

ANGOLA'S TOURISM IN THE CONTEXT OF COVID 19 PANDEMIC

Introduction

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A common saying in Angola goes : “if you drop a seed into the soil, the next day you will find a fully grown plant”. Similarly, if you plunge a drill into Angola’s seabed, oil will come gushing out. For the past forty years, crude oil and diamonds have been the extractive natural resources, which pulled the attention of the government authorities. While crude petroleum is the first largest-export resource from Angola accounting for 55% of GDP and 95% of exports, diamonds are the second largest-export resource representing 5.8% of GDP and 3% of the country’s total exports². However, oil and diamonds have not only failed in providing the expected impact in people’s lives, they have also distracted government officials from exploring, developing and overseeing other resources and sectors. One of the sectors ignored since the attainment of independence was tourism. While the Angolan civil war elevated the country’s distraction from this significant sector, the current COVID-19 pandemic worsened the flourishment, which was taking place. At the same time, the pandemic is equally revealing ways in which investments in tourism could have been done. Thanks to the 2014 oil crisis, which affected the country’s economy, tourism finally entered into the government’s political agenda. This achievement was due to the call for diversification of the economy. However, the outbreak of the coronavirus is not only portraying the weakness of the investments, which was done, but also indicating how these investments were supposed to have been done and how they can be improved for the near future.

2 Arona BUTCHER, “Export Opportunities and Barriers in African Growth and Opportunity Act-Eligible Countries”, *Investigation* 332-464, 2005, p. 5.

This article discusses the tourism's sector in Angola and the way in which it is being affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. First, it will look at the shift tourism has taken from an ignored sector to an area of priority in the government's agenda. This privileged attention accorded to tourism, as we noted, came into being when the 2014 oil crisis hit the economy of the country. It also came into limelight when a specific ministry was created in order to secure the gains from this sector. But since the declaration of the State of Emergency, which came into effect on 27 March 2020, due to the first two positive cases of COVID-19 registered on 21 March, tourism has been crumpled. Second, we shall present a historical background to trace the retrieval of tourism in Angola. This will take us back to twenty-seven years of civil war (1975-2002), which destroyed the flora and fauna of Angola. Third, the article will expose some of the important tourist attractions. These include national parks, reserves and monuments. Fourth, the article reflects on the human resources in place in order to boost tourism. Bachelor degrees in Hotel and Tourism, which some universities are offering illustrate the human capital required to make tourism great is being prepared. To attract tourists. That is why the article will also address issues pertaining the norms approved to attract tourists. Fifth, since the outbreak of COVID-19, tourism is either at low level or a complete standstill due to travel restrictions, borders have remained closed and airport are shut down to commercial flights. We shall explore in depth how all these are affecting this sector in Angola.

The Civil War and Tourism Infrastructures

The present state of tourism is partly due to the recent history of the country. The twenty-seven years civil war devastated the country's infrastructures, flora and fauna³. Just like many people were forced to abandon their homes, millions of wildlife population were also forced out of the country. The eruption of this conflict led the human population to encroach into national parks and reserves for wildlife. For instance, the Quissama National Park, which is situated 75 km south of Luanda, was occupied by the internally displaced persons. In order to create a place for them, animals were hunted from helicopters and shot dead. The war also contributed to the migration of elephants to neighbouring countries. Angola always had the highest number of elephants poaching in Africa. Before the war, there were around 200 thousand elephants in the country but after the conflict, in 2003, there were only 350 elephants left⁴. Most of them took refuge in Botswana. In addition, subspecies sable antelopes,

3 Ricardo de OLIVEIRA, *Magnífica e miserável : Angola desde a guerra civil*, Lisboa: Tinta da China, 2015, p. 49.

4 Mike CHASE, "Census Taker of African Elephants", in *Wild Lives: Leading Conservationists on the Animals and the Planet they Love*, New York: Skyhorse Publishing Books, 2017, p. 326.

such as Palanca negra gigante, which is the national symbol of Angola, therefore, could have been protected, disappeared. Some historic buildings were abandoned, others were destroyed and their precious objects stolen. The Iron Palace is just one example. Located in Luanda, the Palace was abandoned and damaged during the civil war. In the colonial era, the Iron Palace was used as an art center.

