

LDC5 side event: Holistic and multisectoral interventions to address systemic and structural vulnerabilities in LDCs: Lessons learned from Angola.

Date: 6 March 2023

Time: 12:15-13:45

Statement by Mr. Hironдино Garcia President of Prestígio, Angola

Thank you very much. Good afternoon, everyone. Your Excellency with your permission.

As you all know, the private sector is the lever of modern economies, so the development of a dynamic private sector capable of adapting to different economic cycles and creating value and decent jobs should, in my opinion, be a priority for any government and any institution.

It is from this perspective that we very much welcome the work of UNCTAD in Angola, in close partnership with the Government of Angola, through funding from the European Union.

I would therefore like to thank UNCTAD, the Government of Angola, and the European Union for all the technical and financial support they have been giving to the business community and to our country in particular.

The Joint European Union-UNCTAD Programme for Angola: Train for Trade II has been a real success in terms of entrepreneurship.

On the one hand, the Empretec programme, allows the development of a critical mass of national entrepreneurs, in a logic of sustainability, with the training of trainers and educators of a new and more capable class.

On the other hand, it contributes to the evaluation and improvement of the entrepreneurial ecosystem, through an analysis based on the main pillars of entrepreneurship, with the active participation of key actors, namely the private, public, and banking sectors.

With the presence of UNCTAD in Angola and particularly the EMPRETEC programme, one of the main results is the contribution to the creation of self-employment and entrepreneurship making clear that the Government of Angola can and should count on Empretec for entrepreneurship issues.

Empretec introduced a new dynamic in the Angolan business panorama and made many of the entrepreneurs that attended the seminar, due to the growth of their companies, recruit more employees.

The recent study about Empretec impact, as said by Mr. Amadeu Nunes, shows that 85% of the entrepreneurs have registered an increase in their sales, and the companies registered a 72% growth in terms of job creation.

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The Empretec Seminar is considered within the entrepreneurial class as the tool that allows us to optimise our entrepreneurial potential. And it came to join the other existing programmes in the country to consolidate the national entrepreneurial sector.

Empretec is a behavioral training programme, which has the strong capacity to transform and develop the skills and behaviors of successful entrepreneurs.

The dynamics and various exercises practiced throughout each seminar, allow for combining theoretical knowledge with practice, very essential for the development of entrepreneurial skills. In terms of teaching and learning methodology, Empretec uses a very interactive methodology specialized for adult education.

Empretec is in Angola for the second time, it was present in 2003 and trained Entrepreneurs and companies that today are part of a group of 30 of the most successful companies and entrepreneurs at the national level.

Angola has at this moment 4 Angolan trainers, of which 2 of them are Masters with skills to train other trainers. The 4 trainers have already delivered 5 seminars with the quality required by UNCTAD, without the intervention of the Masters, and there was effectively a transfer of skills to the National trainers, so I would like to congratulate the 3 masters for the excellent work accomplished. In terms of the facilitator training schedule, until the end of 2023, we will make and train 2 more facilitators and until 2024 another 4 so that in 2024 we will have 10 National trainers.

The transition of Empretec from UNCTAD to Prestígio was a great success. With the technical support of UNCTAD, we were able to understand the process of organization, preparation, and realization of Empretec seminars.

This programme created an internal revolution and allowed us to have the audacity to start negotiations with national and international institutions that will allow the project to continue.

With our exchange and networking space, the "Café Executivo", held monthly, which started in January, we have joined entities such as the Ambassador of the European Union in Angola, the Coordinator of the Economic and Social Commission of the President of the Republic respectively, so that with them we can present what Empretec is and always with them try to find solutions that allow us to maintain sustainability.

Prestígio is working to mobilise resources from the national community, from the major institutions in our country, (for example the Development Banks and the Commercial Banks), and diamond and oil companies so that, within the scope of their social responsibilities, they can support the project to maintain its sustainability each time.

