



Potential Impact of the Lobito Corridor and Support to the Regional Transformation Agenda

POLICY BRIEF

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The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945. Currently made up of 193 Member States, the UN and its work are guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter. The UN has evolved over the years to keep pace with a rapidly changing world. But one thing has stayed the same: it remains the one place on Earth where all the world's nations can gather together, discuss common problems, and find shared solutions that benefit all of humanity.

The policy brief was been prepared by the following agencies: United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office RCO played a key role of coordination and harmonization of the inputs.

Section I: Background

The Lobito corridor consists of 1,300 km railway line from the port of Lobito to Luau on Angola's northeastern border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the North-Western Province of Zambia. The Benguela Railway is the underlying rail infrastructure throughout most of the Lobito Corridor. Construction of the railway began in November 1902 and concluded in 1931, longer than expected due to the geographical terrain and distractions of the First World War. The railway connects extensive mining and property interests in the DRC and Zambia to the Atlantic Ocean for export to Europe and the America. Furthermore, it serves as a crucial means of transit for the agriculturally productive areas of Angola's Lobito Corridor, which include the provinces of Benguela, Huambo, Bie', and Moxico.

Despite these obstacles and delays, upon its completion in 1931, the Benguela Railway immediately asserted itself as the most efficient way to export goods and minerals from the DRC and Zambia to Europe and the Americas and reached peak operational efficiency in 1937 when it transported 3.3 million tons of cargo and generated US\$30 million in freight revenues. Before the civil war in Angola, the Railway was undergoing modernization and handled 60 percent of DRC diesel exports and 45 percent of Zambia copper exports. However, Angola's 27-year civil war which began in November 1975 disrupted the rail and slowed down progress on the development of the corridor. As a result, Zambian copper exports were initially diverted across the Victoria Falls Bridge to Beira, Mozambique, to be shipped to South Africa for processing and to be sold abroad. Later, Zambia benefited from the development of the Tanzania - Zambia Railway (TAZARA), which opened in 1976 and provided another export corridor to the port of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania.

By the time the Civil war ended in 2002, only 34 kilometers, less than 3 percent of rail along Angola's coast remained functional. The railway line was renovated by the Chinese through a US\$2 billion rail-for-oil program¹ between 2004 and 2014. The renovation included upgrading and redesigning of the railway to accommodate 67 stations and trains traveling up to 90 km/hour. The stated goal was for the rail to be able to carry 20 million tons of cargo and four million passengers per year. However, this goal is yet to be achieved and in 2011 the railway only carried 5,640 tons of goods and 129,430 passengers.

The Lobito Corridor is one of the key trade routes in Southern Africa. The others are Beira (Mozambique and Zimbabwe); Nacala (Malawi and Mozambique); Maputo (Mozambique and South Africa); Mtwara (Malawi, Tanzania and Zambia); the Trans Caprivi (Namibia and Zambia); Tazara (Tanzania and Zambia); Malange (Angola and DRC); and the Namibia (Angola, Namibia and Zambia); and Walvis Bay (Botswana and Namibia).

This policy paper reviews the anticipated modernisation of the Lobito Corridor and its impacts on socio-economic dynamics and developments in the three countries, Angola, DRC and Zambia. It further explores how the corridor can anchor exports, value addition and value chains development. It also examines how the development of the corridor can spur other economic opportunities including in the exploitation of both the mineral and agricultural resources. To ensure alignment with business and human rights standards in the Lobito Corridor project and activities, the paper briefly examines some potential adverse human rights impacts and proposes necessary actions by relevant stakeholders to prevent, address and ensure access to effective remedy for adverse human rights impacts and abuses. Lastly, the paper provides recommendations on how to optimize the benefits of the development of the corridor and the opportunities it will provide to local stakeholders while ensuring that socio-economic, environmental and labour issues are competently addressed.

