

ANGOLA: ACCOUNTABLE, DEMOCRATIC AND PARTICIPATORY GOVERNMENT

NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT No. 654-A-00-99-00084-00

OCTOBER 1- DECEMBER 31, 2000

Under the terms of the cooperative agreement concluded September 30, 1999, between USAID/Angola and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), NDI agreed to undertake a program to build the institutional capacity of civil society in Angola, and to promote participation, accountability, dialogue and reconciliation with government and to ensure citizen participation in the constitutional process. The grant was amended in May 2000 and again in October to add activities and provide additional funding. This report covers NDI program activities from October 1 to December 31, 2000.

The predominant note at the beginning of the quarter was the hold placed on the program by the U.S. Congress, given its concern that NDI's program was supportive of the MPLA government at the expense of UNITA supporters. Despite the setback, once the hold was lifted October 13, NDI was able to pick up its level of activity during the last two months of the year and proceed with the program in Luanda and in several provinces.

I. SUMMARY

As the guerilla war rages on, the election date is still uncertain, and the steps leading to it are proceeding at a exceedingly slow pace. Key among these steps is the new constitution. On that front, during the quarter the only activity was the opening of the proposals for the national symbols – 280 proposals were received, and, indicative of the situation in the country, about 90 percent of the proposals were from Luanda.

On the key contending issues – local power and the system of government – the Constitutional Commission is yet to meet. Despite the fact that the fundamental principles had been adopted in February, these matters were left unresolved, and before the commission proceeds to draft a constitution, it must be accepted consensually.

The opposition's proposals call for elections of provincial governors, a position fully backed by civil society, as highlighted by a recent survey in which all 280 respondents indicated their preference for direct elections of provincial governor. The opposition, however, calls for the winning party to appoint the governor rather than direct elections. In the MPLA's proposal, the governors would be representatives of the central government and hence would be appointed; the MPLA argues that elected representation would be at the level of provincial administration.

Opposition leaders repeatedly stress the need to create conditions to hold elections as quickly as possible to avoid the "eternalization" of the political and administrative organs of government. Analia Pereira, PLD's President, has said that, if Angola waits for total peace, there will never be elections; she has pointed out that in 1992, when Angola went to the ballot box, the country was in a worse situation.

The U.S. Embassy has stated that speedy elections, as agreed to during the Bilateral Consultative Committee (BCC), are necessary to putting the constitutional process back on track. The U.S. Ambassador has said that the process has stalled and that elections, a key signal of a democracy, are a way to move it forward.

The celebration of 25 years of independence on November 11 did not bring the anticipated reforms, specifically a strong statement by the president in favor of a negotiated settlement to the conflict and an end to government corruption.

Regionally, Angola continued its isolation from those countries – chief among these South Africa and Mozambique – that have urged a political solution to Angola's problems, despite the visit of key individuals including South African Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma. The number of military visits in the country and abroad was intense. Angola's official position towards the Democratic Republic of Congo continues to be that Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia will work "hand in hand" to end the armed conflict, as affirmed by General Kundi Paihama, the Angolan minister of national defense.

II. POLITICAL CONTEXT

The Angolan conflict has continued as national and international measures to pressure the warring parties to negotiate a peaceful settlement have been unsuccessful. The war tactics have shifted from conventional warfare to guerrilla-style assaults.

On November 11, at the celebration of 25 years of independence the mood was somber. Marchers chanted "President Eduardo dos Santos, our friend, the people are hungry" rather than the usual "President Eduardo dos Santos, our friend, the people are with you"

During his address to the nation, President Jose Eduardo dos Santos preached reconciliation and nation-building. Buoyed by recent military successes against the rebel group UNITA, he called on the movement's leader, Jonas Savimbi, to seek peace. He used the occasion to announce that the government would be adopting a policy to pardon all those who would come forward and renounce the war. The opposition greeted the news with little enthusiasm, expressing the feeling that the problem in Angola has to be solved at the political level rather than through an amnesty law.