Image 1. Palanca Negra Gigante



Image 1 portrays a giant sable antelope also known as Palanca negra gigante, in Portuguese. This subspecies is endemic in Angola and disappeared for decades. In 2004, cameras installed in Cangandala National Park (Malanje) captured remaining herds. (Source : Cabral, 2005)

During the civil war, many infrastructures which could improve tourism in the country were also destroyed⁵. Consequently, there can never be good tourism without security, good roads, banks, hotels, restaurants, transports, hospitals, medical assurance, health system, water, sanitation, electricity and communication system. During the war, all of these could not be provided in a manner in which everyone desired. Security was a major problem, one could hardly travel or move for more than thirty kilometers from the main city. In 1997, the rebel movement União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) had occupied 40% of the national territory⁶ and the rest was under siege. This lack of security coupled with the landmines, which were, and are still, spread all over the country made it virtually impossible to grow the tourism sector. By the end of the civil war in 2002, there were more than 14 million landmines in the country⁷. The roads were the most affected during the conflict with more than 80%

5 Ricardo de OLIVEIRA, *Magnífica e miserável : Angola desde a guerra civil*, Lisboa: Tinta da China, 2015, p. 51.
6 Marek GARZTECKI, "Angola: Recent History", in *Africa South of the Sahara 2003*, London : Europa Publications, 2002, p. 37.
7 Paulo VISENTINI, *As revoluções africanas : Angola, Moçambique e Etiópia*, São Paulo : Editora Unesp, 2012, p. 42.

destroyed⁸. Between 2002 and 2012, the government invested US\$65.1 billion for rehabilitation and restoration of these infrastructures⁹.

Another important infrastructure which suffered during the war was the railway system inherited from the colonial time. Its rehabilitation was crucial in revamping tourism in the country. *The three main railway lines (Moçâmedes-Cuando Cubango, Lobito-Dilolo and Luanda-Malanje) connect the different regions of Angola, and even countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia. The China Railway 20 Bureau Group Corporation (CR20) rehabilitated Benguela railway (Lobito-Luau), which is the longest with 1,340 km. The cost was US\$1.8 billion and involved 3 thousand national workers and 1.5 thousand Chinese employees¹⁰. The China Railway International Group (CRIG) built Moçâmedes railway (Namibe-Menongue) and Luanda railway (Luanda-Malanje). Moçâmedes-Menongue railway line covering over 900 km was constructed at the cost of US\$2 billion. Luanda-Malanje railway line was extended by 445 km at the cost of US\$90 million. Apart from the rehabilitation of the entire railway lines, the government constructed new stations and bridges. Overall, the rehabilitation of the three railway lines costed over US\$3.5 billion and involved the construction of 2,612 km of network.*

The end of the civil war paved the way for the rehabilitation of infrastructures, which improved tourism. However, since the prices of crude oil and diamonds were still high in the international market, tourism suffered a major setback among the priorities of the government. It was not until June 2014 oil crisis, which hit the world, which the government began to give attention to economic diversification. Since the country's economy is overwhelmingly driven by oil sector, the crisis did not take long to affect the economy. From US\$131.22 per barrel, the price of Brent crude oil, which serves as a reference for national exports, dropped to US\$41. As a result, investing, developing, and promoting tourism became an imperative. The recuperation of tourism came to the spotlight because of diversification of the economy and placed under the care of the Ministry of Hotel and Tourism. The ministry has the task to provide an environment to attract tourists and suggest norms to facilitate their arrival because Angola was, and is still, one of the most difficult visa regime country. The kind of tourism that started emerging was more related to business prospection. The 2014 tourist manual reveals it: 45.3% foreign citizens arrived for business, 38.6% for service, 15.9% for visit and 0.2% for transit¹¹. On 27 March 2020, the

8 Avelino CHICO, "Migration in Angola : Opportunity and Challenge", in *Migration in and out of Africa : Jesuits Ministry Outlook*, Nairobi : Paulines Publications Africa, 2015, p. 73.

9 Universidade Católica de Angola (CEIC), *Relatório Económico de Angola 2012*, Luanda : Texto Editores, 2013, p. 114.

10 Diego PAUTASSO, "A economia política internacional da China para Angola e os caminhos da transição sistémica", *Século XXI* 1(1), 2011, p. 115.

11 Ministério da Hotelaria e Turismo, *Anuário de estatística do turismo de Angola de 2014*, Luanda: Ministério da Hotelaria e Turismo, 2015, p. 43.

