

# Transforming4Trade

February 2024

Special Coverage by UN Africa Renewal

## Angola's route to economic transformation

Small businesses drive  
economic growth



# CONTENTS



**4** Op-ed: A paradigm shift in Angola's development

**6** Overview: Transforming4Trade

**12** Economic transformation through commerce

**16** Angola's small businesses drive economic growth

**22** Young entrepreneurs 'Empretecós' on a mission to transform their country

**26** Varsity head paving the way for women in top jobs

**28** From oil to sustainable agriculture

**30** Interview: 'Transforming4Trade' will reshape African economies

**34** Interview: Could Angola become Africa's logistics hub?

**36** Honey farmers contribute to rural economy, conserve biodiversity



## Transforming4Trade

Special Coverage by UN Africa Renewal

*In December 2023, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) completed the implementation of the EU-UNCTAD Joint Programme "Train for Trade II" in Angola, as part of its Transforming4Trade High Impact Initiative. The initiative advocates for innovative policy approaches to stimulate economic development, with a specific emphasis on enhancing countries' productive capacities and achieving structural economic transformation through evidence-based and sustained policy implementation. The United Nations has acknowledged the Angolan programme as a best practice for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This publication by Africa Renewal focuses on the programme's impact, drawing on beneficiaries' first-hand accounts.*

Writer

Kingsley Ighobor

Editors

Sofia Diara

Zipporah Musau

Design

Paddy Ilos

Cover photo: Irandelson Salgueiro/Tubarones Photography



Óleo de soja  
**kira**

1L

Óleo de soja  
**kira**

1L

ARROZ • R

ONGO

CULTIVADO

KAMACUP

ANGO

# A paradigm shift in Angola's development

UNCTAD's programme, driven by people and policy, boosts productive capacity

By Paul Akiwumi

**S**ince 2017, the European Union-UNCTAD Joint Programme for Angola: Train for Trade II has adopted a holistic, data-driven and evidence-based approach to economic development. The Southern African nation, one of the 45 least developed countries, has an economic structure closely tied to the exploitation of the country's rich petroleum resources.

However, this structure has locked Angola in a cycle of commodity dependence, excluding other sectors with high growth and employment potential. On the development front, this cycle deepens poverty and inequality. It also reduces economic opportunities, particularly for rural communities, women, youth and other vulnerable groups.

## Taking a holistic approach to economic development

To decrease dependency on the commodity-led growth model, UNCTAD decided to write a new narrative. With financial support of the European Union (EU), the Joint Programme for Angola takes a comprehensive approach to diversifying exports and the economy, linking Angola to regional and global value chains.

This holistic approach represents a new development paradigm. It is a shift towards evidence-based development planning that encompasses the entire economy. It aims to replace the model applied so far, which has focused narrowly on sector-based and short-term projects that have not delivered the desired outcomes.



The innovative UNCTAD model underscores the importance of inclusive, multisectoral and multi-partner programmes tied to national development policies. Those who implement the model adopt a long-term view, steadily building domestic productive capacities to transform economic structures and harness comparative advantages.

## Three enablers: Approach, commitment and skills

Over the last six years of work in Angola, UNCTAD has identified three factors as critical enablers of the Programme's success.

First is the integrated, whole-of-society approach that all levels have adopted. UNCTAD works directly with the Government of Angola, the private sector, academia and civil society across a range of needs and national priorities.

The Programme integrates all



UNCTAD's Paul Akiwumi discusses trade with Angola's Secretary of State for Commerce, Amadeu de Jesus Leitão Nune. [📷](#) *Ministério da Indústria e Comércio Angola*

partners into its management mechanism. As a result, a core group of Angolans has formed, Angolans who understand the motivation for a new development paradigm and have worked together over time to deliver this change.

Second, the Programme's success rests on the deep institutional commitments not only to economic diversity but also to a comprehensive, participatory policy-making approach.

Through the support of 15 national policies and processes – among them, revising Angolan investment policies, setting up a cultural and creative industries framework, and developing a comprehensive national entrepreneurship policy – Angolan institutions are codifying their profound commitment.

Such steadfastness is essential to the Programme's sustainability and its delivery

of intended outcomes. By moving towards the adoption of these national policies, the country aims to put in place the requisite frameworks for growth in the years ahead. Complementary policies and, critically, internal stakeholder commitment are hallmarks of the holistic approach.

Third, under the Programme, efforts have focused on developing skills within the country's labour force and boosting productive capacities within various industrial sectors.

For example, training entrepreneurs in key green sectors and coaching the national trade facilitation committee have strengthened human capital in key trade-related initiatives. Enhancing the capacity of Angolans to define public-private partnerships (PPP) and create transport corridors helps to relieve a trade logistics bottleneck.

## Ambitious goals, impressive results

The EU-UNCTAD Joint Programme was quite ambitious when the two partners started implementing it in 2017. But all the hard work has yielded significant returns, surpassing expectations of the Programme's own goals across seven components. It trained over 3,300 Angolans, over a third of them women.

UNCTAD support for forming PPP in transport and logistics infrastructure helped launch tenders for major Lobito corridor components, totaling an investment of \$3.2 billion by the Government. Through this corridor, farmers from remote provinces will be enabled to bring their green products to market.

Perhaps more telling, macroeconomic evidence shows a positive diversification trend in the Angolan economy. Non-oil exports from the country have increased by over 5.7 per cent since 2016. While the path to sustainable and inclusive growth is long, Angola – with the support of key development partners – is making important strides.

The Programme for Angola now serves as a model for other developing countries because it addresses the development challenges facing structurally weak and vulnerable economies. The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs identified its consultative process as one of the good practices in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

The long-term sustainability of the Angola programme requires adequate finance and robust engagements of the country's institutions and development partners alike.

Now, several developing countries across various world regions have initiated or are starting similar interventions, fostering South-South and triangular cooperation. This is the surest way for countries to progress in sustainable development.

*Paul Akiwumi is the Director, Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).*

# Overview: Transforming 4Trade

An EU-UNCTAD Joint programme is changing lives for the better

**A** few years ago, Angola was poised to graduate from the group of least developed countries (LDCs), a significant milestone, since 33 of the 45 LDCs are in Africa.

Graduating from the UN list of LDCs typically boosts investor confidence and gives countries bragging rights for their sound economic management and development progress. But the COVID-19 pandemic, external debt, oil price volatility — oil accounts for about 94 per cent of the country's foreign earnings — and other macroeconomic headwinds slowed its progress.

Yet the country remains one of Africa's largest economies, with recent growth powered by oil revenues and a growing non-oil sector, according to the International Monetary Fund.

## Tackling poverty

Transitioning from a least developed to a developing country requires addressing many development challenges. With unemployment reaching 29.6 per cent, according to the World Bank, the government is tackling poverty through several development pillars, including structural economic transformation, infrastructure development and human capital development. And support is coming from many partners, including the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the European Union (EU).

The seven components of the EU-UNCTAD Joint Programme for Angola: Train for Trade II, running from 2017 to 2023, reinforce those pillars.

*An upscale restaurant in Luanda owned by Mr. and Ms. Hironidino Garcia.*





O Zedo

Couteiro-Mor

Dom Gabriel  
Vale de Anecho

BARÃO  
RODRIGUES

Associação do  
P. N. R.

## Taking a whole-of-society approach

The Train for Trade II programme is unique because of its holistic and whole-of-society approach. It addresses several development challenges simultaneously, ensuring mutually reinforcing positive outcomes.

UNCTAD Director of the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes, Paul Akiwumi, emphasizes the programme's extensive focus on policy reforms, economic

### Pillars of Angola's Development

- Structural economic transformation by investing in sectors such as agriculture, livestock and fisheries, and improving the ease of doing business.
- Infrastructure development by building modern roads, ports and logistics hubs.
- Human capital development by training its entrepreneurs in essential skills and knowledge.

diversification, value chain development, entrepreneurship support, trade negotiation capacity, international export standards and enhanced trade logistics.

“On an institutional level, our support for the private sector's ability to export such products as honey has prompted the development of certification frameworks and infrastructure within the country,” says Mr. Akiwumi.