On the subject of elections, dos Santos said they would be held when the time was right and when a legal and transparent process could be organized. Dos Santos said other government priorities included reducing inflation, boosting education and tackling the nation's growing AIDS epidemic.

The slogan adopted by the president, "The future starts today," struck a negative chord, leaving the majority of citizens further disillusioned. Political analysts, including Bornito de Sousa, expressed disappointment with the speech; they had hoped that the remark about the 'future starting now' would signal a clear break with business as usual. Many had hoped for a new emphasis on controlling corruption and prosecuting those parties who failed to abide by the rule of law. There was no strong move in this direction, a clear sign of which would be the dismissal of the most corrupt and/or ineffective governors.

At the heart of Angola's struggle with democracy is the issue of corruption. Corruption has become endemic, from the dictatorial behavior of provincial governors to petty thievery in sports clubs – activities happening with the connivance or knowledge of the government and the ruling party. As the MPLA prepares for elections, its members are increasingly concerned with checking the abuses of power by members of the Government. The Pro Pace convention in August brought forth this concern, as speaker after speaker raised an accusing finger and questioned the ability of the MPLA's government to solve the basic problems of the population. For example, the recent increase in pension for war wounded to 90 Kwanzas (equivalent to \$US6) with an added subsidy for the completely immobilized of 50 Kwanzas (equivalent to \$US3.33) was perceived as typical of a government that is not in touch with the harsh reality of a majority of Angolans. Adding to the disillusionment, the recent improvements in basic services coinciding with the 25th independence celebration led many to question what the government has been doing during the past 25 years and why only now it has offered some improvements.

The Angolan parliament on December 29 overwhelmingly approved the general amnesty law proposed by the President, embracing both the activities of UNITA and petty crime. The parliament passed the law with 112 votes in favor, 16 against and 13 abstentions out of a total of 220 deputies. Deputies from the opposition parties abstained in protest over what they called a weak law. They contended that the legal solution was not adequate to the political problem confronting the country. UNITA, led by Jonas Savimbi, rejected the amnesty offer, saying that the head of state lacked the legitimacy to declare any type of amnesty. The rebels repeated their demand that the two warring parties should take part in direct negotiations with impartial mediation. UNITA has stated that the war against the Angolan government would continue, following rejection by the authorities of an offer to negotiate a peace settlement.

UNITA issued a series of 12 proposals and demands over the Internet regarding the resumption of negotiations with President Jose Eduardo dos Santos. Angolan authorities, buoyed by recent military gains against rebel positions, rejected the rebel offer. UNITA said it wanted the church, independent press and civil society to mediate between the movement and the government. UNITA said its peace proposals set the stage for dialogue and that the movement was prepared to implement a cease-fire on all fronts within 24 hours if the Angolan government would do the same. UNITA representatives emphasized that they remained committed to a united Angola but with provision for regional autonomy.

International pressure for a peaceful settlement has not succeeded. This fact was highlighted by the report on the sanctions against UNITA, which acknowledged that the movement is still trading in illicit diamonds and has access to funds abroad and that its officials are traveling freely in several countries outside Angola. Of greater importance than the attempts to curb illicit diamond trade is the rise in oil prices, which has diminished the international leverage on the Angolan government and increased its ability to pursue the war.

During his visit, the Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on Internally Displaced Persons was seriously concerned by the lack of effective protection accorded to the physical security and human rights of the internally displaced. He was informed of incidents of harassment; theft of food and non-food items by UNITA, by government armed forces (FAA) and by the national police; rape; forced conscription; forced relocation; and a distinct lack of effective remedies to address such situations. These concerns were brought to the attention of the military and provincial authorities, but little tangible progress was made.

The UN statement was corroborated by a hard-hitting report by the international medical aid organization Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), released ahead of Angola's 25-year independence celebrations, denouncing the "state of neglect" in which the people of Angola are forced to live. MSF charges that the situation is not just the consequence of war, "but the outcome of deliberate choices on the part of the two parties to the conflict."

