



CHATHAM HOUSE

Chatham House, 10 St James's Square, London SW1Y 4LE

T: +44 (0)20 7957 5700 E: [contact@chathamhouse.org](mailto:contact@chathamhouse.org)

F: +44 (0)20 7957 5710 [www.chathamhouse.org](http://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.

For more information – including recordings, transcripts, summaries, and further resources on this and other related topics – visit [www.chathamhouse.org/research/africa](http://www.chathamhouse.org/research/africa).

## **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.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

### Question:

You mentioned CASA-CE could play the role of power broker within the regime. Would you ever accept an agreement with the MPLA?

### Abel Chivukuvuku:

Mr Chivukuvuku stated that CASA-CE would not make an agreement with the MPLA. There are two main groups within the MPLA. There are those around the president who have the law in their favour and are in control of the machinery of government, and who are reformists to some extent, although they do not currently have the power to enact reforms. They believe that if there is a situation where dos Santos is no longer in power, CASA-CE would play their game and work with them because they are reformists and CASA-CE also wants to reform the country.

The other group consists of the apparatchiks within the party. They do not have the law on their side and they do not have any control over power, but they are the majority of the MPLA. They believe that if a power struggle situation arose in the regime, CASA-CE would side with them because both groups are excluded from political influence. Both groups have reason to believe that the opposition, including CASA-CE, UNITA and other groups may play their game: that is what was meant by CASA-CE playing a power broker role.

### Question:

Would initiatives central to the US Dodd-Frank rule benefit Angola by increasing transparency over payments made by businesses to the government?

### Abel Chivukuvuku:

Mr Chivukuvuku stated that an improved context of transparency would not only help the political environment in terms of democracy, but would force the government to deliver in its policies because Angolans would know the true wealth of the country, its resources and income. Angolans only know what the government tells them, which is not necessarily what the country earns because members of the government conceal some of the country's wealth.

Improved transparency would increase the quality of governance and the delivery of social services.

**Question:**

Do you envisage CASA-CE playing a major role if President dos Santos' rule ends suddenly, and would CASA-CE be able to play a role if an alternative power emerges within the MPLA? How do you foresee a post-dos Santos era?

**Abel Chivukuvuku:**

Mr Chivukuvuku stated that CASA-CE is the most dynamic political organization in the country today, but the party wants to become more relevant to Angolans. In a post-dos Santos context, there would be strife within the system between the two clearly defined groups. CASA-CE's role is to play for stability and orderly political transition. The party would side with whichever part of the system it feels is more serious about guaranteeing reform in the country.

**Question:**

What kind of programmes do you have in mind to promote development and tackle poverty in Angola, and in order to encourage long-term stability?

What role do you see for women in these plans?

**Abel Chivukuvuku:**

Mr Chivukuvuku said that the main characteristic of Angola today is the contradiction between economic growth and poverty. For a long time, the population was poor, but people were not aware that they were poor and that it was negative to be poor. Now they are becoming more aware that something is wrong in Angolan society.

There are differences of perceptions and strategy between the government and the opposition. The government believes that the way towards development is to build roads, bridges, railways and airports, but this is just theatre. Infrastructure projects are necessary, but the priority for the government should be to address the areas which will have an immediate impact on the lives of poor individuals: education, health and sanitation.

Mr Chivukuvuku stated that these projects may be part of President dos Santos' attempt to leave behind a political legacy. However, dos Santos inherited a country at war and will be leaving a country at peace; this is a legacy. There has been some transition from one-party totalitarianism to a benign authoritarianism, but full democracy has not yet been reached. Today dos Santos has no clear vision of what the country should build to serve Angolans. It would be better for him to step down now, before people forget that he brought the country peace and judge him by corruption, by stealing and by mismanagement.

Female participation and representation is an issue. The majority of the poor population are women. There has been some progress, galvanized by the fact that most of those at rich universities are girls. This is a very good indicator that in the near future the balance may shift.

#### **Question:**

You characterized the MPLA as made up of factions of apparatchiks and reformers: who are these reformers?

What is your relationship with other political parties, particularly with your former party UNITA? Do you see any possibility for future collaboration?

