultivated for many months, and crops were looted. Humanitarian organisations tried to speed up the process by providing needed agricultural inputs before the start of the current planting campaign, even if their distribution was uneven throughout the different provinces. For instance, in Huambo Province, where less than 1/3 of the population received the necessary agricultural inputs, lack of seeds and tools contributed to a number of critical nutritional situations. In Moxico Province only 4,500 families of the planned 56,000 have so far received seeds and tools.

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Lack of compliance with the norms

Although providing an important planning tool and attributing formal responsibilities to the competent authorities, the 'Norms for the Resettlement of the Displaced Populations' meant very little in practice. According to the 2003 Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal (CAP), only 15% of IDPs moved through an organised resettlement process, and an estimated 30% were settled in areas with adequate living conditions, as specified in the 'Norms'. The forecast reported by the U.N. 2003 CAP Mid-Year Review for the second half of 2003 and the acting U.N. Humanitarian Coordinator confirmed during August 2003 the same figures, with no significant difference in comparison to the previous year.⁴⁵

Lack of capacity and resources, the large number of returnees and serious problems in coordinating the activities of various bodies and individuals⁴⁶ were also detrimental to the implementation process.⁴⁷ While certainly preventing efficient action by the competent authorities, this can only partly justify the lack of respect for the *Norms*. Some reflection should be applied to the Angolan government's policy decision processes, particularly as regards the encouragement of people to return, while being aware of the absolute inadequacy of provincial capacity and the non-existence of basic living conditions in the areas of return.

After the 2002 ceasefire, and with almost 1 million people in acute distress and requiring urgent assistance⁴⁸ with an additional 1 million requiring food assistance, the response should not have been to focus on immediate returns, but rather to stabilise the living conditions of people in need. The government could have used the 3 to 4 months before the start of the rainy season to implement activities aimed at creating the best possible conditions in areas of return, as outlined in the *Norms*.⁴⁹

While the development of clear benchmarks and a matrix of compliance indicators may certainly aid the process, it has proved insufficient. In fact, the full implementation of the resettlement norms was too ambitious for the government to implement in the short term. In any event, resettlement kits, seeds, and tools were not going to be delivered before the commencement of the rainy season in September and October, since these items had to be imported and their delivery required a great deal of capacity unavailable in the provinces. State administration was either absent or inoperative in many of the peripheral municipalities and none of the necessary basic

Table 1: OCHA's IDP Fact Sheet as of 30 December 2003⁴⁴

IDPs by Province	December 2002	December 2003
Bengo	-	-
Benguela	408,887	13,151
Bie	91,329	89,851
Cabinda	23,199	23,628
Cunene	71,908	-
Huambo	190,017	21,490
Huila	189,408	70,011
Kuando Kubango	597,227	84,914
Kuanza Norte	99,733	52,917
Kuanza Sul	107,713	-
Luanda	84,043	42,729
Lunda Norte	391,519	-
Lunda Sul	156,749	17,332
Malanje	209,175	-
Moxico	216,981	24,931
Namibe	22,275	24,909
Uige	20,731	183
Zaire	21,200	-

infrastructure would have been restored for facilitating the return of the population. As a result, during the second half of 2002, some 1 million people moved back without any kind of assistance.

There was also a sense that authorities prioritised assistance for the former UNITA combatants, jeopardising support to IDPs. For instance, resettlement sites prepared in 2000 and hosting IDPs previously living in substandard conditions in abandoned warehouses or rundown public buildings, were told to leave and return to their municipalities, in order to make room for transiting demobilised UNITA combatants and their dependants.⁵⁰ While old temporary structures hosting the last waves of IDPs were emptied, in some cases brand new transit centres for transiting demobilised soldiers were set up.⁵¹ Transportation for assisting IDPs in their return was rarely provided by the local authorities⁵² while, even with delays, the FAA used freight aircraft and trucks to transport former combatants and their dependants.

The United Nations played an important role in the resettlement and return process. They frequently engaged the national authorities in becoming more active in the humanitarian domain to ultimately assume greater responsibility for their citizens in need. However, the United Nations remained ambiguous when it was clear how risky this policy was, and never complained publicly against it.⁵³ The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), in particular, worked hard in order to articulate a countrywide protection strategy involving all UN agencies operating in the country. With the exception of a few cases, the strategy ultimately failed to implement coordinated and effective protection, rarely being capable of redressing abuses and demanding public accountability to the responsible authorities.⁵⁴

Criticism of the UN's lack of will to assume a greater role in IDP protection issues⁵⁵ was strongly rejected by the organisation on the basis that the state is the first and foremost institution responsible for providing protection to Angolan citizens. Protection⁵⁶ was never understood in its full content and potential and the UN chose a less challenging and somewhat controversial line, providing capacity building and technical assistance to Angolan institutions instead, even when a clear protection mandate was assigned by the UN Security Council in August 2002.⁵⁷

