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Angola

The dominance of the ruling party continued, though speculation about the succession to long-term president, José Eduardo dos Santos, continued unabated. Opposition parties and youth protests were vocal in their criticism of the government's poor social track record and violence against opposition activists, but protests were met with violent repression and the country's human rights situation deteriorated markedly. Abroad, Angola positioned itself as a power-player within the CPLP, flexing its financial muscle against Portugal and Brazil, and diversified South-South economic partnerships. Despite further economic growth, the socio-economic conditions for the majority of the population remained dire, with a high cost of living, low salaries, and underfunded public services.

Domestic Politics

The ruling 'Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola' (MPLA) and long-serving President José Eduardo dos Santos continued to dominate politics. Although opposition parties, such as the MPLA's former civil war antagonist, 'União Nacional pela Independência Total de Angola' (UNITA), and the newly-formed 'Convergência Ampla de Salvação de Angola – Coligação Eleitoral' (CASA-CE), generally improved their public profile by taking more decidedly oppositional positions, the **MPLA's dominance** in the

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National Assembly prevented any opposition initiatives from coming to fruition. In June, UNITA's head of faction, Raul Danda, stated that his party had tried to submit a number of issues to parliament, which had "not been met with any acceptance" by the parliamentary leadership.

The question of the **succession to President dos Santos** continued to preoccupy the public debate within the ruling party and opposition formations alike. In May, one of his sons, José Filomeno 'Zénú' de Sousa dos Santos, was made 'interim' chairman of the board of the Angolan Sovereign Wealth Fund, 'Fundo Soberano de Desenvolvimento Económico de Angola' (FSDEA) after the previous chairman, Armando Manuel, was made minister of finance. This 'interim period' lasted until the end of the year, with the fund not making any publicly known investment "to promote the diversification of Angola's economy and generate revenues for future generations", as its statutes stipulated. Rather, as Angolan commenters pessimistically surmised, the FSDEA appeared to be a vehicle for Zénú to be gradually manoeuvred into position as his father's natural successor at the 2017 elections.

In August, independent news sources noted dos Santos' six-week absence from the country, with no previous communication or explanation from the Presidency or the executive. After public questioning by UNITA and CASA-CE, the Presidency said the president had been in Barcelona for a "private visit" and would return shortly, and called for a "march of support" on his return. The Spanish press, however, circulated rumours that dos Santos had sought medical treatment in a private clinic. In November, dos Santos spent several more weeks in Barcelona, to be treated, according to non-government sources, for "serious" renal problems. The same sources also alleged that all his children had travelled to Barcelona at the same time. On 2 December, Sindika Dokolo, husband of the president's daughter Isabel, stated on the margins of the 7th International Art Biennial in São Tomé and Príncipe that reports about the **President's ill health** were "completely unfounded" and that dos Santos had simply taken a few weeks of well-deserved holiday after his "hard work" preparing the 2014 budget, and that even the First Lady, Ana Paula dos Santos, had had a hard time persuading the president to take a few days off. Dokolo further revealed that dos Santos had seized the opportunity of his stay in Europe to visit the dentist, but that Angola was used to "misunderstandings and communication problems in the foreign press", which had led to the rumours.

Dokolo also used the press conference to say that tarnishing Angola's image with allegations of **corruption** was a "dishonest and counterproductive manipulation of the foreign media", claiming that the "Angolan model" of economic success would be "unanimously recognised in 20 years", after 'Forbes Magazine' published a critical story on the illicit sources of his wife Isabel's multibillion dollar wealth.

More importantly, dos Santos' prolonged, repeated absence was seen as a **tentative trial for the succession**, allowing his handpicked vice president, his nephew, Manuel Vicente, to take on a more visible public role. However, although according to the Constitution the vice president should stand in for the president if the latter were absent or incapacitated, observers said Vicente was only formally in charge, and reduced to administering the secondary, 'social' portfolios of health, culture, education and social security, while real power was wielded behind the scenes by dos Santos' formidable head of security, General Manuel Hélder Vieira Dias 'Kopelipa'. In this reading, mounting repression against opposition protests in parliament and in the streets was a test run for a 'coup' by members of the security apparatus bent on safeguarding their economic and political interests against the wishes of the various MPLA factions. Nonetheless, dos Santos eventually returned again in public, putting these rumours temporarily to rest.

