

STRATEGY FRAMEWORK FOR WORKING GROUP ON PEACE,  
RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT IN ANGOLA

Background

The recently held conference on "Time for Renewed International Commitment to Peace in Angola" recommended and created a working group composed of Angolans which would develop a strategy on how to take other conference recommendations forward. In particular the working group was requested to look into how the key issues that were raised could be transformed into national objectives for Angola so as to maximise the working group's impact. Canadian and Norwegian institutions represented at the conference committed themselves to supporting the strategy that would be developed by the working group.

Goal

The goal of the working group is to contribute towards the establishment of peace, reconstruction and development in Angola.

Purpose

The immediate purpose is to establish dynamic stakeholder processes led by the working group which would foster partnerships between government and civil society and which are supported by relevant research inputs.

Objectives

- 1) to promote stakeholder processes on important national and regional issues which have a bearing on the establishment of peace, reconstruction and development in Angola;
- 2) to promote research by Angolans and their partners in the region on key issues that might be identified as useful through the dialogue process from time to time;
- 3) to use the promotion of research as a training and capacity building tool for Angolan researchers;
- 4) to promote collaborative links between Angolans and their partners in other countries in Southern Africa;
- 5) to use the collaborative links as platforms for training, networking and sharing of experiences related to the promotion of peace in Angola.
- 6) To work towards organizing a follow-up conference in Angola within six to nine months.

## Key Issues

The recently held conference identified the key issues confronting Angola as the following (the relevant excerpt from the conference report is reproduced below):

### i) Political rights and participation

The current situation in Angola is delicate and needs to be handled carefully. Angola has a multi-party political system yet political activities and participation are rather muted. The elections which have been set for next year are likely to suffer from lack of legitimacy if conditions and convictions for deepening democracy are not created. Political parties need to acknowledge that Angola is for all Angolans and need to promote public participation in political processes rather than promote forms of continued political concentration of powers. A process or environment needs to be created to renew political life. The process should create respect of the country's institutions such as the constitution and the rule of law and a respect of Angolan opinions. Such a process needs to create a partnership between government and society and not be confrontational. Democracy and political pluralism would need to be all embracing including social, economic and cultural rights. Ways for better representation of women and young people within the political system need investigation. Perhaps a conference held in Angola such as this one could be symbolic in showing the importance of national integration (differences of opinion here as others thought a repeat conference was not necessary).

### ii) Discrepancies in the distribution of wealth

Angola suffers from massive unemployment among the youth, and regional discrepancies in the distribution of wealth. Efficient systems of service delivery to ordinary people need to be investigated. This issue should be linked to the development of poverty reduction strategies as feed into discussions between the Angolan government and the IMF/World Bank. In addition, the importance of agriculture has to be recognized. Before the discovery of oil and diamonds, Angola's wealth was based on agriculture and fisheries. The importance of these sectors to be the country's economy have to be rediscovered. Oil and diamond revenues should be used to produce renewables.

### iii) Macro-economic management

Economic policies and budgets need coherence and consistency. The capacity of government is weak. International assistance is needed in increasing the capacity of government and in changing fiscal policy instruments.

### iv) Bridging the divide in society

"Confessions" of some kind might be needed to bridge the divide in the country. The "confessions" should include benefits acquired by individuals and groups from the time of independence and benefits acquired from the wars that have affected the country. Alternatively, all societal forces (including multi-national companies, churches and government) should mediate in the current conflict emphasizing the suffering that it is causing to ordinary people and long-lasting and sustainable solutions. More than

anything, a transformation of minds and openness is needed. Following up on such ideas would assist people to come together.

#### v) Common approach to sanctions implementation

It was emphasised that government was not prepared to repeat the mistakes of the past in dealing with Savimbi and UNITA armed forces. An analysis of strategies toward achieving peace including the costs/benefits of the elimination of Savimbi should be made. A return to the Lusaka Accord and a common approach to sanctions implementation especially among SADC countries might be the only way forward in dealing with those with weapons of war.

