



# **Building Peace and Democracy in Angola: Challenges and Opportunities**

## **Report of the Angola Country Program (ACP) Lessons Identified Seminar (LIS)**

**Luanda, October 2008**

### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**T**he Angola Country Program Lessons Identified Seminar (LIS) took place in Luanda, Angola, on 01 and 02 October 2008. The overall goal of the seminar was to create a forum for sharing of experiences, analysis, and reflections by various stakeholders working in different sectors of peacebuilding in Angola. The seminar also aimed to evaluate peacebuilding and reconciliation processes that have been implemented in Angola since the end of the civil war in 2002.

The seminar was attended by 34 participants from seven Provinces of Angola (Luanda, Kwanza Sul, Huambo, Bié, Huíla, Cunene and Luanda Sul) and abroad, and ACCORD staff members. The seminar provided a forum of discussion and analysis to a diversity of stakeholders working in the field of peacebuilding in Angola. The richness of the discussions ranged from the variety of themes presented to the broad representation of national and grass-roots institutions.

The seminar was a final activity in the current (2006-2008) phase of ACCORD's Angola Country Program (ACP). The ACP, which was initiated in 2006, implemented a series of activities such as assessment visits, dialogue sessions, Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop and capacity building workshops in conflict management. The Program also held a seminar on the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) tool for peacebuilding activities and has developed training materials in the Portuguese language for use in Angola. By October 2008 when the LIS was held, the Program had engaged about 300 Angolans in all of its activities and networked with various civil society organisations and government structures in most of the provinces of Angola.

The overall assessment based on the analysis and debates that unfolded during the two-day seminar in Luanda provide useful information about the current state of affairs in terms of peacebuilding in Angola as well as direction for future action plans. One of the conclusions from the seminar was that Angola is in transition from conflict, and that there are institutional actors that are playing an important role in the different peacebuilding tasks. However, the challenges for a deep transformation of Angolan society are still quite formidable. The priority areas for the next five years therefore centre around three Bs: better mechanisms of dialogue and coordination of activities between the various stakeholders in the field; better and systematic evaluation of the various programs and projects on the ground; and better commitment for understanding the complexities of the Angolan transition without ignoring the examples and lessons from other post-conflict transitions in Africa. Judging by the continuous mentioning, during the discussion in the seminar, of examples of other African transitions, this latter aspect is extremely important to the current actors in Angola. Indeed, comparative approaches to peacebuilding will be important for the Angolan actors in order to avoid the same mistakes and cycles of post-conflict injustice that have been registered in other post-conflict transitions in Africa.

This report ends with some recommendations that could be the basis for a renewed commitment to Angola. These recommendations were conceptualised in order to develop further programs for the next few years in Angola.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

ACCORD	African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
AMUVIMOG	Associação das Mulheres V. M. C. Órfãos, Bié, Angola
Angola 2000	Organização Angola 2000
ASD	Acção de Solidariedade e Desenvolvimento, Huila, Angola
CEJP	Comissão Episcopal de Justiça e Paz
CIMSCS	Congregação das Irmãs Missionárias de São Carlos Scalabrianas
CODESA	Convention for a Democratic South Africa
COIEPA	Comité Inter-Eclesial para Paz en Angola
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DFID	Department for International Development
DW	Development Workshop
EISA	Electoral Institute of Southern Africa
FNLA	Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola
FONGA	Fórum das Organizações Não-Governamentais Angolanas
CEA	Centro de Estudos Africanos
MINARS	Ministério da Assistência e Reinserção Social
MN	Média Nova
MPLA	Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola
NDI	National Democratic Institute
PL	Plataforma Eleitoral
REH	Rede Eleitoral de Huambo & Lunda-Sul
RM	Rede Mulher
RONG-CVA	Rede das ONGs & Cruz Vermelha de Angola
SAE	South African Embassy
SCG	Search for Common Ground
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNITA	União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola
UTCAH	Humanitária Unidade Técnica de Coordenação da Ajuda



## LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The seminar was attended by 34 participants from seven Provinces of Angola (Luanda, Kwanza Sul, Huambo, Bié, Huíla, Cunene and Luanda Sul) and abroad, and ACCORD staff members. These were:

Name	Institution
Derek Arnolds	Department of Foreign Affairs, RSA
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Arnaldo José António	Plataforma Eleitoral, Luanda, Angola
Francisco Martins	Rede Eleitoral, Lunda-Sul, Angola
Miriam W. Java	Rede das ONGs & Cruz Vermelha de Angola, Cunene, Angola
Faustino Paulo Mandavela	Development Workshop, Luanda, Angola
Carlos Figueiredo	UNDP, Luanda, Angola
Manassés Albino	Associação das Mulheres V. M. C. Órfãos (AMUVIMOG), Bié, Angola
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Luis K. Jimbo	Search for Common Ground, Luanda, Angola
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Titi Pitso	EISA, Johannesburg, South Africa
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Dr. Paulo Inglês	Centro de Estudos Africanos (CEA) - Centre for African Studies- of the Instituto Superior de Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa (ISCTE), Lisbon, Portugal
Kiara Neto	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), Luanda, Angola
Dr. Daniel Ntoni –Nzinga	COIEPA, Luanda, Angola
Rev. Anastácio Chembeze	ACCORD, Durban, South Africa
Martha Bakwesgha	ACCORD, Durban, South Africa
Karanja Mbugua	ACCORD, Durban, South Africa
Pravina Makan-Lakha	ACCORD, Durban, South Africa
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## INTRODUCTION: CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVES OF THE SEMINAR

