



Angola and South Africa discuss cooperation in intelligence

Cooperation between the Angolan and South African intelligence services was discussed when Ronnie Kasrils, South Africa's Minister of Intelligence, was received by President José Eduardo dos Santos on 28 September. The meeting was also attended by Fernando Garcia Miala, director general of Angola's external security services.

Speaking to the press after the meeting, Ronnie Kasrils said the aim was to strengthen the cooperation that had already existed for many years, since the two countries had common interests in the African continent. They also had the joint need, he said, to ensure that the southern region of Africa was secure and stable, so as to give its people the opportunity to develop and achieve economic growth.

Referring to conflict resolution and other continued concerns of Africa, the South African Minister said that 'by working together, we will be able to see and understand what the challenges and threats are'. Cooperation between Angola and South Africa was going to grow, he said, following meetings between officials from the two countries. 'We see things in the same way,' he concluded.

President dos Santos welcomes fund to combat poverty

President José Eduardo dos Santos has hailed the creation of a special fund to combat poverty and urged the international community to give it its full support.

In a message, on 18 September, to world leaders attending a forum on poverty at UN headquarters in New York, he said the fund would help to concentrate efforts on eradicating poverty, hunger, illiteracy, disease and underdevelopment in the world.

'Angola shares that goal and, though this is first and foremost a government responsibility, I appeal to the international community to take urgent and vigorous measures to help to defeat these scourges and establish economic relations with other countries based on equality and reciprocal advantages,' the message continued.

It went on to say that the spread of HIV/Aids threatened to reduce the populations of many underdeveloped countries by half unless efforts were stepped up and resources made available to prevent and treat it.

The President's message stressed the vigorous efforts of the President of Brazil, Inácio Lula da Silva – originator of the forum – 'to put an end to poverty and hunger in the world'.

It said that the world of today was interlinked for better or for worse. 'Today everything that happens in a country or continent is ultimately reflected in the rest of the world, so that hunger and poverty are a threat to global security and prosperity'.

At the end of the forum more than 100 countries signed the New York Declaration calling for action against hunger and poverty.

José Sayovo wins three gold medals and beats world records in Paralympics

The Angolan sprinter José Armando Sayovo won three gold medals in the Paralympic games in Athens in the 100, 200 and 400 metre races for the visually impaired.

He ran the 100 metre race in 11.37 seconds, beating the world record of 11.38 seconds won by the Russian Sergei Sevostianov in the 1983 world championships. In the 200 metre race, his 23.04 seconds surpassed the 23.16 second record set by the Cuban Adrian Iznaga, while in the 400 metres he beat his own world record of 51.29 seconds set in Quebec in 2003, completing the race in 50.03 seconds.

Born 30 years ago in Catabola, Bié Province, José Sayovo lost his eyesight in 1998 while doing his military service. From a peasant family, he previously worked as a mechanic.

As the best paralympic athlete in the world in his class, he said every athlete was proud to win medals, but that it was 'much more important to me that this helps to change the attitude in the world and in Angola to the physically handicapped'. He said he was providing an example of the fact that people should be judged by their actions and abilities, not by their physical condition.

EU supports holding of elections in 2006

The European Union has urged the Angolan government to continue efforts to create the legal, financial and technical conditions making it possible for elections to be held in 2006. This was stated in a note sent to Angola's Ministry of External Relations by the Embassy of the Netherlands, the country currently in the EU presidency.

The note said the EU welcomed the statement of the Council of the Republic on elections and the subsequent letter in which the president of the National Assembly requested the parliament to take the necessary steps to establish the legal framework for preparing and holding the next elections.

'This statement reflects the Angolan government's commitment to the democratic electoral process,' the EU note said. It added that 'the European Union is ready to contribute to the establishment of a climate conducive to free and fair elections'.

The MPLA had presented a timetable for elections on 24 August in which it outlined the main action to be taken between next October and September 2006.

It was presented at a press conference during which Bornito de Sousa, leader of the MPLA parliamentary group, summed up the main tasks as being preparing and approving a legal constitutional framework, organising voter registration, preparing material and logistical conditions, establishing the National Electoral Council, the presentation of candidates by political parties and organising the elections themselves.

The timetable establishes the second half of 2006 as the period for holding elections, in accordance with the proposal made by the Council of the Republic at its meeting on 2 June, and makes the month of September 2006 the deadline date.

Meanwhile, the Council of Ministers, meeting in Luanda on 15 September, approved a timetable of election tasks for which the government will be responsible and which can be carried out regardless of the legislative decisions to be taken by the National Assembly.

