

Briefing note

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Mine Action in Angola

Clearing the Legacies of Conflict to Harness the Potential of Peace



Introduction

This publication draws on and updates the briefing note published following a meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Angola on 26 April 2017.¹ It also incorporates insights from a Chatham House Africa Programme conference session on the legacies of the Angolan Civil War, held on 23 March 2018; and draws on the Africa Programme's research into conservation-driven development models in Southern Africa.²

Almost two decades after the end of its civil war, Angola remains one of the most heavily landmine-contaminated countries in the world. The Angolan government has committed to clearing its landmines by 2025,³ and there is constructive collaboration between the government and mine clearing agencies in this endeavour, but the target will be achievable only if a decline in funding from international donors is reversed. International funding for mine clearance in Angola fell by more than 80 per cent between 2005 and 2017,⁴ and this sharp drop in external support has compounded the impact on domestic funding for national clearance efforts as a result of the downturn in prices for Angola's main export commodities.

The national mine action agency, the Comissão Nacional Intersectorial de Desminagem e Assistência Humanitária (CNIDAH), is supported by the Mines Advisory Group (MAG), Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and the HALO Trust. By 2017, 15 years after the end of the civil war, these organizations had collectively helped clear 56 per cent of known landmine-contaminated land.⁵ State-led demining has focused principally on clearing areas designated for infrastructure projects. Now, it is critical that humanitarian demining in largely agricultural and conservation areas is prioritized to bring to an end the daily threat to Angola's rural poor – as well as to the country's livestock and wildlife – of injury or death as a result of landmine accidents.

Angola has some of the world's most important remaining wilderness, including the tributary system for the unique Okavango Delta, and the country has the potential to host one of the most diverse wildlife populations on the continent. However, the presence of landmines and other remnants of the civil war render large areas of the country unsafe both for wildlife and for the local people, whose ability to derive a sustainable livelihood from their natural environment is fundamental to its protection.

Wildlife and tourism provide important economic opportunities for diversification beyond an oil-dominated economy. Critically, Angola's economic diversification and development objectives can

¹ See Lawson, K. (2017), *Mine Action in Angola: Landmine-Free by 2025*, Chatham House briefing note, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/events/2017-06-15-landmines-angola-appg.pdf> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019).

² See also Vandome, C. and Vines, A. (2018), *Tackling Illegal Wildlife Trade in Africa: Economic Incentives and Approaches*, Chatham House Research Paper, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/publications/research/2018-10-11-tackling-illegal-wildlife-trade-africa-vandome-vines-final2.pdf> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019).

³ Article 5 of the Ottawa Treaty requires states party to the treaty to identify and clear all known or suspected mine contamination within 10 years of the entry into force of the Convention for that party. Angola has already submitted one extension request to meet this obligation, and the country's Commission for Humanitarian Demining and Assistance (Comissão Nacional Intersectorial de Desminagem e Assistência Humanitária – CNIDAH) submitted a second extension request in 2017, seeking assistance to finally eradicate landmines from its territory by the end of 2025.

⁴ For details, see Figure 1.

⁵ Mines Advisory Group (MAG) (2017), *Time to Change Course: Angola and the Ottawa Treaty*, Issue Brief, April 2017, p. 8, https://mag-20180803141540142800000002.s3.amazonaws.com/dev/media/filer_public/a4/1a/a41a7fda-5959-42df-b59b-c55290dccc4/mag_issue_brief_-_angola_the_ottawa_treaty.pdf (accessed 11 Jun. 2019).

only be achieved if the landmines that prohibit access to land for agriculture, mining, tourism and wildlife are cleared.

There are economic opportunities for released land in the most heavily mined provinces of Cuando Cubango and Moxico. Already, some new funding for mine action in Angola, if upscaled or matched by international donors, could be transformative for its people, and for the conservation of the region's vital biodiversity.

