

Angola under Joao Lourenço

Who Are the New Players of MPLA State



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Summary

In 2017, the coming to power of João Lourenço put an end to nearly four decades of rule by the former head of state, José Eduardo Dos Santos. João Lourenço's first objective was to strengthen his authority by appointing people close to him and cadres from the old regime, who had professed loyalty to him, to high office. The speed of the takeover of all the decision-making centers – army, intelligence services, state-owned companies, oil industry and above all the MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola) party-state – by the new “Comrade Number One” surprised the leaders of the Dos Santos era, some of whom were abruptly dismissed or even sentenced to prison. Now firmly established in Angola's command centers, João Lourenço is however facing a serious economic crisis, the most worrying for the country since the end of the civil war in 2002.

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Introduction

After 38 years of José Eduardo Dos Santos's rule, João Lourenço came to power in August 2017 and managed to consolidate his base by surrounding himself with followers and people who held prominent roles in the previous regime. For nearly four decades, José Eduardo Dos Santos was the uncontested head of a country where the private sector – apart from the oil industry – remained very marginal in the country's economy: a typical case of an oil-producing country that is a member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). In Africa, Angola is now the second largest country in terms of volume produced (1.5 million barrels per day) after Nigeria. It has also the capacity of producing 5 million tons of gas capacity per year.

Few totally new figures have emerged around the new president for two years. Joao Lourenço has rather allowed a few cadres to be promoted. Some people with a technocratic profile have kept their position with non-governmental functions, while others have been rehabilitated by the new president after having been sidelined during the last years of Dos Santos's government. The last point is important, because the "excommunications" under the former president were sometimes violent and humiliating, although some of those excluded on one day were subsequently replaced in other positions. However, some of the rehabilitated civil servants owe their return to power to Lourenço and therefore will be particularly loyal to him.

Angola has experienced significant changes in the upper echelons of government since Joao Lourenço's election in 2017, but the system set up by the party-state, the Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola (MPLA), has remained relatively untouched. The new president's goal was to obtain control over the nerve centers of power as quickly as possible, namely in their order of importance:

- The Politburo, the MPLA's highest body and its Secretariat
- The army
- The intelligence services
- Management of the oil industry, particularly *via* the state-owned company, Sonangol
- Other state-owned companies

He also set up a government and presidential cabinet with a mix of experienced technocrats and politicians, who would be completely loyal to him. We will not focus on the handling of different decision-making bodies according to their decision-making importance, but according to the chronology of their takeover by Lourenço's government. First, he changed the security and intelligence apparatus before forming his government and finally taking over the party and state-owned companies. The MPLA, the nerve center of all major decisions, could not be reformed in the initial months, since the party is subject to rules and the appointments are ratified after a congress, whose dates are not decided by the president.

Lourenço also intended to revive regional, continental and international diplomacy that was dormant: President Dos Santos did not travel much in the last years of his regime. However, the economic situation is very difficult: the country experienced recession in 2016 and 2017 with negative growth of -2.5%. Since then, growth has fluctuated between 1% and 2%, far from the 5% recorded before the sudden fall in crude oil prices in 2014. Furthermore, debt has rapidly increased and now represents 65% of gross national product (GNP), or \$ 70 billion.¹ Inflation increased significantly in 2016 and 2017 (30%), even though it was contained at less than 10% in the three previous years. The value of the currency, the kwanza, then collapsed against the dollar. Furthermore, and while foreign investors are obliged to carry out some operations in kwanza, the lack of foreign exchange has significantly slowed down the economy. These data make the new president's room for maneuver particularly limited.

This paper proposes to review the high-profile appointments in the main machinery of the Angolan state to highlight those who Joao Lourenço counts on to consolidate his power and to develop Angola as he sees fit. The objective is not to make an inventory of the country's politics and economy, but rather to learn about the method and people who Joao Lourenço relies on to lead Angola until the next elections in 2022.

1. "La dette publique de l'Angola n'est pas inquiétante – IMF", *Angop*, 1st March 2018, www.angop.ao.

Trusted men in the security apparatus

Some weeks after his coming to power, the new president wanted to entrust the military and intelligence apparatus to the old guard. As a former Minister of Defense from 2014 to 2017, he knows these particularly strategic sectors in Angola well. He chose General **Salviano de Jesus Sequeira** (aged 73 years), who has had a long career in the military since the 1970s, to succeed him at the Ministry of Defense. In 1996, after becoming a general, he dealt with infrastructure and logistical matters within the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA), and then in 2003, he became Deputy Chief-of-Staff of the FAA until 2009. Between 2010 and 2012, he was Deputy Minister of Defense for Equipment and Infrastructure and from 2012 to 2017, Secretary of State with the same role. Therefore, he worked under Joao Lourenço at the Ministry of Defense from 2014. Due to his past as a freedom fighter – he fought against Portuguese colonists from 1968 to 1974 in present-day Cabinda province – Salviano de Jesus Sequeira has an undeniable legitimacy for the post of Minister of Defense. The new Secretary of State at the Ministry of Defense, Admiral **Gaspar Santos Rufino** (aged 70 years), already held the position of Deputy Minister of Defense – responsible for projects – from 2001. He also worked under Joao Lourenço at the Ministry of Defense from 2014 to 2017.

Joao Lourenço did not appoint the Minister of Defense, **Candido Van-Dunem**, who he replaced in 2013, to the government. The latter, now simply a member of parliament, was Minister of Former Combatants and Veterans of the Homeland from 2013 to 2017, while being Defense Secretary to President José Eduardo Dos Santos from 2005 to 2017. The Chief of the General Staff, **Geraldo Sachipengo Nunda**, was replaced after a corruption investigation was instigated against him² but he has just been posted in London as ambassador in October 2019. The new Chief of the General Staff, General **António Egídio de Sousa Santos**, nicknamed “Disciplina”³ [Discipline], was appointed in April 2018 by Joao Lourenço. António Egídio de Sousa Santos was in charge (mainly as number two from 2010) of education and training in the FAA for about ten

2. “Limogeage du patron de l’armée en Angola”, *Voice of Africa*, 23 April 2018, www.voaafrique.com.

3. All nicknames given to some army officers come from the period of the War of Independence against the Portuguese. Hence, these people have distinguished themselves and enjoy certain privileges.

years and was a member of the MPLA's Politburo until 2012 when he became Deputy Chief-of-Staff for Patriotic Education. His departure from the Politburo is related to its incompatibility with his new role.

