
Namibia and Angola: Analysis of a symbiotic relationship

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Introduction

Namibia and Angola have much in common, but, at the same time, they differ greatly. For example, both countries fought colonial oppression and are now independent; however, one went through civil war, while the other had no such experience. Other similarities include the fact that the former military groups (Angola's *Movimento Popular para la Liberação de Angola*, or MPLA, and Namibia's South West Africa People's Organisation, or SWAPO) are now in power in both countries. At one time, the two political movements shared a common ideological platform and lent each other support during their respective liberation struggles. The two countries are also neighbours, with a 1,376-km common border that extends from the Atlantic Ocean in the east to the Zambezi River in the west. Families and communities on both sides of the international boundary share resources, communicate, trade and engage in other types of exchange. All these facts point to a relationship between the two countries that goes back many decades, and continues strongly today. What defines this relationship and what are the crucial elements that keep it going?

Angola lies on the Atlantic coast of south-western Africa. It is richly endowed with natural resources and measures approximately 1,246,700 km² in land surface area. Populated with more than 14 million people, Angola was a former Portuguese colony. Portuguese explorers first came to Angola in 1483. Their conquest and exploitation became concrete when Paulo Dias de Novais erected a colonial settlement in Luanda in 1575. The Berlin West Africa Conference (1884–1885) apportioned Angola to Portugal, since the Portuguese had already established themselves there. The further entrenchment of Portuguese rule ultimately led to the destruction of traditional kingdoms. This was partly accomplished by the practice of divide and rule used various European powers in their conquest of Africa. As a consequence of the Berlin West Africa Conference, artificial borders were drawn up by colonial powers resulting in the fragmentation of most African societies – Angola being no exception.

The indigenous groups launched a brave resistance against the Portuguese from the 1500s to the 1900s, when the Portuguese finally gained full military control of the whole of Angola, thus effectively imposing and enforcing their colonial policy.¹

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1 Birmingham (1966); Heywood (1987); Malaquias (2007); Pitcher (2012).

Angola finally gained its independence in 1975, after 500 years of colonialism and 14 years of armed struggle between the Portuguese and three Angolan nationalist movements, namely the MPLA mentioned earlier, as well as the Frente Nacional para a Libertação de Angola (FNLA, or National Front for the Liberation of Angola) and the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA, or National Union for the Total Independence of Angola). However, the three national movements could not reconcile their aspirations for national power, and plunged the country into war. Eventually, in the early 1990s, due to the end of the Cold War and the changing geopolitical landscape, the MPLA and UNITA signed a peace agreement that paved the way for the 1992 elections. Although the international observers pronounced the elections as generally free and fair, UNITA did not accept the results and launched a final but more destructive phase of the civil war. Only after their leader Jonas Savimbi died in combat in February 2002 did UNITA return to the peace process laid out in 1994 under the Lusaka Protocol. The war came to an official end in November 2002, after the Lusaka Protocol was fully implemented and UNITA was demilitarised. During the 27 years of civil strife, however, over a million people had been killed, and had generated extremely bad social and economic conditions.²

As regards Angola's relationship with Namibia, it has always been one of peace. Nonetheless, it needs to be noted that peacemaking is necessitated by conflict. Although economic ties have existed between Angola and Namibia, it does not mean a lack of communication about inherent corruption, illegal deals and other inconvenient events. Political and military cooperation between the two countries has always been there, but it existed alongside diplomatic misunderstandings and disagreements – especially during the Angolan civil war. This leads us to understand the position that prevails in the world today: that *conflict* has become a frequent word in most reports on contemporary challenges facing the African continent. Indeed, this is certainly the case for the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Region. Put differently, the SADC Region is no stranger to symbiotic relationships. The Region has witnessed conflicts of the worst kind, which have left negative footprints in the family and public life of its inhabitants. It is for the same reason that, when SADC was established in 1992 as a successor to the Southern African Development Coordinating Conference (SADCC), the promotion of peace was one of the key considerations in formulating its mandate.³

This paper constitutes a first attempt to construct the relationship between Namibia and Angola. It also acknowledges from the outset that many important issues that maintain this relationship happen outside the public realm. However, this will not frustrate our effort to do justice to the relationship. The paper argues that the bonds between Namibia and Angola are not being exploited effectively, i.e. in a way that can fully benefit the two parties in the longer term. The discussion further contends that the lack of initiative in

2 See Von Krosigk & Bösl (2006:29f).

3 Nathan (2006).

respect of taking the relationship to a new level frustrates its progress. As a result, cracks in some elements of the relationship, such as commerce and trade, are slowly becoming visible.

The paper's main focus is on bilateral and party-political cooperation. Firstly, the paper looks specifically at the pre-Independence relationship between SWAPO and Angolan political parties. Secondly, it considers the international environment, with particular emphasis on the situation in Angola and the efforts of the United Nations (UN). Thirdly, the paper elaborates on the post-Independence relationship with particular focus on trade matters. Fourthly, the challenges facing trade between Namibia and Angola are considered, after which alternative cooperation frameworks between the two countries are examined in a fifth section. A sixth section looks at Angolan refugees in Namibia who were recently repatriated, while a seventh and concluding section offers some recommendations on the way forward.

Historical ties

General

The political relationship between Namibia and Angola became very intense during the Angolan conflict. Namibia's peacemaking efforts in Angola underlined its belief that peacemaking was fundamental to maintaining security in the SADC Region. Indeed, for any regional community, peacemaking is a necessity, a common good, and an ingredient for maintaining, sustaining and guaranteeing security in such a community.⁴ Peacemaking is also a reactive measure that seeks to create an enabling environment for conflict settlement and post-conflict reconstruction.⁵ Studies on contemporary peacemaking call for a need to rethink and generate a proper understanding of the phenomenon and of peace processes because peacemaking is a means to an end and not an end in itself.⁶ Indeed, peacemaking needs to be studied and researched if rethinking and addressing current challenges is the focus.

Namibia itself suffered more than 100 years of brutal colonialism and apartheid. Thus, it is a post-conflict reconstruction society that is of interest to those concerned with issues of peace, conflict and post-conflict reconstruction. Founding President Sam Nujoma put it as follows:⁷

4 Nathan (2004).

5 Du Pisani (2010).

6 One example in Africa are the ongoing conflicts in the Great Lakes region, especially as regards the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

7 Nujoma (2009).

At the same time hundreds of Angolans were maimed by bombs and landmines, numerous others were displaced because of the war, but the Angolan people and the MPLA government were not cowed down by this brutality and stood firm in solidarity with Namibian political and military figures who fought for independence until final victory was achieved on 21st March 1990.

The above describes the extent of sacrifice by the Angolan people for their Namibian neighbours and Namibians' appreciation of the ultimate price that many Angolans paid in order for Namibia to gain its independence. This underlines the deep-rooted trust between the two nations.

The above statement also symbolises the spirit of African brotherhood that developed and prevailed strongly during most of the liberation years.⁸ This brotherhood and quest for independence was accelerated by Ghana's independence in 1957, as it broke the backbone of colonialism and galvanised Africa and others to realise that independence was near. Among these was Albert Einstein:⁹

Today we must abandon competition and secure cooperation. This must be the central fact in all our considerations of international affairs; otherwise we face certain disaster. Past thinking and methods did not prevent world wars. Future thinking must prevent wars ... The stakes are immense, the task colossal, the time is short. But we may hope – we must hope – that man's own creation, man's own genius, will not destroy him.

