

Angola Signs Accord to Assist Disabled Ex-Combatants

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Right to left: PNRPPD Director Dr. Emanuel Diavita and IRSEM Director General Andrade

On March 9, 2006, the Institute of Socio-Professional Reintegration of Ex-Combatants (IRSEM, from the Portuguese) – the implementation body for the Angola Demobilization and Reintegration Program (ADRP) – and the National Program on Rehabilitation of Physically Disabled People (PNRPPD) signed a cooperation framework agreement that will facilitate rehabilitation of disabled ex-combatants. It was signed by IRSEM director general, General Antonio Andrade, and by PNRPPD director, Dr. Emanuel Diavita.

This agreement marks a shift in focus for the Angolan government's demobilization and reintegration efforts.

Almost 100,000 FMU members have already been disarmed and demobilized since hostilities in Angola ended in April 2002. Now, 20,000 personnel are about to be discharged from the Angolan Armed Forces, many of them disabled and/or chronically ill.

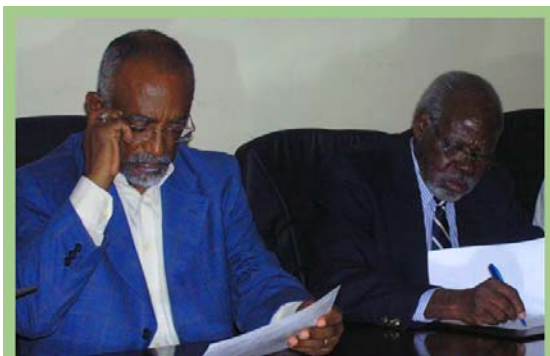
As a consequence, the government is turning its attention to providing specialized rehabilitation and socioeconomic reintegration for disabled individuals. Gen. Andrade called the March 9 agreement a means to combine efforts towards that end.



Right to left: IRSEM Director General Andrade and Acting World Bank Country Manager Olivier Lambert

IRSEM and the PNRPPD pledged to ensure provision of rehabilitation activities that support the socio-economic reintegration of disabled ARDP beneficiaries. IRSEM, in

News & Noteworthy



Right to left: IRSEM Deputy Director Jose Domingos da Costa, and PNRPPD Director Dr. Emanuel Diavita

collaboration with PNRPPD staff, will henceforth have enhanced mechanisms through which to improve the infrastructure, technical and material resources of up to 11 rehabilitation centers throughout the country.

These improvements will enable ex-combatants and other community members to more easily access badly-needed prosthetic, orthotic and rehabilitation services.

Marcelo Jorge Fabre, focal point for disability issues at MDRP, added that the agreement will also have important long term significance on a more macro, program level. "The framework agreement provides the initial building blocks for enhancing national capacity in the rehabilitation sector. That way, the needs of those most affected by the armed conflict in Angola can be met even once the demobilization program itself comes to a close," he said.

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For more information on MDRP, please visit www.mdrp.org or contact Bruno Donat, Communications Officer, MDRP Secretariat, World Bank at info@mdrp.org.