

NORTHERN GATEWAY:
CROSS-BORDER MIGRATION
BETWEEN NAMIBIA AND
ANGOLA

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Namibia shares its borders with five other SADC countries: South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Angola. Communities in southern Angola and northern Namibia share deep cultural roots and people along the border have similar cultural practices, languages and relatives in both countries. Now that peace has returned to the area, it is necessary to re-examine the role of the border as a barrier or conduit to interaction and greater cooperation between Namibia and Angola. Exactly what kinds and volumes of cross-border traffic in people and goods now flow across the border? How is movement across the border managed? Does border management facilitate or inhibit the movement of people and goods? What kinds of pressures exist at official border crossing-points and how could these be better managed? How much irregular border-crossing takes place and with what results?

These, and like, questions related to movement and management on the Angola-Namibia border prompted a request from the Namibian Department of Home Affairs to SAMP for a study of the country's northern border. SAMP was unable to conduct a study of the border in its entirety but focused instead on the zone of greatest cross-border interaction around Oshikango. As this was a Namibian government initiative, the study concentrated only on the Namibian side of the border. However, the study has important policy implications for both countries.

The study was conducted at the Oshikango border post and its surrounding area in October 2003. Official data on border crossings was supplemented by an Origin and Destination (O&D) Survey. A total of 495 questionnaires were completed. Of those interviewed, 206 (41%) were Namibians, 270 (55%) were Angolans, and 12 (3%) were from other SADC countries. Supplementary qualitative research included detailed case studies of migrants, in-depth interviews with border officials, councillors, financial institutions, clearing agents and the business community. Border officials included Immigration Customs and Excise, Police, Road Administration Fund and Veterinary officials.

Amongst the key findings from official border-crossing data supplied to researchers at the border were the following:

- There has been greatly increased cross-border traffic between the two countries in the last 5 years. Each year, however, the flow is much higher from Angola into Namibia than the reverse. The annual number of foreign citizen arrivals at Oshikango nearly doubled from 143,992 in 1999 to 267,504 in 2003. In the case of Namibians moving to Angola, the number more than

doubled from 25,876 in 1999 to 61,222 in 2003.

- Oshikango border post handles by far the greatest number of legal travelers between Namibia and Angola. Overall, traffic from Angola is much higher than vice-versa. Between 1999 and 2003, for example, there were a total of 1,321,365 arrivals from Angola and 780,050 departures from Namibia. The arrivals are dominated by foreign citizens (86%) but included 189,432 Namibians returning from Angola.
- There is a striking discrepancy between arrivals and departures of Angolans. In the case of Namibians, for example, some 200,300 people crossed into Angola and 189,452 returned (a minor discrepancy) between 1999 and 2003. However, 1,131,933 foreign citizens (most but not all Angolans) crossed into Namibia but only 579,750 left (a discrepancy of 552,183). In other words, over half a million more foreign citizens entered Namibia from Angola through Oshikango than left during this time period.
- Cross border movement at Oshikango has distinct gender characteristics. Overall, men dominate cross-border movement from Angola. In the case of Namibian migrants, the pattern is somewhat different: there is little difference between the numbers of male and female border-crossers although women do dominate during some months. During the course of 2003, the number of Namibian women crossing into Angola did increase significantly.

Of the 495 people interviewed in the Origin & Destination (O & D) survey, about 65% were coming from Angola, and the remainder in the opposite direction. About 60% of the migrants interviewed were male while the remaining 40% were female. Most of the respondents were relatively young: 35% were in the 20-25 age group and another 30% were between 30 and 40. Nearly 10% of border crossers were under 20 years of age. The profile of border users emerging from the survey included the following:

- The majority (55%) were crossing the border on foot, suggesting a local origin point. Around 43% were traveling by motor vehicle (car, bus or truck). Although only 2% said they crossed the border using bicycles, this is a crucial local mode of transport for moving goods between the two countries.
- Most Angolans crossing the border came from the southern part of the country. The survey showed that 25% of the respondents were from Santa Clara, while 11% and 8% were from Ondjiva and Onamakunde respectively. A smaller number came from Lubango (6%) and Luanda (3%). Similarly, most Namibian

migrants were from the surrounding villages in northern Namibia with a much smaller number of respondents having traveled longer distances from within Namibia and South Africa.

