



### **Voter registration expected to start in early 2006**

Caetano de Sousa, president of the National Electoral Commission, CNE, said in Luanda on 17 October that voter registration would probably start only at the beginning of next year. Speaking during the swearing in of the members of the Luanda provincial electoral commission, he said this was because the year was nearly over and it would give the CNE more time to organise the human and material resources for its work.

'We need to obtain functional premises, recruit personnel, acquire material resources, draft our regulations and have them approved, and then we should be ready to do our work,' he said, adding that the government was creating conditions for registration to take place as soon as possible. It was an urgent task which, to be done well, had to be programmed.

He recommended that the government start the public education campaign on voter registration, since this was an organisational requirement and all citizens should be aware of the role they had to play.

Caetano de Sousa, who is also a Supreme Court judge, called for transparency, competence and non-partisanship from the members of the CNE, stressing the need for equal treatment of all political parties to ensure that the process went smoothly.

The CNE members are Pereira de Sousa, Maria do Carmo Pegado, Campos Neto, Luisa Kamutale, Mendes Maurício Kajiza, Manuel Pereira da Silva, Paulo Soma and Agostinho Miguel Lima. Six of them were elected by the National Assembly – three from the MPLA, two from Unita and one from the PRS. Two of the others were chosen by the Ministry of Territorial Administration and one each by the magistracy and the Luanda provincial government.

The provincial electoral commissions being sworn in all over the country also have nine members each. This process was due to end on 22 October.

### **Thousands welcome home victorious football team**

Thousands of people lined the streets to welcome home the national football team, the Palancas Negras, on their return from Kigali, Rwanda, on 9 October, after they qualified for the first time to take part in the 2006 World Cup games to be held in Germany.

Meeting them at Luanda airport, President José Eduardo dos Santos said their victory had been 'hard-won, well deserved and just', going on to say that this was a time of great joy for the Angolan people.

'We are going to pay a tribute to the winners with a toast to their health, wishing them new and ever more significant victories,' he said.

Also at the airport to welcome home the national team were Prime Minister Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos, João Lourenço, deputy president of the National Assembly and other officials.

### **Angola elected to UN Economic and Social Council**

Angola was elected a member of the UN Economic and Social Council in New York on 17 October, for a three-year period to start on 1 January.

It had more votes than any other country – 186 of the 191 UN member states. ECOSOC currently has 54 members.

The 18 new members were elected on a geographical basis – five from Africa, three from Asia, one from Eastern Europe, four from Latin America and the Caribbean and five from Western Europe and other countries.

At a Unesco meeting in Paris in October, Angola was elected a member of the inter-governmental committee for the return of cultural property to countries of origin.

### **Eliminating visas with neighbouring countries**

The Angolan and Namibian governments agreed in Luanda on 7 October to eliminate the need for visas between the two countries. The agreement was signed at a meeting of the Angolan-Namibian bilateral commission. José Maria Botelho de Vasconcelos, Minister of Energy and Water, who co-chaired the meeting, said it would be very valuable in facilitating the movement of people across the shared border and improving relations of cooperation.

Agreements were also signed on cooperation between the National Radio of Angola and the Namibia Broadcasting Corporation, the official opening of border posts and the free movement of people and goods between the two countries.

Suspended in 1994 because of the armed conflict in Angola, the work of the bilateral commission was resumed this year.

Meanwhile, one of the main issues discussed at a meeting of the Angola-Zambia joint defence and security commission was the elimination of visas between the two countries.

Speaking to the press at 4 February airport on 21 October, after seeing off his Zambian counterpart W Muliokela, Minister of Defence Kundy Paihama said this would benefit both countries, since it would facilitate the movement of people and goods.

During the meeting, he said, they had reviewed the establishment of communications, especially in respect of the police and the armed forces of the two countries. This, he said, had substantially decreased the theft of vehicles and cattle, the illegal entry of foreigners and other offences.

### **Council of Ministers approves budget proposals**

The budget proposals for 2006 were approved by the Council of Ministers on 26 October.

José Pedro de Morais, Minister of Finance, said priority areas for budget allocations continued to be those set out in the 2005-2006 government programme approved last year, and the government's priority continued to be strengthening capacity in education and health.

'The government is going to make a very big effort to increase the number of school and health facilities, and train personnel, both teachers for the new schools and health workers to meet the needs of new hospitals,' he said.