For Angola, the spirit of African brotherhood was realised when, after her independence in 1975, she offered to host the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO),¹⁰ and allowed the movement – through its military wing, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN) – to use Angola as a base from which to launch its guerrilla war against the apartheid¹¹ South African regime. This was in addition to the provision of political

8 Prominent African personalities concurred. These included Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah, who made the following statement at the first conference of independent African states on 15 April 1958: "Today we are one. If the past the Sahara divided us, today it unites us and an injury to one is an injury to all" (see <http://libyadiary.files.wordpress.com/2011/09/46691356-axioms-kwame-nkrumah.pdf>, last accessed 14 November 2013). Similarly, Patrice Lumumba (1961:19–21), the late Prime Minister of the Congo (today's Democratic Republic of the Congo), said the following at the opening of the All-African conference in Leopoldville: "An independent and united Africa will make a positive contribution to world peace".

9 Albert Einstein (1879–1955), see http://www.refspace.com/quotes/The_New_York_Times, last accessed 16 February 2012.

10 SWAPO was a mass political movement that came into being on 19 April 1960. It took over from its forerunner, the Ovamboland People's Organisation (OPO) formed in 1958 by Andimba Toivo ya Toivo.

11 *Apartheid* is an Afrikaans word meaning "separateness" or "separation". A racist ideology underlay the apartheid policy introduced by the National Party-led government in South Africa in 1948. In 1966, via UN General Assembly Resolution 2202 A (XXI) of 16 December 1966, *apartheid* was defined as a crime against humanity. In 1984, the UN Security Council endorsed

and material support to SWAPO as assistance towards the attainment of Namibia's independence, which was finally achieved in 1990.

Furthermore, Angola and Namibia have deep-rooted cultural,¹² political,¹³ economic, social and historical ties dating back many years. Angola is geographically strategic to Namibia, and vice versa. The political parties in power in both countries are seen as long-time allies who, at one point, shared an ideological platform and approach to their respective liberation struggles. With Namibia finally gaining its independence in 1990, the two states established diplomatic representations and improved mutual relations. Emerging from decades of war, Angola is now the biggest market for any trade in southern Africa because of its reconstruction programmes, and offers Namibia many opportunities for export. Today, Angola makes up 10% of Namibia's total exports, although this figure is growing as more opportunities open up and the two governments improve areas of bilateral cooperation.¹⁴ Current agreements between Angola and Namibia include the areas of trade,¹⁵ health¹⁶ and crime prevention.¹⁷ Angola also registers as the third-largest export destination for Namibia after South Africa and the United Kingdom (UK).¹⁸

Moreover, Angola and Namibia are both members of the same regional and international bodies, such as SADC and the World Trade Organization (WTO). This demonstrates a vision of working together towards achieving common objectives via regional and global platforms. Such objectives includes the development of a better regional infrastructure –

the aforementioned declaration via Resolution 556 (1984) of 23 October 1984. Apartheid ended in 1994 when South Africa gained its freedom from white control and domination.

- 12 Some families and communities living on either side of the border share certain cultural and traditional practices.
- 13 SWAPO's alliances and cooperation with the MPLA and UNITA, respectively, will be discussed later herein.
- 14 Post-Independence Namibia has seen an increase in economic activities with Angola. By 2010, Angola represented 10% of Namibia's total exports (<http://www.trademarksa.org/node/1052>, last accessed 7 August 2013). Angola remains the third biggest export destination for Namibia's products, totalling N\$3 billion in 2012, after South Africa with N\$7 billion and the UK with N\$5 billion (*Annual Trade Statistics Bulletin 2012*, pp 10–11; available at http://www.nsa.org.na/files/downloads/9ae_Annual%20Trade%20Statistics%20Bulletin%202012.pdf, last accessed 6 August 2013).
- 15 Bilateral Agreement on Trade and Economics (BATE, 2005) and Bilateral Agreement on the Reciprocal Promotion and Protection of Investments (BARPPI, 2006).
- 16 Both countries are part of the subregional initiative to eliminate malaria (known as *Elimination 8*), as well as being part of the Trans-Kunene Malaria Initiative (TKMI). The initiative is an alliance between Namibia and Angola to work on malaria control along their common border
- 17 See the Angola–Namibia Joint Commission on Defence and Security. The Commission discusses matters that concern safety and security, the free movement of people across the border – especially border residents, and the prevention of crime.
- 18 See http://www.nsa.org.na/files/downloads/9ae_Annual%20Trade%20Statistics%20Bulletin%202012.pdf, last accessed 6 August 2013.

which Angola desperately needs; regional economic integration; and, most importantly, regional peace and security – if regional stability and economic growth are to be achieved. Hence, the relationship between the two countries is a strategically important one, characterised by friendship and cooperation.

The pre-Independence relationship between SWAPO and Angola's political parties

After SWAPO was founded in 1960, it used its first years to consolidate support within Namibian society and to strategise on how to gain independence for the country. This strategy soon contained four parts:

- Political mobilisation at home
- The diplomatic front
- The education front, and
- The military front.

The military front was the one that gave rise to most of Namibia's connections to Angola.¹⁹

In the beginning, SWAPO sent its combatants to Algeria, Egypt and Ghana to be trained. To gain further expertise, some combatants went to what was then the Soviet Union and to the People's Republic of China. Upon their return, the combatants trained others in turn in Tanzania. In 1966, the first military base was established in Namibia's north-west. In 1968, another was opened in the Caprivi in the east. However, due to the geopolitical position of the country, it was not possible to sustain the liberation struggle in north-western Namibia because it was cut off from all supply routes and was located between hostile and unliberated neighbours.

After the military coup in Portugal on 15 April 1974, which led to a Portuguese withdrawal from their colony, Angola, there was a fundamental shift in the realm of possibilities. Now Namibians could leave the country in significant numbers through Angola to join the movement there and in Zambia. Thus, it became possible not only to augment SWAPO's military operations, arms supplies and, most importantly, PLAN itself, but it also offered SWAPO members the opportunity of furthering their academic, military and professional training in China, Cuba, the Soviet Union, the UK, and the United States of America (USA).²⁰ Another consequence was that the Namibian liberation struggle and the civil war that broke out in Angola became closely interwoven and, in some senses, tangled.

¹⁹ SWAPO Party of Namibia ([n.d.]b).

²⁰ (ibid.).

However, even before Angola's independence, SWAPO had established contact with UNITA, the main political movement fighting the Portuguese. Their relationship was described as fraternal, despite SWAPO having pro-Soviet tendencies. The bond was allegedly a natural one: rather than being based on political, social and economic aspects of a fundamental ideology, it rested on common regional and ethnic affinity, culture, and history. For example, some SWAPO members had also been part of the Union of the Peoples of Angola, which was the first political organisation established in that country, and vice versa, as their members were also part of SWAPO.