Modern violent political conflicts are characterised by massive destruction of physical infrastructure and loss of human lives. In the last hundred years, mass political violence has evolved from wars of aggression into more prevalent internal strife or also designated as civil wars (Licklider 1993). Many of these civil wars are categorised as low intensity conflicts in that the main goals of the parties in war is not to win the war but rather to control the populations in order to sustain the war efforts (Suro 1986). As a result the main casualties of the violence are the civilian populations. Valued institutions and the ways of life of a whole population are under attack and largely disrupted (Nordstrom 1997).

Very exceptionally, as is the case of the Angolan civil strife, civil wars end with one party vanquishing the other (Licklider 1993). However, the fact that civil strife ends with one victorious side does not make the case unique when compared to conflict resolutions that were achieved through negotiation processes. That is, the multiplicity of challenges involved in rebuilding the devastated people and country has similar features. Therefore, a comparative approach is preferable in order to comprehensively address the challenges of conflict resolution and post-war reconstruction (Kornprobst 2002).

The attainment of peace raises new challenges of reconstruction in a country coming out of a history of bitterness, mutual hatred and deep divisions. Around the world, state institutions and civil society organisations in post-conflict societies differ in the way they handle issues of reconstruc-

tion after civil wars. Until recently, the common practice often was to leave, through inattention or denial, communities to fend for themselves. This approach has gradually changed since the end of the civil war in the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and apartheid in South Africa. The approach now is for state institutions and non-governmental organisations, with the support from the international community, to introduce mechanisms and strategies to promote peacebuilding.

Peacebuilding as a strategy of post-conflict reconciliation and reconstruction gained international support after the end of the Cold War. In his 1992 *Agenda for Peace*, the UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali envisioned the concept peacebuilding as "action to identify and support structures which tend to strengthen and solidify peace to avoid a relapse into conflict." Ghali argued that such structures include civilian and military efforts by external and internal actors that seek to prevent the recurrence of conflict, "consolidate peace, advance a sense of confidence and well-being and support economic reconstruction".

Until recently, peacebuilding activities were predominantly developed and funded by Western countries. This dominance raised critical questions about the ideological drive behind these peace building initiatives. Roland Paris (2002: 638) has suggested that these operations were part of *mission civilisatrice*, that is, "to act upon the belief that one model of domestic governance, liberal market democracy, is superior to all others." In this model, peace building issues such as truth, justice and reconciliation, and the rule of law are part of the tool-kits that accompany peace support operations in war-ravaged countries (Fukuyama 2005; Trubek 2006). Some states have responded to the criticism by introducing a South-South conceptual approach for cooperation. This cooperation among non-western countries has also included

civil society actors from secular and religious non-governmental organisations. The areas of intervention have included not only peacebuilding operations but also support for post-war democratisation and reconciliation processes among state and non-state actors.

Peter Batchelor and Kees Kingma (2004) have argued that a broader peacebuilding process takes different forms and content during and after each conflict scenario depending on the history of the conflict, the level of violence, the leadership involved and the resources available. Indeed, peacebuilding activities can, and should, occur during all phases of a conflict. A key component of peacebuilding activities is empowerment of local stakeholders. Especially non-governmental organisations have been in the frontline of numerous peacebuilding initiatives and these organisations have advocated for empowerment approaches. Fletcher & Weinstein (2002) have suggested that efforts to repair social damage due to war must be strengthened by engaging the communities themselves in the articulation their needs around community regeneration. These ideas of peacebuilding through engaging and empowering important local actors underpinned ACCORD's Angola Country Program. Indeed, ACP strove in all its activities to empower and build the local actors.