He further indicated that priority had been given to earmarking budget resources for the programme of reintegrating demobilised soldiers.

This programme, he said, currently involved an estimated 250,000 families, added to which were all the refugees coming from neighbouring countries, who also needed to be reintegrated.

The Minister said another programme that needed substantial funding was mine clearance.

This, he said, was more important than any other problem related to relaunching economic activity in the country.

He said this was the first time in many years that the government had approved a fully financed budget.

The budget proposals were presented to the National Assembly for debate and approval on 31 October.

### **Nova Cimangola cement factory doubles production**

It was announced in mid-October that the output of the Nova Cimangola cement factory in Luanda had increased from 680,000 to 1.4 million tonnes of cement a year.

Factory officials said this had brought down the price of cement on the market.

The improved performance, they said, was due to a fifth mill that had started operating in September.

Apart from the US\$27 million spent on purchasing the mill, the officials indicated, the company planned to spend US\$300 million over the next three years on building another kiln to increase the production of clinker.

### **Sonangol and BP announce new oil discovery**

Sonangol, the national oil company, and BP announced a new ultra-deep water oil strike named Hebe 1, in Block 31, on 21 October. The well, about 361 km north of Luanda, showed a 5,956 barrels a day output in tests.

Sonangol is the concessionaire in Block 31.

BP, the operator, has a 26.67 percent interest. Its partners are Esso Exploration and Production Angola (Block 31), with a 25 percent interest, Sonangol EP (20), Statoil Angola AS (13.33), Marathon Petroleum Angola Limited (10) and Tepsa Limited (Block 31), a subsidiary of the Total Group (5).

### **BP output to increase**

BP Angola's oil production will attain 400,000 barrels a day by 2010, when its investments will rise to US\$8 billion.

This was said in Luanda on 11 October by José Patrício, the BP president in Angola, during a workshop on the company's relations with other economic and social partners.

He said this was because blocks 18 and 31, where BP was the operator, would start producing in 2007 and 2009, added to which was BP's participation in blocks 15 and 17, operated by Exxon and Total, which were already in production.

José Patrício described BP as a long-term partner of the Angolan government and, in partnership with Sonangol, the state oil company, it was developing a programme for the production of modern oil extracting equipment in Angola.

He said the expansion of the oil industry should be reflected in the ever greater ability of Angolan companies to participate in research, production and support in all areas of activity.

He went on to say that although the oil industry required advanced technology, some of the equipment used was being produced in the Sonamet workshops in Lobito and Sonils in Luanda, which indicated that Angola already had a certain technological capacity.

The programme, he said, was aimed at reducing production costs, creating more jobs and, therefore, creating more national wealth.

Oil production in Angola, currently estimated to be 1.1 million barrels a day, is expected to attain two million barrels a day by 2010.

### **Petroleum Institute has trained 1,500 technicians**

The National Petroleum Institute in Kwanza Sul Province has trained 1,500 medium-level technicians in the last four years, according to Domingos Francisco, assistant director of the institute. Most of them, he said, were now working with various oil companies operating along the Angolan coast.

During the same period, he said, it had provided short courses for 1,800 technicians sent by oil companies.

The National Petroleum Institute, which comes under the Oil Ministry, is about 20km from Sumbe, the provincial capital. It currently has 360 students in the medium-level course and 180 undergoing vocational training. The teaching staff consists of twenty Angolans and six expatriates.

### **Taag and Boeing sign agreement**

Angola Airlines, Taag, and the American company Boeing signed a 'working together' agreement in Luanda on 10 October on technical and operational assistance with a view to preparing for the arrival, next July, of the first two of six planes ordered from Boeing.

The agreement provides for working together in the areas of technical assistance, maintenance, personnel training and marketing, with a view to the integration of the new aircraft.

Mateus Neto, president of the board of directors of Taag, said six planes were being bought now and another three later on.

Lee Monson, senior vice-president of Boeing for sales, said the agreement was not just about the sale of planes to Taag, but was to establish a working partnership to ensure the smooth integration of the planes into Taag's fleet.

Meanwhile, Mateus Neto told the Angop news agency that Taag planned to start new international flights next year, once it had renewed its fleet of aircraft.

There would be Houston-Luanda flights in the second half of 2006 and, subsequently, flights to Dubai and Beijing. Taag's current international flights are to Harare, Johannesburg, Lusaka, Brazzaville, Kinshasa, Lisbon, Sal (Cape Verde), São Tomé and Príncipe, Windhoek and Rio de Janeiro.