Ministry of Hotel and Tourism was amalgamated with two other ministries and was renamed the Ministry of Culture, Environment and Tourism.

Table 1. Arrival of Tourists in Angola

Year	2011		2012		2013		2014	
Arrival	481,168		528,133		650,033		594,998	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
	366,705	114,463	376,340	151,793	435,824	214,209	467,818	127,180
Income	US\$698,283,738.31		US\$836,000,000		US\$1,191,000,000 ^{<?>}		US\$903,462,450	
Job created	145,564		157,954		173,478		202,766	

Table 1 shows the arrival of tourists in Angola from 2011 to 2014.

(Source : Own elaboration from Anuário de Estatística do Turismo 2011-14)

Tourism Infrastructures : National Reserves and Monuments

The infrastructures include parks, reserves, forest land, museums and historical buildings. National parks and reserves are spread in the eighteen provinces of the country¹². They occupy an extension of 82,000 km², which is almost 6,6% of the national territory. With 15,200 km² of extension, Iona National Park is the largest. It is located in the south-west, in Namibe Province. Iona was established as a reserve in 1937 and as a national park in 1964. The park contains plenty of animals and reptiles: lizards and geckos. In 2010, cheetahs from South Africa were seen for the first time. In turn, Luiana Reserve is one of the biggest in the country with 8,400 km² of extension. It is situated in Cuando Cubango Province, which shares its border with Namibia and Zambia. In Luiana, we find hyenas, lions, buffalos and black rhyns. Like others parks, the consequences of the civil war also damaged Iona by enhancing arbitrary hunting and human invasion. Investments are now being done by the government and organizations, such as the European Union, FAO, UNDP, World Bank and Global Fund for Environment to rebuild some infrastructures. More than US\$22,200,000 has already been spent to rehabilitate national parks and reserves¹³.

According to Angolan's constitution, the State is charged to protect the environment, species of flora and fauna (art. 24). It is for this objective that the Ministry of Culture, Environment and Tourism was created. The protection of biodiversity is now under this ministry. In order to help protect the environment, the Law 8/20 of 16 April, the Law of Environmental Conservation Areas, was approved. The law is meant to protect national

¹² There are six national parks, one regional natural park, two integral natural reserves and four partial natural reserves. The six national parks are Quissama, Cangandala, Bicular, Iona, Cameia and Mupa. The regional natural park is that of Cimalavera. The natural reserves are Luando, Ilhéu dos Pássaros, Luiana, Búfalo, Mavinga and Namibe.

¹³ André SIBI, "Investidos mais de USD 22 milhões para recuperar parques e reservas naturais", *Jornal de Angola* (22 mai 2020).

reserves, parks and biodiversity. As stated earlier on, many of these reserves have been destroyed during the civil war. The war prompted the invasion of these reserves, furtive hunting and the disappearance of some wildlife species. For their survival, some took refuge in the neighbouring countries. So, the Law 8/20 was timely when the country needs to avoid all of that and obtain gain from its biodiversity. According to National Development Plan 2018-2022, the annual economic growth average will be 3% and an average of 5.9% will be secured by tourism¹⁴.

Image 2. Iona National Park



Image 2 gives a glance of Iona National Park with some zebras.

(Source : Journal de Angola, 2013)

Angola has also plenty of national wonders that if properly tapped and maximised can improve the tourism potential of the country. For example, in July 2013, a national prize to select the seven wonders of Angola was launched. People voted via SMS and, on 2 May 2014, the seven wonders of the country were announced which included Kalandula Falls (Malanje), Maiombe Forest (Cabinda), Carumbo Pond (Lunda Norte), Nzenzo Caves (Uíge), Moco Hill (Huambo), Chiumbe River Falls (Lunda Sul) and Tundavala Rift (Huila). In the long term, these are the places that will become sources of income. However, the infrastructural deficit problem has to be first addressed such as the lack of accommodation, hotels services and security in most of the places where these wonders are located, meaning that a place like Luanda where most of these services are available remains the most attractive place for tourism. *Luanda* holds 60% of existing hotels, development projects, equipments and services¹⁵. Even though none of

¹⁴ Ministério da Economia e Planeamento, *Plano de Desenvolvimento Nacional*, Luanda: Ministério da Economia e Planeamento, 2018, p. iv.