## The Challenges of Peacebuilding in Angola

The history of Angola in the last one hundred years has been characterised by violent conflicts. The bloodiest and destructive phase of these conflicts occurred from 1975, when the country attained independence, to 2002. The main combatants were the Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola (MPLA), União Nacional

para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) and Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola (FNLA). The conflict also involved regional and international military forces. The civil war formally ended in February 2002, when the leader of the UNITA, Jonas Savimbi, was killed by the government forces. The degree of people's exposure to the violence brought through the war was very high (Brittain 1998; Pearce 2005). Undoubtedly, the war had profound consequences to individuals and social institutions. Like many post-conflict countries in Africa that have been analysed by Ali and Matthews (2004), and Nhema and Zeleza (2008), Angola faces multiple challenges that arises from unfinished transitional processes: a transition from colonialism to post-colonial state-building; the transformation of society from a Socialist politically-oriented society into a pluralistic democracy. The challenges of the transitions also include a change from a protracted civil war that fragmented the country into a unified state based on the rule of law, respect for human rights and good governance; the continuous assessment of the programs of disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration of former soldiers (Paulo Inglês's address to the LIS; Dzinesa 2007). Additional challenges include the transformation of cultures of violence into cultures of peace where attention is paid to psychosocial issues and the integration of youth (Wessells & Monteiro 2006); and the constitution of a state that is committed to an equal distribution of opportunities and resources for all citizens regardless of their political, geographic, ethnic and religious affiliations.

In post-2002 Angola, these challenges will require peacebuilding interventions ranging from short, medium- to long-term programs aiming at preventing the country from relapsing into violent conflict and to consolidate a durable peace. So far these activities have been conducted by an array of actors including government, civil society,

the private sector and international organisations. The activities have covered all sectors of the society including the security, political, economic, and national reconciliation. It is within this context that ACCORD, through the Angola Country Program (ACP), has contributed towards peacebuilding in Angola over the last three years.

## Angola Country Program (ACP)

The Angola Country Program (ACP) was implemented in 2006. The overall goal of the programme was to strengthen the civil society organisations (CSOs) so that they can take part in peacebuilding and democratisation processes. The programme had three specific objectives. The first objective was to enhance democratic governance in Angola through promotion of dialogue between actors in various sectors. Developing the capacity of CSOs and transfer skills in prevention, management and transformation of conflicts was the second objective. The third objective was to enhance the capacity and sustainability of local CSOs.

Since its inception the ACP has implemented many activities. These include assessment visits, dialogue sessions, Training of Trainers (ToT) workshop and capacity building workshops in conflict management. In addition, the Program held a seminar on the development of a Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) tool for peacebuilding activities and has been striving to develop training materials in Portuguese language for use in Angola. By October 2008, the Program had engaged about 300 people in all of its activities and networked with various civil society organisations and government structures in most of the provinces of Angola.

While implementing its activities and empowering local actors, the Program gained valuable insights and learned crucial lessons. In order to

assess the significance and applicability of these insights and lessons to the work of actors involved in peacebuilding activities in Angola and Africa, the Program hosted a two-day Lessons Identified Seminar (LIS) to reflect on peacebuilding activities in Angola since the formal end of the war and evaluate those insights and lessons. This report is a summary of the overall assessment of the ACP based on the analysis and debates that unfolded during the two-day seminar.

## Seminar objectives

The overall objectives of the Seminar were:

- To provide a forum to reflect and evaluate the conflict resolution dimension of the peacebuilding processes in the Angolan post-conflict transition;
- To share experiences and strategies that have been employed to respond to those issues;
- To provide an open forum for sharing lessons and best practices for managing conflict in Angola and facilitate the progress of peacebuilding process and raise awareness of potential dispute or conflict situations; and
- To inform current and future peacebuilding initiatives in the country.





## NARRATIVE OF DISCUSSION DURING THE SEMINAR

### Welcome Addresses

Ms. Pravina Makan-Lakha gave the welcome address on behalf of ACCORD while Mr. Faustino Paulo Mandavela of the Development Workshop (DW), the partner organisation, spoke on behalf of the institution. The seminar was officially opened by Mr. Pedro Walipe Calenga who represented the Minister for Assistance and Social Reinsertion (MINARS).

### ACCORD's Welcome Address

Ms. Pravina Makan-Lakha welcomed all participants on behalf of ACCORD in general, and the Angola Country Program in particular, to the seminar, and gave them a chance to introduce themselves. She also thanked ACCORD's partner in Angola, the Development Workshop (DW), and the Department for International Development (DFID) for funding peacebuilding activities in Angola.

While highlighting ACCORD's work in Angola, Ms. Makan-Lakha stated that the ACP has trained 300 people directly. But the number of people who have indirectly benefited from the ACP has not yet been quantified. The task of quantifying that number will be completed in the next phase of the Program. She recognised that changing post-conflict peace building dynamics demands changing responses. Therefore, the seminar aimed to analyse the lessons that the ACP has identified

in its three year work in Angola, and draw recommendations for the next phase of the Program.

### DW's Welcome Address

Mr. Faustino Paulo Mandavela of DW thanked all the participants and appreciated the partnership between ACCORD and his organisation. He also highlighted the peace building activities that DW has implemented in Angola over the years. He emphasised that Angola is in a particular post-conflict transition moment when peacebuilding work needs to be consolidated. He also emphasised that peacebuilding challenges specific to Angola demand specific responses, including alternative dispute resolution mechanisms inherent in Angola's cultural-linguistic groups. He concluded his remarks with a call for coordinated documentation of all peacebuilding work that has been implemented in Angola.