#### Other issues

There were a number of other issues which were raised as needing attention throughout the conference but which were not raised in the final panel discussion. Such issues could still be incorporated into the strategy framework of the working group. They are noted here in serial fashion:

- administration of justice
- monitoring of abuses and corruption (transparency and accountability)
- Angolan responses to low-intensity war with long attrition
- epistemology of peace agreements and peace processes; regional peace initiatives
- regional common security
- transition and capacity building of state structures
- effective strategies for long-term humanitarian action/community rehabilitation
- how to strengthen partnership between state and civil society
- how to make women visible in peace processes

#### Methodology

Objective 1: The intention is to initiate dynamic stakeholder processes on important national and regional issues for Angola under the guidance and leadership of the working group. These processes will need to be knowledge-based (see below). The working group could establish commissions for each of the key issues that has been identified and those issues still to be identified (the number of issues to be dealt with at any point in time would be left to the discretion of the working group), with the membership of these commissions comprising experts in the field. Alternatively the commissions could take a sectoral orientation such as dealing with health, education, agriculture, justice, etc serially or at a time. The experts would produce position papers or undertake research whose findings would be debated in public forums where concrete recommendations would be made for the attention of targeted groups or institutions in Angola and elsewhere. The public forums could be in the form of conferences, workshops, seminars and their frequency would be at the discretion of members of the working group and in light of availability of substantive inputs into the process.

Objective 2 and 3: The working group would identify experts or institutions that might be

interested in doing research or to write commissioned papers on any of the key issues. The criteria to be used in making the choice would be established by the working group. It would be advisable if the choice could be made through a competitive process or, in cases where this is not deemed appropriate, for the criteria to be made explicit eg. the need for capacity building in the specific field. The working group would then formally commission the work with time schedules, terms of reference, resources to be committed, outputs and dissemination expectations being made explicit to those who would be expected to execute the work. In the medium term the working group could work towards holding a follow-up conference in Angola within a six to nine month time frame.

A critical need for Angola is to build a critical mass of social science researchers who are competent in the field of peace-building, reconstruction and development. Experience has shown that many of the people who have the potential would most likely be research students registered with overseas universities who want to undertake research on relevant issues to their society as part of their study program. The working group would have to be open to such considerations. In addition, the working group might also need to consider whether it would be necessary to link the dialogue process and research activities to specific training needs such as training in research methodologies, conceptual underpinnings of the specific research issues, etc.

#### Objective 4 and 5

As was shown through participation at the recent conference, there are many individuals and organisations in Southern Africa who have a particular interest and expertise on developments in Angola. These individuals and organisations can contribute positively to the work of the working group. In addition, some of the issues indicated above are specifically regional in orientation or lend themselves to regional approaches eg networking and sharing of experiences.

It is proposed that in cases of research and training, the working group consider the appropriateness of including regional expertise in these endeavours. Training could be done in the context of secondment of an Angolan researcher(s) to an appropriate regional institution and the researcher following an approved program of work in his/her host institution (hopefully of short duration). In the case of sharing experiences and networking, visits by groups of Angolans involved in appropriate research or field activities would be arranged with counterpart institutions in Southern Africa and/or appropriate regional forums eg. conferences and workshops could be held from time to time.

#### Working Group Membership

As agreed during the conference the current members of the working group are Dr Bornito de Sousa (MPLA Parliamentary leader), Reverend Jose Chipenda, Bishop Damiao Franklin (rector of the Catholic University, Luanda), Mr Almerindo Jaka Jamba (member of parliament, UNITA), and Professor Vicente Pinto de Andrade (academic, Catholic University). The working group is coordinated by Prof. Vicente Pinto de Andrade and will add other members as necessary, especially women.

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### Working Group Secretariat

Given the very large administrative load that can be anticipated, it is proposed that the working group be supported by a secretariat composed of a coordinator who should be a professional in the field of peace-building and post conflict reconstruction and would be able to translate the working group's recommendations into an effective program of work, and administrative assistance as necessary. The secretariat function could be assumed by the Angola Peacebuilding Project office, presently supported by the Canadian and Norwegian Governments and situated within Development Workshop in Luanda.

### Fund Raising

In order to meet all of its objectives and make an impact on Angolan society, the working group will have to raise financial, human and other resources. Initial commitments to supporting the working group were made by representatives of Canadian and Norwegian institutions who were at the conference. These organisations will need to be formally approached with more elaborate proposals, time-lines, specific activities and budgets for consideration. Approaches to other donors will have to be made and assistance may be available from the Canadian and Norwegian organisations in doing so.