### **Project to prevent river flooding in Benguela**

Five hundred new jobs could be created when work soon starts on a project to de-silt the Catumbela, Cavaco and Coporolo rivers in the municipalities of Lobito, Benguela and Baía Farta, Benguela Province.

This was announced in Catumbela on 5 October by Higino de Carneiro, Minister of Public Works, when announcing the results of the tender bids. The work is to be done by the Brazilian company Odebrecht and the Paviterra company within about 18 months, at a cost to the government of US\$39 million.

In order to prevent the serious flooding experienced in the rainy season, the first phase of the work will involve the building of protective dykes and earthworks aimed at regulating the flow of water, according to Joanes André, national infrastructure director in the Ministry. He added that the second phase would involve the existing dams on the rivers and a number of economic facilities like the old Dombe Grande sugar estate in Baía Farta.

Agostinho Felizardo, deputy provincial governor of Benguela for the economic sphere, said the state of the rivers had been one of the greatest concerns of the population, business people, government institutions and civil society, owing to the great damage caused.

### **Steel production to resume in December**

Following the signing of a management contract in January with the Chinese firm Chung Fong, the national steelworks, a factory paralysed since 2000, will resume production in December with a daily production capacity of 100 tonnes.

The investment in relaunching steel production in the country amounted to an estimated US\$28 million. Paixão Domingos, administrative assistant of the factory management, speaking during a visit by Minister of Industry Joaquim David, said the Chinese company, which has a 15-year management contract, was currently installing equipment in the factory. The factory has twenty-five Angolan workers and twenty-six expatriates.

In this phase of relaunching production, China has a 51 percent shareholding and Angola 49 percent.

### **Angola and Morocco sign fisheries agreement**

Angola and Morocco signed an agreement on fisheries, on 6 October, during a six-day visit by Morocco's Minister of Agriculture, Rural Development and Sea Fisheries, Mohand Laenser.

The Moroccan delegation, which included specialists in the areas of training and research, as well as business people, expressed an interest in close cooperation with Angola.

They went to Benguela and Namibe during their stay, as well as visiting a number of fish processing and industrial plants. The Moroccan delegation also had meetings in Luanda with Salomão Xirimimbi, Minister of Fisheries, and Gilberto Buta Lutucuta, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.

### **Government invests in rural extension programme**

The government is investing €154.43 million over five years in a rural development extension programme in the country. It is to be spent on acquiring implements, fertilisers, seeds, pesticides and other farming requirements, technical assistance for peasants and the boosting of livestock programmes.

The programme is to be implemented in all the country's provinces and will initially benefit about 797,000 peasant families in 129 municipalities, figures that will increase in the fifth year.

The purpose is to boost productivity, guarantee food security and increase the income of peasant families. Meanwhile, work for the current agricultural year was in progress in many parts of the country.

The mechanisation programme in Malanje Province for the 2005-2006 agricultural year provides for the preparation of 3,000 hectares of land. Speaking to the Angop news agency on 4 October, Isidoro Manuel, head of the provincial agricultural extension station, said the distribution of seeds, fertilisers and farm tools was already ensured and would be done in two phases, benefiting 134,407 families.

At least 5,300 hectares of land were prepared by the agricultural department in the municipality of Humpata, Huíla Province, for the 2005-2006 agricultural year, which officially started on 15 October. Domingos Maria Lando, local representative of the Ministry of Agriculture, said 60 tonnes of fertiliser has been distributed to local peasants. He said successful crops would depend on the regularity of rain and the quality of seeds. He added that a rural extension programme was being implemented for low income farmers, who were being given agricultural inputs.

Peasants in Essulambada, municipality of Andulo, Bié Province, have received hoes, machetes, axes, seeds, ploughs, fertilisers, pesticides, fungicides and other agricultural requirements.

Júlio de Carvalho, municipal administrator in Viana, Luanda Province, said that 86 tonnes of farm tools had been provided for the current agricultural year by the rural extension programme of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, to be distributed in Viana and Cacuaco.

In Seles, Kwanza Sul Province, there were plans to grow crops – maize, beans, groundnuts, cassava and vegetables – on 10,500 hectares of arable land cultivated by peasant associations.