UNITA's former Secretary-General, Miguel N'Zau Puna, in 1996 described the bond between themselves and SWAPO as a tactical alliance between the two parties prior to 1976. Indeed, it was through SWAPO's assistance that Jonas Savimbi – UNITA's subsequent supreme leader – returned to Angola from Cairo, Egypt, in July 1968.²¹ In the late 1960s and 1970s, exiled Namibians in refugee camps were also heard singing songs about UNITA and Jonas Savimbi in a show of support. From time to time, SWAPO also helped UNITA receive weapons because, unlike SWAPO, Savimbi's movement was not recognised by the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) at the time. SWAPO veteran Helao Shityuwete remembered SWAPO's very close relationship with UNITA, recalling that, prior to the Namibians' armed struggle, UNITA members were accommodated by SWAPO in Tanzania, wore SWAPO military uniforms there, and underwent military training with them.²²

Retired Namibian Police Commissioner for Northern Namibia, Nghiyalasha Hauilyondjaba, declared in an interview that he was SWAPO's adviser to PLAN Commanders Matias Ndakolo and Fellep Nandenga, who operated from UNITA's headquarters in Moxico Province from 1973. At the time, SWAPO sent Hauilyondjaba with a small group of supporters to establish a new front in northern Namibia, through Angola. Cooperation between UNITA and SWAPO began because of their close proximity and, in 1974, Hauilyondjaba became SWAPO's representative in respect of communications with UNITA. During this time, PLAN members fought together with UNITA against the Portuguese, but not against the MPLA, because SWAPO's soldiers had been instructed not to interfere in the relations among the three Angolan rebel movements. However, SWAPO weapons were often stored at UNITA bases, so it is possible that UNITA troops made use of them²³ against the MPLA.²⁴

Upon Angola's independence in 1975, the situation changed radically. The Cold War era still reigned, and its participants lost no time in backing the different Angolan parties to

21 On his return to Angola, Savimbi was armed with a "Soviet-made Tokarev pistol given to [him] in Dar es Salaam by Sam Nujoma" (Brikland 1986:35). On Swedish contacts with UNITA and on Savimbi's return, see Sellström (2002:248).

22 Lush (2011a).

23 (ibid.).

24 Mietzner (2011).

pursue their own quests for power. Thus, UNITA began to be supported by SWAPO's adversary, South Africa's apartheid regime. By 1976, people like Hauliyondjaba, who were located at UNITA bases, gradually became aware of the life-threatening presence of UNITA's new ally. Still under the protection of Jonas Savimbi, the SWAPO group played one side against the other²⁵ and managed to escape to SWAPO bases in Angola's Cunene Province during 1976, after still having served as SWAPO representatives to UNITA despite their own increasing contacts with the MPLA. However, after UNITA attacked a SWAPO Land Rover near Ondjiva, the battle lines were drawn between these two movements as well.²⁶

It is also alleged that it was not only UNITA's alliance to South Africa that led to the breakdown of relationships, but also that, during the chaotic phase of transition in Angola before the MPLA's coming to power in November 1975, —²⁷

SWAPO hedged its bets at first. Its ultimate change of allegiance to the MPLA was not just a result of UNITA's siding with South Africa, but also the MPLA's rapid ascendancy once it received military backing from the Soviet Union and Cuba.

So the feeling of betrayal after 1976 was mutual, as SWAPO then sided with UNITA's foes, namely the MPLA, the Soviet Union and Cuba, and, thus, became UNITA's fourth enemy.²⁸

Even before SWAPO's shift in allegiance to the MPLA, however, the situation within Namibia's liberation party had itself become more complex. The young Namibians who had been going into exile since 1974 had a more socialist – even communist – attitude, since they had received military training in the Soviet Union; this was another reason why SWAPO began to favour the MPLA above UNITA.²⁹

In 1976, there were also mostly young PLAN fighters who demanded more democracy and accountability from the movement's leadership, and opposed its cooperation with UNITA. Their protests caused them to be detained or even killed. Ironically, this was the fate of those who had been first to call for an alliance with MPLA – a move which was in fact made soon afterwards. Today, even those who were young and, often, radicalised during the political unrest in Namibia claim that the current SWAPO leadership should occupy itself with and clarify these past events.

25 In other words, they were manipulated by their enemies and they started to compete against each other although they were 'friends'. This benefited their enemies, such as the South Africans and the MPLA.

26 Lush (2011b).

27 (ibid.).

28 (ibid.).

29 (ibid.).

In 1976, the OAU recognised Angola's new MPLA-led government. Zambia closed all UNITA bases on their soil, while SWAPO moved its headquarters from Lusaka to Luanda. There, SWAPO adopted the Marxist line of its new allies.³⁰

During the SWAPO–MPLA alliance, SWAPO was provided with material support and shelter as the Angolan Government had offered its protection. SWAPO's headquarters were in Luanda, but it also had some camps in southern Angola. PLAN maintained command centres in Luanda and Lubango, as well as training camps in the Benguela, Cuanza Sul and Uilah Provinces. During this time, the MPLA's military wing did not conduct pre-emptive attacks south of the Angolan border. South Africa, on the other hand, in order to ensure UNITA's success, combat SWAPO and prevent the influence of the Soviet Union and Cuba from driving further south, repeatedly invaded and intervened in Angola, e.g. by attacking SWAPO camps there.

SWAPO recruits were also provided with military training at Angolan and Cuban facilities, and were engaged in battle with UNITA and South Africa from bases in Angola and Namibia. In the late 1980s many exiled Namibians, being refugees in Angola, backed the MPLA's military wing and, later, its official defence force, namely the *Forças Armadas Populares de Libertação de Angola* (FAPLA, People's Armed Forces for the Liberation of Angola).

Thus, some of the non-ideological reasons for the MPLA's support of SWAPO were allegedly to gain a friendly next-door neighbour – not only to prevent UNITA from using Namibian territory for their purposes,³¹ but also to remove the threat of the South African apartheid regime at its southern border with Namibia.

The international environment

The situation in Angola

As stated previously, although South Africa's border war against SWAPO raged from 1966 to 1989, it was not until Angola's independence in 1975 which followed the military coup in Portugal and the resultant withdrawal of the colonising powers from Angola that a change in South African policies took place. The emergent chaos of three independence movements struggling for power – especially the discovery of Cuban forces in Angola, posing the threat of a communist neighbouring state – persuaded South Africa to take action against the MPLA and SWAPO and in collaboration with UNITA, the FNLA and

30 (ibid.).

31 (ibid.:195).

their allies, with the support of the USA.³² But there is also an argument to the contrary – at least in respect of the USA's involvement:³³

Cuba decided to send troops to Angola on November 4, 1975, in response to the South African invasion of that country, rather than vice versa as the Ford administration persistently claimed. ... The first Cuban military advisers did not arrive in Angola until late August 1975, and the Cubans did not participate in the fighting until late October, after South Africa had invaded.