The use of landmines in conflict, and the scale of the challenge

Landmines were deployed throughout Angola's war of independence (1961–74) and in the subsequent civil war, which endured until 2002. International actors played a role in both conflicts, including supplying landmines. According to a 1997 Human Rights Watch report, as many as 51 different types of landmines from 18 countries had been identified in Angola.⁶ And although Angola signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction – commonly known as the Ottawa Treaty – in 1997, the government did not ratify it until 2002, and both government and opposition forces continued to lay mines in the intervening period.⁷

The rapid withdrawal of Portuguese colonial forces following the 'Carnation Revolution' in 1974 resulted in conflict between competing liberation movements in Angola. The opposing sides were quickly backed by international actors. The communist MPLA government enjoyed extensive military support from Cuba and the USSR, and provided a safe haven for regional liberation movements including the ANC and SWAPO. UNITA received extensive support from the US, largely through the CIA, and the South Africans, who were already running operations in Angola against South West Africa (Namibia) independence groups.

Landmines were laid by both sides for offensive and defensive purposes during the civil war. They were used by government forces to prevent the opposition targeting critical infrastructure, economic interests or military installations, as well as MPLA-controlled population centres. Meanwhile, UNITA deployed landmines to disrupt road and rail links, as well as to destabilize the government by 'making any semblance of normal life impossible in many parts of the country'.⁸ The mines were laid to cause maximum social disruption. By the end of the conflict, it was estimated that there were as many landmines as people in Angola. Decades later, Angola's people and society still suffer a daily threat from those mines.

All 18 Angolan provinces were affected by decades of conflict, with areas that saw the heaviest fighting in the east, southeast and centre worst hit. Compounding the scale of the ongoing challenges of recovery and reconstruction is that the locations of randomly laid or clustered landmines were not systematically recorded.⁹ The first surveys of mine contamination in Angola

⁶ This includes anti-tank mines from the UK. See Vines, A. (1997), *Still Killing: Landmines in Southern Africa*, Human Rights Watch, p. 36.

⁷ Vines, A. (1999), *Angola Unravels: The Rise and Fall of the Lusaka Peace Process*, Human Rights Watch, p. 37.

⁸ Africa Watch (1993), *Landmines in Angola*, New York: Human Rights Watch.

⁹ Helen La Lime, US Ambassador to Angola, speaking at the Angola APPG event in April 2017.

relied on unverified local testimonies, which overestimated the extent of contamination.¹⁰ A nationwide non-technical survey began following Angola's first Article 5 extension request to fulfil the obligations of the Ottawa Treaty, but this was completed in only 12 out of 18 provinces due to funding shortfalls.¹¹

An oil boom briefly propelled Angola to upper-middle-income status in the early 2010s.¹² The perception that the country was now able to finance its own development led to a drop in international funding for mine clearance. For example, in 2010 the UK Department for International Development (DFID) announced the closure of its programme in Angola, which entailed a complete cut to its £2 million mine action support there.¹³ Angola was subsequently reclassified by the World Bank in 2017 as a lower-middle-income country.¹⁴ But these international metrics for national wealth status have not been matched by its human development or reflected in improved livelihoods for ordinary Angolans. UNDP ranked Angola 147 of 189 countries and territories assessed for its 2018 Human Development Index.¹⁵ The health and social effects of poverty are widespread, and there are multiple pressures on the government purse. Moreover, there are an estimated 88,000 landmine survivors in Angola, many of whom are in need of long-term support to manage their physical and psychosocial needs.¹⁶

Having focused on mine clearance for infrastructure projects,¹⁷ the priority for the Angolan government must now shift to humanitarian demining in rural areas. This will save lives and will also release land for other uses, including agriculture critical to improving food security, wildlife conservation and tourism – all of which are key elements of the government's diversification strategy.¹⁸

MAG emphasizes that the socioeconomic impact of living with landmines disproportionately affects Angola's marginalized rural poor, who also suffer the greatest food insecurity.¹⁹ While Angola was once self-sufficient in major food crops and was a net exporter of coffee and maize,²⁰ the deepening economic crisis driven by low oil prices, together with foreign currency restrictions,²¹ led to social welfare cuts within the national budget, including the slashing of the Public Investment Programme by half in 2015, and a rise in food imports.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Mines Advisory Group (MAG) (2017), *Time to Change Course*, p. 8.

¹² Jensen, S. K. (2016), 'Can the IMF Help Angola Deepen Its Reform Agenda?', Chatham House Expert Comment, 15 April 2016, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/can-imf-help-angola-deepen-its-reform-agenda>.

¹³ Vines, A. (2011), 'Clearing the Killing Fields', Public Service Review: Central Government: Issue 22, https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/avines_psr0511.pdf (accessed 5 Jun. 2019).