As the year's end approached and the humanitarian crisis persisted, the UN appealed for \$200 million to continue its humanitarian work in Angola over the coming year. The UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Angola 2001 said that the humanitarian situation in Angola remains serious and is likely to deteriorate if assistance is reduced. During 2000, at least four million Angolans received UN aid of some kind. Even though the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) has been reduced from about 1 million in 1999 to 338,000 this year, the cumulative effect has been that in the past two decades 25 percent of the population has been displaced from communities and traditions. The level of vulnerability has steadily increased as the massive level of displacement has intensified poverty. Pointing to what the future holds in terms of prospective elections, surface access remains restricted to coastal roads, and at this stage more than 70 percent of humanitarian aid is transported by air.

In a move to increase transparency and enhance the financial management of state accounts, an agreement was finalized between the IMF, the World Bank and the Angolan government to monitor oil funds as part of a broader Staff Monitored Program (SMP). KPMG, a consulting firm, has been contracted to do an oil diagnostic and to put in place a financial monitoring system and forecast future revenues. However, KPMG's 30-month two-part contract does not include a retroactive examination of the use of oil revenues.

In an effort to be more open, the government made public for nationwide discussion last July a new press law. In typical fashion, the document was prepared by a select group of government officials without the participation of journalists. Three organizations that represent Angola's journalists, including NDI sub-grantee MIACCOOP, have taken a joint stand against the government's proposed press law, arguing that it reveals a profound disrespect for freedom of the press. The groups have rejected the proposed law in documents sent to Information Minister Hendrik Val Neto. The groups said that the government's proposal did not constitute an acceptable working basis for democratic reform of the press law due to its repressive, unconstitutional and anti-human rights character. They also criticized the proposed law's continued state monopoly over television and excessive focus on the treatment of journalists as criminals.

III. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

In response to USAID's Annual Program Statement, NDI submitted a proposal in September that was favorably reviewed, but, given budget constraints, NDI was asked to focus its program on the constitutional process; NDI's anti-corruption program activities were suspended. The reformulated proposal focused on the constitutional revision process working directly with the Constitutional Commission and civil society. The principal activities with the commission would be to promote opportunities for public participation in the constitutional process. In addition, NDI would provide the commission with comparative research and expert opinions on critical issues of democratic governance, advancing constitutional dispensations on accountability, public participation, gender, devolved authority and separation of powers. The engagement with civil society would focus on civic

education and mobilizing constructive submissions to the commission. Community forums and mass media will be appropriately utilized to inform the broader public about the constitutional debate on key issues related to the democratic process.

NDI also proposed a subsidiary, although complementary, program activity: empowering women in the constitutional process. The role of women in the political development of Angola and attention to gender specific public policy have been flagrantly neglected. NDI proposed to partner with the National Counseling Centre (NCC) in an initiative primarily focused in the provinces to link grassroots women activists with parliamentarians and leaders of national NGOs in order to ensure their participation in the constitutional process. In a series of community forums with local media attention, women would be given a voice to address gender-specific issues and the concerns of their communities, as well as their proposals for constitutional reforms.

Grant management-related complications marked this quarter's activity. Since the program was a continuation of on-going activities, USAID suggested that NDI prepare an amendment to the existing agreement rather than initiate a new one. Also given the smaller funds, NDI proposed a six-month program, rather than the eight months originally planned. USAID informed NDI that the final response, pending availability of funds, would be sent before September 30; however, on September 27, NDI learned that the U.S. Congress had placed a hold on the allocation of funds to the program. Congress wanted to be assured that the program was open to all citizens, particularly to members of UNITA. The hold was lifted in mid-October, and NDI was able to continue its activities and avoid closing down the office.

IV. PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

During this quarter, NDI signed two sub-grant agreements, one with the Associação Leonardo Sikufinde Shalom Angola (ALSSA) based in Huíla province, the other with the National Counseling Centre (NCC) based in Luanda. NDI also extended its agreement with its media partner, the Journalists Association of Angola (MIACOOB), and engaged in program activities with the Law School of the Catholic University.