Although it was claimed that the Cubans just began arriving in 1975 to fight against South Africa, as far back as 1966, Angola had received instructions to continue fighting the South Africans because of an old relationship between the then leader of the MPLA, Agostinho Neto, and the then President of Cuba, Fidel Castro.³⁴ From 1975 to 1976, therefore, Cuba sent 30,000 of its nationals to Angola as military support.³⁵ In addition, Cuba supplied Angola with civilian workers for construction, agriculture, and industry, as well as several thousand teachers and physicians.³⁶ The two anti-MPLA movements received material and military support from their Western allies. Thus, UNITA was able to build a self-reliance structure that was unparalleled in Africa. Furthermore, South Africa acted as a conduit to the outside world for trade in Angola's natural resources, including diamonds, ivory and timber. By the mid-1980s, South Africa's military intelligence was already supporting UNITA by way of an annual budget of R400 million (roughly US\$200 million).³⁷

After the military coup in Portugal in 1974, the MPLA and the FNLA had an estimated 10,000 guerrillas each, and UNITA had about 2,000. By November 1975, the MPLA and the FNLA had increased their military numbers to 27,000 and 22,000, respectively, while UNITA had some 8,000 to 10,000 soldiers by then. Furthermore, some 2,000–3,000 Cubans had arrived in immediate support of the MPLA, while 4,000–5,000 South African troops had intervened on behalf of UNITA. After that, the MPLA was heavily supported, especially by the Soviet Union, Cuba and other socialist countries. Between 1982 and 1986, they delivered military equipment worth US\$4.9 billion in today's terms, which represented 90% of Angola's arms imports. Cuba's assistance constituted mostly technical and human resources, such as pilots and engineers, but they also provided combat support and training advisory services. In addition, albeit only to a limited extent, after 1976 the Cuban nationals participated in ground and air combat, although most were deployed in the motorised infantry, air defence and artillery units rather than being engaged in direct combat.

32 See <http://www.saairforce.co.za/the-airforce/history/saaf/the-border-war>, last accessed 3 November 2011.

33 Kornbluh (2011).

34 Steenkamp (1989).

35 Kornbluh (2011).

36 Smaldone (1989:199).

37 Potgieter (2000:260); in today's terms, this figure could be around US\$265 million.

Furthermore, Cuban experts also provided SWAPO and South Africa's African National Congress (ANC) with operational and technical support within Angola.³⁸

By 1982 there were 35,000 Cubans in Angola, of which about 27,000 were combat troops and the remainder advisers, instructors, and technicians. In 1985 their strength increased to 40,000, in 1986 to 45,000, and in 1988 to nearly 50,000. All told, more than 300,000 Cuban soldiers had served in Angola since 1975. Angola paid for the services of the Cubans at an estimated rate of US\$300 million to US\$600 million annually.³⁹

By mid-1988, one fifth of Cuba's entire military were deployed in Angola.⁴⁰

UN involvement

Before SWAPO's call to arms in 1966, the international community had already begun to engage itself with southern Africa. In 1966, the UN General Assembly had terminated South Africa's mandate over the territory, and had established the United Nations Council for South West Africa in 1967 (renamed *UN Council for Namibia* a year later), but South Africa refused to accept the UN decision. In 1970, the UN Security Council declared all actions taken by South Africa concerning Namibia after the termination of its mandate illegal and invalid, and demanded that elections be held for the territory in 1976. In that same year, the UN General Assembly also decided that all discussions were to be held with SWAPO, which the UN officially recognised as the sole and authentic representative of the people of Namibia. In 1978, a proposal was issued to the Security Council according to which elections for a Constituent Assembly under the auspices of the UN should take place. A decision was taken in this regard, recorded as Resolution 435, which also established a UN Transition Assistance Group (UNTAG) to aid Namibia in its eventual emergence as a fledgling democracy. At first, South Africa accepted the proposed plan and took part in a pre-implementation meeting in Geneva in 1981. However, South Africa did not agree to a ceasefire – which was one of the fundamental conditions imposed by the UN for the implementation of Resolution 435. On the other hand, the conditions set by South Africa were not accepted by the UN, especially those making the withdrawal of Cuban troops from Angola a prerequisite for Namibia's independence.⁴¹

With the rising pressure on South Africa to resolve the 'Namibian issue', a withdrawal from Angola and a possible independence were negotiated, and an initial ceasefire was set for 31 March 1984. However, because SWAPO and UNITA were not represented at the negotiations and had not signed any ceasefire agreement or truce, accusations of ceasefire violations against SWAPO and UNITA by South Africa and Angola remained.

38 Smaldone (1989:210, 224ff).

39 (ibid:226).

40 (ibid.).

41 UN (2011).

South Africa accused Angola of not being able to control UNITA, and Angola accused South Africa of not being able to control SWAPO. After two South African soldiers were killed and one was captured on 22 May 1985, negotiations on a troop withdrawal and Namibia's independence in terms of Resolution 435 were suspended. Nonetheless, by 1987, all the outstanding issues concerning the UN peace plan had been resolved – except for the troop withdrawal.⁴²

In November 1987, after South Africa's enormous renewed deployment of militarily-oriented infrastructure and logistics in northern Namibia, constituting the most ambitious offensive since 1975, Cuba decided to reinforce its troops in Angola to counter South Africa's commitment. The subsequent defeat of South African troops at the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in March 1988 led to a crisis within South Africa. By May 1988, Pretoria was back at the negotiation table in London, trying to cover up the retreat of their defeated troops in Angola, and showing itself willing to grant Namibia its independence under the terms of Resolution 435.⁴³ South Africa had finally begun to show it was serious about resolution of an intractable conflict.

In December 1988, a tripartite agreement between Angola, Cuba and South Africa was achieved, conciliated by the USA. Furthermore, Cuba also signed an agreement with Angola on the withdrawal of all its troops, a process which was controlled by the UN Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM). These events opened the gates to peace and to Namibia's transition to independence through free and fair elections in March 1990.⁴⁴

The post-Independence relationship: A look at economic trends and cooperation

By the time of Namibia's independence in 1990, Angola was still at war. The civil war between UNITA and now MPLA government forces continued throughout the 1990s. It was not until 2002 that a real opportunity for peace arose in Angola. In February that year, when Jonas Savimbi, the leader of the UNITA movement, was killed, the war ended after more than 27 years, marking the beginning of political stability, peace and a return to normalcy for Angola. Since 2002, the country has been peaceful. In 2008, Angola held its first elections. The MPLA won, with 82% of the votes, with the rest going to opposition parties. UNITA's share of power was reduced to only 16 parliamentary seats – from the 70 seats it had won in the 2008 elections.⁴⁵

42 Potgieter (2000:260).

43 Brittain (1988:119–122).

44 UN (2011).

45 In the latest legislative elections in Angola, which took place on 31 August 2012, the MPLA won 71.84% of the vote (175 seats), and UNITA 18.66% (32 seats). As with the previous two elections in Angola's troubled history, at this one, too, observers raised their concerns about alleged irregularities; see <http://www.chathamhouse.org/research/africa/current-projects/>

The delay of peace in Angola for almost 12 years after Namibia's independence in 1990 also delayed the formalisation of relations between the two countries at the diplomatic, economic and social level. Nonetheless, in September 1990, steps had been taken to establish a Joint Commission of Cooperation (JCC) with the aim of looking at areas of economic interest to both countries. The JCC laid down the foundation for and considered instruments which later translated into joint agreements on trade and economic issues. The JCC's wide focus also resulted in formal bilateral cooperation on areas such as tourism and energy.

However, due to a number of factors, it took long to conclude and sign bilateral agreements after the JCC's establishment. These factors included the following:

- Angola was emerging from a long and devastating war and, therefore, faced competing priorities and challenges
- Economic and other challenges in Angola after the return of peace in 2002 demanded urgent attention, leaving little time to consider less pressing bilateral economic agreements
- A lack of infrastructure such as telecommunications in Angola posed significant challenges and caused delays in communication, and
- The language barrier and other technicalities played a part in prolonging the conclusion of bilateral agreements.

Despite these shortcomings, in May 2003, Namibia and Angola concluded an Agreement on Reciprocal Protection and Promotion of Investments, which was ratified in 2005. The Agreement seeks to protect investments, and create favourable conditions for businesses in both countries.