The way ahead

According to the Angolan authorities, 18 months after the ceasefire almost 3.8 million people had already gone back home,⁵⁸ although humanitarian organisations reported that only just over 2 million returnees could be confirmed. Serious constraints represented by lack of access and threats of landmines will continue to delay recovery, impeding the provision of humanitarian assistance and indispensable agricultural inputs, and consequently preventing returnees from farming their land safely. A lot more needs to be done in order to ensure that returning IDPs and refugees do not become vulnerable once more.⁵⁹ The results of the simultaneous management of three very complex programmes, namely the demobilisation and reintegration of former combatants; the return, resettlement and reintegration of displaced populations; and, finally, the return and reintegration of former Angolan refugees will have to be evaluated at the end of this current rainy season around the next harvest in April/June 2004.

Managing the transition

The Angolan government has prepared countrywide plans for managing the transition from emergency to recovery, aiming at paving the way towards sustainable development. These plans include the finalisation of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan (PRSP)⁶⁰ for the period 2003–2005 in accordance with the 2003–2004 Government Programme⁶¹ and the Intercalary Development Plan for 2004 and 2005, all framed within a longer Strategy for Development for the country until 2025. Simultaneously, UN agencies and their humanitarian partners are engaged in the completion of a comprehensive strategy for the post-conflict phase that will serve as the blueprint for the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for 2005–2008.

The stabilisation of the reintegration process will depend on resource availability, efficient and effective coordination of the actors involved, success with the seasonal harvests, progress in mine action activities, and so on. The process's speed and success will be

uneven in the country because of specific provincial contexts and geographical conditions. The primary objective is to reduce completely the dependence of families on emergency assistance and humanitarian aid, with the aim of moving towards self-sustenance and self-reliance.

The majority of households remain unable to provide surplus food for their families, however, and face severe shortages of agricultural inputs, as emphasised in a report presented in July 2003⁶² by the Vulnerability Analysis and Food Aid Working Group. The Vulnerability Assessment (VA) conducted in 12 Provinces between November 2002 and April 2003 identified 2,657,000 Angolans as vulnerable and currently requiring food assistance or possibly requiring assistance in the future.⁶³ Additionally, the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Farming and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reported in late July 2003 that while food production in Angola had increased since the end of the war, a large portion of the population remained dependent on food aid. The report found that, despite a much improved 2003 harvest,⁶⁴ approximately 1.4 million Angolans remained dependent on food aid, including vulnerable groups of IDPs still living in camps.⁶⁵ This was caused mainly by the increase in number of beneficiaries to be catered for, including returning refugees, demobilised soldiers and their dependants.

If families are able to enjoy the benefits of two successful harvests, they will have the possibility of consolidating food security and self-reliance through stocks' preparation, opening up the opportunity for engagement in other economic activities. This first wave of returnees is expected to need humanitarian aid for only one more

year. However, for those families returning to their homes after more than two years of displacement it will take an average of five years to re-establish their households. According to the WFP/FAO report, in the first year, land rights will be re-established, a rudimentary shelter built and the first area for cultivation cleared and planted. The total area under cultivation will gradually increase each year and in the third and fourth years the house will be completed so that permanent residence can be re-established. Land that has been abandoned for longer will take more time to clear before cultivation can begin. This second wave—which includes returning refugees and former UNITA fighters—is expected to need assistance until the harvest in 2005.

As a result of these challenges, during September 2003 the FAO announced that Angola would become the agency's largest operation in Africa.⁶⁶ FAO aims at providing agricultural emergency assistance to some 2 million Angolans located in 14 of the 18 Provinces

Despite a much improved 2003 harvest, approximately 1.4 million Angolans remained dependent on food aid

and to distribute some 300,000 kits (in addition to a similar amount provided by other NGOs).⁶⁷ FAO will also support the rehabilitation of livestock herds and seed multiplication programmes in villages and rural areas in order to reduce dependency from imported seeds, which is responsible for increases in local food prices affecting negatively economically fragile rural households.⁶⁸ Additionally, a new programme of food aid, estimated at over \$258 million, was approved in October by WFP and will run from January 2004 until December 2005.⁶⁹

The problems associated with the need to produce food should not divert attention from the immense task of social and economic development throughout the country. There are serious delays in the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure in return areas. The state of the health service remains very weak, and recently the Ministry of Health announced a plan to re-establish routine vaccination in municipalities with a higher population density.⁷⁰ Problems of collecting water from unprotected water points, and water-borne diseases, continue to be the main cause of mortality in several provinces. The primary education sector is in ruins, with about 45 percent of Angolan children not attending school. Human resources to run those basic services are also lacking and a training programme should be undertaken as soon as possible. Shortage of technical experts, health personnel and teachers is already blocking the dynamics of recovery.⁷¹