In a very short time frame, NDI assisted ALSSA in organizing a major constitutional conference in Lubango, capital of the Huíla province. The objective was to hear from local communities their views on the future constitution. Local chiefs, church leaders, lawyers, representatives from national associations and a few opposition politicians convened for the three-day conference. The event was unique in Angola: since independence the voice of local authorities has been subjugated to the central power. The focus of discussion was the issue of land rights in Namibe, Huíla and Cunene provinces in southern Angola. For the first time, the communities were able to address a multi-faceted audience about their problems and to suggest solutions, using their own language.

With NCC, more than 10 community meetings have been organized between deputies and citizens. This is also the first time since the elections in 1992 that deputies have been actively engaged in meeting their constituents.

Civic Education

To promote citizenship participation in Angola's political, economic and social life, NDI sponsored the civic education projects of three NGOs through subgrants: the National Foundation for Democracy (FND), the Children Support Group (GAC) and the Organization for Community Development (OADEC). The agreements started in January and ended September 30, 2000. The three NGOs reached 8,302 people, of whom 46 percent were women. In addition, several groups carried out the civic education program on a voluntary basis, among them Horizonte, the National Counseling Centre, Ajad Humanos, and the human rights groups of Prenda, Sao Paulo and Fatima. They trained an additional 4,824 citizens, of whom 49 percent were women.

Each organization's civic education projects are describe in the following subsections. Detailed information about participants is found in Section V. of this report.

In response to a request from an NGO based in Bengo province, NDI also trained 19 civic trainers, of whom three were women.

Due to concerns about security, the programs were conducted exclusively in urban and peri-urban areas. Representative of the Angolan reality, most of the beneficiaries had very limited education, which posed a challenge in terms of their capacity to absorb the content of the civic material.

FND

Following delays in the processing of subgrant documentation, FND implemented its program in two months with 18 trainers. FND's program focused on strengthening citizens' skills in standing up for their rights to fight authoritarian abuses.

GAC

GAC was the only NGO that worked in provinces other than Luanda, with activities in Huambo and Kuito. In Huambo, the project for the first time benefited displaced people who have no formal education, which at this stage are the vast majority of the city's population. To reach a larger audience, the training sessions were mostly conducted in Umbundo, the major language in the provinces of Huambo and Kuito, where a significant number of the population does not speak Portuguese. GAC has translated the *Civic Education Manual* into Umbundo, which has proven immensely beneficial; NDI is planning to fund the reproduction of the manual in order to make it available to organizations working in the area.

The program has created space for political debate in a province where the war has transformed the average citizen's relationship into one dictated primarily by a strong military presence. Due to GAC's civic education program, it is currently possible to observe an emerging civil society capable of addressing the government on behalf of the citizens. As a result of this training, citizens started to organize themselves in small groups to fight for their rights. A significant percentage of women participated. As citizens participate in civic education training and gain an understanding of democracy, they are calling for the election of traditional leaders and of local administrators.

In Bié Province, after two years of heavy bombing and fighting, few believed that a civic education program could be carried out. As a result of the war, the provincial capital, Kuito, is full of displaced people and street children. GAC, in cooperation with NDI, believed that, apart from humanitarian aid, the time was right to implement civic education training and give people skills that can change their lives in a tangible manner. The education project was implemented from January to September. As in Huambo, the sessions were also conducted in Umbundo, which allowed the attendees to participate actively in the debates, giving opinions and suggestions on various issues, mainly peace and national reconciliation.

The civic education project has created an emerging civil society. Although civil society is still weak, if one takes into consideration that the city was characterized until recently by the preeminent presence of military forces, it is a significant change. Kuito now has a visible civic movement based on NGOs, associations and churches.

OADEC

OADEC worked in the municipalities of Cacuaco, Sambizanga and Cazenga, one of Luanda's largest municipalities. Ten trainers carried out the project during a six-month period. As a result, groups are being organized in order to monitor police and human rights abuses, and positive achievements have been reported. In one case, as a result of actions by these groups, all police staff of a Hoji ya Henda (Cazenga municipality) police station were changed, and some of their commanders are facing disciplinary processes. In another case, people wrote petitions to the Ministry of Education to complain about the privatization of a school that had been rebuilt with public funds but that had been given to a private group of people, including the local education representative. The school was successfully returned to the community, and about 5,000 children have returned to the school.