He adds, “The programme has a profound impact, including raising a new generation of entrepreneurs destined to drive this country towards the future.”

Olga Afonso Dicamba, director-general of the Angolan National Institute of Quality Infrastructure, says the programme is making the government more effective in implementing quality controls so that Angolan products meet







international norms and standards.

“We want to make sure that ‘Made in Angola’ signifies quality,” Ms. Dicamba stresses in an interview. “For example, the training workshops organized for people operating in the fisheries sector gives them standards they can use — top quality process, from production to distribution.”

### Revvng up training

The results have been impressive. A total of 3,300 individuals, comprising 2,171 males and 1,126 females, have received training in various fields. With hundreds of “empretecos” revving up business activities nationwide, experts now predict an economic upswing that could put Angola on a sustainable development trajectory.

Small businesses are sprouting across the country, creating jobs for many. About 85 per cent (450 people) of entrepreneurs trained under the Train for Trade II Programme report an increase in sales and a 72 per cent annual growth rate in job creation is observed across all trained enterprises, UNCTAD reported. Managers of 30 of the top 100 companies in Angola have undertaken Emprettec training.

In Soyo in Northern Angola, empreteco members of the Association of Entrepreneurs of the Province of Zaire are cultivating vast agricultural fields, building warehouses and guest houses, and providing employment opportunities.

In Luanda, the Angolan capital, young techies are incubating startup ideas and driving innovation.

In Huambo, the José Eduardo dos Santos University is training a group of women and men in contemporary honey production techniques, boosting local entrepreneurship.

In N’zeto, Antonio Sambiano, a local government administration official, is not only venturing into large-scale farming but also organizing six musicians into a group, hoping to leverage upcoming opportunities in the creative sector.

In Lobito, 21-year-old Ariana Chiteculo is starting a cake-baking and snacks enterprise, aspiring to grow it into

*Maxmel Honey factory in Huambo.*

a bakery while paying for her own college education. Her success story exemplifies how Emprettec training empowers young women to found businesses, employ staff and contribute to their local economies.

### Cutting red tape

To promote investment, Angolan leaders are gradually dismantling bureaucratic bottlenecks, rejuvenating intra-Angola and international trade. Their work includes ongoing reviews of the land laws, more liberal access to foreign exchange for Angolan entrepreneurs and a simplified entry visa process, among other initiatives.



**We must invest more in infrastructure, particularly in communication and roads, to facilitate the movement of people and goods. Connecting the Benguela Railway to Zambia and the DRC will significantly boost trade in that subregion.”**

— Francisco José da Cruz, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Angola to the United Nations in New York



**This training should be mandatory for every young person in Angola and across Africa. We need to change the destiny of this continent.”**

— Wilson Kiteque,  
prominent Empretec trainer

“Our goal is to make Angola a hub for export in the region,” says Manuel Bessa, a technical staff at the country’s export agency, Agência de Investimento Privado e Promoção das Exportações.

As diversification gains momentum, Angola is increasing large-scale production of products like honey, fish and others. A massive fish aquaculture project is underway in Porto Amboim, Kwanza Sul Province, 270 km Southeast of Luanda. When operational, it could produce 1,000 tonnes of fish annually for domestic and foreign markets.

Saraiva Santos, president of the National Association of Aquaculture, recently returned from Vietnam where he participated in the training organized by UNCTAD on adding value sustainably to fisheries and aquaculture products for exports. He predicts that “2024 will witness a massive boost in aquaculture in Angola.”

The government is establishing logistics hubs in six strategic locations — Luvo, Soyo, Lobito, Caála, Luau and Arimba — around the country, equipped with phytosanitary inspection and enhanced storage facilities. In November,



the government inaugurated an ultra-modern international airport in Luanda.

With UNCTAD’s support, the government is also reviewing the nation’s copyright policies to bolster the creative economy, a sector with great job-creation potential.

Catarino Fontes Pereira, president of the board of directors of the Angolan Regulatory Agency for Cargo Certification and Logistics, envisions a high level of logistical interoperability by 2025; and officials are skillfully negotiating logistics cooperation with their counterparts in other countries.

### Keys to success

The UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) recognizes the Train for Trade II programme as a global success story for the Sustainable Development Goals, specifically its good practices for implementation. Now UNCTAD seeks to replicate its success in other countries, under a broader “Transforming4Trade” programme — one of the UN’s 12 High Impact Initiatives to scale up action towards achieving the SDGs.



## 7 Components of Train for Trade II Programme

- Green exports: Diversifying the economy through non-oil trade opportunities.
- Commercial diplomacy: Building capacity in trade policymaking, analysis and negotiation.
- Trade facilitation: Supporting the implementation of the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement.
- Transport and trade logistics: Promoting sustainable transport and trade logistics systems, corridor and cluster-based approaches.
- Empretec: Investing in small and medium enterprises and creating an Entrepreneurship Policy Framework.
- Investment: Reviewing investment policies.
- Cultural and creative industries: Strengthening the cultural and creative industries through a coherent strategy and training for public and private sector agents.

The programme's success stems primarily from its structure, the government's full support and effective coordination. Its broad areas of focus stimulate "structural economic transformation through a holistic approach to development," Mr. Akiwumi explains.

The Ministry of Industry and Commerce coordinates the programme on behalf of the Angolan government, and another 22 ministries are powering its implementation, convening annually to review progress.

In addition, the programme has a

*Women honey producers in Bailundo, Huambo Province.*

ministerial-level steering committee that meets annually to set policy, review progress, and provide strategic guidance, and a technical committee with representatives from various ministerial departments. The technical committee meets regularly to identify challenges, suggest solutions, and make recommendations to the steering committee.

Also, the country's Secretary of State for Commerce Amadeu de Jesus Leitão

Nunes credits UNCTAD with effective coordination. "We are fortunate to have UNCTAD presence in Angola to help create consensus and engage with other institutions."

Mr. Nunes hopes the EU will continue its funding beyond 31 December 2023, when the programme ends. Should it discontinue funding, he said the government would explore alternative funding sources.

Such levels of interest and commitment have led to tangible results. They are testaments to what Angola can achieve through concerted, coordinated and collaborative efforts.

# Economic transformation through commerce

A conversation with Amadeu de Jesus Leitão Nunes, Angola's Secretary of State for Commerce

In an interview with *Africa Renewal's* Kingsley Ighobor in Luanda, Angola's capital, Amadeu de Jesus Leitão Nunes discusses his country's agricultural projects, its successful partnership with the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the European Union (EU) to promote economic development, its support for women and youth entrepreneurs, the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), and more. Here are excerpts of their conversation.

**The first question is straightforward: Is Angola ready for business?**

Angola has been ready for business for a long time. If we analyze the history of Angola before independence, trade was very prosperous, so prosperous that Angola imported only supposed superfluous products. We were very self-sufficient in terms of food.

**Where would you like Angola's economy to be?**

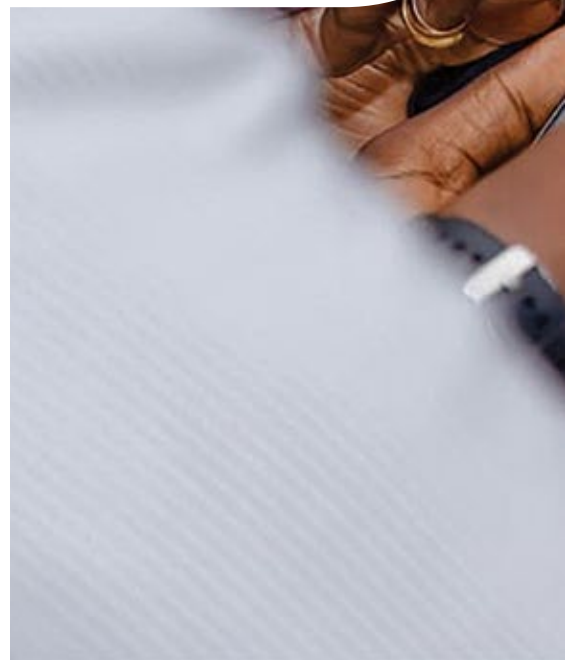
Our short-term ambition is not to depend so much on oil exports. We want

to diversify the economy.