State administration

Comprehensive countrywide policies are required to address a number of very urgent issues. The widespread possession of light weapons by civilians;⁷² the essential supervision and control of access to land and property issues;⁷³ the provision of identification documents to returning people who otherwise remain vulnerable to security threats and cannot access basic social services; and, finally, the rapid spread of the HIV/Aids pandemic⁷⁴ are issues posing severe threats with potentially serious long-term implications. Although the elaboration of national policies is underway, their effective implementation will rely principally upon provincial and municipal government structures. Infrastructural rehabilitation is crucial to allow for the proper running of State administration around the country and is necessary if it is to perform its duties. Without the functioning of these implementing networks all efforts risk failure, prejudicing the recovery of the country.

Urgent needs, government responsibility and donor fatigue

As MINARS correctly argued, "5 million people directly affected by the Angolan armed conflict should be urgently reintegrated in the society."⁷⁵ The crucial question becomes how the massive financial burden for achieving these objectives can be sustained and

what degree of responsibility should be shared among the different actors involved.

It seems that a vicious circle is dominating the issue, however. Foreign governments that have been providing significant financial resources (both bilaterally, multilaterally and through the UN system)⁷⁶ have questioned national authorities in respect of their perceived insufficient financial commitment towards the Angolan population. Their confidence has been seriously undermined by continuous allegations of public funds siphoning⁷⁷ and widespread corruption.⁷⁸ Considering that Angola is the second-largest oil producer in sub-Saharan Africa with an estimated daily production of around 900,000 barrels per day, social indicators are among the worst in Africa. Angola ranks 161 out of 173 countries on the UNDP's Human Development Index for 2002. In Angola, the Millennium Development goals are becoming increasingly distant.⁷⁹

On the other hand, while the Angolan government has devoted resources towards humanitarian assistance, these have been clearly insufficient to have a lasting impact on the majority of needy people.⁸⁰ More substantial has been its commitment towards former UNITA combatants and their dependants. In fact, according to official data (as per June 2003) the government had spent some \$138 million on the demobilised and their dependants,⁸¹ and is currently implementing a second phase for training and reintegration programs valued at \$105 million.⁸²

The government has claimed repeatedly that it lacks the resources to tackle the extensive needs characterising this first phase of recovery, alluding to the burden of external debt service payments.⁸³ This discourse ultimately feeds the impression of an achieved normalcy and contributes to the generalised idea that the situation is completely resolved. This explanation appears unconvincing to a considerable part of the international community, however, and a more robust financial response assuming a larger part of the costs associated with the humanitarian operation could send out clear signs of commitment and begin to change donors' perceptions. The recurrent postponing of the international donor conference that should kick-start the reconstruction and development of the country epitomises this situation. 'Some diplomats in Luanda have said that although they would continue to support emergency aid programmes in Angola, long-term development was ultimately the government's responsibility'.⁸⁴

The international humanitarian presence in Angola has been significant throughout the conflict. Ten United Nations operational agencies, and more than 100 international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and some 400 local groups operating in the country made remarkable achievements in assisting a

huge number of needed people. However, the gradual reduction of financial resources available has resulted in the cancellation of a number of assistance projects. Donor fatigue and funding shortages are already threatening some of WFP's essential operations such as air transport services or food rations' distribution.⁸⁵ Humanitarian organisations are now overstretched and under-resourced and are forced to prioritise acutely vulnerable populations and dwindling emergency responses.

The 2002 CAP collected \$180.4 million of the \$296.3 million required (mid-term revised amount of \$171 million)⁸⁶ as per 19 November 2002.⁸⁷ In the 2003 CAP the requested \$336.5 million was revised to \$313.8 million in June 2003,⁸⁸ and as of December 2003 only 52% had been collected.⁸⁹

Prioritising the most vulnerable

Evidently, urgent priority assistance has to be directed to those groups of individuals that are either most susceptible to abuses, were discriminated against during the war or are currently exposed to higher degrees of vulnerability. These people represent a group cutting across the different categories of returning people and resident communities and have fallen into the cracks of several assistance efforts that often suffer from a lack of co-ordination and consistency.

Displaced women, especially in female-headed households, are among the most vulnerable upon return. They face inequitable policies for distributing assistance as well as obstacles to gaining legal title to land and property. Furthermore, while they did not want to return to their original villages because of lack of social services and without prior guarantee of some form of economic stability, IDP women were pressured by local authorities to leave resettlement sites. In some cases the result has been that female-headed households have had to share the same facilities with returning former combatants and military personnel, which has led to serious human rights concerns.⁹⁰ In the demobilisation and reintegration process implemented by the Angolan Government and with the assistance of the World Bank, women and abducted girls were initially excluded from any direct assistance.⁹¹

Another category of excluded individuals were all those youngsters, girls and boys, aged less than 18 years old who performed some kind of military activity during the war. These were also not recognised as child soldiers and consequently excluded from the formal assistance and reintegration programme.⁹² Of particular concern is the condition of children affected both by the war and the deepening poverty situation.