They included establishing preliminary demographic data, repairing buildings used for voter registration, assessing technical and material requirements and national communications and administrative provisions, and reinstalling offices to support the electoral process in provinces, municipalities and communes.

Luís Gomes Sambo elected regional director of WHO

The Angolan Luís Gomes Sambo was elected regional director for Africa of the World Health Organisation at a meeting in Brazzaville on 2 September.

He received 32 of the 46 available votes. The other candidates for the post were from Burundi, Uganda and Swaziland. The election was preceded by interviews with the four candidates, during which each put forward his proposed programme of work.

The final result indicated that the interviewing committee, made up of the heads of the 45 delegations present, was most impressed by the programme outlined by Luís Gomes Sambo, who was standing as a Southern African Development Community candidate.

Thousands of Unita members join MPLA in Huíla province

Speaking at a public meeting in the municipality of Chipindo, Huíla Province, at which a group of former Unita members were enrolled into the MPLA, Marcelino Typingui, first secretary of the MPLA in Huíla Province, said that 12,533 former Unita members, 7,377 of them women, had left their party and joined the MPLA in the past two years in Chipindo.

Among those who had chosen the MPLA was a former member of Jonas Savimbi's presidential guard and an official in the Unita women's movement.

'Here in Chipindo we are really growing and we're very glad of that,' said Marcelino Typingui. 'In our organisation, the rights and duties of everyone are the same, for both old and new members,'

He added that every person's decision to join a party should be 'free and conscious', adding that someone could join a party one day and leave it the next day to join another party.

Economic prospects for 2005 'promising'

Amadeu Maurício, governor of the National Bank of Angola, said in Luanda on 28 September that the country's economic prospects for 2005 and the ensuing years were very promising. Speaking at the closing session of the 5th annual general meeting of the representatives of SADC banks, he said GDP should continue to grow at a good rate, as should oil production, while industrial, agricultural and commercial activities would become relatively more important.

In order to achieve the progress registered in stabilising the economy, with a significant reduction in the rate of inflation and a balanced exchange rate, the money supply and liquidity of the banking system had been continually monitored.

All the measures taken were also aimed at achieving an inflation rate in keeping with the SADC regional integration target, with a view to the competitive integration of Angola's economy in the region.

The meeting evaluated the capacity of member banks and discussed strategic guidelines to adapt their association to today's requirements. It was attended by the chairman of the association, the Mozambican Aldemiro Balio, and bankers from Angola, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

ChevronTexaco to invest US\$11 billion in projects

Dave O'Reilly, chairman of the board of directors of ChevronTexaco, said in Luanda on 28 September that the company will invest US\$11 billion in twelve oil exploration and liquid gas projects over a five-year period. Speaking to journalists after a meeting with President José Eduardo dos Santos, he said that seven billion had already been spent on three of the main projects.

He said that during the meeting he had introduced the ChevronTexaco board of the directors to the President and that his delegation had come to Angola to see the progress made in various development areas.

O'Reilly said the board of directors would be meeting in Luanda and that this represented the most recent highpoint in the longstanding partnership ChevronTexaco had had with Angola.

'It underlines the commitment we have to this country, where we have been since the thirties,' he said.

ChevronTexaco is the biggest oil company in Angola and the first deepwater one. It has interests in four concessions totalling approximately 4,700 square miles. Its average total oil output in 2002 was 555,000 barrels a day.

PM: government rehabilitating CFB without external help

Speaking in Chinguar, Bié Province, on 22 September, Prime Minister Fernando da Piedade Dias dos Santos 'Nandó' said the government was making a 'great effort' to rehabilitate the Benguela Railway, CFB, on its own, without any external help.

Addressing a public meeting, he said that when the country was still at war there were many abroad who claimed to be friends of Angola and promised to rehabilitate the line, but that once the conflict ended nothing more had been heard from them. They disappeared, and it was for this and other reasons that Angola was now restoring the CFB on its own.

Saying that he was resigned to this fact, he nonetheless expressed the hope that the promised help would be forthcoming. If not, Angolans would have to rely on their own efforts.

The CFB, which was destroyed during the war, is of vital importance as an outlet to the Atlantic Ocean for minerals from Zambia and DR Congo.

The PM spoke of the need for the rapid reconstruction and development of the province, saying that efforts should start with relaunching large-scale food production to meet the needs of the people.

In the provincial capital, Kuito, the following day, the Prime Minister laid a wreath on the grave of General Alfredo Kussumua, killed in combat in 1993, at the new cemetery containing the remains of people who were initially buried in backyards during the siege of Kuito.