Dumilde das Chagas Rangel, the Benguela provincial governor, announced that there were 7,600 tonnes of fertilisers in the province for the 2005-2006 agriculture year.

He said this might be enough not only for Benguela but also for the provinces of Kwanza Sul, Huíla and Bié.

Abrantes Carlos Sequesseque, provincial director of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, said 1,200 oxen were to be distributed as draught animals to peasants organised in associations in Benguela Province. He said 600 were already in the province and another 600 were expected in December. They were being acquired from Huíla Province, he added, and were subject to a quarantine period in an area on the border between the two provinces, so as to avoid any contagious diseases.

He further stated that seeds – 400 tonnes of maize, 120 of beans and 25 of sorghum – were being distributed to local farmers since September. In addition, about 150,000 assorted farm implements were being handed out.

This year 165,000 hectares of arable land had been made available, involving the same number of peasant families, as against 112,000 during the last agricultural year, and a harvest of more than 110,000 tonnes of grain was expected.

'Food self-sufficiency in the province would require a minimum of 150,000 tonnes,' he said, adding that attaining this figure needed the combined efforts of the family and business agricultural sectors.

Eduardo Hungulo, assistant administrator in Caluquembe, in the southern province of Huíla, said that more than 100,000 tonnes of seeds and fertilisers would be distributed this month. They planned to grow crops on more than 200,000 hectares of land and hoped to harvest 150 tonnes of grain, 30 tonnes more than the previous year.

### **Measures taken to prevent avian flu**

The national police is to increase vigilance on borders, in ports and at airports, following a government statement on 20 October suspending the entry into the country of live birds and fertile eggs from Asian and European countries, as a preventive measure against bird flu.

The official statement by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development also suspended the issue of licences to import birds and fertile eggs from Asia and Europe, and advised people to avoid contact with migratory birds.

### **British government provides US\$18 million to combat poverty**

Eighteen million US dollars, provided by the British government and managed by the NGO Save the Children, is being spent on social community projects in Luanda neighbourhoods until April 2006. Sirajo Seidi, manager of the British NGO in Angola, told the press on 17 October that the money was being used for water pumps, community latrines, integration programmes and community education. Other projects, he said, involved refuse collection and treatment, good governance and local administration capacity building.

Save the Children has been working in partnership with the Ministry of Assistance and Social Reintegration in all the country's eighteen provinces, as well as with the Luanda water company, he said.

### **Swedish aid has amounted to about US\$850 million**

Sweden's Ambassador to Angola, Anders Hegelberg, announced in Luanda on 18 October that in thirty years of cooperation with Angola his country had spent about US\$850 million.

Speaking to the press after a meeting with Minister of External Relations João Bernardo de Miranda, he said that relations between Angola and Sweden, which dated back to before Angola's independence, were 'very close' and that both governments wished to strengthen them further through more Swedish investment.

The Ambassador said he had taken advantage of the meeting with the Minister to discuss projects in which Sweden had been involved over the past twenty years, including the building of a number of housing complexes in Luanda.

Asked about the areas in which Sweden was involved in Angola, the Ambassador cited construction, infrastructure, mining and transport, in addition to cooperation with the ministries of Telecommunications, Public Works and Energy and Water.

### **17,620 Aids cases registered**

Seventeen thousand six hundred and twenty cases of Aids were registered in Angola by August this year. This was stated in Caxito, capital of Bengo Province, on 21 October by Luís Kame, the Institute to Fight Aids official in charge of partnerships, information, education and communication.

Speaking at the start of a series of activities to mark World Aids Day on 1 December, he said the pandemic was a growing threat to the countries of Southern Africa. Angola, he continued, had a rate of infection 5 percent lower than other countries in the region; hence the need to find ways of stopping the disease from spreading.

Meanwhile, the municipal education department in the Samba neighbourhood of Luanda held a school theatre competition on 22 October, as part of the education campaign on HIV/Aids taking place in all national primary and secondary schools since 1 September. The competition was to select the theatrical group to represent the municipality in provincial events to be held on 3 and 4 December.

The project, under the aegis of the Ministry of Education, in partnership with Unicef, is aimed at educating and mobilising young people on the dangers of the pandemic and the measures to be taken to prevent and combat it. The plays should reflect problems related to HIV/Aids, as seen by young people.

The government launched an HIV/Aids awareness campaign in schools in September, targeting 600,000 pupils aged from 10 to 18. This followed other preventive action such as supporting NGOs involved in talking to young people, discussion groups of young people and distributing printed material.

