



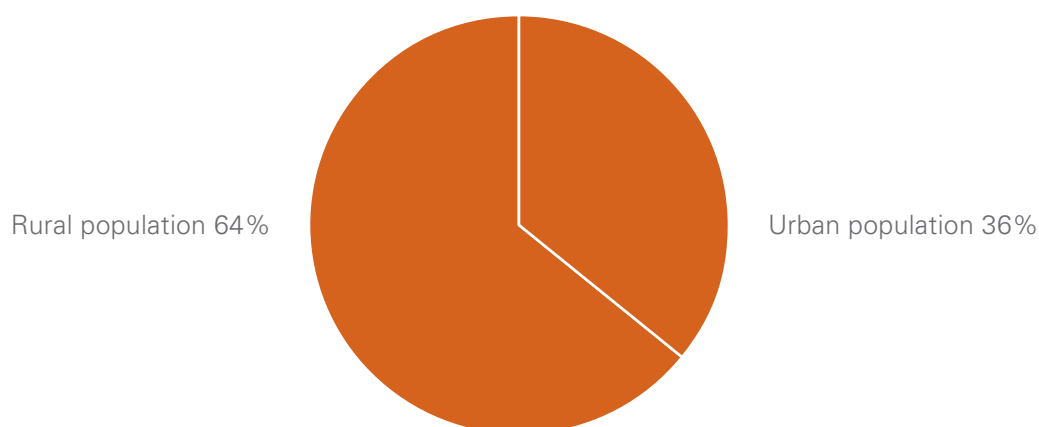
2. Country Overview

The southern African nation of Angola has a population estimated in 2004 at 15.5 million people, a 12% increase in population from the figure given in 2000 (World Bank, 2006a).

Angola has a relatively young population. In 2005, an estimated 46% of the population was under 15, according to the United Nations (UNSTATS, 2005).

In 2003, an estimated 36% of the Angolan population lived in urban areas (see Figure 1 below), while 64% lived in rural areas (UNDP, 2006). The urban population has been found to be growing at a faster rate than the rural population (Earth Trends, 2006).

Figure 1: Urban vs Rural Population



Source: 2003 data from UNDP, 2006

Angola has 18 provinces and its capital city is Luanda. After many years of civil war, the country has been (officially) operating under a multi-party democracy in recent years, with a presidential system. But a general election for national government has not been held since 1992.

The largest province is Huambo, with a population of just over 1.4 million people. The provincial population breakdown can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Population by Region

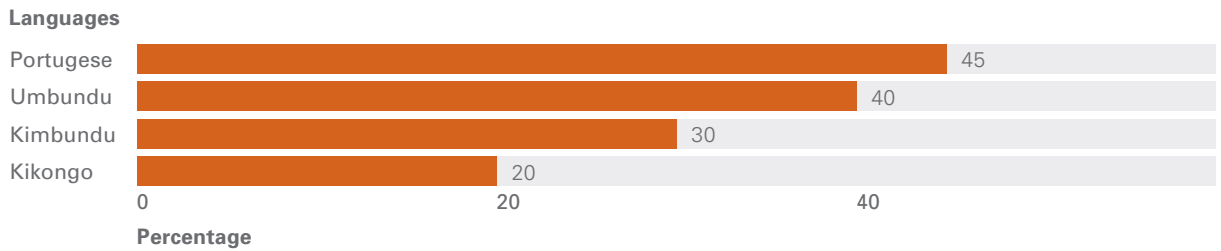
Provinces	Total Population
1 Bengo	156,100
2 Benguela	606,500
3 Bie	1,044,000
4 Cabinda	147,200
5 Cuando Cubango	125,600
6 Cuanza Norte	365,100
7 Cuanza Sul	629,300
8 Cunene	219,800
9 Huambo	1,416,300
10 Huila	829,000
11 Luanda	1,379,800
12 Lunda Norte	279,300
13 Lunda Sul	151,400
14 Malange	818,300
15 Moxico	295,300
16 Namibe	102,700
17 Uige	761,100
18 Zaire	156,500

Source: 1988 data from Library of Congress, 2006

The most widely-spoken language across all ethnic groups is Portuguese, spoken by around 45% of the population, followed by Umbundu at 40%, Kimbundu at 30% and Kikongo spoken by 20%¹. Portuguese is the official language. The GDP per capita in 2005 was estimated at US\$3,200, and the average life expectancy for 2006 was estimated at 38.62 years (CIA, 2006).