¹⁵ According to the former Minister of Hotel and Tourism, Ângela Bragança, there are 235 hotels in Angola, 1,771 hotel developments, 5,829 restaurants and similar establishments, as well as 317 travel agencies. However, 60% of this existing hotel developments and equipments are in Luanda,

Luanda's reserves appears among the seven wonders of Angola, tourists are interested in Quissama National Park, Agostinho Neto Mausoleum, Museum of Natural History, National Museum of Anthropology, Museum of the Armed Forces, National Museum of Slavery, National Museum of Coin, Fortress of Saint Miguel, beaches and the Island of Luanda. The biggest port of the country, where most tourism ships dock, is also in Luanda. For this reason, Luanda has the highest taux of jobs created by tourism¹⁶. For example, in 2009, it was 77.37%, in 2013, 73.6% and in 2014, 72.7%.



Image 3. Quissama National Park

Image 3 shows Quissama National Park, which was founded in 1957. This is the most visited park in Angola. The park is bordered by the river Cuanza and Longa in the north and south, Atlantic coast in the west and high thickets in the east. Beside vegetation, the park is rich with biodiversity: elephants, giraffes, wildebeasts, zebras, crocodiles, cheetahs, rhinos, hippos, sea turtles, gazelles, monkeys and dwarf-buffalo. Some of these animals, e.g., elephants, were brought in 2001 from Botswana and South Africa, because the park lost its wildlife and was profoundly damaged during the civil war. (Source : Agência Angola Press, 2019)

Other infrastructures which are attracting tourists to Angola are the museums and historical buildings. Most of the existing museums were set-up after independence, that is, in 1976. Before independence, these infrastructures were virtually in non-existent or completely abandoned because it was not in the interest of the Portuguese colonial power to preserve native people's cultural values. However, two of them were already in place before independence. These are the Natural History Museum and the Dundo Museum. Others, such as the National Museum of Slavery, the Museum of Congo's Kings, the Museum of Cabinda, the Regional Museum of Huila, the National Museum of Anthropology and the National Museum

and 40% in the remaining seventeen provinces. Moreover, among the difficulties this sector faces, Bragança points out infrastructures, accessibility, deficit of domestic production, dependence on imports, scarcity of hotels, complementary supply, qualified workforce as well as managers as factors mitigating the success of this sector.

16 Ministério da Hotelaria e Turismo, *Anuário de estatística do turismo de Angola de 2009-2014*, Luanda: Ministério da Hotelaria e Turismo.

of Coin, emerged after independence. Apart from cultural values and heritage, these museums reveal and keep Angolan people's identity and history. Some of them equally portray history which goes beyond Angola.

Concerning historical buildings, there are 265 monuments. Among them are churches, which have kept alive the 500 years of evangelization of Angola. Some of the churches are the Our Lady of Pópulo (Benguela), Church of Nazareth (Luanda), Our Lady of Carmo (Luanda), Sanctuary of Our Lady of Conception of Muxima (Luanda), Cathedral of Saurimo (Lunda Sul), Chapel of Quiploa (Namibe), Church of Saint Joseph (Uíge) and the Church of Saint James (Cabinda). All of them also offer opportunity for both cultural and religious tourism. However, many of them are in need of restauration.

Image 4. Sanctuary of Our Lady of Conception of Muxima



Image 4 shows the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Conception of Muxima built in 1599. The church is situated in Luanda and it was used to baptize African slaves before docking to America and São Tomé and Príncipe. Today, it is a devotional place where Christians head to pray for divine graces. Despite the history the place recalls, there are no infrastructures for accomodation. There is only one small hotel, there are no shops, neither restaurants. Rather, there are plenty of stalls where people sell food without adequate hygiene and street vendeurs who trade on religious articles. The Banco de Poupança e Crédito (BPC) was just inaugurated recently. **(Source : Agência Angola Press, 2019)**

The Museums are also very important monuments in Angola. . First, there is the National Museum of Slavery. It was created in 1977. It went out of use and was reopened in 1997. The Museum is located 15 miles from *Luanda* and portrays the shadows of slave trade. It is situated in Africa's largest slave port from where many Africans were taken to America during the Atlantic slave trade ¹⁷. Unfortunately, unlike other museums

¹⁷ Ana Lucia ARAUJO, *Shadows of the Slave Past: Memory, Heritage, and Slavery*, New York: Routledge,

of slavery such as Elmina Castle (Ghana), Ouidah (Benin Republic) and Gorée Island (Senegal), Angola's National Museum of Slavery is not among the major tourists destinations. Among the 2,500 people who visit the museum per month are largely primary school pupils and university students. Most of them do the visit as part of extracurricular activities. Fortunately, between 2014 to 2018, the museum was rehabilitated and this might take it from its shadow.