To improve their chances of countering the MPLA's dominance, five **opposition parties** formed a common platform, the 'forum for the democratisation of Angola', in December, to coordinate their efforts in future local elections. Parliamentary opposition parties UNITA, CASA-CE, and the historic 'Frente Nacional de Libertação de Angola', as well as the 'Bloco Demacrático' (BD), a small opposition party without parliamentary representation, and the 'Partido Democrático para o Progresso – Aliança Nacional de Angola' (PDP-ANA), stated at the celebration of the 65th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on 10 December that the "systematic violation of human rights" endangered the development of democracy in Angola, and that the MPLA was fabricating a "constant state of siege" to further delay local elections. Indeed, after surprisingly strong showings by UNITA and CASA-CE in urban centres in the 2012 general elections, the Ministry of Territorial Administration delayed local elections again, to at least 2015, citing the lack of technical resources and a population census as reasons.

But opposition parties were also beset by **internal problems**. In September, UNITA's National Judicial Council opened an inquiry into corruption allegations against its increasingly popular and outspoken youth leader, Mfuka Muzemba. Muzemba, elected leader of UNITA's youth wing 'Juventude Unida Revolucionária de Angola' (JURA) in 2010 and a deputy in the National Assembly since 2012, was accused of using his position to endorse visa requests to Portugal in return for money, as well as "non-avowed commitments to Bento Kangamba" (the MPLA's 'entrepreneur of the youth'; see Foreign Affairs below) to prevent anti-government demonstrations. Despite Muzemba's vocal defence in the press and his protests at being 'judged' *in absentia*, he was suspended from party functions for two years. Commenters noted, however, that potential challengers to UNITA's president, Isaías Samakuva, had a tendency to be 'neutralised' by intrigues.

The regime's control of the public sphere outside of parliamentary politics became further entrenched. **Press freedom** deteriorated, with most print publications now controlled by one group close to the regime, after the independent weekly 'Angolense' was bought by hitherto unknown "powerful rich people" in February. In May, 'Rádio Despertar' and the last remaining independent weekly publication, 'Folha 8', were threatened with suspension by the authorities for "offences and slander against state institutions and office holders" and for "calling for public disorder". Journalist Domingos Cruz was tried for "inciting war and violence", but was finally acquitted in September for lack of an applicable law. In May, after the international advocacy organisation Reporters Without Borders ranked Angola the worst of all Lusophone countries for press freedom, residents of the provincial capital and former opposition bastion, Huambo, also declared in media interviews that anyone seen in public reading private weeklies considered slightly more independent than the state-controlled 'Jornal de Angola' had until recently risked arrest and police harassment.

Political repression continued, with the overall human rights situation deteriorating. Activists for greater autonomy in the diamond-producing provinces of Lunda-Norte and Lunda-Sul, jailed in 2012 under a law 'for state security' since abolished by the National Assembly, continued to languish in jail in dire conditions. In January, traditional leaders of the Lundas travelled to the capital, Luanda, to lodge a formal complaint about persistent human rights violations in the diamond-producing areas, demanding that the government investigate the situation. In July, Benedito Daniel, the leader of the parliamentary faction of the opposition 'Partido da Renovação Social' (PRS) said that, over the last ten years, 578 citizens had been assassinated, 1,275 had been injured under torture, and 227 had lost their agricultural land.

Independent and international media publicised cases of the torture of prisoners in Luanda's prisons, while female street vendors ('zungueiras') in the capital continued to accuse police agents of blackmail, intimidation, extortion and sexual assault. Forced evictions and demolitions of informal inner-city settlements also continued. Police broke up various smaller youth demonstrations, with organisers arrested ahead of the planned gatherings. During her visit in May, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay stated that **restrictions on fundamental rights** such as freedom of expression and demonstration, the expulsion of citizens from their land and homes, and the violent repression of demonstrations by the police, persisted and she disclosed that she had been prevented from visiting political prisoners in the Lundas. Her closing statement also "urged" the authorities to reduce the "huge disparities that have developed between the richest and the poorest". The state-controlled newspaper 'Jornal de Angola' unsurprisingly published a very selective text of the speech under the title "human rights progress", while political activists criticised Pillay for not meeting with opposition parties, protesting that she had only seen what the Angolan government had been willing to show her.