¹⁴ World Bank (2017), 'New country classifications by income level: 2017-2018', World Bank Blogs, July 1 2017, <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/new-country-classifications-income-level-2017-2018> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019)

¹⁵ United Nations Development Programme (2018), *Human Development Indices and Indicators: 2018 Statistical Update*, New York: United Nations Development Programme, http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2018_human_development_statistical_update.pdf (accessed 3 Jun. 2019).

¹⁶ Sarah Njeri, Research Officer at Leeds Trinity University, speaking at the Angola APPG event.

¹⁷ Helen La Lime, speaking at the Angola APPG event.

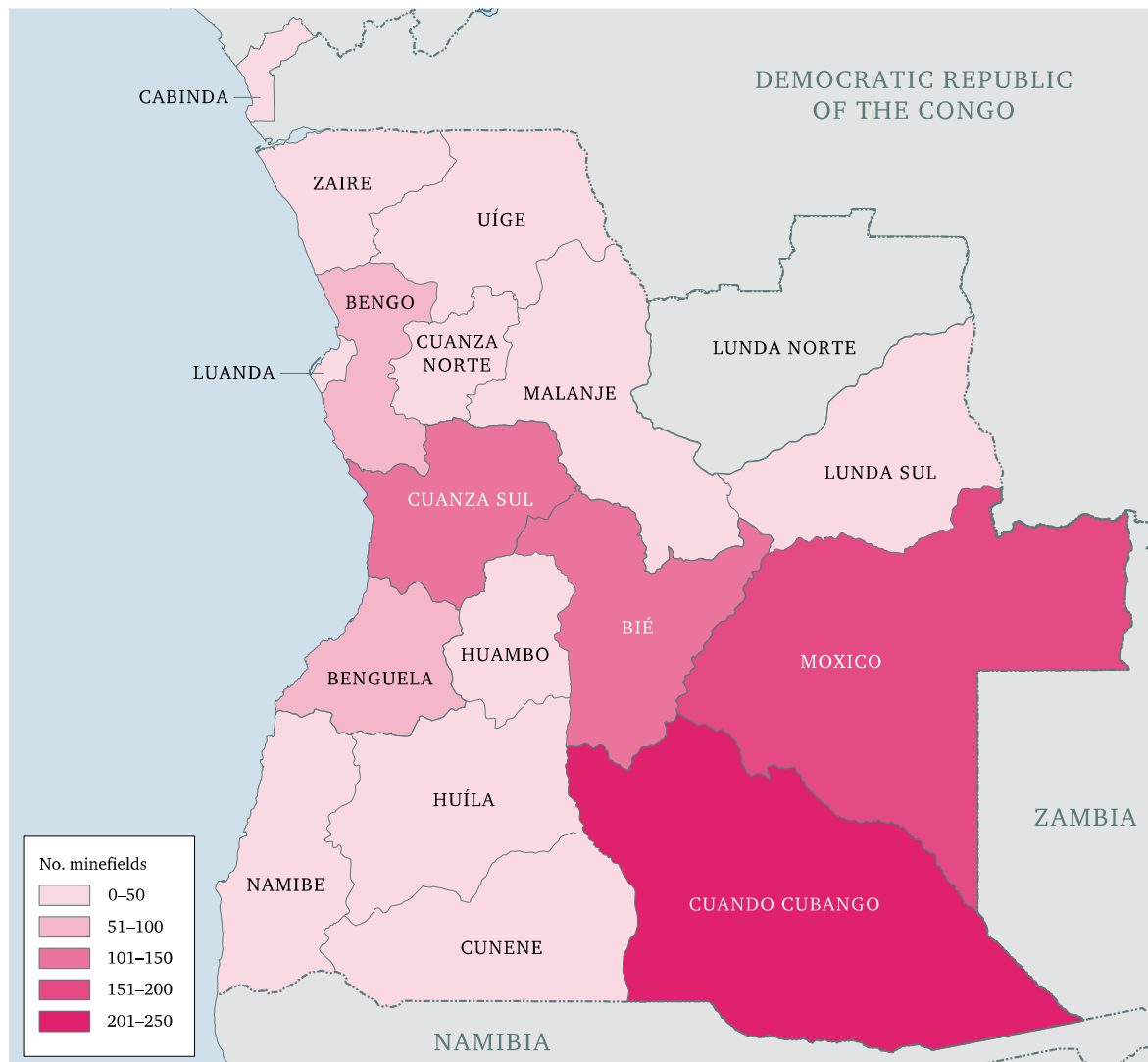
¹⁸ Miguel Gaspar Fernandes Neto, Angolan Ambassador to the UK, speaking at the Angola APPG event.