That means increasing production for almost all goods, not just primary ones. We must increase agricultural production to feed our population and accelerate our country's industrialization. We need to increase production also for export, with added value in processing.

**Which primary products do you want to focus on?**

These are cereals, like corn, rice, beans, and animal protein—eggs and chicken. That is why we have major programmes like





- PLANAGRÃO, for promoting grain production in agriculture for cereals,
- PLANAPESCAS, for promoting fisheries, and
- PLANAPECUÁRIA, for promoting and developing livestock.

**Does the government's programme for agriculture support the private sector?**

In these three major programmes, the state and the private sector are in alignment. The private sector's involvement is fundamental within the institutional framework of the state.

Naturally, arable lands belong to the state, and the state gives concessions for these lands to private entities, especially for agriculture purposes.

**Do you have incentives such as financing guarantees for the private sector?**

Yes, there are significant incentives. For programmes that we need to develop, banks like the Banco Nacional de Angola [Angola's central bank] are providing incentives such as financing with lower interest rates than those offered by commercial banks.

For essential products, we are lowering the Value Added Tax, from 14 per cent to 5 per cent. These initiatives support the private sector.

**Where are the key export destinations, and what products?**

Excluding oil, Angola is exporting fruits, especially bananas, pineapples, and avocados. Our exports go to neighbouring countries like Congo, and to Europe and China.

**Entrepreneurs, artists, trade facilitators and others speak glowingly of the Train for Trade II programme. Why do you think the government's partnership with UNCTAD and the EU has been effective thus far?**

First, the Train for Trade II programme builds on the positive outcomes of the Train for Trade I.



Second, the project structure has been good. As you know, we have seven different components to this project, and this relationship works well. Our Ministry [Ministry of Industry and Commerce] has the institutional political responsibility to liaise with the other institutions involved, and they have accepted our role as the coordinating ministry.

Lastly, We are fortunate to have UNCTAD presence in Angola to help create consensus and engage with other institutions.

**The programme ends in December. What's next?**

In a meeting with the EU, we expressed our interest in and willingness to continue the programme. We would indeed like the programme to continue even

if we need to look for other sources of funding.

The new EU Ambassador just presented her credentials. We will meet with her and present our proposal to continue the programme.

**Many of the programmes' young beneficiaries look to the government to make doing business easy. Other experts, within the government and from UNCTAD, have made recommendations on this issue. Are you committed to facilitating the adoption of their recommendations?**

Yes. We have many programmes supporting new entrepreneurs. The Ministry of Economy and Planning coordinates these mechanisms. Other ministries also contribute significantly to entrepreneurship.



*Angola's Secretary of State for Commerce, Amadeu de Jesus Leitão Nune at a trade fair.*  
📷 *Ministério da Indústria e Comércio Angola*

Also, the National Institute of Support for Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Companies (INAPEM) has a platform that brings together all the institutions working to promote entrepreneurship.

Finally, the Ministry of Economy and Planning has organized one or two startup forums with great success. They had about 300 startups, and they hope to have 1,500 startups in next year's forum.

**Are you making any plans to take advantage of the AfCFTA, which will allow the free flow of goods and people and eliminate most tariffs on goods?**

We are working with the UN Economic Commission for Africa on a national strategy for implementing the AfCFTA. We think that by May or June of 2024, we will have it.

I always say that, in Africa, we are competitors because most of the goods we produce in Angola are the same as those of Namibia, Zambia, or Congo. So, we need to seek complementarity — offering goods and services that complement those of our neighbors. That's why I asked ECA to analyze our strategy for complementary mechanisms that we can set up with our neighbours.

Think of transportation. South Africa has an automobile industry, but the country doesn't make all the parts of the car. Likewise, the parts of an Airbus aircraft come from various places— the engine may be from England, the wings from Germany, the seats from Portugal or Spain— and then the assembling is done in Toulouse, France. This is a necessary complementarity.

**Conceptually, some tout the AfCFTA as a transformative project, one that will create millions of jobs and turn Africa around. What do you think?**

Based on my experience and my knowledge of such matters in Europe where I studied, the AfCFTA is our aspiration; it will succeed only with serious political commitment from our countries.

Without such commitment, AfCFTA is just another instrument, and each country can do business in its own way. There was such commitment in Europe. The countries managed to develop the EU to where it is now.

**Are you very hopeful about its success?**

I have hope, but I tell my colleagues [fellow trade ministers] that success requires continuing dialogue, explanation, and consent of the people. We can have a super-structure like the AfCFTA, but we must truly involve our people— entrepreneurs, businesses, the private sector, students, and academia.

Often with our programmes, we

don't pull everyone together, meaning we can't be inclusive. So, if we can achieve inclusiveness, then we can move forward.

**Women constitute about 70 percent of informal cross-border traders in Africa. How is the government supporting women traders?**

Yes, women carry out a large percentage of informal trade. We have a programme, financed by the EU, to convert the informal economy into the formal economy. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Family, and Women Promotion is fully involved in this programme.

**In Bailundo, a village in Huambo, we met with a group of women who were applying what they had been taught by the University in Huambo to their honey production business. They could use a little support from the government.**

Honey production has increased across the country. Every part of the country — Huambo, Cuando Cubango, Moxico and so on — has honey. When we go to local trade fairs, we see a lot of honey, and it's quality honey.

A gentleman keeps calling me, saying, "I don't know how I'm going to sell my honey. I don't even have a car to transport my honey. I'm going to lose the honey. The honey will spoil." Imagine people like him all over the country!

So, we need to work on certification and everything else that adds value. Also, Train for Trade II has a honey programme, and I think we should explore it more vigorously.

**From what you know about the Angolan industrial base, commerce, trade, and development, where do you see this country in the next five years?**

The government is working to improve the living conditions of citizens. We are all working towards achieving food security. I am confident that we can significantly reduce our dependence on imports for some goods, increase production in many other goods, and ensure food security.

# Angola's small businesses drive economic growth

Micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) are the backbone of any economy. In Angola, people are determined to shift away from oil dependency, which currently constitutes nearly 94 per cent of foreign earnings.

Although the Angolan economy grew an impressive 3.1 per cent in 2022, the World Bank at-

tributed this growth primarily to improved oil revenues and enhanced economic management.

Recognizing the country's need to diversify its economy, the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) is actively assisting the government in implementing an extensive Train for Trade II programme funded by

the European Union and aimed at empowering thousands of Angolan entrepreneurs predominantly involved in MSMEs.

Africa Renewal interviewed three successful small business owners, to shed light on the key factors in their success and the prospects they see for their businesses and their country.

## Hirondino and Carolina: A love story in business

How a loving couple's hard work benefits society

**H**irondino Garcia and his wife, Carolina, have a unique relationship that holds valuable lessons for new businesses, especially in Africa. They jointly manage several small businesses — a fancy fast-food place, an entrepreneurship training center, real estate, a bakery, a farm, and a gym.

### What makes their partnership work?

First, they complement each other well. Second, they keep their work separate from their family life. Third, they involve their employees in their business, which builds strong bonds and helps people improve their lives. Lastly, they contribute to society in several ways.

Carolina explained: "We each bring something different to the table. My husband is bold and takes risks, while I'm more careful, and I work on the details."

Hirondino added, "She brings calmness and is good at managing."

### Work stays at the office

Their journey started 38 years ago when they got married. Carolina, who studied management and economics, worked in the human resources and financial planning department of a company; and Hirondino was a TV producer.

Hirondino left his TV job, joined the national army, and then quit the military to start a travel agency. He asked Carolina to help him manage it after she lost

her job. She used her skills and experience to improve business operations, and Hirondino used his connections to bring in clients.

Their biggest strength as business partners is their love for what they do. "We just do things with love," said Carolina. But working together as spouses has its challenges.

Carolina described her husband as "a very active man, a workaholic. There was a time when he'd come home and talk about business, but I told him, 'I'm your wife first, not just a business partner.' He understood. Work must stay at the office."