Signing the memorial book, he paid a tribute to the heroes of Kuito, adding: 'To the memory of all those who died in the unnecessary and senseless fratricidal struggle, who will never be forgotten. We have forgiven our enemies.'

The Bié provincial authorities want the cemetery to be recognised as a national monument.

Malanje to have rural extension research centre

A research, training and rural extension centre is to be built in Malanje Province at a cost of US\$2 million.

António Castame, director of Prodeca, the northern region food crop development programme, said it would have biotechnology, soil analysis and seed laboratories and serve mainly the northern provinces of Uíje, Kwanza Norte and Malanje.

He said that when the centre was completed and the laboratories had been equipped, which was expected to be in 2005, it would employ a large number of people.

Personnel for the centre were currently taking courses in biotechnology, seed types and varieties and rural extension in Brazil, under an agreement between the two countries.

The acquisition of equipment like microscopes would be put out to tender in October in Angola, Brazil and another country still to be decided on.

Prodeca was formed in 1998 to provide technical and institutional support for peasants and improving, multiplying and distributing seeds.

Mining relaunched in Uíje Province

Prospecting was started a few months ago at the Mavoio copper mine, Maquela do Zombo, to the north of the provincial capital of Uíje.

Nunes Santos Ferreira, head of the provincial department of geology and mines, said the Angolan company involved had already started building the infrastructure needed to start mining.

He went on to say that three companies – Endiama, the state diamond company, Afonso & Filhos and Organizações Mbala – had been authorised to explore the Buengas diamond area, northeast of the capital, and that the local authorities were waiting for the companies to start work.

With regard to the Kuango diamond area, municipality of Kimbele, Ferreira said that no company had yet been licensed to start mining there. There were two or three groups engaged in illegal diamond mining in the communes of Icoça and Alto Zaza, he said, but that the police were already aware of the situation.

Nunes Santos Ferreira said vehicles and technical equipment were needed from central authorities for mining and geological work, and he added that his department had two engineers, one a mining engineer and the other a geologist.

Four bridges re-opened on road from Andulo to Mussende

The *Jornal de Angola* reported on 16 September that road travel would improve on the route from Bié Province to Kwanza Sul Province following the inauguration of four emergency bridges over the Membia, Cuime, Cutato and Cuilo rivers by the World Food Programme. The work was financed by the Swedish government.

The bridges, on the road from Andulo in Bié to Mussende in Kwanza Sul, will facilitate the resettlement of returnees to their home areas, mainly in the commune of Calucinga.

According to Rick Corsino, WFP director in Angola, before the rehabilitation of the bridges the population of Calucinga had to travel about 100 km to Andulo to receive humanitarian aid, but now the WFP would be able to distribute food closer to people in their areas.

Bié governor Amaro Tati said that though provisional, the bridges would contribute to the development of the local economy by permitting the movement of people and goods in places that had been isolated.

Sweden donated US\$2.2 million for the project, which was carried out by the Swedish Rescue Services Agency in cooperation with Inea, Angola's national highway institute, which provided the technicians, while the British NGO Halo Trust helped de-mine the bridge areas.

Fourteen bridges have already been rehabilitated with Swedish funding in the provinces of Huambo, Kwanza Sul, Kwanza Norte, Bié, Moxico, Lunda Sul and Kuando Kubango.

About 135,000 people are currently receiving WFP aid in Bié Province, 8,000 of them from Calucinga.

Assistance for 400,500 peasant families in Huambo

The provincial department of agriculture and rural development is to provide 400,500 families in Huambo Province with assorted seeds for the current agricultural year, 2004-2005.

Lutonadio Samuel Tima, head of the department, said that with the support of national and foreign NGOs, agricultural inputs would be delivered to traditional authorities in villages, who would distribute them to families. His department was waiting for 5,000 tonnes of fertilisers from the port city of Lobito, as well as maize, beans and vegetable seeds and 350 draught cattle.

Peasants would also receive 11 tonnes of improved maize and bean seeds from a seed multiplication project, which would be distributed by the agricultural development station in each municipality.

The families would plant more than 1,000 hectares of land that was being prepared by Mecanagro, the agricultural mechanisation company.

New engines for Moçâmedes Railway

The Moçâmedes Railway, CFM, is to have four new locomotives acquired in India by the end of the year. Paulo Ndala, a CFM official, said the existing seven engines dated back to 1957 and the new rolling stock came within the framework of an agreement worth US\$40 million on the rehabilitation of the line signed by the Angolan and Indian governments this year.

He said rehabilitation, for which there was a budget of US\$18 million guaranteed by the Angolan government, had already started. This involved replacing sleepers and old wagons and repairing bridges and aqueducts.