Public protest demonstrations were met with the full force of the security services. On 23 November, a peaceful demonstration in central Luanda was brutally repressed by the authorities. Youth activists and opposition parties had called for a protest against the authorities after revelations that two civil society activists, Isaías Cassule and Alves Kamulingue, who had disappeared ahead of protests in 2012, had been killed by state security agents and thrown into the crocodile-infested Bengo River. However, on the morning of the planned protest, government security forces surrounded the headquarters of the largest opposition parties, and used tear gas to prevent protesters from gathering. Over 300 people were arrested, and at least three were killed, including Manuel Hilberto de Carvalho 'Ganga', a leader of the youth wing of CASA-CE. Heavily armed police also prevented any protest gatherings in the provinces, and blockaded UNITA headquarters in Bié, Bengo, Benguela, Cabinda, Cunene, Kuando Kubango and Namibe. On 25 November, a protest by street vendors against police harassment was violently broken up and, on 27 November, a funeral procession for Hilberto Ganga, the murdered activist, gathered over 1,000 people marching towards the Santa Ana cemetery. After a quiet start, the procession increasingly became a protest rally, which was stopped by armed police with tear gas and water cannon. International media attention on these events, however, was eclipsed by the information – not entirely accurate, as it turned out – that Angola had become the first country in the world to 'ban Islam', and that the government was engaged in the systematic destruction of mosques. In fact, a government **crackdown on 'illegal sects'**, which in the Angolan reading includes Islam, coincided with, and fed into, government paranoia about political unrest orchestrated "from abroad", and conveniently distracted international attention from the domestic repression of political dissent.

The government also extended its control to the ever more popular **evangelical churches**. In February, the authorities suspended the Brazilian, neo-Pentecostal Universal Church of the Kingdom of God ('Igreja Universal do Reino de Deus'; IURD) and six other evangelical churches for 60 days, after 16 people were killed in the IURD's New Year vigil in Luanda's cidadela stadium on 31 December 2012. Domestic observers criticised the suspension as inadequate, saying the church leadership should be held accountable for overcrowding the stadium. In April, the IURD resumed activities in Angola under the supervision of the authorities, while the other churches were banned, which effectively ensured IURD's monopoly in the prosperity gospel market; again, the proximity of President dos Santos to the IURD and the popularity in Angola of its television channel, TV Record, did not go unnoticed by Brazilian and Angolan commenters.

Finally, the low-level separatist insurgency in the oil-rich northern province of **Cabinda** continued, albeit without any changes to the situation. Exiled leader Henrique N'Zita Tiago repeatedly stated the readiness of the 'Frente para a Libertação da Enclave de Cabinda' (FLEC) to enter into a dialogue with the government over the status of the province, but his offer was met with a resounding silence. In parallel, António Luís Lopes, the military commander of one of the FLEC splinter groups still active in Cabinda's remote north-east, said the people of Cabinda would continue to fight for their "inalienable and indispensable right to independence", guaranteeing that with the union of the Cabindan people, victory was possible. While another Cabindan 'nationalist' denounced to Voice of America the existence of a "concentration camp" with over 4,000 detainees in northern Cabinda, civil society activists, especially of the Catholic Church, also complained of harassment, constant surveillance, and the 'gagging' of free speech. In practice,

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the government thus successfully continued its containment strategy of imposing a heavy military presence and tight security control in the province, together with increased budget spending, while excluding any dialogue on the root causes of the conflict.

Foreign Affairs

Lusophone special relations continued within the CPLP, and bilaterally. On his first return from Barcelona in August, President dos Santos stopped in Malabo (Equatorial Guinea) to attend a Gulf of Guinea summit and reconfirm Angola's support for Equatorial Guinea's long-standing application to join the CPLP.