Hirondino agreed: "Bringing business home can harm our relationship."





### **Creating jobs can cultivate entrepreneurs**

The Garcias also create jobs, helping their community grow. They have employed more than 40 direct employees and many support staff.

One of their secrets to success is treating their employees like family, that they are a part of their business. They also encourage their employees to start side businesses.

For example, one employee started a motorcycle delivery service, another began making yogurt, and both those entrepreneurs provide services and products for the couple's business. Their former employees continue to support them with good ideas.

Besides running their business, Hirondino and Carolina give back to their community. Every month in churches and hospitals, they provide meals to 600 people in need.

When COVID-19 hit in 2020, they organized famous singers in their country to produce a song that brought people together during tough times.

### **Successful entrepreneurs keep learning**

Although the Garcias were already running their business portfolio, they decided to attend a 2018 entrepreneurship training, organized by UNCTAD in collaboration with the Angolan government and funded by the European Union. The Train for Trade II programme opened their eyes to new possibilities.

"It taught us more about running a business, encouraged us to start more businesses and to trust our employees with important tasks," Hirondino said.

The EU and UNCTAD selected the National Empretec Host Institution Prestígio-Liga de Empresários e Executivos de Angola, the training organization founded by the Garcias, to assist in implementing the Train for Trade II project. This initiative supports Angola in diversifying its economy by enhancing its productive capacities, including training entrepreneurs in contemporary business management skills.

### **Women can lead and succeed in business**

Carolina's role as a capable manager shows that women can be strong leaders in business.

Hirondino and Carolina have three children — the eldest a female — and they want to teach them to be entrepreneurs, too. They believe in the potential of girls to succeed in business, just like their employees who are mostly women.

"Our parents didn't teach us business skills, but we have a duty to teach our children," Hirondino said. "In Angola, as in other places in Africa, girls are very smart and dynamic. We just need to empower them."

They anticipate the future with enthusiasm. Their latest foray is a gym, the newest addition to their portfolio. They have ventured into agriculture, cultivating 1000 hectares of land, not only contributing to their country's food security but boosting their income.

In sum, Hirondino and Carolina's story is all about love, hard work, and the positive impact such a dedicated couple can have on their community and in business.



## From a shipping container to a sprawling complex

A young entrepreneur's big dreams become a reality

**S**ix years ago, 34-year-old Adão de Sousa sold various items from a rented shipping container in Soyo, a coastal city in the northwest corner of Zaire Province in Northern Angola. Adão had learned the ropes of entrepreneurship from a mentor he affectionately calls his uncle.

In his early days, Adão chased after moving vehicles, peddling fruits, vegetables, poultry products and personal protective equipment (PPEs).

Fast forward to November 2023, and we find Adão seated behind a massive desk in his sprawling business complex. Now 40 years old, he is the chief executive officer of Asos Comercial, a conglomerate with interests spanning oil and gas, farming, livestock and guest houses.

The complex consists of a warehouse of PPE, with delivery trucks in the rear. Behind the main building, Adão is constructing guest houses and an ultra-modern vehicle repair shop, among other projects.

“Growing up, I was fortunate to have an uncle who taught me the ropes of business,” Adão said, recalling his humble beginning. “My uncle always urged me to work hard and focus as a young man.”

### **Gaining insights to diversify business**

As a thriving oil port, Soyo accommodates many businesses connected to the oil sector. Adão initially tapped into this wealth by selling PPEs like safety helmets and boots to oil companies.



## My uncle always urged me to work hard and focus as a young man.”

— Adão de Sousa, Chief Executive Officer, Asos Comercial LDA

**They taught me things I never imagined I could learn — how to take calculated risks, diversify businesses, and do market intelligence.”**

— Adão de Sousa, Chief Executive Officer, Asos Comercial LDA

An astute entrepreneur, he gradually diversified his business portfolio into farming activities — such as raising goats, sheep, cows, and poultry — as well as repairing vehicles and renting guest houses to oil and gas employees during their onshore stays.

Insights he gained a year ago from friends and business associates who had taken the Empretec training programme fueled his drive to diversify his business.

It is no coincidence that Empretec training took place in June 2022, and he inaugurated his complex a year later, in May 2023.

“For several days, they came here and taught me how to take calculated risks, diversify businesses, and do market intelligence — things I never imagined I could learn,” he said.

“Although I have learned a lot already, I am waiting for the next opportunity to connect in person. I hope they organize it one more time.”

He also continues to receive mentoring and guidance from Soyo Empretec and from Hironidino Garcia, the director general of the Empretec Center in Angola.

With financing from the European Union, UNCTAD is implementing a Train for Trade II programme to equip Angolan entrepreneurs with skills to manage profitable enterprises.

### **A new generation of Angolan entrepreneurs**

“I belong to a new generation of young Soyo entrepreneurs,” said Adão. “We don’t wait for the government to provide for us. Each of us must take initiative and push forward.”

One of Adão’s notable achievements is his successfully lobbying the government to pave the road that leads to his company headquarters in Soyo. “I made significant efforts to convince the Soyo municipal management to pave this road. It has made our location more attractive, and many other businesses are sprouting up along the same route.”

With 18 employees already, Adão expects to increase his workforce substantially once he completes such ongoing projects as the vehicle repair garage and the guest houses. He has also committed to mentoring young entrepreneurs, sharing his story as a source of inspiration.

“In reality, doing business, especially trading, is simple if you learn how to do it: you buy, you sell, and then you buy more and sell more. You keep repeating the process,” he advised upcoming entrepreneurs. “However, you also need to gain financial literacy. And you must be disciplined and focused.”

Adão emphasized the value of weaving “local content” into the economic fabric of Angola. Local content requirements typically mandate companies to procure a certain percentage of their products or services from local businesses instead of importing them.

While some experts view these requirements as barriers to trade, Adão finds them crucial for fostering the country’s economic growth.

Looking to the future, the businessman believes the sky is the limit. “I aspire to expand my businesses, create employment opportunities for many more of my brothers and sisters, and contribute to the development of our province.”

# Seeing new markets across borders

## Empretec training opens an entrepreneur's eyes to AfCFTA opportunities

**A**ngolan entrepreneur Elias Carlos Manuel, aged 43, has set his sights on Namibia. He is looking to expand his agricultural enterprise by exporting produce — bananas, beans, corn, avocados and lemons — to this neighboring market. He is the CEO of Organizações Carlos Manuel, a company group predominantly involved in agriculture and trade.

With a 140-hectare farm in Huambo, known as “Nova Lisboa” or “New Lisbon,” in west central Angola, Elias sees the export business as the logical next step in his growth strategy.

### Training gives entrepreneurs a new view

In 2019, Elias signed up for Empretec training under the auspices of the Train for Trade II programme, financed by the European Union and delivered by the UN Conference on Trade and Development. He considered this training an eye-opener in spotting his opportunities to grow.

Now he eagerly awaits the full implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The AfCFTA, representing a consolidated market of 1.3 billion people and a combined GDP of \$3.4 trillion, promises to tackle cross-border trade barriers and streamline border procedures. It could generate nearly \$300 billion in revenue for participating countries, according to the World Bank.

Elias has tasted success with exports: two years ago, he shipped lemons, bananas and other fruits to Namibia in a profitable venture. “It worked out well at the time,” he recalled, despite bad roads and stringent border post measures.



**AfCFTA will greatly benefit us, simplify trade and enable us to expand our business, which will increase economic activity and create jobs.”**

— Elias Carlos Manuel, CEO of Organizações Carlos Manuel

Still, he said, “They need our produce in Namibia. We have ready customers and a business partner.” He also plans to sell his produce in other regions of Angola due to high demand.

Elias anticipates a growing demand for his produce, both locally and internationally, and he plans to take full advantage of the AfCFTA, if its state parties fully enact its provisions. “It will greatly benefit us, simplify trade and enable us to expand our business, which will increase economic activity and create jobs,” he added.



Namibia, with a population of 2.5 million, is much smaller than Angola with approximately 36 million. However, a niche and ready market in Namibia not only guarantees a steady cash flow for any business but also integrates regional economies, in line with the objectives of the trade pact.

