

# Angolans fear oil windfall won't trickle down to poor

Special to Sentinel-Voice  
from IRIN

With oil prices rising and new oilfields increasing production, frustration and resentment among Angolans is reportedly growing as they fail to benefit from their natural resources.

The government pencilled in an earnings figure of around \$23 per barrel in its 2004 budget, but with prices now about double that, expectations of a government windfall are rising.

"I've heard informal estimates that for every \$1 a barrel increase in the price of oil, it translates to somewhere between \$150 million and \$250 million a year in excess revenue for the government," said Arvind Ganesan, Business Program Director for Human Rights Watch.

Even an average of \$30

per barrel for the year still translates into an extra \$1.4 billion for the treasury during 2004.

But analysts have said it is very unlikely that this wealth not be spent on much-needed social and humanitarian projects.

"People are asking, with the doubling of the price of oil, why do we see no major investment being shared with the country," one analyst said. "The reality is that ... it is [being] used to repay loans faster."

The state-owned Angolan Journal newspaper hinted as much in an article earlier this month, but other than that, the government has publicly said little about what it intends to do with the revenue.

Billions of dollars of potential revenue are believed to have been used as collat-

eral for oil-backed loans to finance the government's external debt, estimated at between \$8 billion and \$12 billion.

Philippe Lazzarini, head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), citing reports that the money would be used to pay off loans, said: "Long term, the increased oil price will have a positive effect, but if it is not all explained, that can only strengthen the incomprehension of the population — they already don't understand how it can take so long to benefit from the peace dividend."

"One problem that has been seen historically is that when the oil price is high, governments tend to invest according to the revenue that they are getting at the time, and when the oil price falls — and inevitably it falls — they run out of money," said Ganesan at the Washington-based HRW.

"The other big problem is over-leveraging — borrowing against increased revenue and not being able to repay it

at a sufficient rate to free up money to do other things. They could run into a real problem down the road.

"Even with the oil price high, the information we've seen is that the Angolan government is still fairly cash-strapped because of this over-leveraging [borrowing against future oil income] in the past. People in the government or the public shouldn't be thinking that there's a huge windfall [on the way]," Ganesan added.

Angola is in desperate need of funds to rebuild its infrastructure, and the country's health and education systems were shattered by almost three decades of civil war. But two years of peace have failed to make a sizeable impact — ordinary Angolans are yet to see the benefits of having a huge national oil reserve.

"I have no water at home

— I have to buy it on the street, yet the government is selling oil for more than \$40 per barrel," said Graca Nunes, who works as a cleaner in the capital, Luanda. "My son has to bribe his teacher so he can pass to the next grade at school because the teacher is paid so poorly by the government. I don't understand why all this oil is not helping us," she added.

"Angola has made some positive steps," Ganesan said. "But, fundamentally, all of those have to do more with how to account for incoming money. They've done less to account for how they spend the money, or where it goes."

Others, however, believe the government is doing its best in what is undeniably a very complicated situation. They argue that after such a long war, it will take more than two years to give a substantial benefit to the people.

"This requires mind-set changes first, then strategic thinking and strategic planning, and finally execution," said Olivier Lambert, senior country officer at the World Bank. "The mind-set change phase is probably over, to a large extent; the strategic thinking and planning phase is in full swing; the execution phase has already started. Hence, the seeds have been planted but we cannot yet see the fruits."

## Storm

(Continued from Page 1)

Brazilian and Jordanian troops in the U.N. peacekeeping mission sent to stabilize Haiti after rebels ousted President Jean-Bertrand Aristide in February struggled to help the needy as aid workers ferried supplies of water and food to victims.

CARE spokesman Rick Perera said the agency had about 660 tons of dry food in Gonaives, including corn-soy blend, dried lentils and cooking oil and was trying to set up distribution points.

Police said aid vehicles were being waylaid by mobs on the outskirts of Gonaives. One truck that made it to City Hall in the town center was swarmed by people who began throwing its load of bagged water into the crowd, setting off a melee. The driver finally sped off, bouncing people off the truck.

Addressing the U.N. General Assembly on Tuesday, Haiti's interim president, Boniface Alexandre, pleaded for help.

"In the face of this tragedy... I appeal urgently for the solidarity of the international community so it may once again support the government in the framework of emergency assistance," he said.

Several nations were sending aid including \$1.8 million from the European Union and \$1 million and rescue supplies from Venezuela. The U.S. Embassy announced \$60,000 in immediate relief aid Monday, drawing criticism from Rep. Kendrick Meek, D-Fla., who called it

"a drop in the bucket."

Floods are particularly devastating in Haiti, the poorest country in the Americas, because it is almost completely deforested, leaving few roots to hold back rushing waters or mudslides. Most of the trees have been chopped down to make charcoal for cooking.