In March 2004, the two countries signed an Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation, also ratified in 2005. The agreement was necessitated by Namibia's membership of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), whose 2002 Agreement prohibits its members from entering into bilateral trade agreements with third parties if such agreements have implications on SACU's common external tariff.⁴⁶ The bilateral agreement is a most-favoured-nation (MFN) type of cooperation, but it does not automatically grant any preferential treatment to products traded between the two countries.⁴⁷ The MFN clause affects the following:

- Customs duties and other charges or taxes of any kind imposed on or in connection with the importation or exportation of goods or the international transfer of payments in connection with such importation or exportation
- The methods of levying such duties, charges or taxes

angolas-2012-election, last accessed 20 August 2013.

46 Article 31, Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation.

47 Such treatment is to be negotiated and agreed among the parties within the context of their cooperation framework.

- Legal provisions pertaining to customs clearance, transit and storage
- Internal taxes and other levies of any kind applicable to imported goods
- Legal provisions pertaining to the sale, purchase, transport, distribution or use of goods in the domestic market, and
- Matters relating to the issue of import or export licences.

In the above matters, any advantage, concession or exemption granted by a contracting party to any product originating in, or destined for, any third country has to be accorded to a similar product originating in, or destined for, the territory of the other contracting party. Furthermore, Article 10 of the Agreement provides for the establishment of a Joint Trade Committee, with the primary objective of dealing with matters of mutual interest with regard to trade and investment. The Committee was officially inaugurated in December 2006 by the two countries' commerce, trade and industry Ministers, who also launched its terms of reference. The Committee meets twice a year on a rotational basis between the two countries. Its terms of reference are currently under review, following a request by Angola in 2008.

Moreover, the Namibia Investment Centre and the Angolan National Agency for Investment established a Joint Cooperation Agreement in 2008 and are working on giving it more substance. This Agreement will enable the two respective national investment arms to identify as well as implement joint programmes and projects.

In 2009, Namibia and Angola also concluded an Economic Partnership Agreement. This agreement will promote and facilitate bilateral cross-border trade. Furthermore, Namibia and Angola are working on a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the promotion of small- and medium-scale enterprise development.

The objective of all of the above agreements and bodies is to ease trade between the two neighbours, but technical hitches and other problems that hamper progress on them are taking painfully long to address.

Challenges to trade between Namibia and Angola

Angola continues to be a significant trade partner for Namibia. However, Namibian products entering the Angolan market are subjected to tariff peaks as well as non-tariff barriers.⁴⁸ These barriers include undue administrative procedures at border points,

48 This goes against the spirit of trade liberalisation efforts in the SADC Region and negatively affects intra-SADC trade. Article 6 of the SADC Protocol on Trade stipulates that members are to adopt measures to eliminate non-tariff barriers and to refrain from imposing new ones. The same Article stipulates the following: "Except as provided for in this Protocol, Member States shall, in relation to intra-SADC trade: Adopt policies and implement measures to eliminate all existing non-tariff barriers and refrain from imposing any new non-tariff barriers".

the introduction of new trade measures, import bans, and other bottlenecks.⁴⁹ Also, in 2012, Angola introduced an import control measure on various goods which negatively affected Namibia's cement exports, among others, to Angola. The ban on cement imports took effect in June 2011 and caught the Namibian Government and many Namibian businesses by surprise.⁵⁰ The Namibia Chamber of Commerce and Industry referred to the Angolan Government's decisions as –⁵¹

... a step backward in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) push for regional integration.

Of concern is that Angola unilaterally introduces these measures which affect Namibia's products.

Furthermore, for Namibian companies, Angola is a tough market. For example, Telecom Namibia established a joint venture with an Angolan company, but pulled out of the agreement in mid-2011 after having made significant losses, i.e. close to N\$2.3 million in total during the period 2009–2010. This is not a unique case: many Namibian businesses in Angola complain about the difficulty of doing business there for the following reasons:

- Corruption is rife – especially at border posts, where officials demand whatever they please to clear goods
- Bribes are the order of the day for any progress in business matters
- Illegal businesses proliferate
- Inadequate infrastructure, such as poorly maintained roads and poor telecommunications
- Payment for completed work is slow or it never comes, and
- If one is not conversant in Portuguese, one encounters problems.

The above all have a negative effect on trade between the two countries. Moreover, some of the agreements and MOUs have not yet been signed, and where an agreement formed a Joint Commission, such Commissions have not been established. Hence, there is no formal structure that governs economic and social matters between Namibia and Angola. Moreover, on a bilateral level, Angola remains a difficult trading partner as it takes unilateral decisions that affect Namibia negatively. However, despite all the

49 For example, port clearance takes several months, and importers are faced with additional delays which result from capacity constraints at the Port of Luanda. Furthermore, importation on certain goods requires an import licence. Also, certain goods require specific authorisation from various government ministries, which often leads to bureaucratic bottlenecks.

50 The Angolan Government has now begun issuing licences to local companies to import cement from Namibia; see http://www.namibian.com.na/index.php?id=28&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=92356&no_cache=1, last accessed 25 November 2012.

51 <http://www.cemnet.com/News/story/127599/namibia-cement-sector-wants-protection.html>, last accessed 25 November 2012.

shortcomings highlighted here, Angola remains a crucial market for Namibian products, with exports totalling N\$3 billion in 2012.⁵²

Other cooperation frameworks

The Benguela Current Commission

The Benguela Current Commission is a tripartite body representing Angola, Namibia and South Africa. It is a multi-sectoral inter-governmental initiative aimed at promoting the integrated management, sustainable development and protection of the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME). The BCLME spans the continental shelf between the Angola Benguela frontal zone and the (South African) Agulhas Retroflexion Area, typically between 36°S and 37°S.

An Interim Agreement was signed in 2006 by four ministers from the Namibian and South African Governments. Angola signed the accord in early 2007. This cooperative arrangement between the three states was meant to be a forward-looking initiative that strove to avoid conflict between the parties insofar as the management of the BCLME resources were concerned. For example, Article 3 of the Interim Agreement applies to the BCLME insofar as it falls within the internal waters, territorial seas or exclusive economic zones of the contracting parties. It also applies to all human activities, aircraft and vessels under the jurisdiction or control of a contracting party to the extent that such activities or the operation of such aircraft or vessels result or are likely to result in adverse impacts on the marine ecology of the BCLME.

The underlying foreign policy position is that there should be no conflict between the states with respect to the BCLME marine resources – and, in the specific context of this paper, between Angola and Namibia in particular. As Article 4 of the Interim Agreement stipulates, the contracting parties are compelled to cooperate in good faith in its implementation, including cooperating in building the capacity of the Management Board, the Secretariat, the Ecosystem Advisory Committee, and any other subsidiary bodies established in accordance with the Interim Agreement. Secondly, the parties are required to cooperate in implementing a Strategic Action Programme and in negotiating, agreeing, and bringing into force a more comprehensive legal instrument, in accordance with Article 10. In terms of the latter Article, the contracting parties are enjoined to use their best endeavours to bring into force by no later than 31 December 2012 a binding legal instrument that will establish a comprehensive framework to facilitate their implementation of an ecosystem approach to the conservation and development of the

52 As stated earlier, Angola is Namibia's third largest trading partner after South Africa (N\$7 billion in 2012) and the UK (N\$5 billion in 2012) (*Annual Trade Statistics Bulletin 2012*, pp 10–11; available at http://www.nsa.org.na/files/downloads/9ae_Annual%20Trade%20Statistics%20Bulletin%202012.pdf, last accessed 6 August 2013).