Many of them are living outside a normal family environment or have become separated from their families, ending up living in the streets or placed in children's homes and similar institutions. All are prone to a wide range of abuses and do not enjoy the necessary educational assistance.⁹³

Conclusion

Three decades of war have left deep physical and psychological wounds among Angolans. Today we have the best opportunity ever to begin consolidating a peace which will ultimately bring prosperity and justice dividends for all.

The country's recovery is a complex process that includes important interventions in the economic, social and administrative sectors. These tasks can be undertaken only through commitment and the cooperation of all actors involved. In particular, the Angolan government should show increased leadership and capacity in tackling the immediate challenge represented by the reintegration process. This process

should be undertaken through a community-based approach, one that will include all returning populations. Furthermore, hundreds of thousands remain vulnerable and food insecure, still requiring humanitarian assistance. Basic services ensuring safe drinking water, health assistance, staffed and functioning schools, and indispensable agricultural tools and inputs should be made available as soon as possible.

Vulnerable individuals should represent the preferential target group in this process, particularly women who are heads of households, the elderly, unaccompanied minors and physically

handicapped individuals. Women, girls and boys who were forced to live and work under the former UNITA forces should also be part of this group. Significant improvements in the living conditions of the population and the progressive economic development of households will also improve the protection of populations.

This year will also be crucial in that co-ordination responsibility and several assistance programmes will be transferred from the UN to Angolan structures. This should be considered an opportunity for the government to overcome the current lack of capacity and devote greater resources to the strengthening of existing bodies, especially at provincial and municipal levels. In addition, the government should address urgently the lack of a functioning justice system in the provinces. Coupled with strengthened administrative services at local level, this would enable Angolan citizens to enjoy their basic rights and the entitlements outlined by the Angolan Constitution.

The government should address urgently the lack of a functioning justice system in the provinces

In the meantime the government will need to continue to work on transparency and good governance. Steps such as the publishing of the executive summary of the National Bank audit report and the IMF Article IV report undertaken this year are encouraging signs, but government commitment should be more robust. Increasing the disclosure of important data regarding fiscal and oil-backed debt

payment transactions associated with greater spending in social sectors would ease the relationship with foreign donors. This will undoubtedly strengthen the crucial partnership with the donor community, a partnership that must focus on reconstruction and development with the ultimate aim of achieving the consolidation of democracy, sustained economic growth and greater macroeconomic stability.