Second, Dundo Museum was founded in 1936 and situated in north-east Angola. Its collections comprise the cultural heritage of the cokwé population as well as ethnographic, geological, prehistoric, zoological and historical specimens¹⁸.

A third monument of great national significance is named in Kikongo as Kulumbimbi. It is the first cathedral built in Southern Africa. Located in the city of M'banza Congo, the church was constructed by the missionary order of the Society of Jesus popularly known as Jesuits in 1548 and named the *Cathedral of the Holy Saviour*¹⁹. Also called San Salvador in the past, the contemporary city of M'banza Congo was the capital of Kongo Kingdom. The kingdom extended itself along the present-day northern part of Angola, Republic of Congo (Brazzaville), and the Western region of DRC. Due to its importance, in 2017 UNESCO declared the city of M'banza Congo as the country's first *World Heritage Site*²⁰. Nevertheless, the city rarely receives tourists because of a number of contributing factors. First, the airport is dilapidated and abandoned. It has become a harbour for plenty of grass and a crossing route for animals. Second, the town is very dirty and the system of water supply is still underdeveloped. Third, M'banza Congo lacks infrastructures: hotels, theatres, restaurants, tour guides, leaflets, online materials, information desk, parks and supermarket²¹. Fourth, transportation is very poor and the road leading to the outskirt is bad. Finally, Kulumbimbi monument gives the impression of an abandoned site given that it is always empty and circled with ribbon²². All of these factors have converted the 'home where lies the bodies of Congo's Kings' an unattractive tourism site. This situation is not only true of Kulumbimbi

2014, p. 7.

18 Mary BOUQUET, *Museums: A Visual Anthropology*, London: Berg, 2012, p. 88.

19 Miguel Nunes GABRIEL, *Os Jesuítas: Na primeira evangelização de Angola*, Cucujães: Biblioteca de Evangelização e Culturas, 1993, p. 10.

20 Bruno Pastre MÁXIMO, "As raízes colonialistas do projeto de patrimônio mundial de Mbanza Congo", *Rev. Cadernos de Campo Araraquara* 23, 2017, p. 192.

21 The lack of information on website is something general across the country. Most of the ministries' website is never updated. For instance, the amalgamation of the ministries of culture and environment had resulted into the Ministry of Culture, Environment and Tourism. This event occurred on 27 March 2020. However, up to now, the website of this new 'super ministry' is not yet ready. The same can happen when one needs to look for any information. Right now, the tourism yearbook posted in the website of the former Ministry of Hotel and Tourism is that of 2014. To make tourism great, online information is crucial.

22 Pope John Paul II was the highest church leader who visited Kulumbimbi in his visit to Angola in 1992.

but also extended to other parts of the country where many of Angola's monuments lie in waste.

Image 5. Old Cathedral of San Salvador (M'banza Congo)



Image 5 shows the ruins of Kulumbimbi, the first cathedral in Southern Africa built by Jesuits in 1548. The Jesuits arrived in M'banza Congo in March 1548. Towards the end of same year, the Cathedral of the Holy Saviour of Congo was ready for liturgical services and sacraments. In 1622, the Jesuits constructed the San Salvador College. The sons of Portuguese settlers and few natives attended the college. Source : Agência Angola Press, 2018)

Human Resources

Human capital is essential for the growth of tourism. For the last forty years, Angola has not trained sufficient number of people to take up the lead. Apart from tour guides and travel agents, the country lacked academics, historians, geographers, hotel managers, cooks, restaurant staff, supervisors, hoteliers, lodging managers and executive chiefs. Crude oil was the state's highest priority and this determined people's option in their choices of educational fields. Everyone wanted to study petroleum engineering and get a place at the National Institute of Petroleum situated in central Cuanza Sul province. More than portraying the government's politic on the formation of the citizens, to study oil petroleum became a ladder for personal success and self-realization. To worsen the situation, the public university, Agostinho Neto University (UAN, in Portuguese acronym) never thought to offer a degree program on tourism. However, when the 2014 oil crisis began hitting the country with some petroleum engineers losing their jobs, people started exploring other options. No one had ever imagined that a petroleum engineer can also be unemployed. The

end of the civil war further spiked a new height of search for alternatives which was aided by the emergence of private universities.