Ndala added that the government would soon be financing rehabilitation of the stretch from Matala, Huíla Province, to Menongue, Kuando Kubango Province.

Health care established throughout Malanje

Gaspar Neto, acting governor of Malanje Province, said that the local executive had provided health care in all the province's fourteen municipalities over the past two years.

Speaking at a meeting to mark National Health Day on 25 September, he said that two years before the health situation had been critical, but now it had changed with the building of a new provincial sanatorium, maternity hospital, vaccine preservation facilities, a centre for treating mosquito nets with insecticide and other facilities built or repaired.

He said the mother and child mortality rate had been one of the highest in the country, but now things were very different, and he stressed the efforts made by municipal administrators to improve health conditions in their areas.

UN stresses government's work in protecting refugees

The Angolan government's efforts to protect refugees and displaced persons resulting from the armed conflict that lasted more than 25 years was highlighted by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan on 21 September in his report on the work of the organisation presented at the General Assembly.

Referring to the work done in respect of the return of 3.7 million refugees since the end of the conflict in 2002, the report mentioned the Angolan government's plan this year to receive about 145,000 refugees coming from various places, most of them from Zambia, Namibia and DR Congo.

It also referred to the cuts in funding for humanitarian action and, in the specific case of Angola, the fact that the World Food Programme had had to reduce by half food aid to hundreds of thousands of Angolan refugees.

Kofi Annan urged the international community to resume the funding of humanitarian operations.

Power and water supply systems restored

The Bié provincial government has spent US\$720,000 on repairing the public lighting systems in four of the province's nine municipalities. Anabela Cayovo Ngunga, provincial director of the energy and water department, said the same would shortly be done in the other nine municipalities, adding that electric power and public lighting in Kuito, the

provincial capital, were the responsibility of central government. By December, she said, power supplies would be functioning in all municipalities in the province.

She said that more than US\$700,000 will be spent on repairing the water treatment and supply system in three of the province's municipalities initially, and that the programme would then be extended to the rest of the province. Her department, she said, was working with the British NGO Oxfam to improve fresh water supplies by digging wells. More than 5,000 wells with winding gear had been dug, and the department was also working with the International Committee of the Red Cross and Unicef to make the population aware of the need to boil water before drinking it.

Local government in the southern province of Huíla has spent US\$405,000 since the beginning of September to rehabilitate and build power and water supply systems in the municipalities of Cuvango and Jamba, as part of the public investment programme. A similar programme is in progress in the municipalities of Chibia, Caluquembe, Caconda and Lubango.

It was meanwhile reported that there would be a significant improvement in the power supply in Benguela Province when the Biopio thermal station in Lobito was reactivated in December. A press statement issued after a meeting of the provincial council said the equipment would start to be assembled in October and the work was expected to take 60 days.

Paediatric hospital re-named after David Bernardino

The Luanda paediatric hospital was re-named Dr David Bernardino Hospital on 17 September, in recognition of his contribution to public health.

Albertina Hamukwaya, Minister of Health, said at the ceremony at the start of a series of events to mark National Health Worker Day, 25 September, that David Bernardino had dedicated his life to children, concerning himself not only with hospital care, but with training and research, reducing infant mortality and organising health services.

David Bernardino, brother of the current director of the Luanda paediatric hospital, Luís Bernardino, was killed in Huambo, where he ran a paediatric and child nutrition centre, during the armed conflict that followed the 1992 elections.

Number of doctors has increased from 708 to 1,179

The number of doctors in the country has increased from 708 in 2002 to 1,179.

This was revealed by Minister of Health Albertina Hamukwaya in her opening speech to a symposium on obstetrics combined with an ultrasound course organised by the Angolan Medical Association with the participation of Brazilian specialists. The programme was aimed at improving the diagnosis and treatment of pregnant women with illnesses as a means of reducing mortality rates. The Minister stressed that such events should be held regularly.

She also announced a series of measures to improve public health. One was a training course in public health, which was attended by 22 doctors.

Albertina Hamukwaya said the number of doctors still fell far short of national needs and this was aggravated by the fact that more than 70 percent of them were in Luanda and some of the provincial capitals on the coast.

The Ministry of Health, in cooperation with the Medical Association, plans to hold quarterly training and refresher courses for doctors.

FAS projects in Namibe Province

According to Frederico Sanumbutue, assistant provincial director of the Social Support Fund, FAS, in Namibe, there is a funding programme for this year worth US\$1.5 million for 35 social and economic projects. He said US\$130,659 of this had already been spent on building three animal vaccination posts, three solar pumps and three laundries in the municipality of Bibala while another 25 projects were in progress.