Philanthropic groups

Various philanthropic groups, created after their members participated in civic education programs, carried out a program to encourage participation in political and social life. The most relevant groups among them were the National Counseling Centre, AJAD Humanos and three human rights groups of the Catholic Church. These groups constitute important evidence of sustainability. Although most of these groups work on a voluntary basis, there is a strong argument to give them support to help them consolidate as institutions and improve their performance.

Horizonte Group

NDI supported Horizonte, an Angolan NGO based in Bengo, which is coordinating a development campaign for the province. Among their objectives is the establishment of cooperative agreements with national and international institutions to bring attention to their province.

In the area of democracy and governance, Horizonte requested that NDI train civic trainers so that they could establish a civic education program. Although 68 participated in the training, only 19 were selected as trainers; participants' limited education restricted their ability to assimilate the information presented. The civic education program would have to be reformulated in order to reach people of this educational level. This was the first time that a civic education training-of-trainers course was organized in rural areas.

Horizonte is now preparing a civic education, human rights and advocacy campaign to improve citizen participation.

Constitutional Process

National Counseling Centre (NCC)

NDI finalized its relationship with a new partner, the National Counseling Centre (NCC), to sponsor a program entitled “*Talk to People, Not in Their Name*,” whose objective is to promote community meetings between deputies and citizens in seven provinces in a period of four months. The preparation of documentation with NCC was easier because most of NCC’s members are former NDI civic education trainers who are familiar with NDI, and also because NCC is based in Luanda, making communications easier.

The project proposes to create political space for debate among the communities, including rural areas. Communities could directly address their representative in the National Assembly and other government officials. The program, conceived to be a multiparty forum, would involve all MPs of all political parties represented in the National Assembly; MPs would not be allowed to campaign on behalf of their parties.

By having direct interaction with their government representatives, citizens can take part in the decision-making process related to the creation of a new constitution. As of December 6, 10 meetings have taken place in the provinces of Luanda, Bengo and Huíla. Meetings had also been held with communities from the Southern provinces of Cunene and Namibe. About 542 people have participated in the debates, including 305 women.

The communities have been active in focusing their comments on the democratic process. Indicative of the impact of the civic education program, those that have benefited from the program tend to ask more concrete questions and to suggest solutions to problems, whereas the others tend to be more passive and limit themselves to listing problems.

Communities are not only voicing their problems, they often present solutions. In many cases they have said they are willing to pay for services as long as the government ensures that there is a provider. In Bengo, one community suggested that it would pay for health services as long a doctor would visit their health post at least twice a month. A common theme mentioned across the country has been the deep frustration with provincial governments. Most citizens have favored the direct election of governors in an effort to foster accountability to the people of the province as opposed to the president.

The communities of the three Southern provinces are interested in the protection of their values and language. They insist on the use of local languages for education and public business, particularly in the administration of justice. They have said that it is a handicap to be judged in the official language, Portuguese, which a significant percentage of the population does not understand.

Although it is early to assess the full impact of the program, the deputies are gaining an understanding of the need to develop more permanent mechanisms of direct engagement with the citizenry and to develop mechanisms to solve their problems.

ALSSA

During this quarter, NDI began work with another new partner, Associação Leonardo Sikufinde Shalom Angola (ALSSA). ALSSA has been involved in civic education and in fostering citizen participation in political processes. NDI was able to conclude the subgrant agreement quickly, since the planned constitutional forum took place from November 28 to 30.

In support of the project of constitutional revision, ALSSA organized a constitutional forum to debate political, social and cultural aspects to be incorporated into the new constitution. It sought to hear input from rural communities, rural leaders and other traditional communities about what should be covered by constitutional law.

The forum took place in Lubango, Huíla province. For the first time in Angola, about 100 rural leaders were invited and were given space to present their views in their language -- Umbundu, Nyaneca, Ganguela, Kwanhama and Olukuvale. ALSSA provided interpreters.