Mario Ferrari, the representative of Unicef, the government's major partner in the campaign, stated in late October that Angola could consider itself lucky, because it still had an opportunity to prevent the spread of the epidemic; but a rapid multi-sector response was needed to control current rates of infection.

In the area of mother-to-child transmission, the government has set up services in Luanda and Cunene to provide medical care and anti-retrovirals to HIV positive pregnant women, which treatment is continued in the post-natal period. Similar centres will shortly be established in Cabinda, Huíla, Benguela and Uíje.

### **Marburg virus to be declared eradicated**

Meeting in Luanda on 12 October, the Council of Ministers recommended that conditions be created to declare the end of the Marburg epidemic in Angola, following a technical report by the World Health Organisation.

A WHO press release said the epidemic could technically be considered to be under control since 29 September, when the last person who had been in contact with affected patients showed no symptoms of the disease.

The existence of the haemorrhagic fever caused by the Marburg virus was officially announced on 21 March 2005. The final figures given by Ministry of Health and WHO experts were 252 cases and 227 deaths, including 32 health workers. It was regarded as the biggest Marburg epidemic in the world.

The procedures relied on by the Ministry of Health to wipe out the epidemic were training health teams, ensuring the use of individual protective equipment, controlling hospital infection and educating the public on the risks of contagion from contact with patients and dead bodies at home.

Mobile teams worked on a daily basis to detect cases, investigate deaths and collect dead bodies, so as to avoid large-scale contagion and transmission. The safety of the teams also had to be ensured.

This work only started to be successful when people began to understand the disease better and the risks of treating patients at home. It was also necessary to prevent infection in health centres.

The WHO sent more than 150 experts in epidemiology, laboratory work, hospital infection control, data management, social mobilisation and medical anthropology to reinforce the national capacity to control the disease.

The WHO also provided Angola with protective clothing and equipment and helped the country to acquire resources from donors and other partners.

The work was centred on Uíje Province, as well as seven other high risk provinces – Cabinda, Zaire, Bengo, Kwanza Norte, Malanje, Lunda Norte and Lunda Sul – where steps were taken to increase vigilance and capacity in terms of personnel and the efficiency of basic health structures.

### **Successful operation to separate conjoined twins**

The first operation in Angola to separate conjoined twins took place in October at the Luanda Paediatric Hospital. A team of Angolan and Spanish doctors separated two six-week-old girls who were joined at the stomach. They were born in Andulo, Bié Province, on 30 August.

'This was the first surgical intervention of its kind in Angola,' said Dr Francisco Domingo, a member of the team. He stressed the important role played by the Spanish doctors in the operation and the post-operative phase.

He said the operation had been successful, but the doctors were still concerned about the condition of one of the twins. 'One of the babies, who was already weak before the operation, needs care,' he said. The baby subsequently died.

### **Improvements at Huambo orthopaedic centre**

José Tchiyoka, director of the Bomba Alta orthopaedic centre on the outskirts of the city of Huambo, said there would be improvements at the centre by the end of the year, following a two-week study trip he had made to Brazil with Florindo Ngonga, his technical director, and Manuel Caterça, head of the dentistry department. The visit came within the framework of an agreement signed in 2004 by provincial governor Paulo Kassoma and Jorge Maluly Neto, mayor of the Brazilian region of Araçatuba, on cooperation in the areas of agriculture, livestock production, health, industry and trade.

The specialists acquired new experience at the Sousa Lima Institute for the rehabilitation of the physically handicapped, the Orthopaedic Gymnastics Academy, the Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation Centre, the northeast Faculty of Health, a physiotherapy course and other health centres dealing with physical rehabilitation.

He said the experience gained and visits to some plants producing surgical and orthopaedic equipment should bring about improvements at Bomba Alta very shortly.

### **Study of traditional medicinal plants**

The Luanda Herbarium, in cooperation with a Portuguese university, is making a study to determine the active curative ingredients of what are regarded as medicinal plants and determine the right doses that should be given to patients. Esperança Costa, director of the Herbarium, said there was already a great amount of empirical knowledge among people who had always used the forest to cure themselves, but it was necessary to identify the active curative principles of the plants, so as to be able to classify them safely as medicinal.

She said two staff members from the Herbarium were at the Minho University in Portugal studying *brutoto*, traditionally used to cure hysteria and malaria when used with other plants, and had already identified the active ingredient.