#### **Abel Chivukuvuku:**

Mr Chivukuvuku stated that in power terms, the MPLA does not exist, but in terms of the political machine MPLA structures exist across the country. Power rests with President dos Santos; those around him benefit from that and are the ones with the law on their side, including Vice President Manuel Vicente. This group have control over the power system, but not the party. To some extent, this group has a bigger tendency to push for reform and a more open system, because its members are already rich and want the freedom to enjoy their wealth.

Those who are the apparatchiks of the party are motivated by exclusion. They believe that if they wait until dos Santos' rule is over, they will have their opportunity. They control the structure of the party, not the power and they are the majority.

Mr Chivukuvuku explained the political context of the other parties: the MPLA is more hostile towards CASA-CE than it is towards UNITA. UNITA is more hostile towards CASA-CE than it is towards the MPLA.



This was the situation for CASA-CE in the run-up to elections. CASA-CE has shown itself to be the most dynamic party within parliament: until today it is the only parliamentary group to introduce proposals for increased legislation over government control and other issues.

Owing to the increased profile of CASA-CE and the fact that Mendes de Carvalho is very open and has reached out to the party, CASA-CE has reached acceptable levels of collaboration with UNITA within parliament.

CASA-CE has put forward the idea that opposition parties should not compete in local elections, but should work together with a common agenda between UNITA, PRS and CASA-CE. PRS signalled an acceptance of this idea, but UNITA questioned how a coalition would pick candidates for each circumscription. CASA-CE replied that polls should be conducted in every circumscription in order to find the best candidates.

Mr Chivukuvuku stated that the objective of competing in local elections is to break the hegemony the system has on local administration, not to evaluate which candidates are in second or third position just yet.

CASA-CE plans to engage in more formal discussions with UNITA on this topic by June. CASA-CE will play the Angola card to see if they can find some common ground. Mr Chivukuvuku said that relations between him and Isaias Samakuva are friendly but apolitical so they need to enter into a new level of discussion and talk politics.

#### **Question:**

You said that change in Angola is inevitable; however the parties in the opposition have hidden their agendas, and your adversary is a strong party. How can your party bring change if you are not united?

#### **Abel Chivukuvuku:**

Mr Chivukuvuku stated that change is inevitable within the timeframe of around five to ten years. There is a need now to think about the quality of change, and who will be the relevant actors needed for change.

The opposition is divided. The traditional opposition played its role but it is not up to the challenges Angola faces now. UNITA lost faith in the possibility of replacing the ruling party. It feels that although Jonas Savimbi was such a strong and extraordinary leader, it did not succeed, and now it cannot

succeed where he could not. With this mind frame, UNITA cannot create the possibility of becoming an actor for change.

On the other hand, CASA-CE became the third political force in Angola within four months. The perception that no one can change the system was not only held by the opposition but by Angolans. The advent of CASA-CE has shown people that it is possible to make changes.

Mr Chivukuvuku noted that wherever possible, CASA-CE will reach out to other parties during local elections because their purpose is not winning power, but change. CASA-CE will team up with whoever in the system is willing to make a change.

There must be change in the quality of governance, the nature of the state and the political system. Mr Chivukuvuku stated that the current centralized presidential system cannot continue. One example of a unilateral presidential decision was the creation of Kilamba, a city for visitors that remained empty for two years while poor people lived in miserable conditions. CASA-CE forced President dos Santos to open the city up. There also needs to be a separation of powers between the legislature, the judiciary and the executive.

More broadly, there needs to be change insofar as the quality of governance and delivery is concerned. There needs to be an end to corruption and stealing. This cannot be done in one day, but the process needs to be started and dos Santos does not have the moral authority to do so.

Change needs to occur in a positive, orderly and peaceful manner. CASA-CE wants to be one of the primary actors in the course of change, but is open to teaming up with whoever it feels is best for Angola.

### **Question:**

Isaias Samakuva stated in a recent talk at Chatham House that UNITA is the reason for continued peace in Angola. How do you perceive this?

You talked about establishing a common agenda between opposition parties during local elections, however you raised doubts that local elections may happen. Do you have a strategy to guarantee local elections are held?

Is CASA-CE related to the recent youth movements in Angola?

How many mandates do you foresee for yourself as the CASA-CE president, and for how many years?

There are internal problems in Angola, particularly the case of the Lunda-Chokwe people and the case of Cabinda. Lunda-Chokwe people are marginalized in Angola. During elections, CASA-CE concentrated more on Cabinda than Lunda. What are you doing for the Lunda-Chokwe people?