Section II: Some Recent Developments

The development and use of the Lobito Corridor as a major trade and development route has gained prominence in recent years, with the DRC and Zambia governments, and various stakeholders² signing of the seven-side Memorandum of Understanding for infrastructure investment in 2023 and Agreements to resuscitate the corridor's development. With support and coordination of the Secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the three countries signed the Lobito Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency Agreement in Angola in January 2023. The Agreement aims to provide an effective and efficient route that facilitates the transportation of goods through the three Corridor Member States, supported by the harmonisation of policies, laws and regulations; coordinated joint corridor infrastructure development strategies and activities; dissemination of traffic data and business information; and implementation of trade facilitation instruments.

¹ An infrastructure for resources programme

² The stakeholders involved include: THE African Development Bank (AfDB) and Africa Finance Corporation (AFC) have joined the United States, the European Union (EU), Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Zambia.

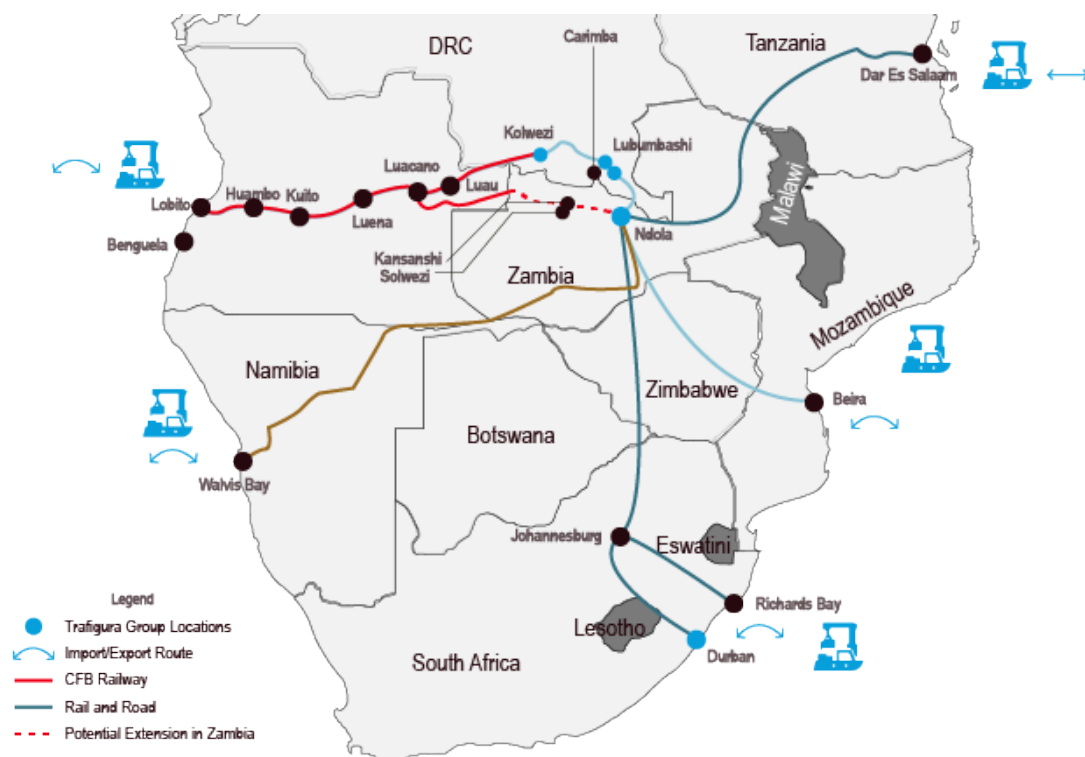
Interest in the development of the Lobito Corridor has gained momentum in recent years as more countries, including the United States, have expressed intentions to invest in the corridor. Through the African Finance Corporation (AFC), the United States Government allocated US\$1 billion to build or improve the rail line of the Lobito Corridor up to Zambia. Furthermore, the United States, the European Union (EU), the African Development Bank, and the African Financing Company signed the Lobito Corridor Extension memorandum of understanding to cooperate under the shared vision on the corridor, signaling the intensification of efforts to revive the Corridor as a key economic artery. The AfDB estimates a total requirement of about \$1.6 billion for the extension work and announced preparedness to contribute US\$500,000 to the process and also to lead efforts to raise the rest of the required resources.