BCLME. Although the Interim Agreement is not yet in force, it is expected to augment the existing cooperative relations between Namibia and Angola.

Angola, Namibia and South Africa have also addressed transboundary issues by conducting a Transboundary Diagnostic Analysis⁵³ and implementing a Strategic Action Programme, both of which are aimed at promoting cooperation on the utilisation of natural resources and avoiding the so-called tragedy of the commons.

The Olubido Railway and the Trans-Cunene Corridor

In 1997, Namibia and Angola formally agreed to improve the transport system in the Trans-Cunene Corridor by building the Olubindo Railway. The new railway line between Tsumeb and Oshikango is an extension of the existing Namibian railway system, while the new line will allow Namibia to link up with the Angolan railway system near Cassinga/Chamutete in Angola. This inter-regional rail connectivity will promote trade among various countries within the SADC Region, but especially between Angola, Namibia and South Africa.

This railway line forms part of the Trans-Cunene Corridor, which is a transport route between Namibia and Angola aimed at promoting development, economic growth, poverty eradication and job creation possibilities in southern Angola and north-central Namibia. The Corridor links the Port of Walvis Bay with southern Angola up to Lubango – a distance of some 1,600 km. The road infrastructure of the Corridor is supported by the Northern Railway Line, which presently extends from the Port of Walvis Bay to the Nehale Station at Ondangwa. The construction of the line from Ondangwa to Oshikango was scheduled to be completed by 2008, but after some delays, the inauguration finally took place on 1 July 2012.

The Angolan Government has been rehabilitating the Lubango–Santa Clara leg of the Trans-Cunene Corridor road network in Angola with development assistance from the European Union (EU).⁵⁴ The border posts at Oshikango–Santa Clara serve as the principal conduit for road-based imports from Namibia and South Africa into Angola. Imports from outside the SADC Region come through Walvis Bay, then via the Trans-Cunene Corridor into Lubango, and then into southern Angola.⁵⁵

The Trans-Cunene Corridor has proved to be one of the busiest in the SADC Region, with volumes having increased by more than 76.7% during 2007/8 alone, because it

53 Bakun & Nelson (1991:1815–1834); Shannon (1985:105–182); Shelton & Hutchings (1990:323–338).

54 Tjønneland (2011:17).

55 (ibid.).

accommodates Angola's imports via the Port of Walvis Bay.⁵⁶ The growth in trade volumes has shown that interest in utilising the Corridor, especially in terms of transporting vehicles, can be ascribed to its being a more efficient alternative for importers as well as exporters through the Port of Walvis Bay.⁵⁷

Namibia and Angola still have to create a one-stop border post at Oshikango/Santa Clara. Planning is under way, but progress is slow. In 2007, for example, Japan funded a feasibility study for such a border post, but financial constraints have hampered its subsequent establishment.⁵⁸ SADC also identified this border post as a top priority, along with a railway line from Santa Clara, but not much has been done about it to date. It is probably reasonable to expect that domestic priorities in Angola – in particular the development of the Namib–Lubango Corridor – will take precedence and may, therefore, reduce the volume of goods coming through Walvis Bay. On the other hand, imports from Namibia and South Africa may increase, which would entail fewer trade restrictions and increased access to goods owing to more flexible transportation regulations. However, at the same time, local markets are threatened as they may not be as competitive as their South African counterparts.

Water cooperation

In the world in general, water arrangements, access to water, or the allocation of water to the citizenry have been a source of silent tensions within and among countries, a tool during conflicts that start for other reasons, and a target during wars.⁵⁹ In this respect, and as the following quotation shows, Namibia saw the imperative of concluding the above-mentioned cross-border water agreements because it wants to tap the Okavango River to meet the country's needs:⁶⁰

Demands on water and land in Namibia are increasing steadily as the population and the economy grow. Although only a few households can survive on subsistence agriculture alone, access to agricultural land remains central to livelihoods [sic] strategies particularly in the non-freehold or communal areas of Namibia. The importance of agriculture is not only likely to remain, but will increase to the extent that population growth continues to exceed the creation of employment opportunities.

56 WBCG (2012).

57 (ibid.).

58 The Namibian Cabinet approved the construction of a one-stop border post at Oshikango. See Cabinet Decision 26/26.10.10.005. At present, the Trans-Kalahari Mamuno border post with Botswana is being developed. Upon its completion, Angola and Namibia will move on to the construction of the next one-stop border post.

59 Gleick (1993:79).

60 Werner (2009:1).

Namibia's plan, which has already created some hydropolitics with Botswana, may be jeopardised by Angola's plans to develop massive irrigation projects in the watershed of the Okavango and Cunene Rivers.⁶¹ Angola has not developed the Okavango – or *Cubango*, as it is known in Angola – River and it is seen as a 'sleeping giant': if programmes to irrigate or build reservoirs are implemented, they will affect water flow downstream to Angola's two co-riparian neighbours, Botswana and Namibia.⁶²

The above situation shows potential conflict in the management of water resources in the Okavango and Kunene River Basins, which will, in turn, affect other cooperative arrangements between Angola, Botswana and Namibia. Being the most arid of the three countries connected to these two Basins, Namibia would be forced to ensure that a mechanism was instituted to minimise the potential of such conflict. Botswana, on the other hand, considering the negative impact on its ecology, would be encouraged to sign an agreement to bind the states concerned to consult each other whenever a water development project was proposed by one of the parties.⁶³ Angola would also be well advised to get to the negotiating table because not only may any water development downstream affect it negatively as an upstream riparian state, but it also foresees potential opposition to its long-term plans to develop the Cubango River within its territory. In other words, there is a need for hydrosolidarity among these nations, which will then create the need for water and environmental security.⁶⁴ This brief point will be clarified later herein.

The Okavango River Basin

A cooperation agreement between Angola, Botswana and Namibia also exists in regard to the utilisation of the Okavango River. In September 1994, the three parties signed an agreement to create a trilateral permanent water commission known as the Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM) in order to provide advice on the environmentally and socially sustainable development of Okavango River waters. OKACOM's role is to anticipate and reduce any unintended, unacceptable and, often, unnecessary impacts that occur due to uncoordinated resource development. To achieve these goals, OKACOM approach is to apply the principles of equitable allocation, sustainable utilisation, sound environmental management and the sharing of benefits.

The treaty, entitled *Agreement between the Governments of the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Botswana and the Republic of Namibia on the Establishment of a Permanent Okavango River Basin Water Commission (OKACOM Agreement)*, is very general. In its Preamble, it highlights the need for cooperation between and among its member

61 Mapaire [Forthcoming].

62 (ibid.).

63 (ibid.).

64 For an explanation of hydrosolidarity as water security, see, in general, Davidsen (2010).

states. It also calls into consideration the concept of the *equitable utilisation of shared watercourses* as a guiding principle in respect of the Okavango River Basin. Furthermore, it incorporates the principles applicable to shared watercourses as enshrined in the 1966 Helsinki Rules⁶⁵ as well as in Agenda 21⁶⁶ of the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro (the so-called Earth Summit), June 1992. With this, it seems OKACOM may significantly enhance integrated regional sustainable development by facilitating the necessary coordination and mutually beneficial cooperation among Angola, Botswana and Namibia, which share the natural resources of the Okavango River Basin.