In March 2018, President Lourenço chose a man to lead the domestic intelligence services (Serviço de Inteligência e Segurança de Estado – SINSE [State Intelligence and Security Service]), who was suddenly dismissed from Dos Santos's system in 2006: **Fernando Miala**. In 2006, Miala led the external intelligence service (Serviço de Inteligência Externa – SIE) and was among those most loyal to José Eduardo dos Santos. When he was sidelined, he was automatically retired, sentenced to four years in prison and demoted in the military hierarchy, going from a general to a lieutenant general. Officially, he was accused of plotting against the president,⁴ but he mainly paid for his open rivalry with one of the president's very close supporters, Manuel Hélder Vieira Dias Jr.⁵ (at the time, he was the Head of the Presidential *Casa Militar* [Head of Military Staff])⁶. By rehabilitating him 12 years after he was sent to purgatory, the president is ensuring Miala's loyalty at little cost.

In April 2018, the president appointed **José Luis Caetano Higino de Sousa "Zé Grande"** as SIE boss. "Zé Grandé" knows the current head of state well, as he was deputy Chief-of-Staff of the FAA when Lourenço was Minister of Defense. He was appointed to this position in 2010. "Ze Grande" replaces **André de Oliveira João Sango** who held this post since 2006 and was seen as being too close to the former President José Eduardo Dos Santos. Furthermore, Sango replaced Fernando Miala in 2006. Fernando Miala, the new head of SINSE, could hardly work in collaboration with André de Oliveira João Sango.

Finally, President Lourenço appointed a new General Police Commander, **Alfredo Eduardo Manuel Mingas**, the former Angolan ambassador to Sao Tomé (an important post for an Angolan diplomat given the many economic investments by Angolan companies in that country). Alfredo Eduardo Manuel Mingas, nicknamed "Panda", has had a long career in the police: he was number two at the national police in charge of protection and intervention from 2006 to 2011, before taking up his diplomatic post. It cannot be said that Alfredo Eduardo Manuel Mingas is close to Lourenço, who has promoted him, so counting on his loyalty.

Lourenço wanted to rely on the MPLA's old guard for the security and information sectors. The appointees' common factor is to have almost all

4. "Ex-Angolan Spy Chief Accused of Plotting against President", *AFP*, 2 April 2006.

5. "ANGOLA: Miala, le chef espion, limogé!", *La lettre du continent*, 1st March 2006.

6. The *casa militar* is a department within the presidency which is responsible for advising the president on all issues relating to state security. It is also responsible for the president's personal safety.

been fighters against the Portuguese colonists in the 1960s-1970s. There is no change or specific reinvigoration here, but absolute continuity. The security issue is the one that the president has the least freedom of reform on at the end of the day, given the number of MPLA cadres who acquired widespread legitimacy during the war against the Portuguese, and then against the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola (UNITA) during the civil war. These cadres feel they have ownership over the sovereign areas of the state connected to the security and defense sector.

A vice president and a wife who are key to his domestic political framework

Although not well-known by the media, the Angolan Vice President **Bornito de Souza Balthazar Diogo**, however plays a key role in the Angolan political apparatus. Before becoming vice president in September 2017, Bornito de Souza was a powerful Minister of Territory Administration from 2010. This ministry is mainly responsible for the appointment of all senior civil servants in Luanda and the provinces. During his seven years at the helm of this ministry, Bornito de Souza has traveled to all the provinces and some remote areas of the country where he appointed all the government's senior civil servants. His role has mainly been to place MPLA cadres and follow their progress. He has a detailed knowledge of the party's cadres' progression in all the Angolan provinces. This is even more true as he led the youth wing of the MPLA, the JMPLA, in the 1980s. So, Bornito de Souza is a tremendous asset for Joao Lourenço. He has a PhD in political science and also traveled extensively in the 1990s as Chair of the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs Committee, and then from 1999, as the Chair of the MPLA parliamentary group, as a replacement for Joao Lourenço. His profile as a civilian, intellectual and finally as an expert in the workings of the MPLA is complementary to the president's, which is more focused on military and security issues.

The vice president has also put his close associates into key posts. He managed to promote **Edeltrudes Maurício Fernandes Gaspar da Costa** as Director of the Presidential "Casa Civil",⁷ (Head of Presidential Staff). Edeltrudes Maurício Fernandes Gaspar da Costa used to work for Bornito de Souza at the Ministry of Territory Administration. The Angolan vice president also supported **Félix de Jesus Cala** for the post of Secretary-General of the President of the Republic. Previously, he worked under Bornito de Souza Balthazar Diogo as Secretary-General of the Ministry of Territory Administration. The new Minister of Territory

7. The *casa civil* is a key department in the presidency whose role is to support the president in all matters apart from those related to security. It also includes specialists on all matters in order to best advise the president and then to coordinate working with the various ministries. The head of the *casa civil* is therefore a sort of Prime minister as they have to pass on information for the president to decide on and then delegate the guidelines to the departments.

Administration and State Reform, **Adão Francisco C. Almeida** is also one of Bornito de Souza's men. He was his Deputy Minister from 2010 and then his Secretary of State from 2012. He also joined the MPLA Politburo in September 2018. The Secretary of State for Territory Administration, **Laurinda Jacinto Prazeres Monteiro Cardoso**, was also taken on by Bornito de Souza in 2010 as Director of the Legal Department.

Ana Dias Lourenço, the president's wife, is without a doubt another key figure in the Angolan government. A former economist at the World Bank where she was an Executive Director of the Board of Directors, Ana Dias Lourenço was also the Minister of Planning for 15 years, between 1997 and 2012. So, she has constantly moved around the country's 18 provinces and has made countless trips abroad, mainly to secure funding for Angola's post-civil-war reconstruction programs. Therefore, just like Bornito de Souza, Ana Dias Lourenço knows many of the MPLA's senior cadres that she has personally appointed or met when she was still a minister. She has also managed to place several cadres at the heart of the new organization of the presidency. This was particularly the case with the short-lived Presidential Secretary for Social Affairs, **Carlos Alberto Lopes**, who was replaced three months after his appointment, to take the chair of the highly strategic Angolan sovereign wealth fund (Fundo Soberano de Angola) in January 2018. He replaced Dos Santos's son, **José Filomeno Dos Santos**, who has been under house arrest. Carlos Alberto Lopes was the First Lady's Deputy Minister from 2003 to 2010 before he became Minister of Finance during the last years of José Eduardo Dos Santos's government. Another leading figure, whose promotion was strongly supported by Ana Dias Lourenço, is **Pedro Luis da Fonseca**, who was also one of her deputy ministers when she was at the Ministry of Planning. He has spent his entire career in positions related to economic affairs and has been the powerful Minister of the Economy and Planning since September 2017. He has been replaced in August 2019 by the renowned economist **Manuel Neto da Costa**.