¹⁹ Chris Loughran, Director of Policy at MAG, speaking at the Angola APPG event.

²⁰ Mines Advisory Group (MAG) (2017), *Time to Change Course*.

²¹ Jensen, S. K. (2015), 'Angola Can Mark 40 Years Since Independence with Bold Economic Reforms', Chatham House Expert Comment, 11 November 2015, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/expert/comment/angola-can-mark-40-years-independence-bold-economic-reforms> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019).

Map: Reported minefields in Angola, 2018



Note: No data were reported for Lunda Norte.
Source: Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor.

Cuando Cubango and Moxico provinces: international legacies and post-landmine opportunities

The most contaminated areas are those provinces that were the sites of the fiercest and most prolonged fighting during the civil war, such as Bié, Cuando Cubango and Moxico (see map). Of these, Cuando Cubango province has 25 per cent of the confirmed hazardous land area in Angola, at over 22 sq km²² – a direct legacy of the confluence of international actors and Cold War politics that converged in Angola in the late 1980s.

²² Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor (2018), 'Angola: Mine Action', 7 November 2018, <http://www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2019/angola/mine-action.aspx> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019).

An offensive by Angolan government forces in 1987, backed by Cuban troops and Soviet advisers, towards UNITA-held Mavinga was pushed back to Cuito Cuanavale, in Cuando Cubango province, by the South African Defence Force (SADF) and UNITA, supported by the CIA. The subsequent siege and battle for Cuito Cuanavale during 1987–88 escalated to become the largest tank battle in Africa since El Alamein in the Second World War. Landmines were deployed in huge numbers in the course of the battle for Cuito Cuanavale, often in a state of panic and disorder, making clearance all the more difficult and hazardous. In many cases, anti-personnel mines were buried along with anti-tank mines, artillery shells, cases of explosives and other ordnance, designed to cause maximum lethal damage. Three decades later, Cuito Cuanavale is still considered to be the most heavily mined town in Africa.

At a conference at Chatham House in March 2018, marking the 30th anniversary of the end of the battle and discussing its legacy, Gerhard Zank, then HALO Trust operations manager for Angola, described how the scale of landmine use has rendered communities completely isolated.²³ He noted that during one visit in 2002, his team had counted over 100 vehicle casualties on the way into Cuito Cuanavale, caused by landmines and airstrikes. On the sand road onwards to Mavinga, via which the SADF had retreated over a decade earlier, the team had cleared 76 landmines in 40 km; but without additional resources they were unable to go any further down the 180-km road. Mavinga remains accessible only by air, making it difficult to provide medical care or other vital services to its population.

Around 150 local people from Cuito Cuanavale are employed in landmine clearance in the area. In 12 years, they had cleared 35,000 mines, around 50–60 per cent of the estimated total.²⁴ Between 2006 and 2011 some 9,000 mines were cleared from a 5 km-long, 80 hectare panel; by 2014, this land had been turned to productive agriculture.

Released land across the country is used for subsistence farming, which is of critical importance for acutely poor rural communities. This is especially important given Angola's pattern of reverse migration, as people have moved back to rural areas after the war. However, Angola's national economic development and diversification ambitions will also require the growth of larger-scale agricultural production. The continued presence of landmines is a serious impediment not just to agricultural expansion, but also to other key aspects of the government's economic diversification strategy, including livestock and extractives, as well as the supporting a fledgling tourism industry, conservation and wildlife economy.

The World Economic Forum forecast in 2017 that Angola would be among the 10 fastest growing tourism destinations worldwide over the next decade.²⁵ In 2018 tourism was listed by the Angolan government as one of nine priority investment sectors, having the potential to generate more jobs across the country than the offshore oil and gas industry currently does.²⁶

²³ Gerhard Zank, speaking at Chatham House conference 'Angola Forum 2018: 30th Anniversary of the Battle of Cuito Cuanavale'. The data in this paragraph come from the speaker's presentation.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ World Economic Forum (2017), 'Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017: Industry Trends', <http://reports.weforum.org/travel-and-tourism-competitiveness-report-2017/industry-trends/> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019).

