

PORTUGAL-AFRICA: AN EVOLVING RELATIONSHIP

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The relations Portugal-Africa since decolonisation in 1974/75 have evolved over three different periods, one in the second half of the seventies, a second over most of the eighties and the latter one on the nineties.

A first period, in the second half of the seventies, can be characterized as turbulent, one in which Portugal suffered an internal adjustment crisis (both political and economic) - and the former colonies experiencing a revolutionary transition process. In this period, mainly in 1974/75, most of the Portuguese big industrial companies and banks were nationalized in Portugal and this fact created a situation in which the ownership of most of the Portuguese private capital in the former colonies fell in the hands of the Portuguese government - and, later on, on the hands of the African Lusophone governments. The second half of the seventies was also characterized by a situation in which most of the Portuguese community fled away from the African Lusophone countries, sometimes in a dramatic way as it happened in Angola (in Mozambique the flight of the Portuguese community was also huge, however not as dramatic and quick as in the Angolan case).

A second period, all over the eighties can be characterized as a period in which relations evolved favourably, mainly on the political level, and cooperation on the economic field began also to develop. In Portugal, in the mid eighties, an agreement between the two main political parties allowed for the modification of the constitutional norms which had prevented, until then, the privatization of most of big companies and banks. In the second half of the eighties and mainly after 1986, when the country became part of the EC and the structural community funds began to help the modernization of the industry, the privatization process suffered a smooth evolution, and by the end of the decade, the Portuguese private capital became growing again. On the other hand, the situation on the African Lusophone countries evolved also with a drastic change in policies, with the adoption of structural adjustment measures and the abandonment of socialist economic policies - however some resilience on the part of Angola.

A third period, which began in the nineties, is characterized by a clarification of the Portuguese foreign policy priorities. The so called Atlantic versus European options, and

the rôle of the traditional Portuguese-African relations was debated in the press, among political parties and inside the very government. The outcome of these discussions brought about a present set of priorities in which Europe and European integration occupies the first place and the Lusophone countries the second one. The United States, Maghreb and Brazil rank on the third position of Portuguese priorities, as well as some particular cases, such as East Timor and the building of a Lusophone Community.

This paper deals mainly with the third period, starting with a picture of the present pattern of African Portuguese policies, followed by a characterization of the current political scenario in the Lusophone Africa and ending with some considerations on problems and challenges ahead.

1. Portuguese African relations: current pattern

The current Portugal-Africa relations are more important at the political level than at the economic level and are concentrated on the Lusophone countries.

The following tables show this general pattern, through the relative position of Africa in the flows of trade, investment and public aid and the dominant position of the Lusophone countries on those flows.

Table 1
Sub-Saharan Africa in Total Portuguese Flows

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
exports	4.54%	4.9%	5.34%	5.6%	
imports	5.8%	7.3%	5.8%	5.7%	
invest *	8.22	9.93	17.69	4.03	
ODA	100%	100%	100%	93%	76%
ODA *	112.8	147.9	212.6	279.4	187.8
ODA/GNP	0.25%	0.25%	0.31%	0.36%	0.28%

* US \$ million

sources: ICEP, ICE, DAC, Ferrreira

Table 2
Lusophone Africa as a % of Total Portuguese Trade

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993 a)
EXPORTS	3.35	3.4	4.19	5.16	3.0
Angola	2.5	2.51	3.36	4.47	2.17
Cape Verde	0.28	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.37
Guinea-B	0.2	0.25	0.2	0.14	0.14
Mozamb	0.3	0.26	0.24	0.18	0.23
S.Tomé e P	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.08
IMPORTS	0.35	0.43	0.47	0.53	0.13
Angola	0.27	0.35	0.38	0.38	0.02
Cape Verde	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Guinea-B	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.02
Mozamb	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.12	0.08
S.Tomé e P	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

a) estimates

sources: ICEP

Table 3
Portuguese Direct Investment on Lusophone Africa *

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Angola	576	272	471	1775	
Cape Verde	14	107	222	21	
Guinea-B	578	29	305	604	
Mozamb	93	625	444	273	
S.Tomé e P	154	148	(...)	(...)	
subtotal	1415	1148	1442	2673	
other Africa	121	644	443	n.a.	
Total	1536	2087	1885	2673 **	