The vice president and Lourenço's wife are key links in helping the president to make decisions, although Bornito de Souza Balthazar Diogo acts more on anything related to the functioning of the state apparatus due to his deep knowledge of the provinces and their cadres, as well as of the MPLA, Ana Dias Lourenço however is mainly listened to on economic choices.

The presidential cabinet: a mix of experienced technocrats and distinctly MPLA politicians

In the presidency, the head of state has made a trade-off between his close relatives (his own brother, **Sequeira João Lourenço**, is for example Deputy Head of Security), leaders of the previous regime (two former Ministers of Petroleum **José Maria Botelho de Vasconcelos** and **Albina Assis Africano** became advisors in March 2018) and people promoted by the president. However, it should be noted that not all the advisors necessarily have power, some hardly ever come to the presidency where they also do not have an office. Joao Lourenço, like other heads of state, has distributed titles and emoluments to people without giving them executive duties. This is mainly the case for people who held high positions under the former president to neutralize them and prevent them from becoming nuisance factors.

The president's official cabinet consists of eight advisors, two chiefs of staff, a secretary-general and a general inspector (plus a significant number of civil servants). The president's Chief-of-Staff, who has ministerial status, **Edeltrudes Maurício Fernandes Gaspar da Costa** – as we have seen is a close associate of the vice president – is not new to the Angolan political scene. In December 2004, he was appointed Deputy Minister for Territory Administration. Under Dos Santos, he was successively Secretary-General of the President of the Republic, and then Head of Presidential Staff -casa civil (the key person in the system that supplies the president with briefing papers and who manages a pool of specialist advisors) since 2012. The new Secretary-General of the President of the Republic, **Félix de Jesus Cala**, was previously Finance Director of Moxico province in the east of the country, and then the interim governor in 2013. The deputy chief of staff **Edson Ulisses de Carvalho Alves Barreto**, is a close associate of his predecessor, Aldemiro Vaz da Conceição. Since 2013, he has been in charge of a government management training unit founded by President José Eduardo dos Santos. The Secretary for Political, Constitutional and Parliamentary Affairs, **Marcy Cláudio**

Lopes, is a former official responsible for political parties in the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Angola. **Victor Manuel Rita da Fonseca Lima**, the Secretary for Diplomatic Affairs and International Cooperation is a heavyweight in Angolan diplomacy. In 2000, when he was an advisor to Dos Santos, he was appointed as ambassador to Japan and then became ambassador to France from 2006 to 2009, and then Spain in 2009. **Francisco João de Carvalho Neto**, the Secretary for the Judicial and Legal Affairs is a law specialist who has worked since the 80' for the government. The Secretary for Institutional Communication Affairs and Press, **Luis Fernando**, is a journalist by training and ran the *Jornal de Angola*, a daily newspaper controlled by the state. He was also a director of Grupo Medionova which owns newspapers and television channels, whose main shareholder is the former president, José Eduardo dos Santos. The Secretary for Regional and Local Affairs, **Flavio Saraiva de Carvalho da Fonseca**, is the brother of the current ambassador to Portugal and the former president's former diplomatic advisor, **Carlos Alberto Saraiva de Carvalho Fonseca**. It should be noted that there has been great instability in the post of Secretary for Economic Affairs with **Lopes Paulo** - a member of MPLA Politburo - being the fourth holder of the position since Lourenço's coming to power. This new advisor, who has a Phd in economy has been working in the central bank and ministry of finance. **Maria de Fatima Republicano de Lima Viegas**, is a lecturer at the Agostinho Neto University and has been Secretary for Social Affairs since January 2018. She was previously responsible for citizenship and civil society in the MPLA. Finally, the Secretary for the Productive Sector, **Isaac Francisco Maria dos Anjos**, is one of the cabinet heavyweights, as he is the only advisor who is also a member of the MPLA's Politburo. He has also successively held the positions of Governor of Huila (2008), Namibe (2012), and then Benguela in 2013.

Four other figures have the rank of minister of state (super minister) and are attached to the presidency because of the importance of their portfolio. This is the case of **Pedro Sebastião**, Head of Military Staff of President of the Republic (*casa militar*). He is a former governor of Zaire province, and therefore particularly useful for understanding Congolese issues, and then a MPLA member of parliament in 2012, as well as a MPLA Politburo member from this date. As for **Manuel José Nunes Junior**, he is Minister of State for Economic coordination and knows this sector well, as he was Minister of Economy in 2008. He was elected as a member of parliament in 2012, and was Chair of the Economics and Finance Committee until he rejoined the government in 2017. The former minister of communication is now minister of state for social matters, **Carolina Cerqueira**. She is member of the MPLA's Politburo.

Finally, **Frederico Manuel dos Santos e Silva Cardoso**, is the powerful Head of Presidential Staff (chief of casa civil) and has ministerial title. The latter had already held this position between 2008 and 2010. In 2004, he was appointed Vice President of the MPLA. The administrative staff around the Head of the Presidential Staff is key and provides the president with briefing papers on all non-security-related issues.

Once again, the description of the profile of the presidential officials shows how a successful mix of technocrats, who held prominent posts under the previous government, is blended with experienced politicians – including a former governor – who have also risen through the ranks due to Eduardo Dos Santos. Relatively few new people are emerging here, with perhaps the exception of the Secretary for the Judicial and Legal Affairs. All the profiles are obviously characterized by their distinct closeness to the MPLA.

Who are the members of the current government?

Apart from the four ministers of state attached to the presidency, the Minister of Defense and his Deputy who have already been mentioned, the president has made up a bloated government, comprising of 32 ministers and 50 secretaries of state. The 82 government members (a relatively large size in Angola – the last Dos Santos governments were made up of 50/60 members) aim to please all the party's clienteles and are made up of technocrats – placed in ministerial positions related to their professional expertise – and experienced politicians. Sometimes, the difference between the two categories is difficult to determine as some technocrats have also had a long political career alongside their profession.