The Lobito Atlantic Railway Company, a joint venture involving Trafigura, Moto-Engil, and Vecturis South Africa, secured a 30-year concession in July, 2023, to provide railway services on the condition that it would invest US\$455 million in Angola and US\$100 million in the DRC. It obtained a concession extendable to an additional 20 to 50 years on condition that the consortium builds a branch line connecting Luacano and Jimbe with a total length of 259 kilometers, which would cost an estimated US\$1 billion.

AFC, lead developer of the Zambia-Lobito rail project, announced the completion of the key feasibility study, and signed a concession agreement with the governments of Zambia and Angola to develop and operate the rail. Additionally, the U.S. Trade and Development Agency announced a US\$2 million grant for an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment for the rail project, which will ensure it is delivered according to the highest international standards.

Among others, some of the key recent agreements include, (i) the EU-Zambia Strategic Minerals and Value Chain Development MoU on transport infrastructure investments and trade, economic development, and transit facilitation (European Commission, 2023); and (ii) the DRC and Zambia Cooperation Agreement to manufacture electric vehicle batteries, which is poised to boost economic growth and re-orient the Corridor's position as an anchor of economic development within the region. The EU Agreements were signed as part of the Global Gateway strategy with the aim of mobilizing as much as EUR 300 billion in public and private investments between 2021 and 2027.

However, while the growing interest in the corridor's development is a welcome development, the significance and ramifications of the Corridor's development to the Southern African economic fabric should not be lost. Everything possible should be done to ensure that the corridor's growth and maturity as a credible transport and development route which contributes to regional development is maintained and expanded.



Source: Lobito Corridor Investment Promotion

Section III: Strategic Importance of the Corridor

The Lobito Corridor provides a crucial link between landlocked countries to international markets via the port of Lobito. This enhanced connectivity facilitates the export of minerals, agricultural products, and other goods, which may potentially increase trade volumes. Similarly, by providing a shorter and more efficient route to the Atlantic Ocean, the Lobito Corridor reduces transportation costs and transit times for imports and exports. With the corridor's improved connectivity, the three countries have attracted private sector investors, and multinational corporations. Due to its complexity, the Corridor will require significant financial resources and skilled labour – a demand that the region might not be able to meet in the short run.

Enhancing the region's competitiveness: The multiplier effects of the Lobito Corridor are yet to be maximised. This is largely because of poor public and private-sector investments in key sectors along the corridor including agriculture and infrastructure. The modernisation of Lobito Corridor will enhance regional connectivity which will bring trade and export opportunities to manufacturers in the three countries. The corridor will provide stakeholders with direct access to international markets via the Atlantic port of Lobito. The enhanced railway infrastructure will lower the cost of raw materials and finished goods. This reduction in logistics costs can improve profit margins for manufacturers and make Zambian products more price-competitive in regional and international markets.

As observed in the Bloomberg Study of 2021, the DRC is a competitive location for the production of battery precursor materials as building a battery precursor plant of the same capacity would cost three times less in the DRC than in the US or China. The DRC's cost competitiveness in this perspective derives from its relatively cheap land and construction costs. Producing the precursor materials in the DRC would also lower supply-chain emissions and add value to the country's cobalt. Moving battery precursor production from China to the DRC would cut the transport-related emissions associated with battery production by 30 percent.

Leveraging minerals and agriculture value chains development: The development of the Lobito corridor will facilitate growth of value chains anchored on the mineral, agriculture, energy resources and other sectors in Angola, DRC, and Zambia and other countries in Southern Africa through three natural routes.