¹ Rene Roemersma, personal communication, July 2006. This figure is a personal estimate. Languages widely spoken add up to more than 100% as some people within the country are bi- or tri-lingual.

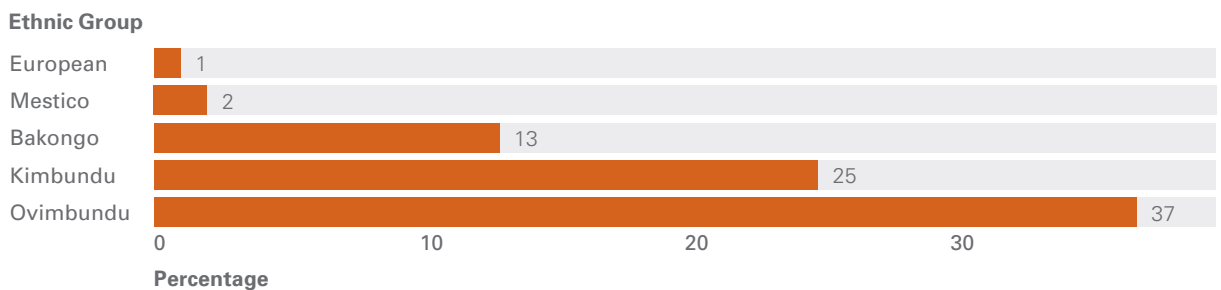
Figure 2: Widely Spoken Languages



Source: Rene Roemersma, personal communication, July 2006

In terms of ethnicity, the country can be divided into five main groupings, the largest being the Ovimbundu, followed by the Kimbundu (see Figure 3 below).

Figure 3: Percentage of Population Belonging to Main Ethnic Groups

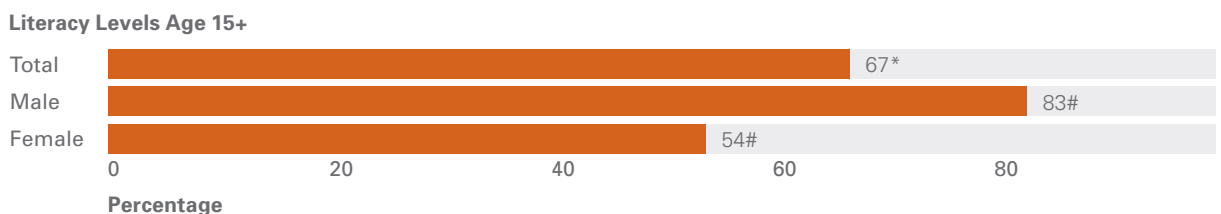


Source: CIA, 2006

The Angolan population is split religiously between Christian (Catholic 38%, Protestant 15%) and traditional African religions (47%) (CIA, 2006).

It is estimated that, in 2004, 83% of Angolan males were literate, compared to 54% for females (World Bank, 2006b). The literacy rate for the adult population aged 15 and above was estimated at 67% in 2004 (World Bank, 2006a).

Figure 4: Literacy Levels



Source: * 2004 data from World Bank, 2006a; #2004 data from World Bank, 2006b

The country continues to recover from a 27-year-long bloody civil war that only ended formally in 2002, and which claimed an estimated 500,000 lives.

Angola is one of the richest countries in Africa in terms of its mineral reserves. It is currently the fourth largest petroleum producer on the continent. The mineral wealth sits in devastating contrast to the extreme poverty experienced by many. As of 2003, an estimated 70% of the population lived below the absolute poverty line (CIA, 2006).

China is now one of Angola's biggest financial supporters. The two countries signed an agreement in 2004 through which China loaned US\$2 billion via Eximbank, the Chinese export bank, repayable over 17 years at an interest rate of just 1.5%, far lower than most other loans to the developing world, and with "no humiliating conditions imposed" (Angolan Embassy UK, 2004)².

Key findings

- Angola is currently in a transitional stage, with the long civil war only having officially ended in 2002.
- Portuguese is the most commonly spoken language of the Angolan population (45%), but other vernacular languages are also widely spoken.
- China is one of the biggest sources of aid to Angola, providing loans at favourable interest rates.
- Literacy levels are low and absolute poverty levels are high, in spite of the country's great mineral wealth.

² It should be noted that these figures are taken from the Angolan Embassy in the UK's own press release, and the report should thus be treated with caution.