More technocratic profiles

The Minister of Foreign Affairs since 2017, **Manuel Domingos Augusto**, has a similar specialist profile and he is supported by a Secretary of State, the ambassador **Tete Antonio** who has mainly been posted in Addis Ababa and New York. Manuel Domingos Augusto has been Secretary of State at the same ministry since 2010. A career diplomat, he was also ambassador to Ethiopia in 2005 where he was responsible for relations with the African Union. He has significant political clout as, unlike the Minister of Interior, Lourenço has admitted him to the MPLA's Politburo. As for the new Minister of Finance, **Vera Esperança dos Santos Daves de Sousa** (35 years old), appointed in October 2019, she was at the working Capital Markets Commission and was a regular guest speaker on economic matters on Angolan TV. She replaced **Augusto Archer de Sousa Mangureira** - appointed Namib governor - who has held the same position since 2016 and from 2003 to 2010 was President Dos Santos's economic advisor. He was also the Secretary of State for Trade from 2010 to 2012, as well as Chair of the powerful Capital Markets Commission (CMC – responsible for regulating the capital markets).

The Minister of Public Administration, Employment and Social Security, **Jesus Faria Maiato**, has never been a minister before, but has worked for a good part of his career in this ministry, mainly as Director of the Legal Office. Another technocrat, **António Francisco de Assis**,

spent his entire career in agriculture before being appointed Minister of Agriculture in 2019. He is supported by a Secretary of State who is also a specialist in the sector, **Carlos Alberto Jaime Pinto**. The latter headed the state-owned company Gestarra that was responsible for buying agricultural inputs to manage yields in Angola. The Minister of Mineral Resources and Oil, **Diamantino Pedro Azevedo**, has been chairman of the state-owned mining company, Ferrangol, for nearly ten years. We will return to his profile in greater detail when we discuss Sonangol and the oil industry.

The Minister of Transportation, **Ricardo Daniel Sandão Queirós Viegas D'Abreu**, who was appointed in June 2018, is a former Presidential Secretary for Economic Affairs and was also Deputy Director of Banco Nacional de Angola [National Bank of Angola]. He replaced **Augusto da Silva Tomás** who had been in this position since 2008. The new Minister of Construction and Public Works, **Manuel Tavares De Almeida**, who is originally from the Cuanza Norte province, has been a MPLA activist from the very beginning and was a member of the JMPLA in the 1970s. He has worked a lot in the private sector for construction companies such as Geotécnica-E.P. or for state bodies like Gamek, which is mainly responsible for constructing dams on the Kwanza river. He is supported by a Secretary of State, **Manuel José da Costa Molares D'Abril**, who is also originally from Cuanza Norte province and is an expert in the construction sector. From 2013, he was Director of the state institute for building standards: Laboratório de Engenharia de Angola [Angolan Engineering Laboratory] (LEA). Joao Lourenço has also chosen the vice-dean of Agostinho Neto University **Maria Antonieta Baptista** to replace in 2019 **Victoria Francisco Lopes Cristovão De Barros Neto** at the Ministry of Fisheries and Sea, a position the latter had held since 2004. The Minister of Higher Education, **Maria Do Rosario Bragança Sambo**, is a newcomer to politics, but has held this position since 2016. In 2015, she was in charge of administration at Agostinho State University for the Luanda and Bengo Neto provinces. Similarly, the Minister for Education, **Maria Candida Teixeira**, a university professor, previously worked in her ministry's field, and then was the National Coordinator for Nuclear Research before becoming Minister of Higher Education, Science Technology and Innovation in 2008 and then a member of parliament in 2012. The new Minister of Health, **Silvia Paula Valentim Lutucuta**, was a cardiologist by profession before her appointment in September 2017.

The new Minister of Social Communication, **Nuno dos Anjos Caldas Albino** is a member of parliament. He replaced in October 2019 **Anibal João Da Silva Melo**, a famous writer and journalist and was a member of parliament from 1992 to 2017. The latter belonged to the MPLA's action committee at Angola's national radio from 1975 to 1978, and then was an active member of the party in Brazil where he studied in the 1980s. His father fought the Portuguese during the War of Independence. The Minister of Trade, **Jofre Van-Dunem Junior**, is new to the Angolan political scene, as up to now he worked in the United States as a Director of Operations for an aviation association (Experimental Aircraft Association). He is assisted by his Secretary of State, **Amadeu de Jesus Alves Leitão Nunes**, a former trade advisor to the Angolan embassies in Lisbon and Rome. The young Minister of Environment (born in 1981), **Paula Francisco Coelho**, has spent her entire career in this ministry, where among other things, she has been Secretary of State for Protected Areas. As for the Secretary of State for Local Government, who has ministerial rank, **Ana Maria de Sousa e Silva**, has been Secretary of State in this position since 2010.

More political profiles

The profiles of the ministers mention below have a more political than technocratic career. As we have stated, the Minister of the very strategic Ministry of Territory and State Reform, the young **Adão Francisco Correia de Almeida** (aged 39 years) is a close associate of the vice president and joined the MPLA's Politburo in September 2018. So, he should have an upward trajectory under Lourenço's presidency. Lourenço is now calling on a young guard who can support the president in the party and which is favorable to generational change.

The new Minister of Home affairs, **Eugénio César Laborinho**, was governor of Cabinda province from 2017 to his appointment in July 2019. He was vice-minister of Home affairs in 2010 and was inducted to the MPLA's Politburo in September 2018.

The Minister of Justice and Human Rights, the law professor **Francisco Manuel Monteiro de Queiroz**, was Minister of Geology and Mines from 2012, where he specifically implemented the new mining legislation. Previously, he was an advisor to the former president, Dos Santos, on parliamentary issues and then political and constitutional issues. A member of parliament since 2012, the Minister of Industry, **Bernarda Gonçalves Martins Henriques Da Silva** has held this position since 2012.