Studies were also taking place at the Herbarium, now that its laboratory had been re-equipped through the support of Agostinho Neto University and the Ministry of Agriculture, and it had been transformed into a botanical centre.

The centre was also making microscopic studies of the pollen of plants gathered from different regions of the country to determine their geographical distribution and note where they had become extinct.

The Herbarium, now a botanical centre, has existed since 1975 and is an institution that comes under the Faculty of Science. It has samples of about 35,000 plants from all over the country, in addition to more than 45,000 samples from the Huambo Institute of Agricultural Research, which were transferred to Luanda in 1992. It provides data for the biology, chemistry and geology departments of Agostinho Neto University.

### **National forum on rural women**

The Ministry of the Family and the Advancement of Women held the fourth rural forum on rural women in Saurimo, in the northeast province of Lunda Sul from 12 to 14 October, to discuss issues related to the situation of peasant women in the country.

Among the issues discussed in panel debates were women and poverty, constraints and opportunities, advancement and sustained development in a local perspective, education and health in rural areas, promoting and protecting the environment, the effects of education and health on the quality of life, the mobilisation of communities to deal with endemic diseases, including HIV/Aids, environmental problems and the rational and ecological use of local resources.

The establishment of the forum by the Ministry is part of the government strategy aimed, above all, at relaunching family production of food crops. A consultative body, it was established to help the Angolan authorities and their national and foreign social partners – NGOs, associations, churches, the World Food Programme, the Food and Agricultural Organisation and Unicef – to ensure that the majority of the population, who live essentially from agriculture and fishing in difficult conditions, might improve their livelihood and reduce the high rates of poverty.

The Ministry also seeks to analyse the social and economic situation of women in the countryside now that state administration has been extended to the whole country, and to draw the attention of decision-making bodies to the need to ensure that projects and strategies give priority to issues related to rural development.

As part of a series of events dedicated to rural women taking place up to the end of the month, the Ministry organised seminars, talks, social and communal activities, meetings with traditional midwives and round table meetings on International Micro-credit Day. The programme also included environmental education, tree planting and collecting donations to be given to rural communities. During the same period, the Ministry held a rural women's fair and visits to communities reintegrated in society within the framework of the peace and national reconciliation process. The main meeting to mark Rural Women's Day, 15 October, was held in Uíje.

The forum was attended by representatives of the Ministry from the country's 18 provinces and representatives of the government, United Nations agencies, NGOs and peasant associations.

Maria das Dores, the Ministry's family policy national director, said that US\$10 million allocated by the government to provide micro-credit support for rural women, as part of the family agricultural production development programme, would start to be distributed this month. This, she said, would help to set up small businesses and reduce poverty.

She said that the views of participants in the forum would help to guide the Ministry in drawing up a national policy for rural women to enable them to become self-sufficient through micro-credits.

### **Forest protection measures**

The Institute of Forest Development, IDF, is shortly to implement a number of programmes aimed at increasing the capacity to protect forests, wild animals and protected areas.

Speaking to the Angop news agency on 3 October in Lubango, capital of the southern province of Huíla, Tomás Pedro, national director of the IDF, said that during the implementation of a project to manage existing natural resources in Angola, the IDF would make a forestry survey of the country and train personnel.

He explained that the IDF programme, which will be supported by the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agricultural Organisation and NGOs, will also involve combating desertification and drought and encouraging community forest management.

Tomás Pedro described the forest conservation situation as worrying, saying that it had recently been aggravated by the resettlement of people in their areas of origin, where excessive amounts of timber and charcoal were being used for domestic and commercial purposes.

### **Better food situation in Malanje and Uíje**

The World Food Programme announced on 3 October that it has closed its offices in Malanje and Uíje, after many years of assisting the needy population, owing to the significant improvement in the food situation in the two provinces, which meant its presence was no longer needed there. One of the contributing factors had been the good harvests.

Mike Sackett, regional director of the WFP for Southern Africa, said: 'During the war, the WFP played a very important role in solving the problems of Malanje and Uíje provinces. We even had to fly under heavy fire to ensure that those who most needed our help could have enough food. Three years after the end of the conflict, most of the population has already achieved self-sufficiency and no longer needs humanitarian aid.'