²⁶ Vandome and Vines (2018), *Tackling Illegal Wildlife Trade in Africa*.

Cuito Cuanavale memorial site

In September 2017, in one of his final acts as president, José Eduardo dos Santos inaugurated a monument at Cuito Cuanavale. Decommissioned military hardware, an outdoor museum and a library attract tourists, students and researchers; and former combatants use the site as a place of reconciliation, where Angolan, former Soviet, Cuban and South African veterans meet and exchange memories. There are further plans, too, to develop a large tourist resort.

The Angolan government is seeking support to have the monument accredited as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Currently, of the 137 sites listed by UNESCO on the African continent, Robben Island is the only site of modern history. Accreditation for Cuito Cuanavale would be a highly significant recognition of its importance in regional liberation history.

In August 2018 the SADC Council of Ministers recognized 23 March, the date of the last offensive of the battle in 1988, as Southern Africa's Liberation Day. On 23 March 2019 leaders and government representatives from across the SADC countries, Cuba and the former USSR gathered at the monument for the inaugural celebration of the day.²⁷

Wildlife

The continued presence of landmines is a considerable impediment to Angola achieving its potential to host one of the most diverse wildlife populations on the continent. Large mammals have begun to return to Angola following the end of the conflict, and it is estimated, for instance, that the country could host an elephant population exceeding 100,000, more than 10 times the current number.²⁸ Angola accounts for 17 per cent of the Kavango-Zambezi Trans-Frontier Conservation Area, including the protected spaces of Luiana and Mavinga national parks and other surrounding wilderness areas.

The highlands of Moxico and Cuando Cubango provinces are the sources and tributaries of some of the most important rivers on the continent for wildlife biodiversity, including the Upper Zambezi, the Cuando, which becomes the Chobe and flows into the Zambezi, and the Cubango, the source of the Okavango Delta.

Southeast Angola has the potential to be a critical wilderness area, providing important overspill for large mammals in neighbouring countries whose ecosystems have reached carrying capacity, especially for elephants. Minefields cause animal deaths and cut off migratory routes. The scarce game in the area is at significant risk from criminals who are able to operate with relative impunity in high-risk, high-reward illegal activities such as wildlife poaching or illegal logging.

Mine clearance is a prerequisite if the Angolan government is to be able to enforce and devolve usage rights over these natural resources, including anti-poaching initiatives and enabling community-driven conservation and access for conservationists. An emergency demining

²⁷ SADC (2019), 'The SADC Region commemorates the first Southern Africa Liberation Day', 24 March 2019, <https://www.sadc.int/news-events/news/sadc-region-commemorates-southern-africa-liberation-day/> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019).

²⁸ Mguni, M. (2019), 'Angola offers solution to Botswana's elephant woes, but...', *Mmegi Online*, 31 May 2019, <https://www.mmegi.bw/index.php?aid=81142&dir=2019/may/31> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019).

programme in Mavinga National Park ran from 2003 until the ending of the UN Airlink service in 2005, which had provided access for mine action agencies. As long as the area's 40,000 inhabitants are unable to benefit sustainably from the park's economic potential, the incentive for them to engage with conservation efforts there remains low.

Angola's wildlife potential has meant that international attention has once again turned to the area, but this time to preserve rather than destroy the landscape. For instance, National Geographic has done extensive work in developing a better understanding of the Okavango river. In December 2018 the US DELTA (Defending Economic Livelihoods and Threatened Animals) Act was signed into law, committing the US to support the economic livelihoods of the more than 1 million people who rely on the Okavango river delta, and to protect the largest remaining elephant population in the world which also depends on it.²⁹

At the London 2018 Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference, Angola's Minister of the Environment, Paula Coelho, stated that the threat of landmines prevents Angola from developing a wildlife-focused tourism trade that could bring jobs and promote conservation in remote regions of the country.³⁰ In response, the HALO Trust noted that landmine clearance in Angola, particularly in Cuando Cubango, has latterly been marginalized as a result of declining donor funding, and that successful regional conservation will be possible only if this is reversed.³¹

To summarize, Angola is keen to harness the economic potential of former battlefields through tourism, wildlife conservation and sustainable agriculture. But achieving these goals requires the support and commitment of the international powers that shaped the country's past to now help clear the remnants of conflict and help Angola forge its own future.