The Minister of Energy and Water, **João Batista Borges**, was already in charge of this ministry from 2011 after having been director of the electricity company, Empresa Nacional de Electricidade (ENE). He is supported by his Secretary of State, who spent his entire career at ENE, **António Fernandes Rodrigues Belsa da Costa**. However, the novelty for João Batista Borges is that he joined the MPLA's Politburo in September 2018. **José Carvalho Da Rocha**, Minister of Telecommunications and Information Technologies since 2008, has also been a member of the Politburo since September 2018. He is supported by a Secretary of State who has been in office since 2016, **Manuel Gomes da Conceição Homem**, a former Chief Executive of Angop, the Angolan state news agency.

The Minister of Hotels and Tourism since September 2017, **Maria Angela Teixeira De Alva Sequeira Bragança**, already has a long political career behind her. A MPLA member of parliament from 1992 to 2011, she has been the Third Vice-President of the Parliamentary Group, as well as Chair of the Foreign Affairs Committee. Since October 2012, she has been Secretary of State for Cooperation and has as a colleague the current Minister of Foreign Affairs, Manuel Domingos Augusto, a heavyweight in the current government as well as a MPLA Politburo member. She is supported by the Secretary of State and former career ambassador, **José Guerreiro Alves Primo** (he was posted to Belgium, Ghana and Turkey).

The Minister of Social Affairs, Family and Promotion of Women, **Faustina Fernandes Inglês de Almeida Alves** replaced in January 2019 **Victoria Francisco Correia Conceição** who died. The latter was Secretary of State in the same ministry from 2016. She already has a long political career behind her. From 2009, she was Deputy Governor of Huila province responsible for social affairs and then technical services, and finally a member of parliament from 2012 to 2016.

Another heavyweight in the regime is the Minister of Culture until June 2019, **Carolina Cerqueira** (now in the state house as we previously wrote), who has been a MPLA Politburo member for several years and was a former Minister of Media in 2010 before she assumed the culture portfolio in 2016. She was a member of parliament and Chair of the "Human Rights" Committee and also undertook many trips abroad to represent the MPLA. She has held positions in the party for two decades, including as Secretary for Social and Legal Affairs. Cerqueira has been replaced in June 2019 by her secretary of state **Maria da Piedade de Jesus**. Another member of the MPLA Politburo – that she joined in 2018 – is the new Minister of Youth and Sports, **Ana Paula Sacramento Neto**. The latter was Deputy Minister of Family and Promotion of Women in 2007, and then Secretary

of Sport in September 2016 before becoming Minister Plenipotentiary of this ministry in September 2017.

The Minister of Former Combatants and Veterans of the Homeland, **João Ernesto Dos Santos**, is also a heavyweight, as he was already a member of the MPLA's Politburo under José Eduardo Dos Santos. A former Governor of Moxico province (from 2008 to 2017), he fought against the Portuguese, during which period he earned the nickname of "Liberdade" (Freedom). He has **Domingos André Tchikanha** (appointed in May 2019) as a Secretary of State, who has spent almost all of his career in this ministry of Defense. He was also military attaché in Addis Ababa and Harare.

The make-up of Lourenço's government has several objectives. Firstly, the promotion of a number of ministers from secretary of state to minister plenipotentiary. On the other hand, for some of them who were already ministers previously, the transition from a status of technocratic minister to a more political minister, allows them in theory to influence decisions outside their own ministry *via* the MPLA's party bodies. We also note that there is no profound change, but much more adjustments. Out of 82 ministers and secretaries of state, about 30 have never had a government post before. Although a few young politicians have entered the government, this is largely dominated by leaders who have already had a long technocratic career in the ministries or in politics within the MPLA. There is no notably significant opening up to any civil society. All ministers from the private sector have worked for companies close to the party – like for example the construction portfolio.

An MPLA Politburo and governors completely in line with the president

Although the Angolan government has to implement the reforms decided by the president, the major political guidelines remain the prerogative of the ruling party, the MPLA and particularly its highest body: the Politburo and its Secretariat, the latter often being called the Politburo, as in the Soviet Union, where a large part of the MPLA's elites were trained.⁸ Although Joao Lourenço inherited his predecessor's Politburo for a year, a profound change was made at a congress after the sidelining of José Eduardo dos Santos from the Secretariat and the Politburo on 6 September 2018. At the time, José Eduardo Dos Santos had to give up his positions in all the party's bodies to Joao Lourenço.⁹ The latter then increased the Politburo from 47 to 54 members and then to 72 in June 2019, to which can be added the 18 Secretariat members. Out of the 72 members, 49 entered the Politburo for the first time, hence changing the carefully weighed balances that served José Eduardo Dos Santos during his four decades in power. There are no rules in making up the Politburo, which is *ultimately* approved by the party's Central Committee, formed nowadays of 497 members (members of the higher or lower ranks of the MPLA hierarchy). The Central Committee has a five-year term and will be renewed in 2021, and therefore cannot be replaced by Joao Lourenço. However, in order to control it better – same reason for the Politburo enlargement –, Lourenço decided to add 134 new members at an extraordinary congress in June 2019.¹⁰ Any appointment to the Politburo must be approved by the president and is subject to relative agreement after fierce debates. The make-up of the Politburo is a careful geopolitical balancing act, each of the 18 provinces must be represented¹¹, women (OMA – Women's Leagues), as well as young people aged under 40 years (the MPLA's youth league – JMPLA) are also selected to include cadres

8. President Joao Lourenço spent no less than four days on an official visit to Russia in early April 2019.

9. Angop, "Le congrès de la MPLA se tiendra le 8 septembre", www.angop.ao.

10. "Angola: Comité Central do MPLA alargado para 497 membros", *Deutsche Welle*, 15 June 2019.

11. According to our accounts, some provinces got lot more members than others. For instance, more than 20 are coming from Luanda. This imbalance can be explained by demographics. In fact, Luanda is by far the most populated province of the country.

who have not experienced the War of Independence (the case of Yolanda Gisele R. A. Santos, Pereira Alfredo or even Maricel Marinho da Silva). The president places people he trusts in order to better control the decision-making process, but he cannot decide everything on his own. Compromises, even by the president, are necessary in the Politburo and the Secretariat.