NOTES

- 1 For details about the FLEC groups refer to J.G. Porto, *Cabinda: Notes on a soon to be forgotten war*, ISS Paper 77, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, August 2003.
- 2 Although the MOU is considered an Addendum to the 1994 Lusaka Peace Accords and not a new peace agreement in itself, its negotiation excluded external mediation, in contrast to previous agreements where the UN and the "Troika" of states (the USA, Russia and Portugal) played that role.
- 3 Humanitarian organisation reported that the confirmed number of IDPs was 1.4 million, of whom 436,000 were in camps and transit centres and 600,000 living in temporary resettlement areas.
- 4 Of those, 211,000 lived in Zambia, 193,000 in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and 24,000 in Namibia. There are also 16,000 Angolans in the Republic of Congo and 10,000 in South Africa. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Angola signs repatriation agreements with UNHCR, Namibia and Zambia*, Geneva, 28 November 2002.
- 5 United Nations System in Angola, *Common country assessment 2002: Angola – The post war challenges*, Luanda, 2002, p 62.
- 6 M Vincent and B Refslund Sorensen (eds), *Caught between borders. Response strategies of the internally displaced*, NRC, 2001, p 27.
- 7 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), *Angola humanitarian coordination update*, 10 July 2003.
- 8 ANGOP, Luanda, 19 August 2003. A few thousand are still in temporary transit centres awaiting transport. See Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), *Angola humanitarian coordination update*, 23 October 2003.
- 9 Nearly 20,000 of all returns to date have come from the Democratic Republic of Congo, 17,000 from Zambia and 3,500 from Namibia. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *UNHCR briefing notes: Angola repatriation, Liberia*, 4 November 2003.
- 10 United Nations System in Angola, op. cit, p 11.
- 11 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), *Humanitarian situation in Angola special report*, 7 March 2002.
- 12 For a more detailed account of the human rights abuses suffered by villagers see Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2003, Angola*, January 2003.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), *Humanitarian situation in Angola monthly analysis*, January 2002.
- 15 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), *Humanitarian coordination update*. 15 April 2003.
- 16 Human Rights Watch, *Struggling through peace: Return and resettlement in Angola*, New York, August 2003, p. 12.
- 17 According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), the Inter-agency Rapid Assessment of Critical Needs (RACN) included 28 locations in 12 provinces and additional "vulnerability assessments" were conducted between May and October 2002 in 220 locations in 11 provinces. OCHA, *Humanitarian Update*, 19 December 2002.
- 18 The first phase refers to 550,000 IDPs resettled until the end of 2002. The second phase, revised in September on account of the unexpected high numbers of spontaneous returns, affects 1.4 million people, including 280,000 former UNITA combatants and their dependants and 48,000 refugees returning from abroad. The third phase focuses on the social integration of the entire caseload through income and employment generation; educational and professional training and infrastructure rehabilitation. For details about provincial priorities and sectoral planning see Unidade Técnica de Coordenação da Ajuda Humanitária (UTCAH)/Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), *Planos de acção provincial de emergência para o reassentamento e regresso*, Agosto 2002 e 4 Dezembro 2002.
- 19 The emergency provincial plans of action for return and resettlement (PEPARRs) should have assisted the movement of 1.75 million IDPs from camps and urban areas before the end of 2002, and an additional 1.4 million during 2003.
- 20 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), *Angola humanitarian coordination update*, 10 July 2003.
- 21 Decreto do Conselho de Ministros Nº 1/01, 5 de Janeiro de 2001.
- 22 Decreto do Conselho de Ministros Nº 79/02, 6 de Dezembro de 2002.
- 23 Diário da República, Despacho Presidencial n.º5/02, 4 de Junho 2002. The dispatch 'harmonises the legal framework for organising and accompanying the social and productive reintegration of the demobilised'. The CNRSPDD was responsible for the social and economics aspects of the ex-combatants reintegration, in this way complementing the oversight of the quartering and demobilisation processes done by the mixed military commission, which comprised high-ranking FAA and UNITA Military Forces (FMU) officers. who had been.
- 24 See World Bank, *Transitional support strategy for the Republic of Angola*, 4 March 2003 and *Technical annex for proposed grant of SDR 24 million (\$33 million equivalent) to the Republic of Angola for an Angola emergency demobilisation and reintegration Project*, 7 March 2003.
- 25 Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), *Enormous humanitarian needs in newly-accessible areas of Angola: 'A dying population'*, 24 April 2002.
- 26 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), *Humanitarian situation in Angola. Analysis*. November/December 2002.
- 27 Unidade Técnica de Coordenação da Ajuda Humanitária (UTCAH)/Ministério da Assistência e Reinserção Social (MINARS), *Presença da população deslocada por Província (até 30 de Novembro de 2002)*, Luanda, 4 de Dezembro 2002.
- 28 Unidade Técnica de Coordenação da Ajuda Humanitária (UTCAH)/Ministério da Assistência e Reinserção Social (MINARS), *Regresso da população/Até 30 de Novembro*, Luanda, 4 de Dezembro 2002.
- 29 The British de-mining organisation Halo Trust believes that there might be no more than 1 million landmines (instead of the often quoted 8 to 15 million). Halo Trust considers that, at the current standards of de-mining capacity and resources invested, the mines could be removed in about 10 years. Presentation of the Halo Trust Desk Officer for Southern Africa at the British Angola Forum Conference, *Angola's Future*, London, 12-13 November 2003.
- 30 'There are two groups of mines: first, those used for classic perimeter defence of strategic areas; secondly, those on roads to prevent access to and from strategic areas of targets. The risk to civilians is enormous, as both strategies were aimed at reducing civilian traffic as well as impeding opposing forces' in International Crisis Group, *Dealing with Savimbi's ghost: The security and humanitarian challenges in Angola*, ICG Africa Report Nº58, 26 February 2003, p 8.