Restoring support for mine action: international and domestic leadership

Angola is one country where achieving the Landmine Free 2025 ambition is possible, but to do so is estimated to require some \$275 million in international assistance.

In the past decade, international funding for landmine clearance in Angola has dropped from a high point of \$48.1 million in 2006 to a record low of \$3.1 million in 2017 (see Figure 1). The EU provided €20 million in multi-year funding in 2010 and 2014, but these contributions have not prevented overall funds from diminishing. In the past, US funding provided a safety net: by 2017, the US had invested more than \$124 million in humanitarian mine clearance in Angola since 1993, much of this for land resurveying and release.³² However, US support for mine action and munitions decommissioning programmes has fallen considerably (see Figure 2), with the 2018 budget commitment to Angola providing only for weapons removal and abatement, not mine

²⁹ The ICCF Group (2018), 'Bipartisan Delta Act Championed by Caucus Leaders Clears Senate, is Signed into Law', 21 December 2018, <https://www.internationalconservation.org/united-states/announcements/bipartisan-delta-act-championed-by-caucus-leaders-clears-senate> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019).

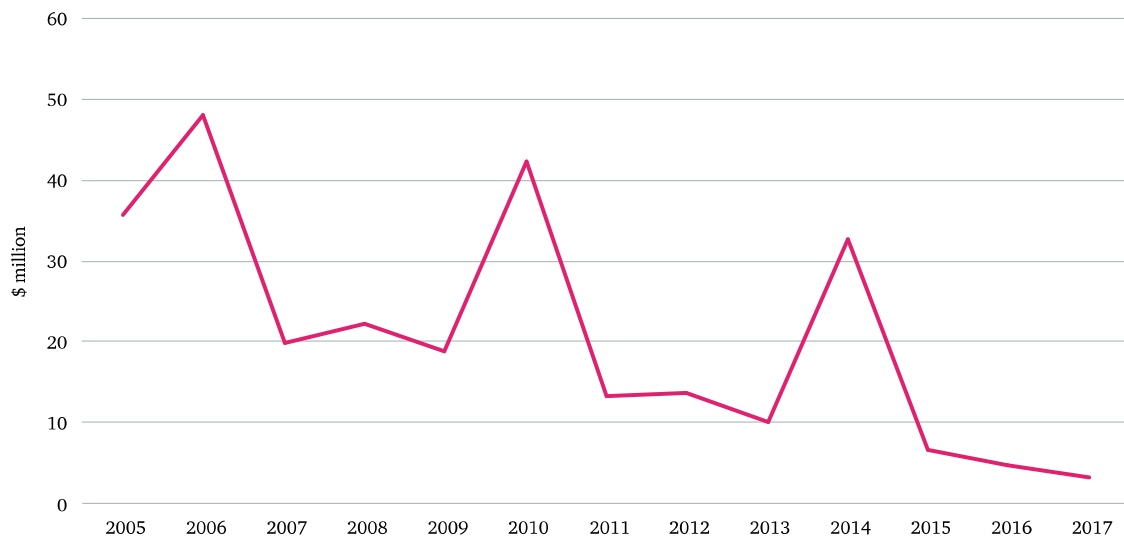
³⁰ Hon Paula Coelho spoke at the Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference: London 2018, on a panel that launched a Chatham House Africa Programme paper that included in depth research on environmental impact of landmines in Angola. See Vandome and Vines (2018), *Tackling Illegal Wildlife Trade in Africa*.

³¹ HALO Trust (2018), 'Landmines and Wildlife', 11 October 2018, <https://www.halotrust.org/media-centre/news/landmines-and-wildlife/> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019).

³² Helen La Lime, speaking at the Angola APPG event.