Among those loyal to the new president in the new Politburo, we can mention the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Minister of Energy and Water, and new governors like those from Bengo, Cabinda, Cuando Cubango provinces or Huila, Lunda sul, Bié, Zaire, Cunene, Moxico, Iuge and Cabinda.¹² Similarly, the former Minister of Education, **M’Pinda Simão**, or the former Head of the Angolan Air Force and former ambassador to Zambia, **Pedro de Moraes Neto**, have both joined the MPLA’s Politburo. Joao Lourenço has also kept some leaders who have had to show sufficient loyalty or could not be replaced for geopolitical considerations or alliances.¹³

The MPLA’s Politburo’s Secretariat has 18 members and to some extent, is the Politburo’s executive body. It was also extensively reshuffled by Lourenço in September 2018 and then in June 2019. Besides Joao Lourenço, who is its President, very few of the 17 other members were already in the Politburo under José Eduardo Dos Santos.¹⁴ On the other hand, a majority of members of the Secretariat have just entered the Politburo.¹⁵ Some of them were excluded from the Politburo in 2018, but remain in the Secretariat, as is the case of **Luzia Pereira de Sousa Ingles Van Dunem** nicknamed “Inga”. Theoretically, the latter cannot be replaced until 2021 as she is the Secretary-General of the women’s wing of

12. Here are the names of the governors who joined the Political Committee: Mara R. da Silva B. Quiosa (Bengo), Eugénio César Laborinho (Cabinda), Pedro Mutinde (Cuando Cubango) or even Luís da Fonseca Nunes (Huila), Daniel Felix Neto (Lunda sul), Alfredo Pereira (Bié), Pedro Makita A. Júlia (Zaire), Adriano Tyova (Cunene), Gonçalves Muandumba (Moxico), Pinda Simão (Iuge) and Eugénio César Laborinho (Cabinda).

13. This is the case, for example, of the new MPLA Vice President, Luisa P. Francisco Damião, who was already in the Politburo under Dos Santos; of the former Minister of Education, Ana Paula Inês Ndala; of the general and businessman António D. Pitra C. Neto; of the powerful Vice President and former Minister of Territory, Bornito de Sousa Balthazar Diogo; of the Minister of state in charge of social matters Carolina Cerqueira; or even the influential Head of the President’s Military Staff, Pedro Sebastião.

14. This is the case of Álvaro Manuel de Boavida Neto or even Sérgio Luther Rescova, the leader of the JMPLA. This is also the case of Ana Paula Inês Ndala, the Coordinator of the Politburo’s Disciplinary Committee; the MPLA’s Vice President, Luisa P. Francisco Damião; the former governor of Uige, Paulo Pombolo, Secretary for Information; or even the Secretary for Mobilization, Jorge Inocêncio Dombolo. Joao de Almeida Martins, nicknamed “JU”, is also already an experienced member of the Politburo as well as the Secretariat.

15. This is the case of Mário Pinto de Andrade, Secretary for Political and Electoral Affairs; leader of the MPLA’s parliamentary group, the anthropologist, Americo Antonio Cuononoca, who returned to the Politburo, as well as the Secretariat in September 2018; and of Pedro de Moraes Neto on the same date.

the MPLA, the OMA. Finally, the last category, which has four people in it, is that of members of the Secretariat who are not or have never been members of the Politburo.¹⁶ Some prominent members of the Secretariat, like the former MPLA Secretary-General, **Paulo Kassoma**, have been excluded from the Politburo, as well as the Secretariat in September 2018, being considered too close to the previous government. This role of Secretary-General occupied since June 2019 by **Paulo Pombolo** is so key in the MPLA's institutional system that Lourenço did not for a second consider keeping the last holder of the post under Dos Santos.

With the aim of establishing his authority over the entire Angolan territory, the new president has also replaced 15 of the 18 governors since September 2017. Only three of them were appointed before Joao Lourenço came to power and had to sufficiently prove their loyalty to the president or/and to his vice president in order to remain in office.¹⁷ The replaced governors were not necessarily excluded from the state apparatus, which goes to show Lourenço also has to deal with these cadres who are not from his close circle.¹⁸

Once again, in some party bodies that are the real decision-making centers in Angola – much more sometimes than the government – Lourenço has put together a clever mix of people from all the provinces and with local and national experience without however having held too important positions in the past – an example is the former MPLA's Secretary-General Paulo Kassoma. Many members of the Politburo wear several hats as ministers or provincial governors. These represent the real mainstay of Lourenço's power.

16. This affects the Secretary for Economic Policy, Salomao Luheto Xirimimbimbi; Diogenes de Oliveira, Secretary for Administration and Finance; Yolanda Gisela Ribeiro Antonio Dos Santos, responsible for social policy; or even Manuel Pedro Chaves, responsible for international relations.

17. This is the case of Norberto Fernandes Dos Santos (Malanje) since 2012; Rui Falcão (Benguela) since 2013; Ernesto Muangala (Lunda norte) since 2008; José Maria Ferraz dos Santos (Cuanza norte) since 2016.

18. An example is João Bernardo de Miranda, who ruled Bengo from 2009 to 2018, and who has been Ambassador to France since September 2018. Likewise, the Angolan Ambassador to Portugal since May 2018 is none other than José Eduardo Dos Santos' former diplomatic advisor, Carlos Alberto Saraiva de Carvalho Fonseca.

Trusted men leading the economy

Angola is a dirigiste economy, where the monetary policy of investments, or even preparing the budget do not necessarily follow a market logic, but could be influenced by local political factors. Since independence, the MPLA has been obsessed with control and does not want its economic policies dictated by outside parties, particularly not the IMF or the World Bank. Hence, the extreme closeness of the Angolan regime to China, whose economic model inspires many MPLA leaders¹⁹. Although the Ministry of Planning disappeared when Lourenço came to power, the Ministry of Economy has also become that of Planning. The difference between the previous and the current situation is therefore more symbolic than concrete. So, the state keeps its leading role in driving major projects and dictating the rules of the game for the national economy. The Central Bank is obviously not independent of the political power.

The Central Bank

A few weeks after he came to power, Joao Lourenço also appointed a new governor of the Banco Nacional de Angola: **José de Lima Massano**. The latter has the distinction of having already been head of this institution from 2010 to 2015. At the time, he officially resigned because of the sharp devaluation of the national currency, the kwanza, as a result of the fall in crude oil price since mid-2014. José de Lima Massano was sacrificed at the time. Joao Lourenço decided to reappoint him, knowing that his skills were never questioned. Additionally, José Eduardo Dos Santos did not fully dismiss him, as he had been encouraged to become Director of the Executive Committee of the private Banco Angolano de Investimentos [Angolan Investment Bank] (BAI).²⁰

Sonangol and the oil industry

The reshuffles within the state-owned oil company, Sonangol, has been one of the indicators of Joao Lourenço's effective takeover of the country.