Why did CASA-CE fare better in Cabinda in the last elections than UNITA, who previously did well there?

### **Abel Chivukuvuku:**

Mr Chivukuvuku stated that CASA-CE did better in Cabinda than UNITA, but the party was not happy with the results as it expected to win. Most of the forces for change in Cabinda were siding with CASA-CE: the party signed an agreement on what changes need to occur to recognize the specificity of Cabinda while maintaining it within the context of Angola. This will become more prominent by the time the next elections take place.

CASA-CE have deliberately established in internal statutes that no president of the party can hold more than two mandates within CASA-CE. In the event of a victory in 2017, Mr Chivukuvuku would be obliged to leave the post of president vacant, as according to CASA-CE statutes no one can hold both presidency of the party and presidency of the country.

Mr Chivukuvuku noted that the constitution requires that local elections must be held. According to the law, the president has to call for local elections and so far dos Santos has remained silent. Unofficially there has been talk among ministers, but no legal framework or timeframe for elections have been set up.

CASA-CE has its own agenda to ensure that local elections take place. First, it will try to talk to the president and hear his views on the possibility of local elections. The next step is for CASA-CE to introduce the topic in the National Assembly in order to launch a debate on local elections, even if the proposal is not passed by parliament. If the proposal is defeated, CASA-CE will take the matter to the Constitutional Court on grounds of the illegality of obstructing local elections. CASA-CE will take these steps this year to clarify the agenda on this issue.

Mr Chivukuvuku said that there are no obvious conditions in Angola for a return to war. However, war is different to turmoil and civil strife, and there is currently a social structure that is very high-risk. There are too many poor people who are literate and urban, with a government that is corrupt, mismanaged and insensitive to the suffering of these people. The mix of urban youth and poor people with former military personnel as happened last

year contributes to this high-risk social structure. Civil strife is being met by strong violence on the part of the government, and this reaction brings serious problems. This is why CASA-CE defends the need for change and to have a different way of looking at social problems.

CASA-CE encourages peaceful, orderly transformation, as long as the system abides by the law and holds local elections. If the government does not want to organize local elections, then CASA-CE may join those who propose civil strife in the push for change, and the government is aware of this position. However, there will not be a return to war in Angola.

Mr Chivukuvuku said that the issue of the Lunda-Chokwe people is one of political demand that could be met by changing the nature of the state. The state is too centralized, leaving no room for minority groups in Angola, and the MPLA pushes an agenda of Angolan national identity that supersedes local or ethnic identity. CASA-CE believes that the nature of the state needs to change in order to allow every ethnic group to have a say, and to recognize the individual identities of each group alongside their Angolan identity. One of the factors fuelling the political demand of the Lunda and Cabinda people is the idea that they do not benefit from the wealth derived from the resources found in those provinces, which is used to provide social services in other cities. What is needed is to ensure that social services are provided across the country, which will reduce this legitimate demand.

### **Question:**

How does CASA plan to convince people that if they vote for them, there will be change? Who will benefit from this proposed change?

You characterized Angola as being both central African and southern African. The process of political liberation in southern Africa is progressing quickly. How is Angola influenced by this progress?

What is your relationship with oil industry: does your party receive contributions from companies? What are you offering to the oil industry that other parties are not?

### **Abel Chivukuvuku:**

Mr Chivukuvuku stated that Angolan law forbids foreign entities to contribute donations to political parties, so there is no relationship between CASA-CE

and the oil industry. CASA-CE is funded through the resources of its members.

Angola is simultaneously in southern Africa and central Africa. Angola is powerful in central Africa, although dos Santos has been reluctant to overplay this role after failures intervening in Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea Bissau. Angola fares well in comparison to the majority of central Africa. Angolans feel closer to southern Africa because of the dynamics of the previous conflict. Their problems were linked with those of Namibia and South Africa. Also, southern Africa is the most viable region of sub-Saharan Africa and it is better to belong to a region that is viable. Economic links with southern Africa are still weak, and there is a perception that Angola competes with South Africa for dominance of the region. The Angolan elite should recognize that Angola is not yet in a condition to compete with South Africa and the negative relationship between former President Thabo Mbeki and President dos Santos framed this. Things are different now that President Jacob Zuma is a puppet of dos Santos. Overall, Angola fares very poorly in terms of democracy and good governance in southern Africa.