First, the Corridor will provide impetus for value addition and exports in minerals including the critical energy transition minerals. A fully functional Lobito will provide an avenue for the enhancement of mineral value chains through further processing and refining not only in Angola, DRC and Zambia but across Southern Africa through linking up with Zimbabwe, which holds Africa's largest lithium reserves and is the fifth largest producer globally. The link with Zimbabwe could re-orient the country's role in the transboundary special economic zone through the Beira-Lobito transcontinental road network. The Corridor would thus expand the Angola, DRC and Zambia economic alliance to include lithium mining and refining operations in Zimbabwe and thus integrate these countries into a larger regional battery electric vehicle value chain. Furthermore, the development of the Beira-Lobito transcontinental road network spanning 3,523 km, crossing Angola, the most southerly part of the DRC, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and central Mozambique would further enhance the capacity of the Lobito Corridor in supporting the battery and other mineral value chains. This route links mining areas of the DRC, Zambia and Zimbabwe and agricultural production areas of Angola, Zambia and Zimbabwe to the Atlantic port of Lobito and Indian Ocean port of Beira. Thus, the Lobito Corridor will provide an opportunity for the development of an integrated value chain system with four major nodes namely; the rare earth mineral refinery in Angola (Longonjo rare earths project, the cobalt refinery in the DRC, the copper refinery in Zambia and the lithium refinery in Zimbabwe which together would thus provide the foundation for an integrated battery electric vehicles value chain in Southern Africa.

Second, by linking Angola, DRC and Zambia, the Corridor would also provide the basis for the development of a diversified energy value chain in Southern Africa which can help address the current high energy deficit in the region. The current energy supply situation in Southern Africa makes the development of an integrated regional energy value chain particularly important and strategic. The energy mix of three countries³ is tilted more towards hydro and the diversified energy mix away from hydro will support a predictable energy supply regime anchored on critical energy transition minerals.

³Angola (61.8 % hydropower, 37.6 % other fossil fuels and 0.6 % hybrid), DRC (96 % hydropower and 4 % from oil, natural gas, uranium, biomass, solar, and geothermal power) and Zambia (83 % is from hydro, 9 % from coal, 5 % from heavy fuel oil, and 3 % from solar)

Third, through agro-processing activities along the Corridor, regional agricultural value chains will flourish. Agro-processing and agricultural value chains are earmarked as potential anchors of growth and industrialization in Southern Africa and beyond. Through enhancing Southern Africa's agricultural value chains, by providing a reliable transport route, especially for perishable agricultural products, the Corridor presents an opportunity for the enhancement of regional quality standards in agricultural value chains, both animal and crop. By linking Zambia and DRC to Angola's more advanced smart agricultural regions, for example, the Corridor will be crucial in providing technology transfer and enhanced agricultural value chains.

The evolution of the value chains will support stronger domestic and cross border linkages, generate jobs, raise incomes and help address poverty and inequality. Importantly, opportunities for micro, small and medium women and youth-owned enterprises will be created along the value chains and thus facilitating industrialization and transformation.

Facilitation of Trade, Investment and Integration through Leveraging regional and global markets: Developing Africa's infrastructure, will facilitate trade and investment in the region. Investments are targeting related sectors such as agriculture, energy, and logistics. The Lobito Corridor initiative has potential to foster regional integration and cooperation by enhancing dialogue, information sharing, and joint planning among countries and regions involved. The establishment of a cross-border coordination forum remains cardinal to facilitate regional and continental participation, and advocacy for simplified trade and visa regulations to promote regional integration and cooperation.

The Corridor can leverage existing bilateral trade agreements through a two-pronged approach. By reducing trade and other administrative barriers, the Corridor will unlock its full potential, including free flowing of goods and services, as well as the development of industrial hubs in strategic areas along the route. Aligning policies, standards and regulations will increase the efficiency of transport in the three countries and beyond. The improvement of the railway superstructure will also reduce road traffic, contributing to a more sustainable and cleaner environment. In the context of AfCFTA, the corridor will also potentially boost intra-African trade, contributing to regional economic growth.

The Lobito corridor presents an opportunity for Angola, Zambia, and Zimbabwe to be more integrated in trade and improved access to regional and international markets. This integration can boost agricultural productivity, create jobs, and foster regional economic growth. Beyond national and subnational considerations, the Lobito corridor's positive impact on trade volume and timely shipments poses a foundation for developing and improving agricultural value chains in Southern Africa. Table 1 presents the value of imports from DRC to Angola, Zambia to Angola, imports from Angola to Zambia, and Zambia to DRC. The table suggests that the value of agricultural products to Angola from the DRC was \$2,850, representing around 23% of the value of all products in 2022. Similarly, Angola's import from Zambia is worth around \$4,825 (76% of all exports) in 2022. The value of DRC's agricultural products imports from Angola was \$11,313 (12.3% of all exports), and DRC's agricultural products imports from Zambia was \$22,161 (4.2% of all exports) in 2023.