However, the OKACOM agreement evidently fails to recognise the institutional conflicts that exist among its members. Furthermore, the national institutions typically devote most of their attention to large-scale, centralised forms of supply management. Small-scale, decentralised or traditional options tend to be neglected or left to the communities.⁶⁷ Yet, as Hinz⁶⁸ asserts, these institutions and their customary laws have great implications for ecosystems.⁶⁹ This justifies an investigation on the extent to which the agreement recognises traditional water institutions in the Okavango River Basin, and what the implications are of that extent of recognition on the equitability of water allocation.

Since no research has been done to determine the successes or failures of OKACOM, it is difficult to ascertain its true value. In consideration of the available literature,⁷⁰ however, for such cooperation to be fruitful and to yield results, there is a need for adequate capacity and institutional strength. Traditionally, transboundary water equity remains dispersed and fragmented in most countries. As Brooks⁷¹ asserts, international agreements and, indeed, national institutions tend to be insensitive to indigenous practices, gender concerns, ethnic groups and the environmental impacts of institutional actions. Such organisations merely reflect the concerns of the governments that create them; hence, it is not surprising that the OKACOM agreement is oblivious to these social and environmental issues as well.

65 The Helsinki Rules on the Uses of the Waters of International Rivers offer an international guideline to regulate how rivers and their connected groundwaters that cross national boundaries may be used. The Rules were adopted by the International Law Association in Helsinki, Finland, in August 1966.

66 Agenda 21 is a non-binding, voluntarily implemented UN action plan with regard to sustainable development. It is a product of the UN Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992. It is an action agenda for the UN, other multilateral organisations and individual governments around the world that can be executed at local, national, and global levels. The “21” in Agenda 21 refers to the 21st Century. Agenda 21 has been affirmed and modified at subsequent UN conferences.

67 Brooks (2010).

68 Hinz (1995).

69 Hinz & Mapaire (2010:195–199).

70 (ibid.).

71 Brooks (2010).

OKACOM was not really able to make much progress in its first decade. Southern Angola, and the Okavango River Basin in particular, was fundamentally a war zone. In 2007, after the resumption of peace in Angola, OKACOM was able to establish a Secretariat in Maun, Botswana. However, this Secretariat is not fully functional because it is hampered by many constraints. These include personnel and finances, but also the underlying politics or diplomacy between the countries concerned. In the same vein, Angola seems not to be too involved – as evidenced by there being no major Angolan regional projects on the Okavango. Nonetheless, the World Bank is providing funding to a major Water Sector Institutional Development Project being implemented by the Angolan Ministry of Energy and Water. This is mainly focused on providing water and sanitation to major cities, but it also has major components on institutional strengthening and management, including management of the Okavango River.

The Kunene River Basin

A cooperative arrangement also exists between Angola and Namibia regarding the management of resources in the Kunene River Basin. The arrangement stems from historic agreements concluded by the administrative powers of the two former colonies before the two countries gained their independence. An agreement dating to 1969 initiated the construction of the proposed Kunene River Scheme. This agreement established a Permanent Joint Technical Commission and made provision for Namibia to abstract water at Calueque for diversion to the Cuvelai Basin in northern Namibia. The project included several water infrastructural developments, including the Gove and Calueque Dams. It also included the construction of a pump station for the diversion of water into Namibia, the Ruacana Weir for the diversion of water into the Ruacana Power Station, and the hydropower station itself. These projects were largely there to benefit Namibia, being the driest country south of the Sahara, whereas Angola is a country with a water surplus. However, of these infrastructure projects, the Calueque Dam was never completed due to the war in Angola at the time. The total development of the Kunene River includes the multi-purpose Hydropower and Irrigation Scheme at Matala, Angola. Today, Namibia diverts water from the Kunene River at Calueque across the catchment to the Cuvelai drainage basin for domestic water supply.

Contrary to the arrangement in the Okavango River Basin, the two riparian countries Angola and Namibia have not yet established any joint management structure for the Kunene River Basin, although, as mentioned previously, a Permanent Joint Technical Commission bringing together officials from both countries is in place. The Commission builds on three previous water usage agreements between South Africa and Portugal, entered into between 1926 and 1969. It seems that Namibia and Angola are happy with the arrangement and do not see the need for a new Commission based on a new agreement. Angola has been described as ‘the sleeping giant’ in the sense that water resources in that country are relatively unexploited. Future developments, however, could have serious

consequences to the availability of water for countries downstream in both the Okavango and the Kunene River Basins.⁷²

Angolan refugees in Namibia and their recent repatriation

The issue of refugees from Angola has remained a sensitive one to date. The majority are indeed Angolans who fled to Namibia as a result of the long years of war in that country. The next highest number is from the Great Lakes.

At the height of the Angolan crisis leading to the 2002 refugee crisis in Namibia, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Namibian Government were caring for approximately 25,000 refugees. Since then, there has been a significant decrease in these numbers through voluntary repatriation and 'spontaneous settlement' by Angolans, with the operation now at approximately 8,000 persons, including Angolans.

Refugees began coming to Namibia in the early 1990s. Most resided at Osire, a refugee camp whose establishment was necessitated as the number of asylum seekers grew. Osire is located in the Otjozondjupa Region and the nearest town, Otjiwarongo, is 120 km away. The population at the camp is now estimated at 8,550. Around 75% of these refugees come from Angola, while 19% constitute asylum seekers and refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The rest come from Burundi and Rwanda.⁷³ Most of the displaced persons from Angola left their homeland between 1992 and 2001. The year 1999 witnessed the highest number of new arrivals due to the intensified war in Angola. There were also a few individuals who arrived earlier than 1992. A survey done in 2007 showed that a total of 387 individuals (87%) said that none of their family members or relatives had returned to Angola.⁷⁴ Only 22 individuals (10 female, 12 male), representing 4% of the respondents in the survey,⁷⁵ indicated their willingness to return to Angola. Nine respondents indicated that they would return to Huambo; three said they would go back to Bie, while three would return to Cuando Cubango, two to Huila, and five to other Provinces. Five individuals (3 female, 2 male) indicated that they would return in 2009. Of the remaining respondents, an overwhelming 96% of them (421 in total, of which 231 were female and 190 male) indicated that they did not intend to return to Angola and planned to settle in Namibia either in or outside Osire – mainly in Rundu or Otjiwarongo.

The overall finding of the survey was that the majority of Angolans at Osire did not intend to return to Angola. Their unwillingness to return no longer appears to be linked

72 Pinheiro et al. (2003:105–118).

73 UNHCR Executive Committee, Conclusion on Local Integration, No. 104 (LVI) – 2005.

74 See Conteh et al. (2009).

75 (ibid.).

to the political divides that reigned before the resumption of peace in that country, but to Angola no longer being familiar to them: they said they felt they would no longer have a social support system in Angola due to their protracted stay in Namibia. As a result, most of them seemed to have established themselves at the camp with a – not necessarily family-related – social support system that gave them a sense of belonging. The main challenge, however, is that most of these refugees have not managed to establish a self-reliance mechanism, thereby making the majority of them dependent on humanitarian assistance. Thus, the dependency syndrome which characterises most refugees worldwide is also evident among Angolan refugees in Namibia.

