



CHATHAM HOUSE

Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE
T: +44 (0)20 7957 5700 E: contact@chathamhouse.org
F: +44 (0)20 7957 5710 www.chathamhouse.org

Charity Registration Number: 208223

Africa Meeting Summary

The Role of New Political Parties in Angola: New Entrant, New Era?

Abel Chivukuvuku

President, Convergência Ampla de Salvação de Angola

Chair: Alex Vines

Research Director, Area Studies and International Law; and Head Africa Programme, Chatham House

15 May 2013

The views expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of Chatham House, its staff, associates or Council. Chatham House is independent and owes no allegiance to any government or to any political body. It does not take institutional positions on policy issues. This document is issued on the understanding that if any extract is used, the author(s)/ speaker(s) and Chatham House should be credited, preferably with the date of the publication or details of the event. Where this document refers to or reports statements made by speakers at an event every effort has been made to provide a fair representation of their views and opinions, but the ultimate responsibility for accuracy lies with this document's author(s). The published text of speeches and presentations may differ from delivery.

INTRODUCTION

The following document provides a summary of a meeting held at Chatham House on 15 May 2013. The meeting looked at the role of new political parties in Angola following the formation of *Convergência Ampla de Salvação de Angola (CASA-CE)*.

Angola has faced considerable challenges in its gradual transition to democracy since the end of the civil war in 2002. In recent years the country's democratic development has been galvanized by the emergence of new political parties. In 2012 the former foreign secretary of UNITA, Abel Chivukuvuku, left the opposition to form the *Convergência Ampla de Salvação de Angola - Coligação Eleitoral (CASA-CE)* and contested last year's elections, winning 6 per cent of the national vote and almost 13 per cent in Luanda.

At this [Angola Forum](#) roundtable, Mr Chivukuvuku offered his insights into opposition politics in Angola. He discussed the role new parties play in Angola's evolving democracy, and how new parties can operate in the political space.

The meeting consisted of a presentation followed by a discussion, both of which were held on the record. The following summary is intended to serve as an *aide-mémoire* for those who took part and to provide a general summary of discussions for those who did not.

ABEL CHIVUKUVUKU

Mr Chivukuvuku spoke on the current characteristics of Angola and what he perceives to be Angola's dilemma, on the inevitability of change and future prospects for the country.

Angola was a fashionable topic during the civil war, and is fashionable once again owing to extravagant growth and rampant corruption. Angola is located in both southern and central Africa: southern Africa as the most viable part of sub-Saharan Africa, and central Africa as a troubled area. Angola views itself as more of a southern than central African country.

Angola today is a country at peace after decades of war, although lately the democratic process has stalled. Today there is a benign authoritarian regime, where power held by one individual.

In the context of economics, extraordinary growth will continue for next few decades, but this is coupled with a volatile social structure. More than six per cent of the population is very poor; there is a large urban population and small elite which has amassed vast amounts of wealth in the last decade, without being able to explain how.

Social imbalances have been growing: there is a small group linked to the government and the family of the president which is gaining wealth, whereas most of the population has been left behind.

Mr Chivukuvuku discussed Angola's current dilemma. On the one hand, so long as President dos Santos is in power, there will be no meaningful or significant change in regard to the nature of the state, the political regime and the quality of governance, because there is no political will on the part of the president. On the other hand, President dos Santos will try not to relinquish power.

Mr Chivukuvuku said there is a mistaken perception that President dos Santos' rule is a factor of stability in Angola, whereas actually the opposite is true. Dos Santos represents a serious risk factor for the country, because of this dilemma and because people mistakenly believe stability arises from the power of one individual rather than from strong, serious political processes.

Coupled with this dilemma is the inevitability of change in Angola in the next five to ten years. Change is inevitable because legally, dos Santos only has one more mandated term of office. If he continues to rule, he may eventually try to change his mandate, but he is unlikely to succeed.

Another reason why change is inevitable is the maturing political environment. People are becoming more aware of their status as poor individuals, especially compared with the levels of wealth and corruption seen in government. Increasing literacy rates have allowed young people to understand these dynamics and become more involved in politics. Furthermore, there is strife within the regime itself between those who have access to wealth and those who do not, making the regime more unsustainable. These are the factors which make change inevitable in the aforementioned timeframe.

The political calendar demands local elections in 2015 and general elections in 2017. By law, local elections should take place but so far there has been no commitment by dos Santos to hold them. He may even try to postpone or abandon the idea of holding elections in order to prevent the breakup of his total hegemony of local administration.

Mr Chivukuvuku stated that CASA-CE was created because it understood that the current regime does not make changes and that the traditional opposition has lost faith in the possibility of generating change. This new organization is composed of individuals from all segments of society, with Angolans from all the main ethnic groups represented.

The organization has the youngest leadership in the country, while the old regime is dominated by Angola's first political generation. UNITA is made up of the second generation while elements of the first generation remain. CASA-CE is composed of the second or third generation of politicians. Considering that the majority of the electorate is young, this gives CASA-CE the opportunity to hold a prominent role.

CASA-CE was created in April 2012 with elections in August 2012. Within four months, it had become the third major political force in the country. Mr Chivukuvuku noted that if elections had been more transparent, the party's success might have been greater.

Mr Chivukuvuku spoke about the transformation and growth of CASA-CE. Its only option in the 2012 elections was to create a coalition. This coalition was not made up of political parties, but of a minority of political parties and a majority of individuals. Members of CASA-CE do not belong to the political parties that make up the legal dimension of the coalition. CASA-CE's goal is to transform this coalition into a single political force by 2016.

The party is in the process of changing the political nature of the organization. From the elections in 2012, CASA-CE realized that the majority of its supporters were young and urban. This is positive for CASA-CE, given that

two-thirds of the Angolan population are urban and the majority of the electorate are young. CASA-CE wants to make the transformation into a large political force that by 2016 will be the most relevant political party in the country.

Mr Chivukuvuku discussed the prospects for CASA-CE and for Angola. He noted that while the current regime remains, there will be no political change. However, the gate may open for CASA-CE after local elections in 2015. By 2017, CASA-CE wants to be strong enough either to hold power in Angola, or to work as a power broker between the two main factions in the regime.

Economic growth will continue, and will most likely become diversified away from the oil sector. However, poverty will also continue as there is no political will to seriously fight poverty without a change of governance occurring. The combination of poverty, urbanization and illiteracy will intensify the prospects of revolt within a fragile social structure that is less stable than that existing in Angola today.

Mr Chivukuvuku said this was why CASA-CE has to play a role in order to guarantee social stability. It wants to be the party that shows those caught up in the dynamics of poverty, literacy and urbanization that change can be achieved in an orderly, peaceful way.