NDI's Isabel Emerson and Padre Pio met with João Lourenço, President of the Constitutional Commission and Secretary General of the MPLA. Lourenço stressed that he thinks that a consultative process about the constitution is premature; the process, he said, should only begin once a draft constitution has been negotiated and prepared by the parties with a seat in the National Assembly. Padre Pio stressed that the objective of the activity was to educate citizens about the process so that, when the commission presents the draft, it will find a knowledgeable population ready to provide serious input to the document. As Secretary General of the party, Lourenço has asked that the provincial representatives of the MPLA be present at the event, but, as president of the Constitutional Commission he would not appoint a representative, and the commission would not speak during the conference (15 minutes of the program had been allocated for them). NDI suggested that the commission present a brief about the process itself (fundamental principles that had been adopted, that deputies had undertaken the process of drafting the document, etc.). At first Lourenço was amenable to the idea, but he later decided against it, arguing that, if he participated in Lubango, he would set a precedent of being able to respond in the rest of the country.

After meeting with Padre Pio, Lourenço stressed that, contrary to popular belief, the commission is not drafting the constitution behind closed doors, but, given that nine parties are negotiating a draft, it would be unfeasible to start any process of consultation with civil society. The experience with the press law would indicate that it pays to involve citizens early in the process, as opposed to presenting a finished product. Padre Pio was encouraged that Lourenço had not declared the event unconstitutional. Padre Pio has been threatened for his stance in favor of giving a voice to the rural communities in the Southern provinces.

NDI also met with the Acting President of the National Assembly, Dino Matross, who was receptive about the conference being organized in Lubango and about work in the provinces. NDI raised the possibility of the National Assembly funding the visits of the deputies to the provinces, but Matross declined, citing budgetary limitations. Matross also informed NDI of a scheduling conflict that might prevent some deputies from attending the forum.

Three days later, official press reiterated Lourenço's position that the constitutional journey was premature and that the presence of members of the National Assembly would set a bad

precedent. Despite this public discouragement, about 300 people participated at the forum, including five deputies, local government representatives, police officers, religious leaders, journalists and traditional representatives of the Nhyanecas, Kuanhamas, Nganguelas, Humbis, and Umbundos of the provinces of Huíla, Cunene and Namibe. A frequently heard comment was their indignation towards the National Assembly. Traditional leaders questioned the fact that the National Assembly travels abroad to learn from other countries and invites foreign experts but does not travel in the country nor listen to their elders.

Given the short time between the confirmation of the subgrant agreement and the date of the forum itself, government contacts were made somewhat on short notice. It is unclear whether earlier contact would have softened the government's reaction, or whether the government could have stopped the activity altogether or would have tried to manipulate the process.

Most of the debates focused on land tenure and traditional law. Participants stressed that they were not against big landowners, but that they would like to see their rights and customs protected: for example, if a landowner enclosed property, the landowner should provide corridors for the cattle to move to traditional pastures and should not close off access to water. Most men favored that the constitution expressly protect traditional law, whereas women, although generally in favor, said they would like to see some of their rights protected and their treatment improved. Of great concern is the treatment accorded to widows: it is customary in the region that, if the husband dies, the husband's family takes everything and the woman still must pay for all that she uses from her husband.

Materials documenting the forum discussions will be prepared and sent to the Constitutional Commission in the form of suggestions.

MIACOOOP

Regarding the media, NDI initiated its program with on-going partners this quarter. The subgrant relationship with MIACOOOP became rocky because of complications related to the congressional hold on funding. After the hold was lifted, NDI decided to extend the agreement as had been agreed prior to the complications. Due to the uncertain funding situation, MIACOOOP's activities had slowed considerably: after an initial phase of setting up and purchasing equipment prior to the hold, MIACOOOP had conducted few other activities, with the exception of the activities related to the press law.

During the last two weeks of October, NDI held extensive meetings with MIACOOOP to develop their program. MIACOOOP proposes to organize a weekly call-in radio debate in Luanda on constitutional matters. In four provinces, MIACOOOP would organize radio debates broadcast over the local independent radio stations.