### Diversifying expands horizons

In addition to his agricultural endeavours, Elias is branching out into apartment rentals and warehousing. He is also constructing a private school.



He attributes much of his business transformation to the Empretec training in 2019. “The training experience opened our minds and instilled the belief in our potential,” he said.

The certified trainers emphasized the importance of developing a clear business vision and working towards organizational goals. “What Empretec did for me is priceless,” he said.

Elias’ journey — starting with just 50 cases of soft drinks to owning a warehouse and two-story apartments and cultivating tens of hectares

**What Empretec did for me is priceless. The training experience opened our minds and instilled the belief in our potential.”**

— Elias Carlos Manuel, CEO of Organizações Carlos Manuel

of land — highlight his growth as an entrepreneur.

Furthermore, Elias aspires to contribute to society by supporting education. Currently, he donates books to schools in

Huambo and periodically provides food for school children. He understands that, when children have access to free meals at school, they are more likely to stay there and learn — and learning makes all the difference.

# Young 'Empretecos' on a mission to transform their country

EMPRETEC training sparks interest with youths learning



n

Leading the way



**I**n a spacious start-up incubator nestled in the heart of Luanda, the bustling capital of Angola, a group of aspiring young men and women are engrossed in their computer screens.

They are scouring the internet for the next big business opportunity, getting information for their business plans, conducting market research, or assessing the risks they are about to take.

What unites them is a shared ambition—to achieve success as entrepreneurs.

They are aware that the road to success is paved with hard work. Their dreams extend beyond personal gain; they are driven to contribute to the development of their nation and uplift their families.

These young Angolans proudly call themselves “empretecos”, a term derived from “Empretec”—a United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) capacity-building programme aimed at fostering entrepreneurship and supporting micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in countries. The EU funds the Train for Trade II programme in Angola, which includes empretec training.

A UN General Assembly resolution labeled Empretec a “behavioral approach programme.”

The term “empreteco” refers to anyone who has undergone Empretec. There are approximately 500 Angolan empretecos, of different ages and gender and from different parts of the country.

Africa Renewal engaged in a

*Empretec lab in Luanda..*



**The training [on entrepreneurship] instilled in me self-confidence and financial independence,”**

— Laudiana Nicolau, the manager of an entrepreneurship training company.

conversation with five young empretecos. Namely, Laudiana Nicolau—the manager of an entrepreneurship training company, Wilson Kiteque—a prominent empretec trainer who has traveled across various regions of the country, Mara Francisca Kanganjo—the proprietor of an online bakery and cookies store, Antonio Pehehaff Neto—the founder of a graphic and branding company, and Carla Gabriela Salvador—the manager of an online jewelry and fashion accessories store.



**Setting and diligently pursuing targets emerged as her key takeaway from the training,”**

— Ms. Mara Francisca Kanganjo, the proprietor of an online bakery and cookies store.



**I am now committed to giving my all to every endeavor I choose in life,”**

— Carla Gabriela Salvador, the operator of an online jewelry and fashion accessories store.

### What prompted a shift towards entrepreneurship?

“It is the entrepreneurship training we recently completed,” Laudiana volunteers.

Seeking to demonstrate that women can break the cycle of dependence, she emphasizes, “Women often rely on men, first on their father as the head of the family and then marrying and becoming dependent on their husbands for everything. I want to show that young women can own successful businesses. The training instilled in me self-confidence and financial independence.”

Mara echoes Laudiana’s sentiments, stressing that setting and diligently pursuing targets were her key takeaways from the training.

Carla, now armed with a clear understanding of business opportunities, diversification strategies, and the commitment necessary for success, pledges, “I am now committed to giving my all to every endeavor I choose in life.”

The training’s emphasis on internal and external business management methods, goal-setting, calculated risk-taking, self-assurance, and effective negotiation skills were the highlights for Wilson, one of the lead Empretec trainers.

### Taking risks

A recurring theme for the empretec is their newfound willingness to take calculated risks, an attitude they were previously averse to.

Wilson recollects the lukewarm interest among Angolans when the training commenced in 2018. However,

word-of-mouth recommendations have led to a surge in interest.

Listening to these budding entrepreneurs underscores the most crucial outcome of their training—a renewed hope in their potential for success and a rekindled determination to achieve their goals.

### Contributing to national development

“I want to develop my country,” asserts Laudiana, her resolve palpable.

Antonio’s vision extends even further: “I aim to uplift my society and support my friends and family. My personal wealth is not my concern; I want to be remembered as someone who positively impacted lives.”

Their individual aspirations reveal a remarkable maturity that defies their age, most of them being in their 20s. The good news is that the training provides a clear path to success, and they have access to the internet, a valuable resource for continuing to acquire business intelligence.

“In today’s business landscape, knowledge is power,” insists Wilson,



maintaining that soaring interest in the training confirms the eagerness among Angolans to move beyond oil and gas and not depend on the government in sectors where individuals can excel.

Antonio describes the training as highly practical, emphasizing how he



**In today’s business landscape, knowledge is power,”**

— Wilson Kiteque, a prominent Empretec trainer who has traveled across various regions of Angola.





**I aim to uplift my society, support my friends and family. My personal wealth is not my concern; I want to be remembered as someone who positively impacted lives when I'm gone,"**

— Antonio Pehehaff Neto, the founder of a graphic and branding company.

witnessed firsthand methods that a business could use to generate profits.

“It was a real-life experiment. We formed groups, and my group established a juice supply company. We immediately started reaching out to potential clients and within three days we had sold products worth about 170,000 Angolan Kwanzas (approximately \$200). It was incredible,” he recalls.

He’s now ready to apply the concepts he learned during the Empretec training in his own business, aiming for national and international recognition within the next five years.

### Challenges ahead

Yet, amid the myriad opportunities in an economy traditionally dominated by

extractive industries, the empretecos acknowledge the challenges they face.

These include an economy recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, a fluctuating currency that makes risk assessment unpredictable, and banks’ hesitancy to lend to young entrepreneurs without established track records.

Mara says she also grapples with stiff competition from well-established companies in her industry: “I’ve crunched the numbers and wonder why they offer such low prices for their products, considering we use the same materials.” Describing the competition as unfair, she hopes to tackle it by redefining her target market.

Laudiana believes there is a need to change people’s mindset on financial literacy. “People should begin to

understand how money works. It will be helpful,” she says.

Wilson’s primary concern is the economic environment, emphasizing that entrepreneurship requires supportive policies to thrive.

Part of UNCTAD’s Transforming4Trade holistic initiative includes examining current policies and recommending to the government those policies that can help establish an enabling environment for entrepreneurship to flourish.

As the empretecos return to their computer workstations following our conversation, Wilson has one last message: “Please convey to everyone that this training should be mandatory for every young person in Angola and across Africa. We need to change the destiny of this continent.”



# Varsity head paving the way for women in top jobs

Prof. Virginia Lacerda Quartim is the Dean of José Eduardo dos Santos University in Huambo

**V**irginia Lacerda Quartim, Dean of José Eduardo dos Santos University in Huambo, in Huambo Province, is the country's only female head of a university. The position is referred to as President or Vice Chancellor in other countries.

Prof. Quartim won elections to the position in 2021 by a landslide, garnering more than 90 per cent of votes cast, according to Max Vicente, a professor in the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the university.

In an interview with Africa Renewal in her office in Huambo, Ms. Quartim says she was motivated to run for the

position "because I wanted to pave the way for more women.

"I want women and girls to believe that they have skills and capacity just as the men, but they must have the courage," she says.

Prof. Quartim, who is a professor of agronomy, explains that women bring "unique rationality and sensitivity to



# way

decision-making processes, which can foster more inclusivity.”

With inclusivity, she adds: “We are talking about achieving harmonious development of the country.”

She is immensely popular among students and faculty, a development her colleague Mr. Vicente attributes to her leadership style.

“She is direct and tough; she is very nice but firm. She fights all the time for the interest of the university, and we all love her,” he adds.

She has extraordinary insight into the running of the university with a student population of more than 10,000.