- 31 According to the INAROE annual report, 287 new landmine/UXO casualties were recorded in 2002, from 167 mine and UXO incidents. Although this represents a decline in recorded new casualties (from 673 casualties in 2001), non-governmental sources indicated that the number of incidents increased dramatically during 2002 and early 2003, particularly incidents involving anti-vehicle mines. See Landmine Monitor Report 2003, Angola, 9 September 2003.
- 32 During the January 2003 visit to the country by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Sérgio Vieira de Mello, a consortium of international NGOs operating in Angola (CONGA) emphasised several patterns of human rights violations suffered by returning IDPs, mainly at the hands of Angolan authorities including the FAA and PNA. These included forced return and false incentives for return, inhibition of free movement, and physical and sexual abuse.
- 33 Human Rights Watch, *Struggling through peace: Return and resettlement in Angola*, New York, August 2003, p 14.
- 34 Ibid. p 19.
- 35 A survey conducted by the Human Rights Commission of the Angolan Bar Association, reported that, as of March 2001, only 13 of the 164 municipal courts stipulated in the Angolan Constitution were functioning. The poor state of the justice system was noted, and the shortage of provincial judges, provincial and municipal prosecutors and associated personnel emphasised. See, Comissão dos Direitos Humanos da Ordem dos Advogados de Angola, *Diagnóstico preliminar sobre o sistema da administração da justiça em Angola – Perspectiva Estático-Estrutural*, Luanda, Março 2001.
- 36 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), *Humanitarian situation in Angola: Reporting period 01-15 May 2002*. See also *Acta da 17ª Reunião do Grupo de Coordenação Humanitária referente ao Ano 2002*, Luanda, 23 de Outubro de 2002.
- 37 Human Rights Watch, *Struggling through peace: Return and resettlement in Angola*, New York, August 2003, p 10.
- 38 In the resettlement of the Cambanbe II camp, in the Bengo province, the settlers' houses were burned and the crops from 10 hectares of cultivated land were lost. Ibid. p. 10. See also *Voz da América, Deslocados protestam*, Luanda, 27 Setembro 2002.
- 39 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), *Humanitarian situation*, 10 July 2003.
- 40 According to OCHA, at least 308,700 people in 24 areas were reportedly in critical need including 190,000 people who were isolated as a result of poor road conditions and mine infestation and 117,800 who were living in areas not yet accessed by humanitarian agencies. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), *Humanitarian coordination update*, 15 April 2003.
- 41 At the time, the government of Angola estimated that some 400 bridges were in need of repair or rebuilding, and 500 roads needed rehabilitation.
- 42 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), *Angola humanitarian coordination update*, 10 July 2003.
- 43 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), *Humanitarian situation in Angola*, 1 –15 September and 15 – 30 September 2003.
- 44 Official figures from MINARS (UTCAH), Government of Angola. OCHA-Angola, *IDP fact sheet*, 30 December 2003. However, the figures for December 2002 differ significantly from the ones reported by several humanitarian organisations, which during December 2002 confirmed assistance to the following populations: Benguela (61,854), Cunene (10,506), Huambo (85,114), Huila (173,744), Kuando Kubango (102,169), Kuanza Norte (24,915), Luanda (17,500), Lunda Sul (36,568), Malange (15,413), Moxico (47,071) and Zaire (1,527).
- 45 He confirmed that '70 percent of the returned did not find the conditions that are set by the norms [for return and resettlement]', IRIN, 19 August 2003.
- 46 Assistance in returning the displaced was not available because of failures in essential planning and coordination between MINARS departments. An example of this occurred when, during October 2002, IDPs were sent from the Benguela and Bie provinces to the transit centre in Huambo.
- 47 The UN's acting humanitarian coordination has pointed out that, 'Just to talk about the state bodies—the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Social Affairs—each one is independent so its important that in the field they find an efficient way of co-ordinating themselves. There is awareness that coordination was problematic in some areas' See IRIN, 19 August 2003.
- 48 We include in this figure 500,000 people previously inaccessible; 300,000 former UNITA combatants' dependants; and, 150,000 new IDPs who arrived in the first quarter of 2002.
- 49 In practice, the Norms became effective only after six months from the start of the first spontaneous returns, so possible cases of non-compliance with the Norms would have not been allowed legal redress.
- 50 This happened during October 2002 in the resettlement sites of Bengo 2 and Kituma in Uije Province. Old IDP camps of Luhemba and Nguari in Lunda Sul were used for the reintegration of some demobilized soldiers and their families. See, Human Rights Watch, *Struggling through peace: Return and resettlement in Angola*, New York, August 2003.
- 51 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), *Humanitarian coordination update*, 15 April 2003.
- 52 For instance: in Uije province international NGOs provided trucks; in Moxico province the cost of delivering water to the Luena central hospital was met by an international NGO.
- 53 According to the UN, the PEPARRs 'should facilitate the return of IDPs currently living in camps and transit centres prior to the next agricultural campaign. Between June and August, as many IDPs as possible will be encouraged to return'. Furthermore, 'humanitarian partners are working in close collaboration with Government authorities to accelerate resettlement and return (on the basis of minimum standards specified in Angola law)'. See Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), *United Nations bridging request: Humanitarian operations in Angola*, 18 June 2002.
- 54 Human Rights Watch, *United Nations: Protect the displaced in Angola*, 5 March 2002. Also Human Rights Watch, *The war is over: The crisis of Angola's internally displaced continues*, July 2002.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 In the workshop on 'Protection for human rights and humanitarian organisations: Doing something about it and doing it well', held at the International Committee of the Red Cross, Geneva, January 1999, a shared and agreed definition of protection stated that 'the concept of protection encompasses all activities aimed at obtaining full respect for the rights of the individuals in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the relevant bodies of law (i.e., human rights, humanitarian and refugee law)'; and protection as being 'any activity (...) aimed at creating an environment conducive to respect for human beings, preventing and/or alleviating the immediate effects of a specific abuse, and restoring dignified conditions of life through reparation, restitution and rehabilitation'.