19. It will be recollected here how the difficult negotiations with Western donors in the aftermath of the Civil War in 2002 pushed Angola closer to China.

20. Although this bank is private, its main shareholder is the state-owned oil company, Sonangol.

In November 2017, a few weeks after his election, the president indeed dismissed his predecessor's daughter, Isabel Dos Santos. The latter was appointed in 2016 to reform Sonangol. Besides the symbolic dismissal of his predecessor's daughter, Joao Lourenço decided to replace her on 15 November 2017 with **Carlos Saturnino**, who himself had been dismissed from his position as Director of Sonangol's powerful "exploration-production" subsidiary, Sonangol P&P, by Isabel Dos Santos in January 2017. The real driver of change is the sidelining of all the Dos Santos family members in key positions, but Carlos Saturnino was involved in all the previous government's major decisions on oil matters and he struggled in driving a totally new strategy. Carlos Saturnino was first appointed on 12 October 2017 as Secretary of State for Oil, suggesting that he would be a counterweight to Isabel Dos Santos. However, a month later, Joao Lourenço secured his control over the institutions and decided to directly oppose his predecessor and to dismiss Isabel Dos Santos. Carlos Saturnino is a *protégé* of the former Angolan Vice President, **Manuel Vicente**, who was chairman and CEO of Sonangol from 1999 to 2012. Under Manuel Vicente's leadership at Sonangol, he allowed Saturnino to quickly climb the ranks of the state-owned company. However, Carlos Saturnino was himself replaced in May 2019 by another of Manuel Vicente's close associates, **Sebastião Pai Querido Gaspar Martins**. Since Lourenço's coming to power, the latter was on Sonangol's Executive Board. Previously, he was Director of the oil *junior*, Somoil, one of the companies owned in the background by Manuel Vicente.

Manuel Vicente seems to be the new president's strong man for oil. Manuel Vicente was accused of bribing a magistrate in Portugal in 2017 and Joao Lourenço created a diplomatic mini-crisis in January 2018 by defending him and refusing to allow the former vice president to be put on trial in Lisbon.²¹ In May 2018, Portugal finally conceded to its former colony that Manuel Vicente be tried in Angola where the former vice president has immunity.²² In addition to having pleaded Carlos Saturnino's cause, so that he came back to Sonangol in the highest position, Manuel Vicente is, because of his extensive knowledge of the oil sector, one of the current president's unofficial advisors. So, his absence from the MPLA's Politburo since September 2018 must not be overinterpreted.

In order to replace Carlos Saturnino in the position of Secretary of State for Oil, President Lourenço firstly chose **Paulino Fernando de Carvalho Jeronimó**, who was dismissed from Sonangol's Executive

21. "Former Vice-President on Trial: A Watershed Moment for Portugal and Angola", *Transparency International*, 23 January 2018.

22. "Portugal Lets Angola Try ex-VP in Graft Case, Hopes to Improve Ties", *Reuters*, 10 May 2018.

Board in June 2016 by Isabel Dos Santos.²³ Paulino Fernando de Carvalho Jeronimó changed role in February 2019 and is now Chair of the new oil regulation authority: Agência Nacional de Petróleo e Gás [National Agency for Oil and Gas]. As for the Minister of Mineral Resources and Oil, **Azevedo Diamantino**, formerly CEO of the state-owned mining company Ferrangol for a decade, he is also very close to the presidential couple²⁴ and has been carrying out extensive reform of the oil and mineral resources sectors for two years. Azevedo Diamantino is in charge of these two key sectors, whereas before his appointment, two separate ministers managed oil and mining. His goal, as for Carlos Saturnino, since 2017 has been to encourage the oil majors to invest more than before to avoid a massive decline in production when several blocks (particularly 14 and 15) are seeing their production collapse. During Joao Lourenço's visit to Paris in May 2018, Total – the country's largest producer with 229,000 barrels per day – for example obtained a new permit (48) and created a *joint venture* with Sonangol to establish a network of gas stations in Angola.²⁵ Similarly, after a visit by BP's CEO to Luanda²⁶ on 10 December 2018, the British company made a final investment decision on the Platina project (block 18) and extended the production period for the Greater Plutonio field until 2032. Chevron, one of the oldest operators in the country, is also exploring the option of taking out new licenses.²⁷ As for ExxonMobil, it committed to three new exploration licenses south of the Angolan *offshore*, in the Namibian Basin in December 2018.

To assert his power, Joao Lourenço also appointed Directors of Sonangol who were deposed under the Dos Santos administration. This is the case of two former Prime Ministers who fell from grace: **Fortunato Ferreira do Nascimento** (1975-1978) and **Marcolino José Carlos Moco** (1992-1996). Marcolino Moco openly criticized corruption under Eduardo dos Santos in the *New York Times*²⁸ newspaper in June 2017.

In this key sector of the Angolan economy, although policy efforts have been made to attract more investment, the people in charge were already in very high positions under Dos Santos. There is no generational change yet or strategic planning. However, the serious crisis in the oil industry, which

23. "Isabel dos Santos Installs her Team at Sonangol", *Africa Energy Intelligence*, No. 772, 21 June 2016.

24. "ANGOLA: Comment Diamantino Azevedo est devenu le vrai boss du pétrole?", *Africa Energy Intelligence*, No. 830, 11 December 2016.

25. Total's website, www.total.com.

26. World Oil, "Sonangol and BP Agree to Advance BP's Activities in Angola", 11 December 2018.

27. "ANGOLA : Après Exxon et Total, Chevron veut ressortir le carnet de chèques", *Africa Energy Intelligence*, No. 829, 27 November 2018.

28. "ANGOLA: Marcolino Moco à la Sonangol, ultime attaque de Lourenço contre le clan Dos Santos", *Africa Energy intelligence*, No. 809, 23 January 2018.

started in 2014, forced Angolan officials to propose measures enabling the *majors* to become more financially involved in the country. Furthermore, Sonangol is in such financial difficulty that since 2018 it has been considering selling some of its non-core subsidiaries – aviation, telecoms, etc. – but also part of its exploration/production subsidiary, Sonangol P&P, the driver of the state-owned company. The sidelining of Carlos Saturnino is similarly a sign of the end of Sonangol’s dominance over the oil industry. Saturnino was opposed to the creation of a regulatory authority which controlled the sector as this is what Sonangol does. So, he lost his bet and was replaced by Gaspar Martins, a former Sonangol executive, who is more favorable to compromise.