* million Portuguese escudos

** not including other African countries

sources: ICE, statistical tables

Table 4
Lusophone Africa as a % of total Portuguese Bilateral ODA

	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
Angola	11.5	10.9	7.8	6.9	12.6
Cape Verde	14.7	14.9	9.4	7.4	9.0
Guinea-B	16.0	14.3	10.0	6.8	7.9
Mozamb	35.6	41.1	61.4	67.8	57.7
S.Tomé e P	14.6	15.6	6.2	6.5	5.3
other	7.6	3.2	5.2	4.6	7.5

sources: ICE, statistical tables

The tables show that the Portuguese-African economic relations are concentrated on the Lusophone countries. They are rather weak, but, despite their weakness, these relations are important on the microeconomics level for some export industries. This is the case for some agro-industrial products, wine, pharmaceuticals, chemical products, clothing and tissues, electrical appliances, transport materials and other products, for which Angola occupies a somewhat important position, with about 80% of this total until 1992 (from 1993 onwards, the war has prevented payments, which made trade decline). The particular case of the ups and downs of the Portuguese public assistance in 1993 - after having abandoned in 1974, Portugal rejoined the DAC in 1991 - is due to the swings on the refinancing of the public debt, particularly on the case of Mozambique.

However coordinated at the level of a Secretary of State under the Ministry for Foreign Relations, the relations with Africa, mainly with the Lusophone countries, are dealt in a decentralized way by several departments of the government. This is only reinforced by a very particular kind of political (and, to a certain extent, even organic) "lobby", which tends to see the cooperation with Africa as a "natural" activity of these departments - staffed with a reasonable number of people with personal knowledge and affective relationship with the former colonies. Recently and under the leadership of the

Secretary of State for Cooperation, it was created a consultative body constituted by representatives of different Ministries, with the responsibility for coordinating cooperation actions.

The strengthening of Portuguese relations with Africa, mainly with Lusophone Africa, is a matter of national consensus and is supported by the whole spectrum of political parties and by a favourable public opinion. At the political level, bilateral relations are rather good in general - with a graduation that goes from the very good for Cape Verde to the fairly reasonable for Mozambique. The Portuguese political action in Africa has concentrated on the support for peace and democratic transition processes and, on the multilateral level, the Portuguese diplomacy is becoming stronger, mainly in terms of its influence on community structures (the leadership of the foreign relations with the ACP countries and South Africa by a Portuguese, J.D. Pinheiro, is regarded as a particular success of the Portuguese diplomacy).

Despite their unstable political processes, Angola and Mozambique occupy a central position in the Portuguese press and originate a number of political statements on the part of the government, politicians, and the President of the Republic. Angola is a particular case, in the sense that it usually generates a division between those more sympathetic with MPLA positions and those more in line with UNITA arguments, and this is discussed almost as if it were an internal political affair. This is one of the reasons why it is important to look a little more carefully to the situation in the African countries, mainly in Angola and Mozambique, so as to figure out what could possibly emerge from the actual transition period which they are passing through and what kind of consequences could result for their relationship with Portugal.

2. The situation in the African Lusophone Countries

As an introduction, one should stress some general considerations over the five African Lusophone countries, which are of importance for their relationship with Portugal.

A first consideration is the fact that Portugal constitutes the first provider of imports, investment and public aid for Cape Verde, S. Tomé e Príncipe and Guinea-Bissau and usually ranks on the first places for imports and investment on what concerns Angola and Mozambique.

Another consideration follows from the fact that all those African countries are experiencing, since the beginning of the nineties, political transition which include elections and the adoption of multiparty and democratic constitutions. In Cape Verde, political transition resulted in a peaceful electoral defeat of the ruling party; in S. Tomé, which has recently experienced a second election with a peaceful return to power of the former ruling party, the first election also resulted in a peaceful change of power to the opposition; more recently, on July of the current year, elections in Guinea-Bissau resulted in a difficult victory of the ruling party, the PAIGC. The cases of Angola and Mozambique, however also experiencing political transition and electoral processes, are rather different.

Both countries have experienced, after a long period of civil war, difficult negotiation processes between contenders, a cease-fire period and elections. In Angola, in September of 1992, after an electoral victory of MPLA over UNITA, war resumed; in Mozambique, elections took place by the end of October 1994, and the results gave a narrow majority for Frelimo and a clear victory for its Presidential candidate, Joaquim Chissano. Peace and the strengthening of political stability in Angola and Mozambique, is a crucial question for the future of both countries and for the Portuguese relations and policies in that part of the world.