Finally, tourism entered into Agostinho Neto University's academic curricula six years ago, that is, in 2014. In same year, the Higher School of Hotel and Tourism started. The school offers a four year degree program which aims at forming people on management and tourism. The lack of lecturers led the authorities to go as far as Cuba seeking for help. They left out African countries, such as Kenya, Tanzania and South Africa. The bilateral deals with one of these countries, whose experience is far ahead of Angola, could be less expensive. After UAN, other institutions of higher education followed the same path. Among them are the Superior Institute for Technological Sciences, the Polytechnic School of Malanje and the Private University of Angola. With human capital coming from these schools, the country is on the right path to make tourism a top priority. This cannot be done only with amateurs. The President of Angola, João Lourenço, recognizes it when, speaking on the occasion of the swearing in of the Secretary of State for Secondary Education, he affirmed that the country needs to form its people in order to avoid the errors of the past²³. These errors are related but not limited to the lack of strategy and ignorance of the potentiality of the country's tourism sector. The error also includes failure to collaborate with sister African countries to sell tourism circuits. For this reason, President Lourenço added that Angola will not move forward with oil and diamonds ; rather, with human capital well formed and prepared²⁴.

There is no doubt that graduates from the universities will put their skills into use for the betterment of the country. Beginning from 2010, the number of tourists has been growing and among them are foreigners, Angolans residing abroad and those living in the country. For instance, in 2012, 46.5% of tourists were foreigners, 42.1% were nationals and 11.4% were Angolans residing outside the country²⁵. In 2013, the situation was similar : 45.6% foreigners, 43% nationals and 11.4% nationals living abroad²⁶. Regarding the origin, in 2014, 55% were Europeans, mainly Portuguese ; 18% Africans, the majority were South Africans ; 14% Americans, mainly Brazilians ; 12% Asians, mainly Chinese; and 1% Middle Easterners, mainly Israelites²⁷. From the data, one can value the growth of internal tourism. The percentage of nationals living inside and outside of the country is far ahead of that of foreign tourists. Nevertheless, the government must also

23 Cf. Agência Angola Press, "PR exige mais qualidade no ensino no país". https://www.angop.ao/angola/pt_pt/noticias/politica/2020/5/24/exige-mais-qualidade-ensino-pais,40a1bcd-f8-9138-a38e932608ec.html (Accessed 13/06/20).

24 *Ibid.*

25 Ministério da Hotelaria e Turismo, *Anuário de estatística do turismo de Angola de 2012*, Luanda : Ministério da Hotelaria e Turismo, 2013, p. 40.

26 Ministério da Hotelaria e Turismo, *Anuário de estatística do turismo de Angola de 2013*, Luanda : Ministério da Hotelaria e Turismo, 2014, p. 44.

27 Ministério da Hotelaria e Turismo, *Anuário de estatística do turismo de Angola de 2014*, Luanda: Ministério da Hotelaria e Turismo, 2015, p. 38.

work hard to attract domestic and continental tourism from other African countries. This might mean having to relax the visa regulations for black people and Africans. Moreover, Angolans living in the country travel to tourism sites during the long weekends, while foreigners prefer doing so in the summer. In other words, they travel to Angola between July and August. The 2014 data make it clear : 13.5% arrived in July and 13.3% in August. The least arrival occurs in November (5.2%) and December (8.9%), respectively. All these tourists arrivals to tourists sites incur costs which, in turn, contribute to the country's economic growth (*see table 1*).

Legislation

There is no tourism without legislation. A couple of legislations were approved at different times, for example, Law 9/15 of 15 June, which approves the law of tourism; Joint Executive Decree 23/15 of 23 January concerning the hotel legal regime ; Joint Executive Decree 470/15 of 14 July which deals with ecotourism ; Presidential Decree 1/16 of 4 January regarding catering and similar activities ; and Executive Decree 355/17 of 19 July, which permits the National Council to develop tourism in Angola.