### Ministry of Assistance and Social Reinsertion (MINARS) Address

The Minister for Assistance and Social Reinsertion was represented by Mr. Pedro Walipe Calenga who officially opened the seminar. Mr. Calenga stated that the government of Angola has identified civil society organisations as critical partners in peacebuilding and development, and cited cases where CSOs have contributed to re-integration of refugees. He also stated that the long-running war created numerous challenges for the government that include internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees, destruction of infrastructure and poverty.

While thanking ACCORD for its work in Angola, he advised the institution and all CSOs to consider the country's specific post-war context and challenges. He also advised for consideration of dispute

resolution mechanisms that exist in Angola's cultural communities. Mr. Walipe then welcomed all participants on behalf of the Minister for Assistance and Social Reinsertion and urged them to engage with ideas and provide solutions to the challenges that are confronting Angola at this time when the country is in transition.

## Challenges of Peacebuilding and Democracy

Presentations and discussions in the second session dealt with the challenges of peacebuilding and democracy in Angola. Dr. Paulo Inglês and Rev. Anastácio Chembeze were the key presenters while Ms. Pravina Makan-Lakha moderated the session.

### Challenges of Peacebuilding & Democracy: Country Overview

Dr. Paulo Inglês presented an overview of peacebuilding and democracy issues in Angola, and pointed at the tasks on peacebuilding that need to be emphasised upon at this time in Angola's post-conflict transition. He started by reviewing developments and peace agreements that have been signed in Angola since 1975. These include the Alvore Agreement of 1975, the Bicesse Accords of 1991, the Lusaka Agreement of 1994 and the Luena Memorandum of 2002.

Dr. Inglês argued that though all these agreements aimed to end the conflict, they focused more on the actors and paid scant attention to the causes of the conflict and evolving dynamics during the various phases. He mentioned that there have been gaps in analyses of the conflict as many of them have focused more on the armed parties, yet there were many other parties. He also mentioned

that post-conflict transition has been complicated by the fact that the conflict ended when UNITA was militarily defeated.

Dr. Paulo Inglês focused on several key issues. Firstly, Angola lacks a unified national narrative, and a well articulated national identity. Instead, there are competing visions of the national identity, which have been feeding into the conflict. Secondly, national integration and reconciliation in Angola has been undermined by several divides. These are ethnic/cultural identities divide, regional (north/south) divide, urban/rural divide, social classes divide and elite/mass divide.

Thirdly, the military defeat of UNITA has imposed a national discourse that is dominated by military language and imagery. The dominance of military imagery is slowing down peace building and reconciliation work as every issue is seen through the lenses of victors and losers, undermining social structures and encouraging intolerance in communities. Fourthly, there is need for an all inclusive national reconciliation process, peacebuilding activities and national institutions as post-conflict peacebuilding is a long term process. And lastly, reconciliation in Angola has been interpreted to mean forgetting the past. Dr. Inglês ended by posing questions to guide the discussion of the seminar. Some of these questions focused on the possible lessons learned from the recent elections that ended with a majority victory of the MPLA party; the need to seriously consider the increasing poverty in a country which is registering an economic growth partly due to the oil sector.

During plenary discussion other issues were brought to the fore. These included the role of the recent parliamentary elections in consolidating peace and reconciliation; the need for restructuring of the state through review of the constitution; the importance of CSOs in post-conflict peacebuilding; and the necessity of an economic transformation in order to reduce the higher levels of social exclu-

sion. Some of the participants also warned about the links between inequality and the emergence of different types of conflicts. Other participants drew attention to the issue of violations of human rights taking place in Angola, the corruption that afflicts multiple sectors of the Angolan society, and the necessity of creating laws to counteract the wave of regionalism and tribalism, i.e. the establishment of action plans and distribution of resources based on family and ethnic identifications. It was stated during the LIS that tribalism and regionalism should be tackled now because it is a serious source of conflict. Other participants placed Angola in the perspective of economic globalisation and the processes of exclusion that it brings with it and raised critical questions about the presence of Chinese and Brazilian workers in Angola. There was an innuendo that these migrant workers may be taking away the job opportunities that should be reserved for Angolans. This perceived or real competition for the control of the job market can create serious instability in society.

This part of the debate ended with a note by Dr. Inglês insisting that peacebuilding and national reconciliation are long-term processes and that schools can play an important role in boosting the required transformative experiences in post-war Angola. The schools were considered as driving forces because of their capacity to create new habits in the new generations, in this case the post-war generations.

## **Enhancing Conflict Management, Building Peace and Democracy in Angola**

Rev. Anastácio Chembeze reviewed the implementation of the Angola Country Program and its activities. He explained that the ACP was implemented in 2006 following a conflict vulnerability assessment that had been conducted in Angola

between 2003 and 2005. He also explained that the program aims to enhance democratic governance in Angola through promotion of dialogue between actors in various sectors and at different levels; develop the capacity of CSOs and transfer skills in prevention, management and transformation of conflicts; and enhance the capacity and sustainability of local CSOs.