- 57 See UN Security Council Resolution 1433 (2002).
- 58 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Angola (OCHA), *Angola: humanitarian coordination update*, 23 Oct 2003.
- 59 As noted by the acting UN Humanitarian Coordinator in August 2002, 'given that the majority are going back to rural areas, the first thing is that they must have access to means of agricultural production: seeds, tools and land. They must receive access to land without mines, or at least to be aware of where there are mines'.
- 60 See Direção de Estudos e Planeamento do Ministério do Planeamento, *Estratégia interina de redução da pobreza (Documento Provisório)*, Outubro 2002.
- 61 In this document, the Government identifies the following priorities: the consolidation of the peace process; the promotion of national reconciliation and social reintegration of demobilised soldiers and their families; the war displaced; the countrywide extension of State Administration; the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure in the health, education, economic sectors; the consolidation of a stable macro-economic environment for the revitalisation of the national economy and the provision of incentives for economic activities; and, finally, the reestablishment of constitutional normalcy. From Governo de Unidade e Reconciliação Nacional, *Programa do governo para o período 200-2004*, Luanda, Outubro 2002.
- 62 FAO/WFP Special Report, *Crop and food supply assessment mission to Angola*, 25 July 2003.
- 63 The assessment was based on provincial vulnerability assessments conducted by representatives of the Government, UN Agencies and NGOs in the provinces of Bengo, Benguela, Bié, Huambo, Huíla, Kuando Kubango, Kuanza Norte, Kuanza Sul, Lunda Sul, Malanje, Moxico and Uíge. Assessments contained information on markets, agricultural production and population movements and included residents, IDPs, returnees and socially vulnerable groups. The assessments found that: 1,028,000 people are food insecure and in need of assistance; 865,000 additional people in need of assistance during the lean season; 447,000 people who may need assistance; and, finally, 317,000 people who will need assistance only if exposed to a negative shock. The vulnerable population identified includes the following groups: 1,403,000 returnees; 763,000 vulnerable residents; 266,000 IDPs; 138,000 resettled persons; and, 86,000 persons who belong to socially vulnerable groups, such as orphans or the elderly.
- 64 According to the FAO/WFP Special Report, abundant rains, farmers returning to their land and the distribution of agricultural inputs have led to a 14 percent increase in cultivated areas, boosting agricultural performance for 2002-2003. This year's cereal production is expected to reach 670,000 tonnes, 23 percent higher than in 2002.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Approximately 5,000 tonnes of inputs will be distributed to the most remote and isolated villages, where pockets of extreme vulnerability still exist.
- 67 The kits will include locally adapted varieties of maize, beans, vegetables, millet and sorghum seeds, and agricultural tools such as hoes and machetes.
- 68 FAO Press Release, Rome/Nairobi, 19 September 2003.
- 69 This programme, approved during the Third Ordinary Session of the WFP's Managing Board, will provide about 3.9 tons of food for nearly 1.4 million people, 60 percent of whom are women. It will also benefit about 170,000 refugees returning home from neighbouring countries. Vulnerable groups will receive emergency aid until next year's harvest, facilitating the return of populations to their homes, as well as implementing programmes such as food for work to guarantee the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure.
- 70 ANGOP, *Interview with the UN acting humanitarian coordinator*, August 2002.
- 71 In July 2003, the UNICEF reported that in a single district of Benguela Province, some 9,000 children were not at school because of lack of teachers. IRIN 24 July 2003.
- 72 According to Frederic Myemba, rough estimates indicate that there are between 5 and 10 million small and light weapons in the hands of civilians throughout the country. F Myemba, *Disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration*, Africa Files, Sept. 2003.
- 73 A draft land law was presented in August 2002 and, excluding some localised initiatives in Huíla and Benguela provinces for promoting civil society debate on its text and prescriptions, there has been so far very limited progress on the discussions around it. See in this regard, USAID, *Field Report Angola*, August 2003. In November 2003, a technical committee presented to the government a report on how to improve the original draft, including recognising the coexistence of State owned land, individual property and respect of the land rights of rural communities. It also recommends minimum and maximum limits of land ownership as well as a clause requiring the effective use of land. From the presentation by Prof. Carlos Feijó, British Angola Forum Conference, *Angola's Future*, London, 12-13 November 2003.
- 74 Because of the relative isolation of the majority of the country during the war, the spreading of the disease has been limited in comparison to other countries in the region. The limited capacity for the gathering of data on rates of infection has also prevented the capacity for a realistic assessment of the size of the problem. Existing projections currently point to a 5% rate of infection in the adult male population with higher infection rates likely in areas close to the bordering countries.
- 75 ANGOP, Luanda, 19 August 2003.
- 76 United Nations System in Angola, *Common country assessment 2002: Angola – The post war challenges*, Luanda, 2002, p 85.
- 77 According to a leaked International Monetary Fund report, about \$1 billion went missing in 2002, approximately one third of the entire state revenue. See details of allegations of corruption and embezzlement in Global Witness Press Release, *Will Angola finally publish its oil accounts?*, 20 June 2003.
- 78 In 2002, Transparency International ranked Angola among the five most corrupt countries in the world (in a list of 102).
- 79 World Bank, op cit, p 6, table 1.
- 80 It has been difficult to ascertain disaggregated figures of the real amounts of resources allocated and spent by the government in humanitarian assistance for the internally displaced. Often authorities report data incorporating different groups of beneficiaries.
- 81 According to a communiqué from the Government in August cited by ANGOP, as per the 19 June 2003, the government has disbursed a total of \$138,367,951 (\$120,009,998 in 2002 and \$18.357.953 in 2003) for assisting and sheltering former UNITA combatants and their dependants under the auspices of the MOU.
- 82 On the 20 of August, ANGOP reported that the Institute for the Social and Professional Reintegration of Ex-soldiers (IRSEM), a department of the MINARS, confirmed that the project will benefit 530,000 people (former soldiers and their relatives). It will end in December 2006 and cost \$105 million (of which \$33 million were donated by the Institute of Agrarian Development (IDA); \$53 million were granted by Multi-Donors Trust Fund (MDTF); and, \$17 million were disbursed by the other international donors). The project provides professional training of demobilised soldiers, including 105,000 from UNITA and 33,000 from FAA, in addition to assistance to their relatives