	All Products	Agricultural Products	Foliage	Groundnuts	Soyabeans	Maize Flour	Vegetables	Maize
Angola's Imports from DRC	12,366	2,850	392	387	384	197	62	33
Angola's Imports from Zambia	4,825	3,683	-	194	-	911	378	638
DRC's Imports from Angola*	92,010	11,33	157	-	-	1,483	-	w617
DRC's Imports from Zambia*	534,250	22,161	7,836	-	9	3,955	-	106

Source: Trade Map
* indicates 2023 Figures

Improving transportation infrastructure and facilitating access to key markets, the corridor can support the beneficiation process, enabling these countries to add value to their raw materials before export. This integration can boost local economies, promote industrialization, and increase their competitiveness in the minerals sector globally. However, despite this potential, these countries continue to primarily export raw materials while importing final goods, as shown in Table 2. This reliance on raw material exports highlights the need for enhanced industrialization to fully benefit from their resource wealth and increase their share of the global value chain, especially in the CETM sector.

Merchandise	2019	2020	2021	2022	Origin	Destination
Manganese	9,530	26,217	5,990	9,764	DRC	China & India
Copper	5,917	5,961	9,838	21,192	DRC	China & Bulgaria
Sulfur	4,648	4,162	-	-	Russia	DRC
Detergent	25	-	-	-	China	DRC
Nitric Acid	17	-	-	-	China	DRC
Metab of Sodium	989	-	-	-	China	DRC
Ammonium Sulfate	490	-	-	-	Turkiye	DRC
Vehicle and Art	-	34	-	-	Australia	DRC
Soap	-	48	-	-	Australia	DRC
Plastics	-	7	-	-	China	DRC
Miscellaneous Materials	17	2,872	2,875	2,464	Kinshasa	DRC

Source: Port of Lobito Statistical Bulletin, 2024

Growth, Job Creation and Poverty Reduction: The Lobito Corridor presents a significant opportunity for Zambia to upgrade its transportation infrastructure, addressing current challenges and positioning the country for enhanced economic growth and integration in the global market. The majority of the population in these three countries, particularly the youth, will benefit from both direct and indirect employment opportunities in the Lobito Corridor. The Corridor could provide both permanent and temporary opportunities for the people, particularly the youth during the construction and operation of the railways. Jobs will be available in the maintenance and operational management of the corridor, logistics, administration, and environmental management.

It is estimated that more than 500 new jobs have already been created, and this rate will increase significantly in the coming years. The increased economic activity also supports the growth of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The Corridor crosses many cities and towns in the participating countries (for instance it crosses four provinces over 1,300 km in Angola alone). The development of the cities, towns and communes through which the corridor passes is guaranteed.



Lobito Corridor is to become the third most key Corridor in the SADC region by 2050

Section IV: Expected Challenges in the Development of the Corridor

Despite the huge potential benefits from the corridor, the operation and development of the Lobito Corridor will face many challenges, ranging from coordination to financing. This huge financing gap calls for both public and private sector funding. Rehabilitation of the Corridor will further affect the three countries in the areas of environment and human rights, including gender-based violence.

Continuous Availability and Disbursement of Funds: According to the recent assessment by the African Development Bank, the Corridor will need about \$1.6 billion for all the works envisaged, and that it was prepared to contribute \$500 million itself and lead the process to raise the rest. Railroad projects, such as the Lobito Corridor, often span multiple years during their implementation phase, which can complicate the ongoing securing of funds and increase the risk of investor withdrawal, both from public and private sectors. This can potentially lead to project stoppage before completion. Maintenance and operation of the Lobito Corridor require substantial investment over the project's lifespan. To mitigate such risks, there is need to establish a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) and the ability to secure funds in advance of the implementation phase are crucial. An SPV helps isolate financial risks and manage project-specific investments, while advance funding ensures continuous financial support throughout the project's duration.