He mentioned all the provinces that the program had worked in, and cited various activities the ACP has implemented. He also cited the opportunities and challenges that the ACP had encountered, and the outcomes the ACP had managed to get and summarised with key lessons that the ACP had identified. These lessons include the following.

Firstly, ownership of the peacebuilding processes and the emergent institutions by the people is both a political and social imperative. Secondly, it is important for CSOs implementing peacebuilding activities to understand the difference between their work and that of political parties. Thirdly, CSOs' training programs are often a critical entry point for CSOs work in both rural and urban communities. And lastly, interactive training is one of the best ways to model both the values and procedures of participatory conflict resolution.

During plenary discussion, a number of activities were cited to support the lessons noted above. Similarly, ACCORD was applauded for its work in Angola and some CSOs requested the organisation to expand its work in provinces where it had not implemented any activities. There was also the point of the synergy between CSOs and other institutions implementing peacebuilding activities.



## Key Issues in Peacebuilding and Democracy: Lessons Identified

The third session focused on issues in peacebuilding and democracy in Angola with presentations by Dr. Paulo Inglês and Dr. Daniel Ntoni-Nzinga. Both presenters are Angolans who have worked with grassroots' networks in various provinces.

### Transition and National Reconciliation in Angola

In his presentation on transition and reconciliation in post-conflict Angola, Dr. Paulo Inglês identified two processes of transformations that are taking place concurrently: the formal process and the informal processes. He argued that the formal process is taking place at the national level, and involves state institutions. The process has three components: political, social and economic transformations. The political transformation process began with the Bicesse Accords of 1991 and sought to end the protracted civil war. The armed dimension of that process continued until 2002 when UNITA was defeated.

Taking the participants through the various phases of the Angolan history, the presenter argued that the social transformations aim at altering social structures in the Angolan society, while the economic transformations aim at changing the economic foundations of the country. Both processes predate the Bicesse Accords, and took a turning point in 1975 when the country attained independence.

Dr. Inglês further argued that the three transformations are deeply linked. Some transformations were implemented in the 1960s and 1970s, but their impact was only felt in the 1980s

and 1990s. Similarly, economic transformations of the 1970s were only felt in the 1980s. For example, centralised planning introduced in 1975 phased out the informal economy whose absence was felt in the late 1980s and the 1990s.

The key tasks that have been performed at the formal process include power-sharing, reconstruction of the state, social re-structuring and national integration. Power sharing has entailed the inclusion of all the armed groups in the post-conflict government. Also implemented at the formal process has been military integration and transformation, which has been smooth. Reconciliation at the elite level has also occurred. But some major tasks including re-structuring of the state through review of the constitution have not taken place. Consequently, the old perspectives towards the state have prevailed while the discourse between the state and the society is still characterised by suspicion.

However, there has been very little reconciliation at the lower levels in the communities. That lack of reconciliation at the lower levels is what has given rise to the informal process, that is, the process of reconciliation between communities, between communities and individuals and between individuals at the grassroots. Dr. Inglês also raised the question of exclusion both at the national and community level.

The plenary discussion engaged in various issues raised by the presentation. While some questioned the meaning of peace as understood in Angola, others focused on representations in the emergent post-conflict institutions. There were questions on the implications of the recent legislative elections, the role of the school system in peacebuilding, as well as on the role of military in the transformation. Also to emerge from the plenary were questions regarding ethnic/cultural identities and possible scenarios after the recent elections given that the government of national unity has run its course.

## Post-conflict elections, Representation and Peacebuilding in Angola

Dr. Ntoni-Nzinga started his presentation on post-conflict elections, representation and peacebuilding in Angola with a provocative comment that the conflict in Angola has not been clearly defined. "What did the conflict mean to Angola?" He posed. He provoked the participants further by arguing that the 1992 elections, which were marred by controversies, were the second elections in post-colonial Angola and not the first. According to him, the first elections took place in November 1975 but the parties used bullets instead of ballots. The presenter further argued that because the conflict has not been clearly defined, then peace has also not been clearly defined.

Regarding the peace process, Dr. Ntoni-Nzinga argued that the process has been exclusive. By involving the armed parties, MPLA and UNITA only, the process left out other important stakeholders in Angola. He cited this as one of the key reasons why the Bicesse Accords were bedevilled by implementation problems as soon as they were signed. He contrasted the exclusivist nature of the Angolan peace process with South Africa's Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) negotiations that were inclusive.<sup>1</sup> Closely related to this were the issues around the legitimacy of the peace agreements and their implementation.