Jeanne came four months after devastating floods along Haiti's southern border with the Dominican Republic. Some 1,700 bodies were recovered and 1,600 more were presumed dead.

Gonaives also, suffered fighting during the February rebellion that led to the ouster of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and left an estimated 300 dead.

The storm entered the Caribbean last week, killing seven people in Puerto Rico before the hurricane hit the Dominican Republic, killing at least 19, including 12 who drowned Monday in swollen rivers. The overall death toll was 717.

On Tuesday, Jeanne was posing no threat to land, about 515 miles east of Great Abaco island in the Bahamas.

Also out in the open Atlantic was Hurricane Karl, 990 miles from the Caribbean's Leeward islands, and Tropical Storm Lisa, which was about 1,005 miles northeast of the Leeward Islands.



## TRANSPORTATION NOTICE

A Public Information Meeting regarding proposed improvements to the I-15 corridor from Sahara Avenue to the US 95 "Spaghetti Bowl," also known as **PROJECT NEON**.



### Purpose of Meeting

The Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration and the City of Las Vegas, is conducting a Public Information Meeting to provide project information and receive public comments on the project alternatives that focus on:

- I-15 freeway improvements
- Local access improvements to the Las Vegas downtown redevelopment area
- Operational improvements of the I-15 Charleston Boulevard Interchange
- Connecting Industrial Road and Martin Luther King Boulevard
- Grade separating the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and Oakey Boulevard/Wyoming Avenue

### When and Where

Thursday, September 30, 2004 – 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.  
Clark County Government Center  
Community Room (Pyramid-shaped building)  
500 S. Grand Central Parkway  
Accessible via Citizen Area Transit routes 105 and 207.

### Where You Come In

Members of the public are invited to attend the meeting at their convenience between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. to submit comments verbally to a court reporter or in writing on a comment sheet provided at the meeting. A formal presentation will not be held as this open format increases the opportunity to submit public comments while providing a venue for one-on-one discussions with project staff.

In addition to any comments received at the Public Information Meeting, written comments also will be accepted until 5 p.m., Friday, October 15, 2004. Please submit your comments to: Tamra Ryan, PROJECT NEON Project Office, 1640 Alta Drive, Suite 11, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89106. Comments also may be submitted via the web at [www.ndotprojectneon.com](http://www.ndotprojectneon.com).

**Right-of-Way:** The Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policy Act of 1970 will govern the acquisition of any right-of-way necessary for this project. More detailed information on right-of-way acquisition and relocation assistance can be obtained by calling the NDOT right-of-way contracting agency Universal Field Services at (702) 310-7171, or by visiting the PROJECT NEON Project Office.

General information about the project and meeting can be obtained from the PROJECT NEON Project Office or by calling Tamra Ryan toll-free at (888) 411-NEON. Certain project materials are available in alternative formats upon request.

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## EMPLOY

### AIRPORT ENGINEER

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of Aviation

Responsible for the management and supervision of a major section in the Airport's Construction and Engineering Division. Plans, supervises, reviews and evaluates the work of a design team consisting of professional and technical support staff. Performs professional level engineering planning, design and construction oversight on difficult, complex and/or sensitive airport construction, remodeling and major repair projects. Requires a Bachelor's Degree in Electrical Engineering, and five years of full-time professional level design and project management experience, two (2) years of which includes supervisory/management experience. Equivalent combination of formal education and appropriate related experience may be considered. Additionally, must possess registration as a professional engineer in the State of Nevada, or if registered in another state, must obtain Nevada registration within one (1) year of the date of hire. Must possess a valid Nevada Class C driver's license at time of hire. Salary: \$64,168.00 - \$99,459.36. Clark County application and supplemental assessment required. Apply by October 1, 2004.

Clark County Human Resources  
500 S. Grand Central Pkwy,  
3rd floor  
Las Vegas, NV 89155  
(702) 261-5735  
[www.co.clark.nv.us.com](http://www.co.clark.nv.us.com)

### CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT INSPECTOR

Clark County Department  
of Aviation

Inspects routine to complex public works, capital improvement, engineering and developer-built projects, for conformance with County, Federal, state and industry plans, specifications, codes and contract provisions; ensures that required modifications are accomplished. Work out of doors in all weather conditions; works with exposure to potentially hazardous materials and in hazardous conditions, such as traffic. Requires equivalent to completion of 2 years of college-level course work in pre-engineering, construction technology, or a related field, and two (2) years of full-time construction inspection experience, preferably inspecting public works projects. Experience in a field closely related to the work may be substituted for the required education on a year-for-year basis. Must possess a valid Nevada Class C Driver's License at time of hire. Salary: \$43,673.76 - \$67,691.52. Application deadline is October 1, 2004.

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Published: Las Vegas Sentinel-Voice — 09/23/04