“She has been teaching at the university for more than 30 years. So, she understands us, she understands our needs, how to take the university to the next level,” he says.

Prof. Quartim says the university has a reputation as a centre of excellence, developing students who are contributing in diverse ways to the society.

## Partnership with UNCTAD

Currently, the José Eduardo dos Santos University is partnering with the Angolan government, the United Nations Conference for Trade and Development (UNCTAD), and the European Union (EU) to implement a project that empowers women in honey production.

The project is under UNCTAD’s Transforming4Trade initiative which seeks new avenues for diversification and the “development of competitive value chains, increased support for entrepreneurship, exploring regional and global value chains,” according to Paul Akiwumi, UNCTAD’s director of the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes.

Mr. Vicente is the university’s focal point for the Transforming4Trade project, which involves the participation of many students.

Angola has a relatively progressive reputation for women’s participation in top political positions.

In a recent interview with Africa Renewal the Permanent Representative of Angola to the United Nations, Ambassador Francisco José da Cruz, said that women occupy about 40 per cent of top positions in government, including that of Vice President.

Prof. Quartim hopes there will be more women heads of universities in Angola in the near future.

The José Eduardo dos Santos University, named after the former President of Angola, has a rich history.

Founded in the early 1990s, it has been a beacon of education and research in central Angola.

The university offers a wide range of programs in sciences, humanities, and technology, reflecting the

diverse educational needs of the Angolan population.

## The city of Huambo

The city of Huambo, where the university is located, is one of Angola’s most significant urban centres and has played a crucial role in the country’s history.

Founded in the early 20th century during the colonial era, Huambo was known as Nova Lisboa (New Lisbon) until 1975. It has been a site of major cultural and political activities, contributing significantly to the independence and post-independence history of Angola.

Throughout its tumultuous history, particularly during the Angolan Civil War, Huambo faced considerable challenges.

However, the city has emerged as a symbol of resilience and reconstruction. The presence of José Eduardo dos Santos University in Huambo underscores the city’s commitment to education and progress.

## The university’s impact

The university’s impact extends beyond academics. It is a vital contributor to Huambo’s economy and cultural life, hosting various community engagement programmes and cultural events.

These activities not only enrich the students’ experience but also strengthen the bond between the university and the local community.

In recent years, the university has focused on sustainable development and community-based projects.

The honey production project is an example of this commitment. These initiatives not only provide practical skills to students but also contribute to the economic and social development of Huambo and Angola at large.

Prof. Quartim envisions a university that not only excels in academics but also plays a pivotal role in shaping a more equitable and prosperous Angola.

Mr. Vicente says the Professor’s leadership is about managing the present as well as envisioning and building a better future for the university, its students and the wider community.

# From oil to sustainable agriculture

## Soyo entrepreneurs explore opportunities in green initiatives

**D**omingo Nvita Manuel Judite used to manage a guesthouse and a car rental company in Soyo, Zaire Province, Northern Angola, serving offshore oil workers.

In this oil-rich region, the economy revolves around the petroleum industry, so it is natural for entrepreneurs to seek opportunities linked to this sector.

But the ever-fluctuating global oil prices have sometimes hurt local businesses, prompting Domingo and other Zaire Province-based entrepreneurs to consider diversification.

### Training

Fortunately, in July 2022, he and 25 others participated in an Empretec training programme that equipped them with the knowledge to explore new sustainable business opportunities, take calculated risks, and monitor set targets.

With technical support from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the National Empretec Host Institution, Prestígio-Liga de Empresários e Executivos de Angola, now directly implements Empretec entrepreneurship training initiated under the EU-UNCTAD Joint Programme for Angola: Train for Trade II.

The initiative brought together various partners, including the Association of Entrepreneurs of the Province of Zaire (ASEEZ), of which Domingo is the current president.

The entrepreneur and his colleagues are now diversifying into sustainable agriculture—growing, processing, and distributing organic vegetables and fruits for local consumption and export.

In discussing the opportunities and challenges in the sector with Africa Renewal in Soyo, Domingo and other ASEEZ executives, including first vice president Kiangani Nti Jose Pedro, second vice president Ribeiro Pascoal Sebastião, and secretary-general Teófilo Mabinga Tati, said they aim to break away from the cyclical nature of the oil market by promoting sustainable business activities.

Domingo maintained: “We want to transform Zaire Province into a key commercial hub in Angola—and without oil money.”

“We want to shift the entrepreneurial mindset in Angola, and agribusiness is the next big thing,” Kiangani added.

### Stars are aligned

They believe the stars are aligned in their favor.

First, Zaire Province holds a strategic



geographical advantage. Soyo is located on the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), separated only by the Congo River and offering opportunities for cross-border trade.

Currently, cross-border trade is mostly informal, with traders transporting goods like potatoes and tomatoes by boat between countries.

Second, Zaire’s fertile land grows fruits and vegetables, and increased production of these items will catalyze the local economy, generate jobs and boost trade with neighboring countries.

Third, there are new technologies that can sustainably and significantly boost animal breeding.

### Challenges

Nevertheless, strict border-post processes and high tariffs impede cross-border trade. On the flip side, bringing informal traders into a formal process will foster a sustainable economic ecosystem, which will increase revenues for authorities, they explained.



Another challenge is the lack of financing from banks and other financial institutions, a concern Kiangani shared: “I have up to 350 hectares of land, and I am only cultivating 20 hectares. I would like to expand my business, but that requires a lot of money, which I don’t have.”

He cultivates tomatoes, hot peppers, mangoes, and rears livestock and poultry—goats, cows, and chickens. He sells his tomatoes to a middle company in Soyo, which processes and resells them to high-end consumers.

Could he eliminate the middle company? Yes, he stressed, but that will require a lot more financial power than is currently available. He would need a big storage facility and invest heavily in marketing, branding, packaging, and transportation.

Also, there are problems related to plant diseases, such as fungi. There is a need for pesticides that can kill any fungus, insect, or plant disease and prevent the destruction of tonnes of produce like tomatoes.

Another challenge is mechanization,

because manual labor is time-consuming and costly. Kiangani noted, “Right now, we employ many people at different times of the year, waste a lot of time and pay a lot of money. Mechanization will boost productivity and, as a result, earnings that can be reinvested in the business.”

“If we can buy a tractor, we can modernize production,” corroborated Domingo, who hopes to organize ASEEZ into a cooperative to enable them to have stronger bargaining power in negotiations with financial institutions.

### **Saving for education**

Many young men and women live and work on Kiangani’s farms, most hoping to save money and return to school. For example, Joao Manuel, the farm manager, aspires to acquire a university education. “I am saving up to pursue a degree in agriculture,” he said, reflecting a commitment to skills development and knowledge enhancement. “And when I am done, I will return to agriculture.”

After a few unsuccessful attempts,

*Aseez President Domingo Nvita Manuel Judite (second from right) is flanked by Vice President Kiangani Nti Jose Pedro and Secretary-General Teofilo Mabinga Tati, with Second Vice President Ribeiro Pascoal Sebastião (left).*

Kiangani is once more trying his luck negotiating a deal with a bank that could lead to the establishment of a dairy product factory on the farms.

“Our goal is to milk the cows here [on the farms], produce cheese, yogurt, and other dairy products for the local market and export to other countries,” he explained, as herds of goats and cows wandered about. “We have an opportunity to export to the two Congos.” He was referring to the Republic of the Congo and the DRC.

With newfound skills—courtesy of UNCTAD, the government, and the EU—innovative ideas, and a vision of a more sustainable and prosperous future, Soyo entrepreneurs are eager to transition from oil to sustainable agriculture.



# 'Transforming4Trade' will reshape African economies

Infrastructure development is pivotal, as we work to create necessary transport links for diversifying into sectors like agroindustry and processing - Paul Akiwumi



**Paul Akiwumi**, Director of the Division for Africa, Least Developed Countries and Special Programmes at the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), visited New York in September to promote his organization's new High Impact Initiative, Transforming4Trade. *Africa Renewal's Kingsley Ighobor* discussed this initiative and its benefits for African countries with Mr. Akiwumi. Here are excerpts of their conversation.