Environmental Impact: Although the railway projects have played a vital role in the economic prosperity and sustainable development of many countries, they have also been sources of harm to the environment. Environmental degradation, including deforestation and pollution, is also a common concern. The most common environmental complaint about the railways is the amount of carbon emissions they produce which pollute the air, soil and water while contributing to deforestation and causing damage to living organisms. Despite this danger, the railways are still the most environmentally friendly means of transport. The railways can further create barriers that could limit free movement, and disrupt habitats. In most cases, the railways cut through a wide range of the country's ecologically fragile and important ecosystems, resulting in soil erosion, land degradation, flooding and habitat destruction.

Cross-Boundary Coordination: The Lobito Corridor spans three countries—Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Zambia and impacting over seven districts within Zambia. The involvement of multiple governments introduces significant complexity in coordination due to differing political agendas, legislative frameworks, and administrative capacities. In addition to political agendas, the processing of shipment is usually done through different customs systems in line with each country's regulation. This is an area which needs great attention—harmonisation of customs policies.

Local Community Development Complementary Infrastructure: Railway projects often overlook the need for supporting community infrastructure, such as connecting roads, train stations, marketplaces, and housing for railway workers. Without these essential components, the railway is unable to fully achieve its intended social and economic benefits. Additionally, devolution mechanisms and technical capacities at the local government level may be insufficient to support the development of this complementary infrastructure. Consideration of funding for railway projects should include provisions for local development.

Land Acquisition and Management: Railway developments have numerous effects on the economy and daily lives of citizens, including land acquisition. The implementation of the new section of the Lobito Corridor will require land acquisition, which presents several challenges. Zambia has a dual land tenure system, incorporating both statutory (government) and customary (traditional) land rights. Navigating these systems can be complex, especially with land held under customary rights. Land acquisition may necessitate relocating communities. In most cases, inhabitants suffer from inhuman treatment from authorities to implement land acquisition. It is important that measures are put in place to implement land acquisition smoothly. Strengthening land tenure regulations and registration processes can facilitate acquisition and reduce land-related conflicts. Additionally, a fair and comprehensive resettlement plan is essential to mitigate the negative impacts on affected communities.

Community Conflict: The operation of the Lobito Corridor as an export route can trigger disputes over exploitation and allocation of these resources among communities. Such conflicts can hinder project implementation and initiate long-term resentment between groups. Therefore, it is crucial to address these risks during the design and construction phases by implementing appropriate mitigation measures. Conducting thorough social assessments to understand the local context and associated risks, alongside community-based planning, can effectively reduce the potential for conflict.

Health risks: The influx of workers along the Corridor is more likely to increase the spread of communicable diseases and sexually transmitted infections. Human mobility is one of the predictive factors to the spread of disease as the mobile population move with different health profiles that may impact or be influenced by the host communities. Human mobility bridges areas of risk exposure to diseases like Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and Malaria among others. It is important to provide access to essential health care services such as SRHR-HIV for the mobile population as they travel along this corridor. It is also important to collect migration health data to support health service delivery so that no one is left behind.

Gender Aspects: The Lobito corridor will potentially serve as an important trade route for Small-Scale Cross-Border Trade (SSCBT), which is a heavily feminized economic activity. Women engaged in SSCBT are likely to face challenges that hinder their economic activities and jeopardize their safety. Risks include heightened instances of GBV, gender-based discrimination and sexual exploitation and abuse as women seek to benefit from the trade and employment creation. The social instability that comes with such developments further triggers high vulnerability in host communities with women and adolescents likely to fall into prostitution and trafficking, including sex trafficking.

The cross-border trade derived from the corridor if not gender inclusive can potentially expose women to additional gender-based barriers to trade particularly in the absence of investment in infrastructure to help keep women safe, such as reliable access to electricity to light up border crossing at night, access to a stable telecommunications network, proper sanitary conditions and decent overnight accommodation to reduce exposure of women to violence. Women and youths in host communities providing other informal transactions and services albeit menial, often lack attention and regulatory blindness on how to extract value from these informal industries, to ensure that the women who dominate these industries are protected and derive commensurate benefit. Additionally, they may experience harassment at the border, have to pay bribes to border officials and they may also experience delays which can engender abuse and harassment.