Following the death of Jonas Savimbi in February 2002 and the establishment of peace and stability in Angola that followed, the number of new arrivals at Osire reportedly reduced significantly. In 2003–2004, a voluntary repatriation process was undertaken after the signing of the Tripartite Agreement between the UNHCR and the Namibian and Angolan Governments, in which 6,200 refugees and asylum seekers, inclusive of some non-Angolans, participated. Today, the Namibian Refugees Committee in the Namibian Government's Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration (MHAI) is wholly responsible for refugee assistance domestically.⁷⁶ This Committee also has the mandate of granting refugee status, shelter, protection and other related services.

The Namibian Government has ratified the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol and made reservation to Article 26 of the Convention, which deals with the freedom of movement of refugees and asylum seekers within Namibia. Transgression of this provision can lead to the offender's arrest, detention and prosecution. As regards the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa, although Namibia is not a signatory to it, its provisions have been incorporated into domestic legislation by way of the Refugee (Recognition and Control) Act, 1999 (No. 2 of 1999).

In early 2012, the UNHCR⁷⁷ recommended another process of voluntary repatriation for refugees.⁷⁸ The principal reason for this was that conditions in Angola had improved to such an extent that Angolans could no longer qualify as refugees. The Namibian Government then decreed that all Angolan refugees would lose their status as from 30

76 See Refugee (Recognition and Control) Act, 1999 (No. 2 of 1999).

77 Between November 2011 and 2 June 2012, the UNHCR had repatriated 14,000 Angolan refugees – including those from Namibia; see <http://www.unhcr.org/4fd1f16e9.html>, last accessed 12 January 2012.

78 According to Nkrumah Mushelenga, a Refugee Commissioner at the Ministry of Home Affairs in Namibia, 3,000 Angolan refugees returned to their homeland as part of the UNHCR voluntary repatriation programme from 30 June 2012, whereas 1,000 Angolan refugees opted for local integration. During January 2013, 30 more refugees returned home. The process for those who have opted for local integration is ongoing (pers. comm., 24 February 2013).

June 2012. The Angolan Government cooperated on the issue, and the UNHCR bore the mandate to carry out the repatriation. The UNHCR reported as follows in May 2012:⁷⁹

The convoy with 108 Angolan refugees on board departed from the Osire refugee settlement in Northern Namibia on Tuesday. Many of them had been living in Namibia for some 20 years. Some of the returnees had been born in Namibia and had never been to Angola before. They arrived in Angola yesterday, after travelling for three days.

The arrangement reportedly was that the UNHCR would provide repatriating refugees with a cash grant⁸⁰ before their departure from Namibia, while the World Food Programme allocated each individual with a three-month food ration. The Namibian Government also donated trucks to transport the repatriating refugees' belongings back to Angola. Once in their homeland, the returnees received identity documents and reintegration packages from the Angolan Government.

Regarding refugees in general, if the Commissioner in Namibia believes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that a person has ceased to be a refugee, such Commissioner is required to refer the matter to the Namibian Refugees Committee for consideration. 'Global cessations' are invoked for particular groups because reasons for granting them refugee status have ceased, especially with reference to certain nationals, such as those from Angola. Indeed, this is exactly what happened in the case of Angolan refugees – as described earlier herein.

Other existing and future multilateral cooperation

Angola, as a significant economic and political power in southern Africa, has committed itself to a number of regional and international engagements over the past few years. Since 1979, it has also been a member of the African Union and has had some steady economic growth: some have called it the "sleeping giant"⁸¹ because of its expected economic vitality. As an African country, it ranks amongst those with the highest amount of foreign direct investment (FDI); in 2009, for example, FDI in Angola totalled US\$13 billion.

Angola as a state has great significance in economic and military terms with respect to stability in the SADC Region – which also depends partly on stability in Namibia. In addition, Angola's commitment to the process of a united Africa has been demonstrated by the many treaties and charters it has already signed to this effect. However, although

79 See <http://www.news24.com/Africa/News/Angolan-refugees-return-to-unsure-future-20120626>, last accessed 14 November 2013.

80 The cash grant has since been increased to US\$350 (about N\$3,150, from a mere N\$100). This certainly served as an incentive. In addition, the Angolan Government gave the returnees a plot of land, 6-m sheets of corrugated iron and timber to build temporary houses for themselves.

81 Pinheiro et al. (2003:105–118).

Angola has ratified some international treaties on human rights, its ratification of other fundamental instruments for such rights is outstanding. Furthermore, it has signed the treaty establishing the African Economic Community and the African Union Convention on Preventing and Combating Corruption, for example, but has not ratified either.

In 1999, Angola became a full member of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), joining Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, the Republic of Congo, and São Tomé and Príncipe. Angola also signed the Mutual Assistance Pact between ECCAS Member States, proving its dedication to promoting regional economic cooperation in central Africa.

Furthermore, Angola is committed to regional integration. In 1980, together with Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, Angola founded the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), which, in 1992, became the Southern African Development Community (SADC). However, Angola still has to implement the 1996 SADC Trade Protocol to which it acceded in 2003. The Protocol calls for enhanced cooperation in cross-border trade, the elimination of all forms of non-tariff barriers, and forbids quantitative import restrictions. In August 2011, Namibia's President Hifikepunye Pohamba handed over the SADC Chair to Angola's President José Eduardo dos Santos for a year to discuss matters that included the implementation of SADC Protocols.

Conclusions

The relationship between Angola and Namibia has grown from the liberation struggle assistance and comradeship to bilateral cooperation, touching on several domains, which further include, water and energy, tourism, security and defence and transportation.⁸² These areas are important to both countries and show their willingness and political will to address matters of common interest. However, the relationship has a lot to improve on and leaves a lot to be desired, if the two countries are to build robust economic and social networks and systems that will lead to the achievement of Angola's Vision 2025 and Namibia's Vision 2030 and beyond.

This paper has covered how the relationship between Namibia and Angola has evolved. Specifically, the paper addressed the pre-Independence bonds between SWAPO and the Angolan political parties UNITA and the MPLA. The discussion also dealt with the international environment, with particular emphasis on the situation in Angola, but also on the UN's efforts and involvement in the military conflict that rocked Angola and affected Namibia's security. It interrogated the turns and twists in Angola to which

82 The Trans-Cunene Corridor, operated by the Walvis Bay Corridor Group, links the Port of Walvis Bay to southern Angola.

Namibia had to react; whether supporting the opposition or the ruling party and the see-saw of the SWAPO Party of Namibia has been shown and illuminated in the general understanding that Namibian politicians were at times somehow confused by the developments in Angola and their allies who also participated in the conflict.

This paper also elaborated on the Namibian post-Independence relationship with Angola and a special focus was put on matters related to trade between the two countries and references have also been made to other countries in the SADC region. In this regard, shortcomings negatively affecting trade between Namibia and Angola were covered but the general conclusion is that trade relations between the two countries have been steady and the relations on this aspect have been cordial and have seen the graph of trade volumes going up, especially after the civil war of Angola. The paper concluded with consideration of the other cooperative regimes, being the events in the Okavango and Cunene river Basins as well as the cooperation of the two countries in the war in DRC and the Angolan refugee situation in Namibia. The paper concludes that in general, the relationship has been very positive but largely symbiotic.

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