The WFP started providing food for the needy in Malanje in 1993, at a time when it could only be transported by road, owing to the lack of security on roads. More than 340,000 people depended on food aid in that province alone in 1999. Now the number has dropped to about 30,000, mostly recently-arrived returnees.

In Uíje, where the WFP started to operate in 1997, the following years were marked by a vast movement of people to reception areas. More than 160,000 people were wholly dependent on food aid to survive in 2002, but in October this year only 2,450 people will need food aid.

Mike Sackett said that following the signing of the ceasefire in Luena in April 2002, the WFP had gained access to a greater number of people suffering from serious malnutrition. By the end of 2002, about two million people were dependent on WFP food aid.

The situation had completely changed over the past three years, he said, especially in the north of the country, where most of the population had achieved self-sufficiency. Now only 600,000 people in the entire country were receiving food aid from the WFP and its partners.

### **New social projects**

Oswaldo Serra Van-Dúnem, Minister of the Interior and head of the government monitoring group for Cabinda, started to inaugurate a number of social and economic facilities in the municipalities of Cacongo and Cabinda on 10 October.

In Cacongo, he officially opened health posts in the localities of Beira Nova and Ueca, re-opened the municipal administration building in the small town of Lândana, and went to see work in progress on water desalination in the commune of Massabi, the building of a primary and secondary school in Lândana, and visited the health centre in the commune of Dinge. In Cabinda, he opened the protocol house of the provincial office of his Ministry, the water supply system in the village of Simindele and the public works building yard.

His visit also included a visit to the Cabinda pre-university centre, a meeting with the provincial council and a briefing with the local press. The Cabinda government is also carrying out a road rebuilding programme.

Miguel de Carvalho 'Wadijimbi', Deputy Minister of Information, inaugurated a primary school, a rehabilitated primary and secondary and eight homes for nurses and teachers in mid-October in the municipality of Camucuo, 295 km north of the city of Namibe in southwest Angola. They were built at a cost of US\$501,230 provided by the social support fund.

### **Port of Luanda wins international award**

Business Initiative Directions has awarded the World Quality Commitment international gold star to the port of Luanda for its efforts to improve the quality of its services. The award was presented in Geneva to Silvio Barros Vinhas, president of the board of directors of the port, on 10 October.

A port administration statement described the award as international recognition of its efforts to improve services and satisfy its customers, following action to ensure the modernisation of management and organisation, despite the difficulties Angola was still going through.

### **Angola to destroy landmines**

André Pitra 'Petroff', president of the national inter-sector demining and humanitarian assistance commission, CNIDAH, said in Luanda in early October that Angola will comply with the Ottawa Convention on the destruction of anti-personnel mines.

Speaking at the end of a course on anti-personnel mine destruction, he said: 'With your work and commitment, the cooperation of the population, traditional chiefs and those who participated directly or indirectly in the establishment of stockpiles, I am certain that we will comply with Article 4 of the convention,' One of the difficulties, he said, was that stockpiles were scattered all over the country.

'These devices have to be eliminated or at least put in safe places, so that people can work and move about freely,' he said, adding that demining needed to be stepped up, since preparations had started for the next general elections, scheduled for 2006.

'People need to be told the areas they can pass through to go and register and vote,' he said.

Meanwhile, a meeting of the standing commission of the Council of Ministers on 19 October decided to create an executive demining commission to ensure action to permit the inspection, clearing and quality control of population resettlement areas. The decision was taken following a review of the work of the National Demining Institute, which was regarded as insufficient.

A press statement said the demining programme was a 'high priority' and that performance would also affect the electoral process. The government therefore wished to encourage greater commitment and efforts on the part of public and private bodies in ensuring mine clearance, it said.

### **Dundo Museum to re-open next May**

The Dundo Museum will be re-opened to the public on 18 May, International Museum Day, according to Minister of Culture Boaventura Cardoso, who was speaking to the press at the end of a working visit to Lunda Norte Province.

He said the restoration of the building would be completed in November, after which the phase of cataloguing the more than 10,000 museum pieces to be displayed in new cases would start. Time was needed, he said, to do this and to re-install all the equipment, but all the work, including the security system, would be completed by that date.

Closed to the public for the past three years, there have been a number of burglaries at the Museum. The

last, in April 2004, was thwarted by the national police and 26 exhibits were recovered.

The Dondo Museum was established in 1936 and now contains more than 10,000 ethnographic pieces and a collection of 9,000 natural history exhibits.