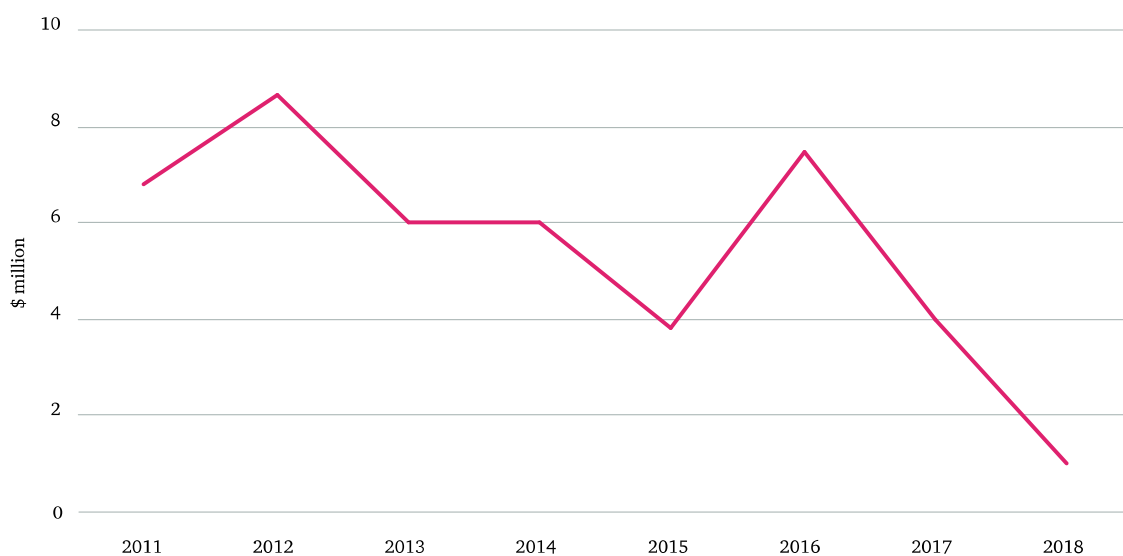
clearance. For Angola to become landmine-free by 2025, some \$40 million in funding will be needed every year until then. At the current rate of funding, Angola will not be landmine-free until 2046.

Figure 1: International contributions for landmine clearance in Angola, 2005–17



Source: Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor (multiple year reports).

Figure 2: US funding for mines and munitions assistance in Angola, 2011–18



Source: USASpending.gov, via HALO Trust.

The stalling of humanitarian progress caused by the sharp decline in international support for mine clearance has been compounded by a drop in national funding that traditionally provided an important safety net for people living with the consequences of landmines, as well as financing

some clearance. During 2005–17, the Angolan government provided over 69 per cent of total mine action support, including for victim support and orthopaedic care. However, low oil prices and deteriorating economic conditions meant that by 2017 the amount of national funding was less than a third of what it was at its peak only five years earlier.

The UK has a legacy of support and action on mine clearance in Angola. Worldwide coverage in 1997 of Diana, Princess of Wales, walking through minefields in Kuito, in central Angola, and meeting survivors in Huambo was a significant driver for an international ban on landmines. In December 1997 Angola was among the 122 original signatories to the newly concluded Ottawa Treaty.

In April 2017, on International Mine Awareness Day, DFID announced £100 million in funding to support mine action globally for three years, including an extension of DFID's Global Mine Action Programme (GMAP).³³ The UK had confirmed that it was ending direct development aid to Angola in 2011, closing also its £2 million mine action programme,³⁴ but the All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Angola held a consultation on this in April 2017,³⁵ at which Angola's exclusion from the GMAP was challenged. In September 2018 the UK government announced that Angola would be a recipient of the new DFID funding commitment.³⁶

Positive impact

Internationally funded demining programmes have positive social impact and contribute towards rural development. As well as the removal of hazardous ordnance, by hiring local staff these programmes transfer skills and contribute to empowering rural communities, particularly women. In March 2017 the HALO Trust introduced a '100 Women in Demining in Angola' project, with the aim of empowering 100 women through recruitment, training and employment across a range of mine action roles including operations, administration, logistics and fleet support; within a year the project had trained 20 paramedic deminers.³⁷ Meanwhile, MAG also reported training its first female deminers in April 2018, and in 2017 it was able to increase its national staff contingent from 83 to 98, and its international staff from four to five, as a result of increased funding.³⁸

The broader value of these projects has attracted support. In 2019 the HALO Trust received \$1.2 million from BP for Women in Demining, together with a renewed commitment from ENI (which first funded the initiative in 2017).³⁹ In March 2019 US Deputy Secretary of State John

³³ Department for International Development, Scotland Office, and The Rt Hon Priti Patel (2017), 'UK triples support for action against landmines on 20th anniversary of Princess Diana's iconic Angola visit', press release, 4 April 2017, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-triples-support-for-action-against-landmines-on-20th-anniversary-of-princess-dianas-iconic-angola-visit>.