The presenter went further and raised issues on the electoral system in Angola, the nature of

<sup>1</sup> CODESA negotiations took place in South Africa from 1991 to 1994. The negotiations involved all the major actors namely the National Party (NP) government and the African National Congress (ANC), and all the minor parties such as Pan-African Congress (PAC), Azania People's Organisation (AZAPO), Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), the Conservative Party (CP) and the new Freedom Front (FF). The negotiations took place against a backdrop of political violence in the country, and resulted in South Africa's first multi-racial election that was won by the African National Congress (ANC).

the Angolan state, as well as questions of reconciliation and post-conflict transformation. Noting that the nature of the Angolan state has not been articulately defined, he argued there was a need to resolve this matter in order to address the shortcomings of the electoral system. These shortcomings include a winner takes all system, a partisan electoral commission, and poorly informed voting population.

He questioned the capability of the current electoral system to resolve conflicts that may arise in this post-conflict transformation phase, and mentioned the absence of civic education which includes electoral and voter education. He also mentioned new challenges that include confusion between the ruling party, the government and the nation-state; abuse of human rights; new forms of intolerance; corruption; and the need to build political structures after the first post-conflict elections.

Dr. Ntoni-Nzinga's presentation raised other critical issues around post-conflict reconciliation. In his view, the failure to clearly define the conflict, peace issues and the nature of the Angolan state has led to other pitfalls. These include the failure to clearly articulate issues of reconciliation. Instead, the winner of the war and the elections has been left alone to determine the future of Angola without strong checks and balances. As a result, the population has become cynical and many did not participate in the most recent legislative elections, while many who cast their vote did so to protest.

Dr. Ntoni-Nzinga's presentation attracted an animated discussion from the plenary. Questions over the issue of the conflict definition arose, while the linkage between political and military interests attracted varied comments. The question of exclusives and representation of armed parties in the peace negotiations raised another question: whom did armed parties represent? There were also comments about confusion between par-

liamentary and presidential elections, and voter apathy. Other issues that arose were 'tribalism' and role of CSOs in post-conflict peacebuilding.

## Disarmament of the Civilian Population

Mr. Cirilo Calisto Mbonge of Organização Angola 2000 started the second day with a presentation on the disarmament of the civilian population. He explained that the long running civil war in Angola bequeathed the country a problem of weapons as the armed parties distributed weapons to their combatants and the civilian population at the height of the war. After the end of the war, many of these weapons were being used to commit crimes in many parts of the country particularly in major towns and cities. Thus, Organização Angola 2000 was founded to respond to this problem of weapons availability.

Mr. Mbonge also stated that the government of Angola launched a national campaign for the voluntary surrender of weapons. The voluntary surrender period ends in December 2008. Thereafter, the citizens will be compelled to surrender all the weapons. He also pointed out that majority of the population are not aware of the national laws that deal with possession and disposal of weapons. He submitted that Angola Penal Code Cap 8 has specific articles that outline the legal position regarding acquiring, possession and disposal of weapons.

Mr. Mbonge further submitted that Organização Angola 2000 justification for supporting weapons surrender is threefold. Firstly, possession of weapons in itself does not guarantee security. Citizens possessing weapons have been reluctant to surrender them because of insecurity. Organização Angola 2000 has conducted an awareness campaign that informs these citizens that possession of weapons does not necessarily guarantee security.

Secondly, these weapons are being misused to commit violent crimes in the country. And thirdly, many people are not trained to handle weapons. Therefore, there are deaths that have been caused by accidental handling of weapons.

In addition to promoting inclusiveness in the weapons awareness and voluntary surrender campaign, Organização Angola 2000 has also embarked on a campaign to address the culture of violence that permeates all sectors of Angolan society. That culture of violence and militarism is one of the outcomes of the civil war. To support this point, some participants cited the use of crude weapons such as machetes and broken bottles in violent confrontations in public transport (taxi and buses) ranks.

Beside physical violence, the culture of violence is also symbolised by militaristic language that permeates all forms of social discourse. Confronting the culture of violence is, therefore, essential in order for the country to realise peaceful post-conflict reconstruction and democracy. Mr. Mbonge pointed out that their weapons awareness campaign has borne fruit as voluntary surrender of weapons has tremendously increased in all areas where Organização Angola 2000 has conducted the campaign.

In its work in weapons awareness campaign, Organização Angola 2000 has identified the several lessons. First, factors such as unemployment and social inequality contribute to conflict. Second, reduction of weapons from the society is an imperative. And third, reducing violence in the society is a critical factor in peace and democracy consolidation.

While responding to questions and comments from the discussant and the participants, Mr. Mbonge admitted that Organização Angola 2000 has not carried out research, nor possess reliable research data on the linkage between weapons uses/proliferation and

socio-economic conditions such as poverty. He also admitted that it is very difficult to have accurate statistics on the availability of weapons in the country.

Regarding data on returned weapons, Mr. Mbonge stated that Organização Angola 2000 has been depending on statistics from the police and other security agencies. The session concluded with the submission that Organização Angola 2000 has sought to influence policy options regarding weapons, and has engaged the police and military departments regarding the policy options and changes they would like to see implemented.