However, bilateral relations with **Portugal** took a dive after dos Santos announced, in his state of the nation speech in October, the "end of the strategic partnership" between the two countries. There was in fact no such formal agreement. The previous years had seen exponential growth in Portuguese investment in Angola, and even more Portuguese economic migration to Angola, and Angolan investment in the Portuguese energy, banking, telecommunications and agricultural (vineyards) sectors. In fact, through the investment of state oil company Sonangol, Isabel dos Santos, and other Angolan regime figures, Angola was now controlling parts of Portugal's public debt, and in September, one of the MPLA's 'trusted entrepreneurs', António Mosquito, became the majority shareholder in the Portuguese construction company Soares da Costa. Far from heralding an end to this lucrative economic entanglement, dos Santos' statement was thus a well-calculated warning shot, after the Portuguese judiciary had opened a number of investigations into suspected money-laundering and embezzlement by leading figures in the Angolan regime, including the temporary freezing of € 11 m in shares owned by Vice President Manuel Vicente. Subsequently, the Portuguese government multiplied its diplomatic efforts to restore good relations with Portugal, although Portuguese Foreign Minister Rui Machete was severely chastised in the Portuguese press for apologising for the judicial inquiry to Angola. In November, however, the Office of the Public Prosecutor announced the archiving of the case against Manuel Vicente, and the public procurator charged with the case said this would allow for "meetings and bilateral summits to be realised without unfounded stigmas".

Commercial and diplomatic relations with Angola's other main Lusophone partner, **Brazil**, were also further strengthened. However, activist Rafael Marques accused Brazilian arms manufacturer Taurus of colluding with Angolan national police commander, Ambrósio de Lemos, to over-invoice an arms sale to the Angolan police. Furthermore, in October, the Brazilian judiciary issued an international arrest warrant for General Bento dos Santos 'Kangamba' for trafficking women and running an international prostitution ring. Kangamba had already escaped arrest in June, thanks to his diplomatic passport, when he was briefly detained in Monaco carrying about € 3 m in cash. Kangamba, now on Interpol's most wanted list, denied all accusations, but the Brazilian press revealed more and more sordid details of the affair and the arrest warrant was maintained. The authorities and the MPLA declined to comment. Kangamba, a nephew of dos Santos by marriage and member of the MPLA bench, had already served a prison sentence in Angola in the 1990s for profiteering. Widely known as the 'entrepreneur of youth' and owner and president of the popular Kabuscorp FC in Luanda, his financial largesse in support of 'youth events' was one of the regime's tools in its attempts to quell youth protests.

Also within the CPLP, Angola furthered its economic grip on its 'nineteenth province', **São Tomé e Príncipe**: in May, Isabel dos Santos' telecommunications company, UNITEL, successfully bid for the first private mobile network operating licence; in July, Santomean President Manuel Pinto da Costa gave assurances of full support for Angolan investors and entrepreneurs in his country during a visit to Luanda, and Angola's state oil company Sonangol expressed interest in upgrading and operating São Tomé's deep-water port. In addition, the ministers of finances of the two countries signed a financial cooperation agreement in December, which paved the way for a $ 180 m Angolan credit line "for development projects".

International bodies other than the 'CPLP club' were less important. Angola continued its rather lukewarm participation in **SADC**, as Trade Minister Rosa Pacavira ruled out joining the SADC free-trade zone "before 2014 or 2015", as "some adjustments", for example to customs tariffs, were still necessary. In parallel, Angola expressed scepticism at the idea of interference in its internal affairs by the SADC tribunal, which it saw as serving the interests of its great sub-regional rival, South Africa. Nonetheless, diplomatic efforts to rebrand dos Santos as the region's elder statesman and Angola as a force for peace continued through the regional bodies SADC, CEMAC, the AU, and the ICGRL.

In June, Médecins Sans Frontières reported the often violent expulsion from Angola, over a period of three weeks, of 52,231 DRC 'irregular migrants'. However, contrary to previous years, these mass expulsions were not reciprocated by the repatriation of Angolans from the **DRC**. On the contrary, the two countries signed a contract in August with a private operator for joint oil exploration in Angolan and DRC territorial waters off the mouth of the Congo River, thus resolving a long-standing source of diplomatic tension.