They also planned to build ten schools, four homes for teachers, four health posts, four homes for health workers, a courthouse and an abattoir.

Between January 2002 and July 2003, he said, the FAS had implemented 116 projects in Namibe Province, at a cost of US\$4.9 million, benefiting 190,000 people.

Police arrest foreign currency forgers

First superintendent Alexandre Canelas, national director of the economic police, told the Angop news agency on 15 September that a group of foreign currency forgers had been arrested during an operation in which 150,000 forged US dollars had been seized, together with equipment on which they were produced.

Those arrested, he said, were four foreign nationals who had been mainly responsible for the increased amount of false currency, and he warned the public not to exchange money in the street, where the forged notes circulated.

More than a million children back at school

A report presented by Angola on 10 September at the 47th International Education Conference in Geneva said that more than a million children had gone back to school in 2003. Angola was represented at the conference by Minister of Education António Burity da Silva and Jorge Sanguende, representative to Unesco in Paris.

The report described the structure of education management and the educational reform in progress, and gave special attention to issues of gender, social inclusion, professional competence and the role of teachers.

It said that the number of pupils in primary schools had increased by more than 51 percent to just over 2.1 million, while there were 112,785 teachers in primary and secondary schooling, another 29,184 having been taken on last year within the framework of the process of national reconciliation, i.e. from Unita.

According to the report, 51 percent of pupils in basic education – up to eighth year – are girls and 40 percent of teachers are women. Among negative factors affecting the education of girls, it said, were poverty, domestic work, early marriage and unwanted pregnancies.

Saying that 2003 was the first year since independence that the education system had been extended to the whole country, the report said that 'with the end of the war, under government programmes schools have been built in all the provinces with the support of the communities and the assistance of social partners'.

It acknowledged, however, that the number of pupils registered for primary schooling in 2003 had exceeded expectations by 37.3 percent.

The system, it said, was unable to meet the demand, although the government was increasing budget allocations for education – currently 7 percent of the total – and promoting a policy of 'universal primary and basic general education'.

UK to fund mine clearance equipment

Britain's Department for International Development, DFID, is donating €272,665 to help the national demining programme to acquire manual and mechanical equipment. The equipment, provided in cooperation with the NGO Norwegian People's Aid, is to be used to guarantee safety on the Mbanza Congo to Uíje road and to facilitate the building of bridges.

It will also facilitate the distribution of humanitarian aid to enable Angolan refugees in DR Congo to return in safety. Between 2002 and 2003, DFID contributed a total of £7.881 million to emergency programme in Angola. This was spent on food and logistical support for the World Food Programme, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance, the International Committee of the Red Cross and three Médecins sans Frontières programmes.

DFID supports mine clearance and assistance for the resettlement of displaced persons and refugees. The United Kingdom has contributed £20.3 million in bilateral assistance since 1999.

It was meanwhile reported on 7 September that the national inter-ministerial commission on demining and humanitarian assistance had started a three-day meeting in Luanda to discuss provincial programmes of action and the financial and technical situation in respect of mine clearance.

It was attended by deputy governors and representatives of the media and NGOs involved in demining in Angola. They discussed the social and economic effects of mine contamination, mine awareness education, assistance to victims, and mine clearance to assist work on dams, power stations and electricity pylons, highways, railways and agricultural fields.

It was meanwhile reported in Benguela on 8 September that mine clearance on the stretch of rail between Caimbambo and Cubal, 147 km south of the city of Benguela, had been completed in 25 days, instead of the 45 days initially forecast.

Captain Domingos Lucas, head of the Angolan Armed Forces, FAA, brigade that did the work, said this had been made possible by the quality of the specialists and technical means used. Fifty FAA sappers had cleared the more than 30 km of line.

Captain Lucas said the Benguela Railway brigade was now putting new sleepers and tracks on the demined stretch.

New projects in Huambo Province

The construction of new social projects in the commune of Chipipa, about 20km from the city of Huambo, is reviving the social and economic life of the people who live there.

Bento Sandulu, administrator of Chipipa, told the Angop news agency on 1 September that two new schools and a 15 to 20-bed health centre were currently being built as part of the Integrated Development Programme. He went on to say that 30 wells, the communal market and the public lighting system had been repaired and a new generator system installed.

The local administration, he said, was working to ensure that more than 30 classrooms were built before December, to take in the more than 1,950 children who were not attending school.

Sandulu also said that this month peasant farmers would receive agricultural inputs, maize, beans and vegetable seeds, so as to make up for the crop mission.