The mining companies: Endiama and Ferrangol

Although oil and gas are by far the leading sectors in the Angolan economy (50% of GNP, 70% of revenue and 90% of exports),²⁹ the mining sector is also significant. Angola has two major state-owned companies: Endiama which handles diamond production (including its subsidiary Sodiam which markets them) and Ferrangol which manages all other minerals. As for Sonangol, the organization of the companies Endiama, Sodiam and Ferrangol was modified in November 2017, a few weeks after Joao Lourenço came to power. There are relatively few major changes among the leaders in this sector, but we should however point out the start of significant liberalization, particularly in the diamond sector. The government will no longer have the monopoly of selling diamonds *via* Sodiam. The decree implementing this decision was signed on 31 January 2019.

Endiama is now led by **José Manuel Augusto Ganga Junior**, a former Director of Sociedade Mineira de Catoca (a large private diamond producer in the country). The other members of the Board of Directors are **Lauriano Receado Paulo** (advisor to Sodiam’s Board of Directors from 2008 to 2017 who has a PhD in Mining Engineering from Berlin), **Ana Maria Feijó Bartolomeu** (entire career at Endiama), **Osvaldo Jorge Campos Van-Dúnem** (formerly at Endiama), **Joaquim Filipe Luís** (formerly at Endiama). Finally, **Santana André Pitra**, a retired general and fighter against the Portuguese colonial regime, and a member of the MPLA’s Politburo in the 90’, was appointed Director of Endiama in 2017. He joined the MPLA when he was 16 years old, and then was one of the architects of the Bicesse Accords, enabling the ceasefire with UNITA in

29. Cia Factbook, www.cia.gov.

1992. Santana André Pitra who was governor of Huambo province will clearly be the president's eyes and ears within Endiama.

In Ferrangol, the Director for more than ten years was the new Minister of Mineral Resources and Oil, Diamantino Azevedo. **João Diniz dos Santos**, who was already a company director, replaces him. He will be surrounded by directors **Romeu Artur Ribeiro** (already in this position), **Djanira Alexandra Monteiro dos Santos**, **Kayaya Kahala** (a director for more than ten years) and **Henriques Kiaku Simão** (former deputy CEO of the mining company Angolana de Exploração de Recursos Minerais – AEMR).

The mix of politicians and technocrats in state-owned mining companies does not mark a break with the preceding Dos Santos administration. However, the opening up of some key markets, like diamond sales to other companies than just state-owned ones, is a real revolution. The aim here is to facilitate the development of a more open and possibly more profitable market for state coffers.

The country's sovereign wealth fund

Carlos Alberto Lopes (the former Deputy Minister of Planning in 2003 and then Minister of Finance in 2010), briefly Presidential Secretary for Social Affairs, has been running the sovereign wealth fund **Fundo Soberano de Angola** (FSDEA) since January 2018. He replaces the son of the former President José Eduardo Dos Santos, Jose Filomeno Dos Santos, who was accused of corruption and held in pre-trial detention in September 2018.³⁰ Carlos Alberto Lopes, a close associate of Ana Dias Lourenço, had been dismissed by Dos Santos. He can rely on his new directors: **Laura Alcântara Monteiro** (Deputy Governor of the Banco Nacional de Angola from 2009 to 2010 and then Secretary of State for Economy in 2012), **Pedro Sebastião Teta** (former Deputy Minister of Science), and **Valentina de Sousa Matias Filip** (former executive of the Banco de Desenvolvimento de Angola). Lourenço can fully depend on Pedro Sebastião Teta who he appointed to the MPLA's Politburo in September 2018.

Joao Lourenço has also decided to replace most of the leaders of other state-owned companies like that of the national aviation company, TAAG. **José João Kuvíngua**, former Secretary of State for Transportation, was appointed president of TAAG instead of **Joaquim Teixeira da Cunha**. The latter has been on TAAG's Board of Directors since 2008 and led the company since 2013.

30. "Angola: Jose Filomeno dos Santos, fils de l'ex-président, arrêté", *RFI*, 24 September 2019.

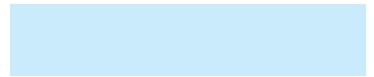
Conclusion

On reviewing these multiple appointments, we find that Lourenço has replaced a large part of the government, state-owned companies and MPLA officials. However, he has also had to retain many of the former regime's cadres who he worked with when he was at the Ministry of Defense or in Parliament. The president is replacing them but takes his time to do so. The Angolan president also chose to rehabilitate people dismissed in the Dos Santos era. He has also had to make compromises and keep people inside the state machinery who are not necessarily loyal, but with whom he will have to work to avoid making enemies of them.

It seems clear that the course and profile of the country's leaders have hardly changed with Lourenço coming to power. The MPLA remains an all-powerful party-state obsessed with control. The people now in power come from the same ideological mold as that of the Dos Santos period – with no or very little openness to civil society. Of course, we can always argue there are exceptions such as the new finance minister, the 35 years old Vera Daves de Sousa. After having replaced a large part of the MPLA's Politburo and Secretariat members, there is now the last bastion that still eludes Lourenço that he will have to attack: the Central Committee (even though he already appointed many new members to dilute the power of the remaining members). Elections to renew this body are scheduled in 2021. If Joao Lourenço once again manages to place his trusted men, no more state or party body will be able to challenge the president's power.

Economically, President Lourenço has been trying over the last two years to send out signals of openness in order to attract investors and boost the country's economy which is in a very low-growth situation and vulnerable to fluctuating oil, gas and diamond prices. Furthermore, the Angolan state's very high debt makes the room for maneuver extremely limited in terms of economic recovery. Although significant efforts have been made in the oil sector with the relaxing of *local content* rules, visa facilitation, the end of Sonangol's dominance, or the allocation of new blocks to the majors, the country clearly still has not started to diversify its economy. Agriculture is the responsibility of a Minister, who is an expert in the field with some political clout, but the increasing agricultural partnerships (Israel, Morocco with the OCP, etc.) will not

have any tangible impact on the ground in the short term, as long as the oil continues to flow and even more so, while new oil discoveries are increasing. The Italian company, ENI, for example has recently announced multiple oil successes in its block 15/06.



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