In October, Angolan soldiers allegedly 'invaded' a border region in the **Republic of Congo**, occupying five localities and a border post, and 'kidnapping' a number of Congolese soldiers. Angolan Foreign Minister George Chicoty denied the allegations, saying that, if anything had happened, the lack of visible border demarcation might have led to a misunderstanding. Congolese sources, however, rumoured that the invasion had been a demonstration of force after Congolese President Sassou Nguesso unsuccessfully made a pass at Angolan First Lady Ana Paula dos Santos during a summit in Brazzaville. After five days of negotiations, the "unhappy incident" was solved diplomatically, with Angolan soldiers freeing the Congolese and withdrawing across the border.

Further afield, **China** remained Angola's most important commercial partner, despite a 4.2% drop in trade, with imports from China estimated at $ 4 m and exports at $ 31.9 bn.

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The strategic partnership was reinforced when the foreign ministers of the two countries met in September.

The **USA** celebrated 20 years of diplomatic relations with Angola, and in February and March AFRICOM delegations discussed in Luanda the possibilities of reinforcing military and security cooperation between the two countries, underlining Angola's "crucial role" in regional peacekeeping initiatives. Nonetheless, the Obama administration took a tougher stance against dos Santos' long rule; in May US Secretary of State John Kerry cancelled a scheduled meeting with Angolan Foreign Minister George Chicoty during the latter's visit to Washington, DC, allegedly due to "lack of progress" in the human rights situation and the conduct of the 2012 elections.

Relations with **France** remained tense, with sources inside French oil company Total claiming off the record that its expansion plans in Angola had been thwarted by the persistent political disharmony; other French investors complained of high entry barriers to the Angolan market and the "challenges" posed by the interpretation of the law on public investments and delays in issuing permits, licences and visas. In November, in the hope of improving the situation, Laurent Fabius made the first visit to Angola by a French foreign minister in ten years, accompanied by leaders of leading French companies such as Alstom, Bolloré, Airbus, and Véolia. Other European countries scrambling for a part in Angola's economic boom included **Belgium**, whose Princess Astrid headed an economic delegation to Luanda in October. In August, the **UK**'s Price Harry visited Angola and criticised the lack of progress in demining the country.

Angola also revived old alliances: close cooperation with **Cuba** continued in the education and health sectors. Agreements on culture, education and fishing were signed with **Russia** in September, while in February the largely state-owned Russian diamond company Alrosa discussed the creation of a consortium with Angolan state diamond company ENDIAMA. In addition, Angola signed a $ 1 bn deal in November with Russian arms manufacturer Rosboronexport to buy 18 used Su-30 fighter jets, as well as helicopters, artillery and tanks. In February, the defence ministers of Angola and **Serbia** signed an agreement for the construction of military installations and the training of officers.

On a much more relaxed note, in June the Angola pavilion, with photographs by the artist Edson Chagas, won the Golden Lion for best national participation at the **Venice Art Biennale**, the first time a sub-Saharan African country had won the prize.

Socioeconomic Developments

Despite opposition and civil society criticism, the **state budget** was passed in its entirety on 15 January with 156 votes for, 8 against, and 31 abstentions in the National Assembly. The budget increased by 50% over the previous year to $ 69 bn. It included for the first time, to the World Bank's great approval, parastatal operations carried out by state oil company Sonangol, and was praised by the government as its best ever, with a third of the budget marked for social spending. However, as noted by the BD opposition party, 17.6% of 'social spending' was earmarked for defence, security, and internal order, while only 13.8% was allocated to health and education. According to investigative journalist and activist Rafael Marques, State Intelligence and Security Services had a budget of $ 695 m, compared with the Ministry of Agriculture's $ 611 m and the External Intelligence Service's $ 340 m. Moreover, the $ 1.8 bn budget for the Presidency – much higher than the $ 1.5 bn for the Ministry of Health – included $ 69.7 m for presidential security and $ 150.2 m for the Presidential Guard, an indication that the president felt the need to increase his personal security and bankroll a parallel, much better-paid, personal army in times of peace. The BD further noted that 70% of oil revenues and 52.3% of total fiscal revenues were directly under dos Santos' control, with several "strategic funds" and "special funds" at his disposal and not under the purview of the government's budget audit and control mechanisms. The budget, they said, thus aimed at "the reproduction of poverty, the militarisation and concentration of power, and the favouring of certain sectors over social solidarity". The BD also observed that the Angolan FSDEA, created in October 2012 with a starting capital of $ 5 bn and sustained by revenues from the production of 100,000 b/d of crude oil, did not figure in the budget, raising further conjectures that state revenues would serve to enrich the dos Santos family to the detriment of the Angolan people.