Regarding the norms relating to the entrance visa, the Law 13/19 of 23 May, the Law for Foreign Citizens Residing in Angola, states that tourism visa is only provided at the Angola's diplomatic missions and consulates (art. 51). However, the president of the country can allow it to be given at the border post. Furthermore, the visa is valid for three months but the person can only remain in the country for thirty days. The visa allows multiple entrances and can be renewed two times. In addition, apart from tourism, the visa serves for family's visit, business prospection and to participate in scientific and technological activities in the country.

Angola also allows business tourism. This is because of economic prosperity, which Angola has experienced after the civil war. Some data confirm the growth of economic activities after the civil war. In the 2007, 14% of tourists came for business. This number grew as time went on : in 2008, there was 20% ; in 2009, 21% ; in 2010, it grew to 38.4% ; in 2012, it went as far as 45.3% ; in 2013, it reduced to 40.6% ; and in 2014, it remained stable at 40%. Considering the processes to apply for visa, Angola is still far behind many countries who have made tourism an irreversible priority. Notably, countries such as Kenya and Tanzania, whose economy is fed by tourism, provide visa at the airport and border posts. The government of Angola loses nothing to take such a policy.

However, the Presidential Decree 56/18 of 20 February solves part of the issue. This Decree exempts people from some countries from the tourism visa requirement. For others, the Decree simplifies the administrative process to get it. The simplification means that the visa is provided within

three days and can also be obtained via online (art. 3). Citizens who are exempted from applying for tourism visa to get to Angola are from Botswana, Mauritius, Seychelles, Singapore and Zimbabwe. Apart from failing to expand this measure to other African countries, the Presidential Decree seems to be ironical since nationals from Kenya and Tanzania have not been exempted from getting the visa. The two countries are more developed tourism economies and yet Angola makes it difficult for citizens of Kenya and Tanzania to visit the country. By so doing, Angola is throwing away the opportunity to learn from them. Kenya charges US\$50 for tourist visa, while Angola demands US\$70 (Presidential Decree 20/19 of 14 January). The reason for such a cost is due to some tourists who end up remaining in the country after their visa expired. Among the irregular migrants established in Angola are those persons who had entered the country using tourism visa²⁸. There are other countries whose requests are equally simplified²⁹. Though some simplificatory procedures have been adopted, it is still hard and expensive to enter Angola.

COVID-19 and its Lessons

The COVID-19 pandemic is pulling back the progress, which Angola had made in the tourism sector. At the same, the pandemic is showing the weaknesses of the measures, which were taken to boost this sector. Angola registered its two first imported positive cases of COVID-19 on 21 March from Portugal. From then, the number of cases never stopped growing. As of 28 September, the country has confirmed 4,797 cases, out of which there are 176 deaths, 1,813 recoveries and 2,808 still active. The first measures, which were taken was to close the whole border. As a result, commercial airways could no longer fly from and to Angola. No one could enter the country, unless for humanitarian reason and other activities described as 'essential services'. Moreover, interprovincial travels were banned. These conditions put in place to combat the ravaging pandemic crippled tourism. Restaurants, bars, theatres and tour sites were all closed. Gatherings of more than fifty people were prohibited. Collective sport was discouraged. Churches were closed and liturgical services prohibited. Finally, quarantine has entered into our daily vocabulary and everyone was obliged to be confined in their homes as a nationwide lockdown was imposed. State administration staff were encouraged to stay at home. All

28 Simão MILAGRES & Lutina SANTOS, *Fluxos migratórios em Angola : novos contextos e desafios*, Luanda : Mayamba Editora, 2018, p. 160.

29 Countries whose application is simplified are all nationals from European Union, other European countries (Norway, Great Britain and North Ireland, Iceland, Principate of Monaco, Russia, Federação Helvetic Republic and Vatican State), few from Africa (Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe, Morocco, Swaziland or Eswatini, Algeria and Zambia), America (Argentina, Uruguay, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Cuba, USA and Venezuela), Asia (South Korea, United Arab Emirates, China, India, Indonesia, Israel, Japan and East Timor) and Oceania (Australia and New Zealand).

of this came into effect on 27 March. The Presidential Decree 81/20 of 25 March, which declared the State of emergency, enforced it.