With assistance from NDI, MIACOOOP has prepared a balanced program of 10 radio debates covering the political spectrum to include important segments of civil society. Luanda Antena Comercial (LAC) is renting two hours per week to MIACOOOP in order to broadcast the program, a small but significant victory because LAC, even though deemed an independent radio station, was often criticized for being an MPLA radio station that would demand to control the agenda and the guests and would screen incoming phone calls. The following topics for discussion have been planned:

1. The Fundamental Principles to Drafting a Constitution; Local Autonomy
2. De-concentration and Administrative and Financial Decentralization
3. Distribution of Wealth in Angola
4. Systems of Government (presidential and semi-presidential) and the Profile of a Good Leader
5. Relationship between Deputy and Citizen
6. The Definition of Angolan nationality and the Demand for Angolan Nationality for the Posts of President of the Republic, National Assembly and Supreme Court
7. The Control of Constitutionality
8. The Equality of Rights, Obligations and Opportunities of all Angolans before the Law
9. The Protection and Promotion of Identity of the Angolan Historical Reality
10. The Relationship Between Power and Opposition

In addition, MIACOOOP plans to conduct debates and radio programs in Benguela, Cabinda, Cunene, Huambo and Huíla provinces, with the same themes as above. Deputies and members of civil society participated in the first radio debate, which took place in Huíla and which touched upon the National Assembly's refusal to attend the forum. Participants also discussed the land issue and advised that this issue be dealt with soon, citing the example of Zimbabwe as a clear warning of what could happen in Angola. Due to complications with the electrical power, only five listeners were able to call in to the program.

MIACOOOP also assigned a journalist to cover constitutional activity in Lubango; material gathered will be used to prepare a program covering the event in local languages.

Catholic University

NDI finalized its agreement this quarter with the Law School of the Catholic University, which is organizing a week-long Constitutional Forum in January comprising two phases. In the first phase, international academics will be invited to debate the following key constitutional themes: (1) the French system; (2) the American system; (3) the role of the Constitutional Court in South Africa; (4) local power in Cape Verde; and (5) the new African constitutions. In the second phase, Angolan academics would analyze the constitutional proposals submitted to the Commission by nine parliamentary parties. The analysis will be structured around (1) the Fundamental Principles; (2) The Fundamental Rights; (3) the Economic Constitution; (4) the System of Government; (5) Local Power; and (6) the Guarantees of the Constitution. The target audience to be invited will be presidents of parties with seats in Parliament, churches, government, embassies, universities and associations.

NDI plans to bring a judge from the South African Constitutional Court and Ms. Akande, a renowned constitutional expert in Nigeria who has served on two previous constitutional drafting committees. Akande also assisted in the drafting of constitutions for a few other African countries and has worked in academia for over 20 years, serving as Dean of the Faculty of Law at the University of Lagos and Vice Chancellor of Lagos State University. She currently heads a prominent women's NGO called the Women, Law and Development Center.

Bar Association

NDI organized the final debate of a series entitled "Citizen Participation in the Constitution Making Process" with the Angolan Bar Association on the theme of "Guarantees of

Constitutionality,” with a well-known speaker, Professor Rui Ferreira, President Eduardo dos Santos’ lawyer and said to be influential in shaping views in the majority party.

The debate was very heated, and the main issue was the legality of the present National Assembly; most participants argued that the Assembly no longer has a legal mandate since the deputies were elected in 1992 for a four-year term. At the heart of the matter is the widespread feeling that this National Assembly has not been able to check the excessive power of the Executive.

V. RESULTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

NDI’s program produced the following results and accomplishments, presented according to USAID’s intermediate results (IR) statements:

IR 2.1. Greater availability of information on key issues

- Three sub-grantee organizations – the National Foundation for Democracy (FND), the Children Support Group (GAC) and the Organization for Community Development (OADEC) – trained a combined total of 13,126 citizens in citizen rights and responsibilities.
- A civic education manual in Umbundo, the major language in the provinces of Huambo and Kuito, was developed and used by sub-grantee GAC.
- NDI trained 19 civic trainers in response to a request from Horizonte, an NGO based in Bengo province that is preparing a civic education, human rights and advocacy campaign to improve citizen participation. This was the first time that a civic education training of trainers has been organized in rural areas.
- NDI partner Catholic University planned a constitutional forum for January 2001 that would bring together party presidents, government officials, and leaders from churches, universities and associations to discuss different models of constitutional systems and to analyze the constitutional proposals of the nine parties.
- With assistance from NDI, partner MIACOOOP has planned a series of 10 radio debates on constitutional matters. Luanda Antena Comercial, often criticized for close ties to the MPLA, has agreed to rent broadcast time to MIACOOOP for the series.
- MIACOOOP assigned a journalist to cover constitutional activity in Lubango.

IR 2.2. Improved civic advocacy on key issues

- As a result of training by sub-grantee GAC, citizens have become more active in calling for protection of their rights, as well as for elections of previously non-elected posts.
- As a result of civic education work by sub-grantee OADEC in the municipalities of Cacuaco, Sambizanga and Cazenga, groups are being organized to monitor police and human rights abuse. In one case, the police staff of one locality were changed, and some of their commanders are facing disciplinary processes, following citizen involvement. In another case, a publicly built school was returned to public service following citizen outcry over the school’s suspicious privatization.

- Communities of the three southern provinces, interested in the protection of their values and language, have participated in community meetings with representatives in the National Assembly organized by partner NCC.
- Representatives from national associations joined local chiefs, church leaders and lawyers for a three-day conference to share their views on the future constitution – the first time that the communities of Namibe, Huíla and Cunene provinces were able to address a multi-faceted audience about their problems, using their own language.
- In Kuito, the provincial capital of Bié province, a visible civic movement of NGOs, associations and churches has arisen following civic education projects there by sub-grantee GAC.

IR 2.3. Improved citizen-government collaboration to promote democratic processes

- Local chiefs participated in a three-day conference to share their views on the future constitution; previously, the voice of local authorities has been subjugated to the central power.
- Some 100 rural leaders were invited to provide input in their own languages to the constitutional forum organized with partner ALSSA. The forum was attended by 300 people, including five deputies, local government representatives and police officers, as well as religious leaders, journalists and traditional representatives of the Nhyanecas, Kuanhamas, Nganguelas, Humberia and Umbundos.
- The Secretary-General of the MPLA and the Acting President of the National Assembly each met with NDI staff to discuss the involvement of civil society in the constitutional reform process.
- NDI partner Catholic University planned a constitutional forum for January 2001 that would bring together party presidents, government officials, and leaders from churches, universities and associations to discuss different models of constitutional systems and to analyze the constitutional proposals of the nine parties.
- NCC conducted 10 community meetings between deputies and citizens, the first time since the 1992 elections that deputies have been actively engaged in meeting their constituents. The meetings involved some 542 people, including 305 women.

Enhanced participation of women in political process and politics.

- Women participants in the constitutional forum organized with partner ALSSA voiced concern that a new constitution address issues of women's treatment without detracting from traditional law; the traditional treatment of widows was cited as being one concern.
- The number of women participants in civic education projects demonstrates enhanced participation of women in political process and politics:

<i>NGO</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Total</i>
FND	896	1,504	2,400
OADEC	1,880	1,920	3,800
GAC	1,005	1,097	2,102
Luanda	402	615	1,017
Bié	266	248	514
Huambo	337	234	571
Horizonte	16	52	68
Philanthropic groups: National Counseling Centre Ajad Humanos Human Right groups of Prenda, Sao Paulo and Fatima	2,356	2,400	4,756
TOTAL	6,153	6,973	13,126

VI. PERSONNEL

Given complications in the program and temporary suspension of both funds and activities, NDI did not renew the contracts of two staff, a driver and the logistics assistant. NDI hired a junior administrative assistant to provide administrative back-up. At present the office has the following staff:

Isabel Emerson	Country Director
Augusto Santana	Program Officer
Mauricio de Oliveira	Finance and Logistics Officer
António Joquim	Administrative Assistant
António Figueira	Driver and Administrative Assistant