The National Bank of Angola successfully combated inflation and the 'dollarisation' of the economy. In July, a new law came into effect forcing all foreign operators in the oil sector to pay for goods and services in the national currency, kwanza, and through domestic bank accounts. **Foreign exchange reserves** remained stable at $ 35 bn, or eight months' worth of imports, public debt was reported at a moderate 31% of GDP, and inflation fell again to a yearly average of 7.7%, the lowest rate in 22 years.

Despite economic diversification programmes and the launch of a new, simplified commercial licence in August, 97% of exports were still dependent on **oil production**. With annual oil revenues estimated at between $ 60 bn and $ 70 bn, these made up around 50% of GDP and 75% of government revenue. Production hovered between 1.74 m and 1.76 m b/d, the highest levels since 2010, and the start of the production of liquid natural gas at the Soyo LNG plant gave a further boost to hydrocarbons exploration, and helped the industry diversify its customer base to new Asian markets. Despite the still insular nature of the sector, which formally accounted for only 1% of jobs, the oil industry offered new opportunities for education and employment to a restricted, but growing number of Angolans; Total Angola reported in June that over half of its director positions were now held by Angolan nationals. State oil company **Sonangol**, voted Africa's second most important company by the magazine 'Jeune Afrique' in March, continued its expansion drive, investing in oil exploration in Venezuela, Iran and Algeria.

In May, a new banking code was introduced to improve transparency and governance in the booming **banking sector**. The new law included ownership disclosure, risk management and auditing requirements, though the presence of politically connected individuals

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on the boards and as majority shareholders in the largest banks raised some doubts about the enforceability of the regulations. Strong demand from India and China also increased demand to the Angolan **diamond industry**, which remained Africa's third-largest with an output of around 8 m carats. In January, De Beers announced promising diamond finds in its remaining unexplored Mulepe concession in Lucapa, and Escom mining said conditions were finally right to start explorations at its Luô concession. In November, Angolan diamond producer Catoca also signed an agreement to explore for diamonds in neighbouring Zimbabwe. However, the ill-treatment of workers and local residents continued: when workers at the Camuto project went on strike in June to demand a salary raise to cope with rising food costs in the Lundas, the authorities dispatched the Rapid Intervention Police to allow the company to recruit new workers in place of the striking staff. Generally, **workers' rights** made little progress. In July, the governor of Lunda Norte dismissed over 100 schoolteachers who had been on strike for two months over salary arrears and unpaid bonuses, saying the strike had been plotted by UNITA in anticipation of the 2017 elections, and in December, a strike at Luanda's water provider EPAL was 'resolved' by the arrest of strike leaders.

GDP growth was estimated at 6.2% by the IMF, but international ratings agencies and commercial banks pointed out the "elevated vulnerability" of the economy to external shocks, highlighting poor governance, succession risks and growing social tensions as further sources of insecurity. Indeed, despite continued economic growth, the Africa Progress Commission (APC), chaired by Kofi Annan, said in May that Angola was one of the African countries "where the **inequality** between natural resource endowment and social well-being was felt at its most powerful". Although Angola was again Africa's second-largest oil producer, infant mortality remained among the world's highest, at 161 per 1,000 new-borns per year. Furthermore, while per capita GDP grew to $ 3,890, more than 55% of citizens lived on less than $ 1.3 per day. Unemployment officially stood at 25%, and, as the APC report noted, "some of the country's poorest are forced to buy water, at high prices, from private suppliers" – through collusion between the companies of army generals and the public water distributor EPAL, as people commonly said in Luanda. A social and economic report of the Catholic University's Centre of Scientific Study and Research also said the country was far from reaching its human development goals "because of corruption and the bad distribution of national revenues".