The strive for gender equity in the modernisation of the Lobito Corridor has potential for a multiplier effect on poverty reduction, employment creation, intra-African trade and regional integration, but can only do so with related inclusive trade policies that address the gendered implications noted herein.

Human Rights Standards: One of the duties of the three governments is to respect and protect the human rights of individuals against human rights abuse. Zambia has ratified several international human rights instruments and undertaken some actions to ensure that government, business enterprises and other stakeholders understand and apply international business and human rights standards in the country, particularly the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) in relation to business operations in the country. While more is needed in the DRC and Angola to progress with regards to promoting the business and human rights agenda, these two countries have ratified several international human rights instruments, reflecting their respective commitments and duties in relation to upholding international human rights standards including the UNGPs.

Governments of the three member States, business enterprises and other relevant stakeholders have a duty and responsibility, through independent and coordinated actions, that business operations linked to, or resulting from the Lobito Corridor are carried out in line with international human rights standards, particularly in relation to the State duty to protect human rights (Pillar I of UNGPs), the corporate responsibility to respect human rights (Pillar II of UNGPs) and the existence of appropriate mechanisms to ensure access to effective remedy for business-related human rights abuses (UNGPs Pillar III).

Meaningful stakeholder engagement should be conducted by the Governments of the three countries, business enterprises and other relevant stakeholders in actions aimed at ensuring that policies, regulations and adjudication processes are in place to effectively address adverse human rights impacts and abuses, including any cross-border business-related human rights harms resulting from the Lobito Corridor. These measures should specifically address issues related to prevention, human rights due diligence and impact assessment, the management of human rights risks, mitigation, transparency and corporate reporting, as well as judicial and non-judicial mechanisms to ensure access to effective remedy, in line with the UNGPs.

Section V: The Role of the UN in the Overall Project

The UN plays a crucial role in supporting rural communities at risk of conflict with the development of large infrastructure projects like the Lobito Corridor. The development of the Corridor should factor in human mobility as the dynamic movement of people across borders for various purposes, including labour and trade, will present both opportunities and challenges that necessitate effective management and governance. To address this, the UN can play a pivotal role in mainstreaming trade facilitation and human mobility along the Corridor, providing technical expertise, capacity strengthening, and evidence-based solutions to optimize benefits while mitigating challenges. This includes strengthening facilitation of fair and ethical labour migration and recruitment practices, improving protection from exploitation and abuse and upholding decent work and human rights principles.

Strengthening systems at the local level is essential to enhance the capacity of these communities, particularly in protecting women and children, and ensuring access to essential services. By enhancing the capacity of local authorities and community-based organizations, the UN can ensure that women and children at risk of adverse impacts receive timely and effective support. Training local personnel in child protection, gender-based violence prevention, and response mechanisms will be key to creating a safe environment for these communities.

Strengthening healthcare systems is another critical area where the UN can provide support. The influx of construction workers and the environmental changes brought about by large projects often increase the risk of communicable diseases, including malaria, STIs, and HIV/AIDS. The UN, through its various agencies, can support local health authorities to enhance their ability to manage these health challenges through tailored training and provision of financial support. This includes supporting systems to ensure the provision of essential medical supplies, and implementing health education campaigns to raise awareness about disease prevention and early detection.

Improving water, sanitation, and hygiene interventions is also vital. The UN can support the construction of adequate sanitation facilities, promote hygiene practices, and ensure proper waste management in both construction camps and surrounding communities. These measures are crucial in preventing the spread of diseases and ensuring a healthy living environment for all.

The harmonization of policies, legal, regulatory and institutional frameworks across the three member States to facilitate the smooth flow of factors will be a key aspect of the operation of the Corridor. Among other support in this endeavour, the UN is already playing a key role in harmonisation of customs rules and procedures to facilitate trade and movement of factors across the national borders. For instance, the UN is assisting the three countries in trade facilitation through ASYCUDA Programmes. Currently, an ASYCUDA Programme Regional Coordination office and Data Centre has been established in Lusaka, Zambia. The centre supports all the countries along this corridor with automated tools for boosting their trading capacity. The ASYCUDA programme is critical in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of trade and customs procedures along the corridors to lower trade transaction costs.