**You travelled to New York, in part, for the launch of Transforming4Trade, an initiative aimed at changing Africa's trade and economic structures. Can you tell us more about this initiative?**

To engage in international trade, a country must produce continuously more advanced and technologically complex goods or services. This initiative revolves around achieving structural transformation through a holistic approach to

economic development, not through traditional models such as commodity or sectoral dependency.

Our event highlighted the success of our pilot programme in Angola, where we have been operating for over six years now. We have successfully helped to steer the country towards its core national development objective of diversifying the economy away from oil dependence.

Our efforts have supported the reform of numerous policies, helped identify new avenues for diversification and

concretely supported the development of competitive value chains, increased support for entrepreneurship, exploring regional and global value chains, improved capacities for trade negotiations and meeting international standards for exports, and assisted with trade logistics, among others.

Additionally, we have contributed to formulating new investment and sectoral policies that connect these vital components.

Infrastructure development is pivotal, as we work to create necessary transport links for diversifying into sectors like agroindustry and processing.

### **Why did you choose to showcase Angola's success in New York?**

The Angola case is a demonstration of the profound results and impact that can be achieved through the implementation of an evidence-based, holistic, and multi-sectoral approach to economic development, with a long-term vision.

We are actively seeking new partners. Our aim is not only to spotlight our approach, but also to announce that we have recently launched similar initiatives in Kenya and Ethiopia.

We also have plans for Mozambique, Malawi, and Zambia. In fact, I will be in Zambia in October to launch an initiative there.

### **Is this initiative aimed exclusively at African countries?**

No, it is a global initiative. We have plans for more countries like Honduras. Enhancing productive capacity is a universal concern, and our holistic approach offers an interconnected perspective on productive development.

During our New York event, we received interest from more than 20 other countries, indicating a growing global interest. Our goal is to have a significant number of countries participating in this initiative by 2030.

### **Are any African countries among the 20 expressing interest in your initiative?**

Yes, we have significant interest from African countries, including Nigeria, where we are currently active.

In addition to the National Productive Capacities Gap Assessment, we are exploring a more detailed approach in Nigeria, working at the state level. With this level of detail, the government can gain insights into the productive capacities of individual states and target its policies to foster the production of goods and services more effectively.

We are also taking on a regional perspective, assessing productive capacities across Regional Economic Communities like ECOWAS and SADC.

### **How do you engage with these countries?**

We collaborate with individual countries bilaterally, and through regional organizations like the African Union. Our engagement strategy depends on the specific constraints identified within each country.

We use a data-driven index, the Productive Capacities Index (PCI), to pinpoint the challenges. Subsequently, we conduct a gap assessment to uncover constraints, opportunities, and gaps. Based on this assessment, we tailor a comprehensive programme to address key issues.

### **Have you assessed the actual impact of this initiative?**

To a considerable extent, yes. Our entrepreneurship programme, for example, has successfully supported entrepreneurs, assisting them in developing business models and entering new sectors.

In Angola, 30 out of the top 100 private companies have undergone our process, with 85 per cent of them reporting increased sales. Additionally, a 72 per cent yearly job growth rate can be observed in these enterprises.

On an institutional level, our support for the private sector's ability to export such products as honey has prompted the development of certification frameworks and infrastructure within the country.

Angola's labs are now better equipped to handle certification, including phytosanitary standards, not just for

honey but also for various agro-processing products.

### **How does this initiative align with the goals of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)?**

The initiative strongly aligns with AfCFTA.

Our initiative works to build the capabilities of countries across the value chain. For example, if Angola produces honey but not the glass jars needed for packaging, another African country may step in to fill that gap.

Without tariffs or duties under AfCFTA, countries can trade, process, certify and export these products freely.

### **Global trade involves multiple countries. Are you supporting not only Angola but its trading partners as well?**

Yes, that is a crucial aspect. Remember, our initiative complements rather than substitutes national development strategies. It also aligns with the broader efforts of the United Nations. Our approach is demand-driven we respond to countries' requests for assistance.

Collaboration among countries is key. Consider the automobile industry, where different countries may produce various components. By working together and enhancing their capabilities, they could manufacture all the components within the African continent and freely trade them under AfCFTA. The same applies to the pharmaceutical industry.

In our Economic Development in Africa report 2023, we mapped the technological capabilities of various African countries. With free movement across the continent, countries could harness these capabilities collectively.

### **How have you ensured the sustainability of this initiative?**

First and foremost, countries totally own the programme, and each must establish its own dedicated governance structure, including a steering committee representing all relevant ministries.





For example, in Angola, this committee consists of several cabinet ministers, representing up to 23 ministries involved in programme implementation, who convene biannually to oversee the programme.

Additionally, a technical committee, with members from all ministries, supports implementation efforts.

Also, the private sector, academia and civil society representatives are involved in relevant meetings and consultations. They are some of the key interlocutors on the ground.

UNCTAD, jointly with its Centers of Excellence, extended partner networks and sister UN agencies, provides technical support.

Over time, the initiative will become part of the normal work of government ministries, private sector entities and university curricula.

### Does this initiative address green technologies?

Yes, it certainly does. Africa possesses minerals crucial for the global transition to green energy.

Africa has an imperative to add value to these minerals instead of exporting them as raw materials.

For instance, using green energy to process cobalt within Africa is more environmentally friendly than sending it to another continent for processing with carbon-emitting energies. For such processes, Africa should leverage its abundant green-energy resources.

Furthermore, Africa must adopt green technologies to remain competitive.

This is increasingly important as countries progressively adopt and implement policies to address climate change, especially those that use trade policy as their main instrument.

Africa must also invest in green technology to lower its emissions and avoid such penalties when exporting outside the continent.

### How receptive are countries to women's empowerment in your initiative?

Women's empowerment is an important aspect of economic development. Many women-led businesses are part of our entrepreneurship programme, which actively supports their empowerment.

The creative economy, prominent in Africa with industries like Nollywood, greatly benefits from women's contributions. In sectors like tourism, where women play significant roles, we strive to ensure that they have equal opportunities to maximize their contributions to their national economies and to their own well-being.

While many economic sectors remain male-dominated, we have employed creative solutions to increase women's participation.

Our analyses fully integrate the gender perspective and consider other specific groups that require particular attention, such as youth. Policy recommendations, therefore, target issues and practices that can help to empower women and marginalized groups.

### What would you consider successful outcomes for the continent?

Two developments are critical: First, Africa must fully operationalize AfCFTA. Countries are currently aligning their policies with AfCFTA, and we must prioritize its implementation. Taking advantage of the vast African market can drive structural transformation.

Second, Africa must add value to its raw materials, particularly as the world seeks critical minerals for transitioning to renewable energy. We cannot afford to continue exporting minerals found predominantly in Africa as raw materials.

Within the next five years, I envision Africa organizing itself to add such value to these resources, providing the world with essential inputs for developing renewable energy.

This transformation will lead to decent jobs, increased income, improved social services and, importantly, more high-tech employment opportunities for our youth.

# Could Angola become Africa's logistics hub?

Yes, according to Catarino Fontes Pereira, head of Angolan logistics regulatory agency

To help diversify the economy, the Angolan Regulatory Agency for Cargo Certification and Logistics (ARCCLA) oversees implementation of the country's logistics network projects. In this interview with *Africa Renewal's* Kingsley Ighobor, Catarino Fontes Pereira, president of ARCCLA's board of directors spoke about the potential for current projects to foster national and regional economic development.

**Why did you send some of your staff to the training organized by UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)**

We have the responsibility to regulate and supervise logistics in Angola. Through our Ministry of Transport, UNCTAD assists in training Angolans,

including young people. We must develop the capacities of our staff so that they can perform more efficiently.

As you know, ARCCLA is a very young institution. We need a certain level of knowledge on, for example, how to conduct PPP [public-private partnership] processes. Our staff must understand important variables in structuring





a project.

UNCTAD has extensive knowledge about logistics around the world, especially in Africa, and so we needed it to help us as we took the first steps in project execution. So, the team learned some important concepts.