As an example of the government's setting of priorities, the Ministry of Social Assistance and Reinsertion officially declared in January that three municipalities in the drought-stricken southern province of Cunene were affected by **hunger** – a danger alerted to by local organisations and the Catholic Church since May 2012. The government then promised a swift response. In March, the EU contributed € 2 m to UNICEF to "complement" government activities with a nutrition programme, after an evaluation showed that over 550,000 children under the age of five were at risk of malnutrition in ten of the 18 provinces. The irony that the 2013 budget cut health and education expenditure to the benefit of defence and the Presidency was not lost on Angolan observers and in May the governor of Cunene said hunger had worsened. In June, FAO reported that Angola had reached its first MDG by halving hunger and malnutrition. While Angola's ambassador to FAO said this was a recognition of "the efforts of the Angolan government and President José Eduardo dos Santos", local NGOs in the neighbouring Namibe province appealed for urgent help for victims of drought and called the FAO statement an insult to Angolan victims of hunger. Finally, while the authorities were busy hosting the roller hockey world cup, UNICEF said in August that $ 14.3 m was needed to ensure food security and water for 1.8 m people. Despite some investments in agriculture, **dependency on food imports** continued. Thus, although agronomists underlined again the country's enormous agricultural potential, the Angolan sociologist Paulo de Carvalho observed that with imports 14 times higher than exports it was "not possible to think of a great future".

Road traffic mortality remained the world's third-highest, while bribe-taking by the traffic police remained rampant with drivers reporting paying 'fines' and 'tips' of up to $ 250 per trip from the capital to the southern coastal city of Lobito. Police Commander de Lemos appealed to road users to denounce these practices to help the corporation in its fight against corruption; nonetheless, the competitiveness of domestic food production remained somewhat limited due to such 'road taxes'.

The **health sector** also remained underfunded, with one medical doctor per 10,000 inhabitants, and 60% of these practitioners were concentrated in Luanda. Malaria remained the main cause of infant mortality; the country also registered cases of dengue fever, human trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness) and cholera. In June, health authorities published a report claiming that around 300,00 people in Angola were living with **HIV/AIDS**, of whom 54,000 had followed antiretroviral (ARV) treatment programmes. NGOs said the actual number was much higher, though they admitted that the cultural stigma led to substantial underreporting of AIDS as the cause of death. The former UNAIDS representative to Angola accused the authorities of deliberately lying about the official 2% prevalence rate, saying that the real prevalence was much higher, and that 70% of people living with HIV/AIDS had no access to ARV treatment.

In the **education** sector, a middle-school student association in Luanda denounced the unsanitary state of school toilets, saying that overflowing faeces posed a serious health risk to pupils, and that children were often forced to clean school facilities. Similarly, the leader of the opposition party PRS, Eduardo Kwangana, said in January that, despite loudly proclaimed increases in social spending, the allocated budget never reached its destination and that the education system was designed "to keep children stupid". Thus, despite advances in primary enrolment, demand still outran supply in secondary and tertiary education.

Instead, the so-called "concrete policy" continued, with investment in physical infrastructure and prestige projects, without the necessary human and administrative resources to make them work. The model city of Kilamba, on the outskirts of Luanda, completed in 2012 year by Chinese construction companies, still awaited its residents, as the allocation of apartments was marred by delays, corruption and administrative incompetence on the part of Sonangol's subsidiary SONIP, which was charged with the marketing of the residences. The apartments, originally designed as **social housing** in partial fulfilment of the MPLA's 2008 and 2012 electoral promises, were initially offered at prices ranging from $ 60,000 to $ 125,000. Confusion and delays persisted until the end of the year, and the first lucky residents complained of the lack of water and electricity supplies, and inadequate transport to the city centre.

Luanda was again named the **world's most expensive capital** for expatriates by an international business consultancy. While some commenters rejoiced at this free publicity for the country, most deplored the fact that the cost of living remained extremely high, including for accommodation, food, transport and water, while the quality of services remained low. "The only thing cheap in Luanda are the salaries", said Angolan lawyer Ana Paula Godinho at a roundtable on the subject.

Jon Schubert

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