Section VI: Policy Recommendations

The ongoing development and eventual completion of the Lobito Corridor and its link with the hinterland will provide immense opportunities for stakeholders in the three countries. It will have significant spillover/multiplier effects to other regional member States as commodity-based value chains mature and use the corridor as a trade route grows. Nevertheless, the three member States have central roles to play in ensuring that the corridor development process and its operation optimizes the benefits to national stakeholders and investors alike. As negotiations with developers and financiers evolve, Angola, the DRC and Zambia, should craft policies that deepen the linkages of the corridor development activities with the socio-economic development aspirations of the three countries.

The three Governments should, collaboratively:

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive framework to harmonize policies, standards, and procedures for the movement of goods, services, and people. These should be developed in line with existing bilateral trade agreements, regional economic communities, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the Common Market for Eastern and South-ern Africa (COMESA) infrastructure development programmes and the aspirations of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Agreement.
2. Engage with the developers to ensure that the modernisation of the Corridor include in-vestment which supports the development of value chains to avert the challenge of the Cor-ridor being seen as a passage for the movement of raw materials for refinement outside these countries - value addition and beneficiation programmes should be central to the de-velopment of the corridor.
3. Ensure that the development of the corridor and construction of the attendant facilities fac-tors in the economic activities already ongoing along the corridor by ensuring that these ac-tivities are not disturbed and if they are, mechanisms to compensate the stakeholders for any losses that may arise are in place and supported by a watertight policy, legal and regu-latory framework. Furthermore, where feasible
4. Develop and implement harmonised policies and regulatory frameworks which provide lo-cal stakeholders with opportunities to fully participate in the development of the corridor - the policies should embrace local content frameworks to anchor the participation of micro, small and medium enterprises financing institutions and other stakeholders from the three countries,
5. Ensure that the corridor development initiatives are integrated into the national develop-ment plans such as agriculture, mining, manufacturing, and the ongoing battery initiative as an export route for the battery precursors, batteries and eventually electric vehicles and oth-er vehicle components.
6. Develop and implement harmonised socio-economic and environmental impact assessment requirements across the three member States to ensure that the project develops in a social-ly, environmentally and economically sustainable manner and respects labour standards.
7. Establish a tripartite framework agreement to superintend over the development of the cor-ridor to ensure that milestones are met and the commitments are respected.
8. Establish concrete measures to address gender, child labour and human rights issues which may arise in line with the UNGPs

The United Nations System, as one of the key development partners supporting socio-economic development in the three countries should:

1. Leverage its expertise and comparative advantages across multiple sectors, including agriculture, environment, energy, infrastructure, education, mining, economic develop-ment and social protection, to provide a comprehensive, coherent, and coordinated ap-proach to the development and implementation of the Lobito Corridor and the attendant infrastructure.
2. Support the enhancement of the automation of trade processes, data exchange and moni-toring tools along the corridor using tools such as the Migration Information and Data Analysis System for the interoperability and coordination of data sources and platforms at the national and regional levels.
3. Support the development and implementation of local content and procurement policies that deliberately provide preference to local sourcing on inputs including labour and al-so provide for transfer of technology and skills to local entrepreneurs by the foreign in-vestors.
4. Continue to collaborate strategically with the Governments of the three member States, business enterprises, civil society and other stakeholders to support the development, strengthening and application of business-related human rights and labour standards and policies aimed at ensuring business respect for human rights in relation to the Lobito Corridor.
5. Support technical assistance activities including awareness raising and capacity building on business and human rights to the Governments of the three member states, business enterprises, civil society and other relevant stakeholders.
6. Support the undertaking of baseline surveys of socio-economic and environmen-tal activ-ities along the corridor to document existing activities likely to be disturbed by the de-velopment of the Corridor so as to develop strategies to address these before the devel-opment programme commences. Such studies will provide the basis for any compensation or change use that may be necessitated by the development.



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