## Re-integration of Returnees

### MINARS Presentation

The question of re-integration of returnees is crucial in a country in the post-conflict transition phase. Recounting the experiences of the government of Angola, Dr. Nilza de Fátima Batalha, who represented the *Ministério da Assistência e Reinserção Social* (MINARS), mentioned that re-integration of returnees is a very difficult and long term process. She argued that her ministry was charged with re-integrating internally displaced persons, the refugees and the demilitarised and disarmed ex-combatants. In order to achieve the set objectives of re-integration, national law offering incentives to returnees was passed by parliament to provide the necessary legal framework for the re-integration program. Further, the ministry established a detailed program with specific time frames.

The re-integration was preceded by de-mining and reconstruction of basic infrastructure. At the time, Angola was the country with most mines in the world. Further, the re-integration program was implemented as part of the broader poverty

eradication program. Dr. Batalha gave the figures of returnees at the time as: - 4.2 million IDPs (one of the largest figures in the world) and 500 000 refugees.

The program offered all the returnees the possibility of voluntary return to areas where they had been originally. The law also detailed the services that the returnees were to get as part of the re-integration package. At the end of the first phase of the re-integration program, 3.3 million IDPs had returned to their original areas. The rest chose to stay where they were, or opted to be re-integrated in other areas. Similarly, 400 000 refugees returned voluntarily to their original areas. The rest opted to be re-integrated in other areas or chose to remain in the countries where they had sought refuge.

Dr. Batalha admitted that the re-integration process faced many challenges. Firstly, not all services that the law entailed the government to provide were provided. Secondly, accessing certain localities which were under the control of UNITA during the war was very difficult. Thirdly, there were challenging communication barriers between returnees and host populations as many refugees were speaking national languages of the countries where they had been hosted. In view of the above MINARS has identified the following lessons.

One, it is better to create different programs for different categories of returnees rather than one program for all returnees. Two, a detailed legal mechanism contributes greatly to the success of a re-integration program. Three, it is necessary to create a dispute resolution mechanism to deal with conflicts that are likely to arise in the re-integration process. Four, stabilisation of survivors of conflicts guarantees the success of a re-integration program. Five, an all inclusive program has a better chance of success and reduces costs of re-integration.

Dr. Batalha's presentation attracted animated response from the participants, particularly those from the provinces. Some argued that some returnees have not been accepted in areas where they were re-integrated, while others questioned the success of the program. There were also questions regarding disputes that arose after re-integration particularly over land resources in towns, as well as the nationality of those refugees who feared to return, yet they remain citizens of Angola. Other questions that arose were those of non-Angolans who are refugees in Angola and the fate of Angolans who joined the Buffalo Battalion of the defunct South Africa Defence Force (SADF).

The presenter reacted to some of the comments and questions, and referred others to the relevant ministries or departments. She also admitted that her department had quantitative data on re-integration, but had not done qualitative analysis. She also admitted that Angola's re-integration program was one of the largest in Africa and demanded huge amounts of resources. She also stated that few non-governmental organisations were involved in the process of re-integration. She concluded with the point that the process ended in March 2007 and was voluntary. Those who declined to be re-integrated cannot be compelled to return. The war is over and Angolans are free to return.

## Experiences from other actors and from the Provinces

Before representatives from the Provinces could share their experiences Sister Marlene Wildner, who is a missionary and former director of Jesuit Refugee Service in Angola, shared her organisation's experience in re-integration programs. The missionary stated that re-integration of refugees is a difficult task that requires patience

and resources. Her organisation had been working in Moxico Province which had the highest number of IDPs and returning refugees. Jesuit Services covered reconstruction of physical infrastructure.

The organisation experienced several challenges including communication as most returnees could not speak Portuguese; most were in Zambia and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The organisation also introduced education for peace and community discussion forums to promote co-existence between returnees and host communities. By 2007, the Jesuit Services had assisted 22 000 children get basic registration documents so that they could start schooling.

In some areas, the host communities became hostile to the returnees whom they regarded as foreigners. In other areas, ethnic suspicion and hostilities that were fuelled by past association of ethnic groups with political parties arose and threatened re-integration programs. Another key issue that arose was land disputes re-settlement and re-integration programs were implemented.

A few representatives of the Provinces raised shared their experiences. Faustino Paulo Mandavela narrated DW's experiences in various provinces. But most felt that Dr. Batalha's presentation had covered most of their concerns.





## SUMMARY AND WAY FORWARD

**T**he concluding session was facilitated by Ms. Pravina Makan-Lakha. As stated at the introduction, the seminar aimed to provide a forum to:

1. Reflect and evaluate the conflict resolution dimension of the peacebuilding processes in post-conflict Angola;
2. Provide a forum for sharing lessons and best practices from CSOs working in the peacebuilding sector in Angola;
3. Recommend what needs to be done in the next phase of the Angola Country Program (ACP); and
4. Inform current and future peacebuilding activities in the country.