**Have they started applying those concepts in their work?**

Yes. One of the concepts we learned was risk sharing. In setting up PPP projects, we must understand how to share the risks involved. We represent the government, and our partner may represent a concessionaire, and so we must share the risks.

Another concept was project viability. We must understand how to conduct studies that make a project feasible for international institutions like the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and others.

**Do you intend to organize more training for your team?**

Of course! Capacity building should be a continuous process. The development of any institution depends especially on human capital. When people are well-instructed and well-capacitated, they develop our institution. As an institution created a few years ago, we need to learn, grow and reach the level that we intend to reach. Therefore, we must be very well prepared.

**What is your ideal situation for logistics in Angola?**

We are striving to reach an acceptable level. The level of interoperability of our logistics is not yet stable among members of the logistics chain. Many elements are missing. We must bring the operators together for them to understand their role and the role of the government.

When we harmonize and synchronize our work, Angola will have an acceptable level of logistics.

---

see page 39





# Honey farmers contribute to rural economy, conserve biodiversity

With support from a local university and UNCTAD, beekeepers in Huambo Province enhance honey production and add value to their products

**O**n supermarket shelves in cities and towns across Angola, you will find Maxmel Honey prominently displayed, available in various sizes and shapes. These honey products bear the label “Made in Angola”

*Simao Samoma and Leonardo Bacia De Lourdes manage more than 213 beehives in Kalima, Huambo Province.*

and indicate their 100 percent natural and organic quality.

Max Vicente, a veterinary medicine professor at the Universidade José Eduardo dos Santos, founded Maxmel Honey in Huambo, Northern Angola, in 2012. His primary goal was to create an avenue for local beekeepers who were unsure of what to do with their surplus honey.

The beekeepers now sell their excess honey to Maxmel Honey, which

processes, packages, and distributes to supermarkets and retail stores nationwide.

But the demand for honey continues to outpace supply, Professor Vicente explains in an interview with Africa Renewal in Huambo. The company plans to scale up production to meet local demand and potentially export to neighboring countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Botswana.

## Training

Under the auspices of the EU-financed programme, Train for Trade II, workshops and training sessions organized by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Universidade José Eduardo dos Santos introduced local honey farmers to modern production techniques in assembling beehives, attracting and managing bees and hives and extracting honey.

Honey and aquaculture are key elements of the Train for Trade II green initiatives component.

Traditionally, the process begins with hollowing out tree trunks, using scented leaves to entice the buzzing insects to the tree trunks, and then smoking the bees out before collecting the honey.

It is a method that poses risks and affects the quality and taste of the honey.

The training sessions, among other benefits, offered innovative solutions such as the use of imported perfumed jelly, which minimizes risks and contributes to biodiversity conservation.

## Results

The results of the training are evident: about 3,000 beekeepers are extracting honey across the country.

Amadeu de Jesus Leitão Nunes, Angola's Secretary of State for Commerce, affirms: "Every part of the country — Huambo, Cuando Cubango, Moxico, and so on — has honey, and when we participate in local trade fairs, we see a lot of high-quality honey."

For a country that relies on oil for nearly 94 percent of its export earnings, the current focus on honey production



*Beekeepers in Kalima.*

aligns with its broader economic diversification goals.

Improved beekeeping methods could boost honey production from 90 to 200 tonnes per year, according to estimates by UNCTAD.

Honey production is relatively environmentally friendly and could potentially uplift livelihoods, particularly of rural women. Professor Vicente emphasizes that "The training was designed to introduce the farmers to new techniques that minimize environmental damage."

Moreover, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization highlights that 75 per cent of the world's crops consumed by humans depend on pollinators, including honeybees, meaning bees are good for food systems.

## Bee farming hubs

Bailundo and Kalima communities appear to be the hubs for bee farming in Huambo Province.

In Bailundo, a group of 45 women and six men who formed the Katiavala Agricultural Cooperative have witnessed a notable uptick in honey production after embracing the new production techniques.

Vice President of the cooperative Júlia Nangueve says that their training has been beneficial, with tangible improvements in their livelihoods.

In Kalima, another group comprising 70 men and 34 women, manages a network of 213 beehives spread over 42 hectares of farmland, where they also cultivate avocados, oranges, cassava, pineapples, potatoes, lemons, mangoes and other crops.

Reflecting on their journey, Simao Samoma, head of the group in Kalima said they started bee farming to get honey for personal consumption due to the high cost of sugar. They soon discovered the health and economic benefits of eating and producing honey.

They coordinate with Professor Vicente, benefiting from follow-up training and supplying unprocessed honey to Maxmel Honey.

Mr. Samoma's deputy, Leonardo Bacia De Lourdes, says he could now provide for his eight children. He envisions a brighter future for them, including going to a university. Like the boys, his four daughters are actively involved in farm work. "The girls work even better than the boys," he says.

The Universidade José Eduardo dos

Santos conducts honey research and trains students who in turn venture into communities to provide ongoing guidance to honey farmers.

Mr. Vicente underscores the importance of certification and value addition as crucial components of the sector's growth.

## Challenges

However, amidst a seemingly sunny outlook, Angolan honey farmers are acutely aware of the challenges they face, including the lack of adequate personal protective equipment (PPE), leaving them vulnerable to bee stings.

Also, they need continuous training to keep up with evolving techniques, Mr. Samoma points out.

They mention that farmlands ravaged by fire need rehabilitation, and reforestation could translate to a better bee environment and management.

Mr. De Lourdes suggests that more investment in the sector could help them expand production, multiplying the number of beehives and achieving the dream of 24/7 honey harvesting.

Lastly, honey farms are often situated in remote locations, underscoring the need for efficient transportation to enhance operational efficiency.

In Angola, honey production is about empowering rural communities, conserving biodiversity, and transforming lives. By embracing innovation, Angolan honey farmers are already contributing to their country's ambition of sustainable agriculture and economic diversification.

---

## Could Angola become Africa's logistics hub?

from page 35

### How soon? Next year? 2025? 2030?

As soon as possible. We think that, in 2025, we can reach a level that is significantly better than where we are today.

### Do you coordinate logistics with your counterparts in other countries, particularly neighboring countries?

At the continental and subregional levels, we are working together. We are a member of the Union of African Shippers' Councils, an African institution where we share trading information and discuss strategies for developing logistics in Africa, an African institution where we share trading information and discuss strategies for developing logistics in Africa.

Angola is also a signatory to the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), and we constantly discuss with other countries areas of collaboration on free trade.

### In your conversations with representatives of other countries, do you sense momentum in developing the

### infrastructure needed to accelerate the operationalisation of the AfCFTA?

Yes, and we have good examples. Senegal, for one, has developed its ports to a very high level. Ethiopia is doing a lot in logistics development and organization. South Africa is constructing massive infrastructure. In Angola, we just inaugurated a new airport that will make us a logistics hub, not only within Africa but also for connecting Africa with Asia and South America.

### What logistics systems are you specifically talking about?

They include infrastructure to bring produce from the big farms. We must have the capacity to transport products from the countryside to a storage facility. We must have the ability to conduct phytosanitary inspections so that we can prepare these products for export and the domestic market.

### How does improved infrastructure support Angolan entrepreneurs?

We have a strategic programme for developing logistic infrastructures in Angola. Considering our needs, we identified six strategic locations.

Two are in the northern region. The first is in Luvo, where we share a border with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Luvo holds significance because of its high level of trade.

The second is in Soyo, a major oil hub in Zaire Province. We need logistic infrastructure because of the new oil refinery in Zaire Province.

The third and fourth are the Lobito Corridor and Caála in the Huambo Province, the main hub for agriculture in Angola.

The fifth is Luau, on the western border between Angola and the DRC.

Lastly, the sixth is Arimba in Huila Province, strategically positioned to facilitate the export of ornamental stones such as marble and granite.

So, when these six logistics locations are working effectively, we can say that Angola has an organized logistics operation. We are on our way to being a logistics hub, with the support of organizations like UNCTAD, we will get there!



Frescos  
do Dia

clássico

quente e bom

PÃO de  
FORMA  
simples



600 g