- (approximately 400,000 people), including kits for feeding, working utensils and concession of micro credit.
- 83 United Nations System in Angola, *Common country assessment 2002: Angola: The post war challenges*, Luanda, 2002, p 68.
 - 84 Alertnet interview to Mr. Francisco Roque Castro, WFP Director in Angola, Zoe Eisenstein, 23 October 2003.
 - 85 Although malnutrition rates have improved significantly, WFP is still providing food to 1.7 million people every month and rations for about 740,000 people are distributed through the food-for-work scheme (of which 100,000 are especially vulnerable, such as orphans, the elderly and pregnant women).
 - 86 Unidade Técnica de Coordenação da Ajuda Humanitária (UTCAH), *Acta da 17ª Reunião do Grupo de Coordenação Humanitária referente ao Ano 2002*, Luanda, Setembro 2002.
 - 87 Ministério da Assistência e Reinserção Social (MINARS)–Unidade Técnica de Coordenação da Ajuda Humanitária (UTCAH), *Síntese sobre a situação humanitária em Angola. Julho/Novembro 2002*, Luanda Dezembro 2002.
 - 88 Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), *Mid-Term Review. 2003 Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal for Angola*, 3 June 2003.
 - 89 The portion required for the public health sector had, by the end of August 2003, reached only 8 percent. This shortage of funds prevented agencies from maintaining cold chains, provide basic materials to newly established health posts and expand treatment for mothers and children. The substantial shortfall will also have consequences for protection activities, birth registration, justice reform, demining activities, and live-saving programs for 300,000 newly accessible people. See Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 8 September 2003.
 - 90 Human Rights Watch, *Struggling through peace: Return and resettlement in Angola*, New York, August 2003.
 - 91 Refugees International, 7 March 2003.
 - 92 Human Rights Watch, *Forgotten fighters: Child soldiers in Angola*, New York, April 2003, p 3.
 - 93 United Nations System in Angola, *Common country assessment 2002: Angola: The post war challenges*, Luanda, 2002, p 41.



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About this paper

Amongst all the atrocities of war, one of the most tragic consequences of the 27 year long civil conflict in Angola was that over 4 million of civilians were forced to leave their homelands searching for safe havens elsewhere in the country and becoming internally displaced persons (IDPs). The 4th of April 2002, date of the ceasefire signed by the Angolan Army (*Forças Armadas de Angola*) and the UNITA military forces (*Forças Militares da União Nacional para Independência Total de Angola* UNITA-FMU) represented the most evident sign of hope for those people to return home and rebuild a normal life.

The paper analyses what happened in those 18 months including governmental policies, the contribution of the international community and the difficulties encountered by the returning populations. It finally identifies the most urgent priorities to be met by the competent actors involved, in light of the ultimate goal of securing a lasting peace.

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