The situation in Angola, with an expected signature of the Lusaka agreement in the 20th of November, is rather difficult. In fact, the recent military successes of the government forces do not obliterate the fact that UNITA is yet a very powerful military contender, with a strong political structure and a well established social support, able to continue a guerrilla warfare. Outside Angola, its links with the Mobutu regime in Zaire provide UNITA with an extensive border to infiltrate weapons and men, and the Republican victory on the recent elections for the US Congress represent an important, however potential, positive outcome for the UNITA positions. The fact is that a military victory for the government is not certain and for sure it should not constitute a durable alternative to the Angolan conflict, which is more of a political nature. The Lusaka agreement, includes a power-sharing formula, which was not foreseen in the previous 1991 Estoril agreement. However, even if peace is restored, the verification of the cease-fire, the cantonment and reintegration of UNITA forces in the national army, and the restoration of a positive political ambiance to allow UNITA people to occupy their places on the central government and the Parliament will take its time.

In Mozambique, a power-sharing formula was also avoided in the 1992 Rome agreement between the government and Renamo. Given the tragic outcome of the first elections in Angola and the well succeeded transition in South Africa, a certain pressure was exerted on Frelimo so as to accept some kind of pre-electoral power-sharing arrangement that could prevent a non acceptance of elections on the part of the loser. However, this arrangement, originally proposed by Renamo, was refused by the ruling party, probably because inside Frelimo there was the conviction of a successful outcome of the electoral process. Notwithstanding the victory of Frelimo, Renamo won important strongholds on the Central and Central-Northern provinces of the country. Given the particular situation of Mozambique, it is not probable a similar outcome as in Angola because military capabilities of the former contenders are not alike. Renamo, unlike UNITA, is not a well-armed and trained guerrilla group, and is not experienced on conventional warfare. The governmental army is also not well trained and equipped, meaning that the fire-power available to the former contenders in Mozambique (and the financial capability of buying more and better weapons) are nothing of the kind one can find in Angola.

3. The challenges ahead: a traditional future?

Given the picture of the Portuguese-African relations and the prevalent situation on the Lusophone countries, a number of questions should be raised on the next possible evolution of Portuguese policies such as: will the Portuguese policies continue its traditional concentration on the Lusophone Africa, will the public opinion continue to support these policies and will the Portuguese private capital develop a particular interest for investment in Africa?

The answers to these questions are of course open and depend on a number of factors, some of them closely related to the future development of an European foreign policy. As a matter of fact some current common European cooperation policies should most probably proceed, such as the support for human rights, democratic transition, structural adjustment programmes and international and regional integration as well. A current trend of the priorities of the Portuguese diplomacy are a reappraisal of the positive aspects for Portugal, as a member of the European Union, of strengthening Portuguese connections in Africa. To a certain extent, the choice of a Portuguese to lead the

European foreign relations with Africa in the Commission is an example of the persistence and results of such objectives.

Another important question to raise about the future trend of the African Portuguese policies could be the following: will the Lusophone countries give any particular priority to Portugal and to Portuguese institutions?

To answer to this particular question one should bear in mind a number of important points. One of these points refers to the particular kind of cooperation actions which have been in the centre of Portuguese actions and policies. However the persistence of the old rhetoric of "cultural affinities", there is a growing concern and action for some more practical support for the maintenance and development of the Portuguese language abroad, the support for administrative and defence capacities of the African states and the strengthening of institutional contacts and programmes between Portuguese and African institutions - firms, NGOs or other organizations.

Another important point relates to the relative weakness of Portugal and the Portuguese institutions when compared, for example, with other stronger European partners. Interestingly and up to a certain extent, the Portuguese weaknesses can also be considered as strengths, for Portugal is hardly regarded as a neocolonial power. These somewhat paradoxical "strong weaknesses" increase the scope for Portuguese firms and other institutions to take advantage of triangular ventures, comprising local and foreign partners, and this is being understood by some Portuguese companies - meaning that they start to understand the non-existence of such thing as a "traditional Portuguese business reserve" in the Lusophone Africa.

A last consideration refers to the Portuguese influence to encourage other European partners to intervene positively on the African scene. An example of such kind of actions could be the set up of special EU programmes to help reconstruction in Angola and Mozambique. The way Portugal succeeds or fails on fostering such kind of European initiatives towards Africa will be an important factor for its present and future influence.

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