We are also mobilising the beneficiaries themselves so that they start contributing with the partial payment of their training, a situation that may begin this month.

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I have the honor of being one of the first Angolans to benefit from this project in 2003, and here I would particularly like to thank our Secretary of State for Commerce, Amadeu Nunes, who was the person who referred me to the Empretec programme many years ago, with a small invitation to go to Geneva to participate in a fair, where by chance I won the prize for the most attractive stand at the fair. From then on, the solution was to keep going and never stop.

I am that Angolan citizen like many others who had everything to go wrong, everything. At the age of 13, I lost my father with about 47 bullets in his body. Angola was going through a civil war, but this made me, and many other Angolans realize that it was necessary to fight.

This war created more than just deaths, unfortunately, it created men with a lot of capacity, men with the need to win, and I am one of them. At the age of 13, I started to work very informally, but after my father's death, I needed to help my mother.

We must understand that in Angola most women support their families, and we men must have the capacity to understand this and be close to them. That is what I did as a child, and still do today.

It was a complicated phase of my life, but there are things that we can't escape, we have no way out. So, at that moment I made the decision, and because I started to work, and the easiest place is the one that some people have in memory, the so-called Roque Santeiro market. It was not an easy situation, but it was the possible one, I created the conditions and with the few resources I had, I was selling fish, for a long time, until one day in front of my house I found a truck stopped with many crates of beer. I did not know the person, but because the man had contacted me, because he wanted to understand how to store the truck, probably, at that time, I had no notion of the English language (I cannot speak English but I can understand everything), unfortunately, the French language was the same thing, but through mimicry, I understood that the man wanted to sell beer and I made myself available. And at that time, I received the first crates of beer, I sold it, returned it and sold it again and a few months later I realized that I had 97.000 dollars at home under the mattress because our economy was still unbanked at the time.

This allowed me to contact people who certainly knew more than me and led me to leave the informal market.

I never stopped, it was then that Empretec came into my life, and it changed me completely. I realize that today I am in fact a completely different man, a man with many gains. Being part of the list of the 30 most successful companies in my country is something extremely strong. Today what I do is give back all that I have achieved in the world of the Empretec, I am in a moment of sharing, today I am a happy man, for being able to share with my brothers all that I have learned.

I must also thank Mr. Paul, Mr. Mussie, and Ms. Johanna, for believing in me, and for allowing me to be the Director of Empretec in Angola today. Thank you very much.

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This is very difficult. I must say here today to everyone that I am very happy, I have grown a lot, and I have realized dreams that I had not dreamed of.

Today I produce 700 tonnes of corn a year, today I have a 19-floor building, today I build roads, I never dreamed of this, but God allowed me to put some people in my way and it was a project called Empretec. Fortunately, I am not the only one, there are some of us, at this moment since 2018, we have managed to train 364 new entrepreneurs with the Empretec methodology. We are sure that in the coming times, some of this will be part of the statistics and we will be more than thirty (30). What we also realized is that it is not enough just to train them, it is important to accompany them, it is important to be close to them and this is the work that we are going to do. We accompany them day and night.

Today we have national trainers, which is a source of great pride, my family is a family of entrepreneurs, and my wife is now a successful businesswoman, and this is also due to Empretec.

I tried it at home, and it worked, women are very strong, much stronger than us, and men have to recognize this, it will be easier and better for the world, this is a great truth, I no longer have any worries because I am sure I have a partner who will support me.

Gentlemen, this is Empretec, what I leave as a challenge is that please do not stop, help us to help, we need to continue.

It is also important, and here I am sending a message to the Secretary of State, that in parallel with the work and support we have received from UNCTAD and the European Union, we need the Angolan Government to be more present in this process. We need it very much. And here I am not talking about Mr. Amadeu Nunes, who is the meat of Empretec, who is the Empretec bone, not this one, but we need this to be extended to the Government of Angola.

Thank you all very much, thank you for listening and I am very sorry. That is not easy. Thank you.