³⁴ Department for International Development (2011), 'The future of UK aid', news story, 1 March 2011, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-future-of-uk-aid> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019); and *Guardian* (2010), 'De-mining priority', letter from Alex Vines, Chatham House, 17 November 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/nov/17/demining-priority-angola-congo> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019).

³⁵ Angola APPG event, 'Mine Action in Angola: The Role of the International Community', 26 April 2017, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/event/mine-action-angola-role-international-community>.

³⁶ Department for International Development and The Rt Hon Penny Mordaunt MP (2018), 'UK aid will protect more than 820,000 people from threat of lethal landmines', press release, 6 September 2018, <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-aid-will-protect-more-than-820000-people-from-threat-of-lethal-landmines> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019).

³⁷ Landmine & Cluster Munition Monitor (2018), 'Angola: Mine Action'.

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ HALO Trust (2019), 'Thanks to BP our 100 women in demining project is growing', 20 May 2019, <https://www.halotrust.org/media-centre/news/bp-angola-supports-100-women-in-demining/> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019); and ENI (2019), 'Eni Angola renews partnership with the

Sullivan announced \$2 million in humanitarian demining assistance to support the Angolan government's commitment to demining in the Okavango region, and to help the country achieve landmine-impact-free status by 2025.⁴⁰ These commitments make a serious contribution, but more needs to be done.

Conclusion: the moment for action

Angola is no longer at civil war: landmines will not now be re-laid, and it is time for action. Mine clearance organizations are working together better than ever before, with a focus on achieving a landmine-free world by 2025. New initiatives such as the HALO Trust's 100 Women in Demining in Angola project are providing training and salaries to women living in rural areas, helping to reverse demining job losses caused by funding cuts.⁴¹ These programmes have positive associated social impacts, and are attracting international support from investors.

At a political rally in Cuando Cubango in April 2017, the then MPLA defence minister and presidential candidate João Lourenço emphasized the government's commitment to demining, 'to save lives, but also to create conditions ... for the development of agriculture, tourism and industries', and to working with the country's international partners on mine action.⁴² For Angola to become landmine-free by 2025, and to see the conservation-based economic development and the protection the region's vital biodiversity and conservation that comes with it, will require collective action from the government of Angola and its international partners. The UK's recommitment to funding mine action in Angola is welcome, as are the announcements in 2019 of corporate and significant renewed Angolan government funding. More funding is needed, however, and the US administration in particular should significantly increase its support for action on demining in Angola so that the country can achieve its commitment to be fully landmine-free by 2025.

HALO Trust, 27 February 2019, https://www.eni.com/en_IT/media/news/2019/02/eni-angola-renews-partnership-with-the-halo-trust# (accessed 5 Jun. 2019).

⁴⁰ US Embassy in Angola (2019), 'Joint Statement Following the U.S.-Angola Strategic Dialogue', 19 March 2019, <https://ao.usembassy.gov/joint-statement-following-the-u-s-angola-strategic-dialogue/> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019).

⁴¹ For more information on the HALO Trust's '100 Women in Demining in Angola' project, see <https://www.halotrust.org/100women/the-project/> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019).

⁴² Defence Minister João Lourenço, speaking at a political rally in Menongue, Cuando Cubango, 5 April 2017. Translation courtesy of the HALO Trust: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iwWxIhVdY-s> (accessed 5 Jun. 2019).

About the APPG on Angola

The All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Angola is an independent and impartial cross-party group of British MPs and peers that seeks to develop knowledge of Angola in the UK parliament. Formed in 2002, the APPG on Angola helps to build links and foster good relations between the UK and Angola, offering support for Angola's development, democratic transition and post-conflict reconstruction. Since its formation, the secretariat for the APPG has been administered by Chatham House.

The APPG on Angola explores the UK–Angola relationship through research activities such as meetings, parliamentary events, country visits and publications.

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Cover image: A mine clearance specialist in Angola preparing equipment used to look for unexploded ordnance, May 2012.

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