All these measures are still having diverse negative effects on tourism and on activities related to it like business prospection, family's visit and participation in a scientific session. In terms of budgetary prevision, by the end of 2020, around 4.6 million tourists were expected in Angola. The country could raise a revenue of US\$4.7 million and one million jobs could have been created. However, the coronavirus pandemic has affected these previsions. Instead of job creation, people are losing their work. At the end of May 2020, more than four thousand workers were reported to have been laid-off. Furthermore, more than 100 industries of medium and large scale are on the brink of collapse. To make it worse, since the announcement of the first two imported positive cases of COVID-19, the 150.000 Portuguese immigrants established in Angola have been turned into scapegoats and given that the outbreak of the pandemic began in Wuhan (China), the 240.000 Chinese immigrants residing in Angola are treated as scapegoats too.

In spite of the fragile social cohesion, the pandemic has exposed the weakness of the investments in tourism. First, 75% of structural investments were concentrated in Luanda. Today, this province is the most affected by coronavirus. If the question is to save the economy, other provinces can save it if the government can solve the infrastructural problem, invest in human resource, good road networks and hotels. Second, the COVID-19 revealed the poverty in the National Health System. Health is what every tourist cherishes most reflected through mandatory health travel insurances. If hospitals are not adequately equipped, then preventable and curable illnesses such as malaria will continue to kill more people, tourists included, than the COVID-19. From January to March 2020, Angola registered 2,065,673 cases of malaria, out of which 2,548 resulted in death. Thanks to coronavirus new hospitals are being built. Border provinces are gaining new hospitals. In Luanda, a hospital whose full capacity is for 1,000 patients has just been built as well as a Laboratory Diagnosis Centre whose testing capacity shoots from 700 to 6,900 specimens a day. The 6,900 specimens to be processed per day, 3,700 include RT-PCR molecular tests and 3,200 is meant for rapid serological exams. Third, the COVID-19 pandemic has enhanced the conditions for the return of biodiversities, which had disappeared. Due to the reduction of human activity on the sea, flamingos and dolphins are now back in Luanda, Lobito and Namibe. Finally, the COVID-19 has unraveled our deficit of domestic production and over dependence on imports. Angola imports more than half of its food³⁰. The pandemic is redirecting our attention to desire

³⁰ In 2018, Angola imported US\$14.5 billion worth of goods, mainly from China (15.6%), Portugal (13.6%), Singapore (12.4%), Togo (6.17%) and Belgium-Luxembourg (5.54%). Among the main imports into Angola were raw sugar, confectionery sugar, beer, chicken, wheat, meslin flour, wine, frozen beef, frozen fish, saussages, chocolate, onions, sauces, pasta, milk, olive oil, vinegar,

more made-in-Angola products and fewer imports. Nevertheless, more investment is required.

Conclusion

This article explored the tourism sector in Angola and the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. The perennial need to evaluate the infrastructures still persists. This will boost the sector and attract internal and international tourists. We identified national reserves, parks and monuments, some which are part of the seven wonders of Angola. Others are significant for their historical relevance, which go beyond Angola. Consequently, there was a huge investment of about US\$22 million to rehabilitate some of them. However, this investment was concentrated chiefly in Luanda. Hotels, resorts, schools of hotel and tourism are all being built in Luanda. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have indicated that investments should have been spread all over the country. Luanda is the epicenter of the pandemic and tourism could still have continued in other provinces. Unfortunately, most of them lack infrastructures. Therefore, COVID-19 has revealed the weakness of the State's options to discriminate against other provinces when it comes to development. Nonetheless, the pandemic has become a blessing in disguise because it is offering the opportunity to readjust some of these options. Today, hospitals are being equipped and built everywhere. Moreover, the 2014 crude oil crisis, which is still ravaging the economy of the country, implies that Angola's future can no longer be dependent on oil but also neither on diamonds. Rather, it will be secured by 'made in Angola' products. This includes tourism. Finally, Angola must open their border to the outside world, especially Africans, some of who happen to be from leading and very sophisticated, tourism economics globally like Kenya and Tanzania and learn a lesson or two. ■

butter, tea, salt, coffee, nuts, cabbages, bananas, margarine, potatoes, palm oil, soft drinks, bread, pastry, cakes, pork, beverages, poultry meat, other meats, rice, medicines, soap, sanitary, books, construction materials, refined petroleum.