The seminar had been conceptualised to cover four broad themes:

- I. Challenges of peacebuilding and democracy;
- II. Transition and national reconciliation;
- III. Role of elections in post-conflict transformation; and
- IV. Disarmament and re-integration of returnees – IDPs, refugees and demobilised soldiers.

In two days, diverse actors who came from different organisations presented on various issues from different perspectives. After informed discussions by participants, who also represented different organisations, issues that emerged from

the forum can be summed up in the following bullet points.

- There is a need to intensify peace building work in Angola as the country faces numerous post-conflict challenges;
- Angola lacks a unified national narrative and well articulated national identity;
- Several divides have hampered national integration and reconciliation in Angola;
- National discourse in Angola is dominated by military imagery;
- The mass proliferation of weapons among civilian populations has contributed to maintain an environment of violence and insecurity;
- The misuse of lethal weapons by different state security forces has incremented a climate of insecurity and raised questions about the scope of the various disarmament programs and strategies;
- Reconciliation in Angola has been interpreted to mean forgetting the past;
- Local communities must necessarily own peacebuilding processes;
- There is a need to emphasise the cultural transition of violence into a culture of peace whereby education can be used as one of the key tools in this transition;
- Different categories of returnees demand different programs of re-integration;
- A legal mechanism is a prerequisite to successful implementation of a re-integration program;
- A dispute resolution mechanism to resolve disputes that arise in the re-integration process is very necessary;
- Re-integration programs must necessarily be all- inclusive;



- Actors in the provinces and local communities are the best placed to identify gaps in the re-integration programs;
- Re-integration programs are implemented to assist the people (the returnees and the host communities). But they do not necessarily respond to all needs of the people;
- The results that are attained on the ground after implementation of re-integration programs are not necessarily the outcomes that are contemplated in the office when the programs are planned;
- Bridge building in the communities is very important during re-integration program implementation phase;
- Inclusiveness in re-integration programs plays a key role in the program's success;
- Experiences and responses of CSOs to various issues that have arisen from re-integration programs in Angola need to be tapped;
- All ex-combatants from UNITA were re-integrated, but ex-MPLA combatants were not re-integrated. That has created new problems that need to be resolved;
- While implementing re-integration programs, many government officers had to contend with the traditional leadership or authorities. That has created new challenges;
- Land disputes have arisen after re-integration mostly in urban areas and far less in the rural areas. The rural areas have much land as most people in Angola have opted to stay in urban centres;
- Regional and ethnic divides have in some cases hampered re-integration processes.



## RECOMMENDATIONS: A COMMITMENT TO ANGOLA

The animated discussion during the LIS revealed important gaps of intervention that have so far received little attention. This report makes the following recommendations to bridge these gaps:

1. In light of the participants' concerns over the lack of a unified national narrative on the recent history of Angola it is recommended that a careful assessment of possibilities to develop a unified national narrative from below be considered. This would entail community-based approaches to truth-seeking, justice and reconciliation in which former combatants (MPLA and UNITA) and war survivors in general (those that stayed behind in the frontlines and former internally displaced and refugees) take an active role. Based on what is known from other post-conflict countries in Africa, community-based programs on truth-seeking can be pivotal to denounce and eradicate the continuation of cults of violence and impunity in post-civil war Angola.
2. Education for a deep transformation of citizenship in which issues of rights, duties, and individual and collective responsibilities are debated and decided at community level;
3. Facilitate possibilities for scaling up of local debates and transparent decision-making processes to reach provincial and national authorities;
4. Create systematic forums in the provinces with similar goals to this "Luanda Lessons Learned Seminar" as a strategy of capacity building through continuous local reflections to create local solutions to local challenges on peacebuilding, reconciliation and sustainable development;
5. Develop more integrated and participatory crime prevention activities in order to reinforce a better collaboration between state security forces and the citizens;
6. Facilitate meetings between central state institutions and NGOs in order to reduce the current climate of mistrust and sense of competition and to define areas for closer collaboration;
7. Make possible local participation on current debates on the state policy of decentralization and create local lobby groups to voice local priorities that takes into account local histories, ethnic divides and the specificities of local development;
8. Generate programs aiming at systematic and comparative evaluation of the various programs targeting issues of peacebuilding, reconciliation and human rights.
9. Future national seminars on "Lessons Learned on Peacebuilding Processes" must include broader country-regional comparisons and exchange of experiences;
10. Endorse comprehensive approaches to peacebuilding that includes the main themes discussed in this seminar as well as psychosocial aspects that have been demonstrated to play a major role in peacebuilding;
11. Promote research projects to study the post-civil war politicisation of ethnicities

and the ethnisation of public architecture that determines processes of inclusion and exclusion. The research results can inform on meaningful strategies to address issues of good governance and the rule of law from below in Angola.

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