- A large number of people crossing the border into Namibia at Oshikango are engaged in local, circular movements within the border vicinity. Most people from Angola were also going to local destinations such as Oshikango (around one third). Only 6% were proceeding on to Windhoek or other urban centres such as Oshakati (4%), Ondangwa (3%), Ondjiva (6%) and Lubango (3%). The majority of respondents (76%) were in possession of a border pass, a permit given at the Namibian border for travelers who do not possess any other traveling documentation and restricted to travel within 30km of Oshikango border post for a fixed period of time.
- The local, circulatory character of much cross-border movement is confirmed by the frequency of crossing. Nearly 20% crossed the border every day; 16% a couple of times per week; 17% once a week and 16% once a month or a couple of times per month (17%). Only 21% were first-time or infrequent users of the border post. Over a third stayed only a few hours in the other country (Table 10). Others said they normally stay for half a day (15%), a whole day (15%) or a few days (16%). Only 9% said they were going for six months or longer.
- Almost 55% of Angolans and 42% of Namibians said that they had immediate family across the border who they visited frequently. Over a third of Namibians with immediate family in Angola tended to visit them on a daily basis. Angolans preferred to visit their families in Namibia a couple of times per year (24%) or once a year and less (31%). Shopping was by far the most popular reason for crossing the border (mentioned by 34% of respondents). About 21% of those crossing the borders purported to be visiting family members and friends. About 23% mentioned business as the primary reason for their traveling. Of these, approximately 16% were on "personal business" and only 7% on "employer's" business.

The analysis gives a clear picture of the migration patterns and activities at the main border between Namibia and Angola. With the current prevailing economic situation in Namibia, and Oshikango in particular, an ever-increasing growth in cross-border traffic can be expected. This raises many challenges of efficient management for both governments. Consideration could certainly be given to facilitating greater freedom of movement between the countries.

INTRODUCTION

Namibia shares its borders with five other SADC countries: South Africa, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Zambia and Angola. Like most colonial boundaries, modern Namibia's borders were an artificial colonial imposition.¹ The impact of colonial demarcation was particularly acute along the Angola-Namibia border. Communities in southern Angola and northern Namibia shared deep cultural roots and people along the border had similar cultural practices, languages and relatives in both countries. There may be as many Oshiwambo speakers, i.e. people who belong to one of the various Owambo ethnic groups such as the Uukwanyama, on the Angolan side of the border as on the Namibian side.² The Namibian Owambo make up over 43% of the population of Namibia. Those on the Angolan side came under Portuguese rule while their relatives were ruled by the Germans and then the South Africans. Migration and resettlement across the border was not uncommon.³

The post-colonial experience for communities on either side of the border also followed a different path. As a result of anti-colonial and civil wars, the Angola-Namibia border became extremely unstable after 1966 and the beginning of the long war of independence from South Africa. Much of this war was fought in the border zone which became highly militarized as a result. Angola was a recipient of many Namibians who fled the country to join the liberation struggle to fight the colonial regime that ruled Namibia at that time. After independence, the border continued to be a zone of instability as the civil war in Angola raged on. Namibia's "unstable northern frontier" was constantly destabilized by military operations and refugee movements.⁴

The relationship between the two countries grew stronger after Namibia won independence in 1990.⁵ The Namibia government supported the Angolan government in its war with UNITA and a number of agreements favourable to Angolans living in Namibia were put in place. Angolans were given special permits to allow them to receive all benefits as nationals in Namibia despite their Angolan citizenship. The end of the civil war in Angola has brought about a new era of peace for the region, the repatriation of Angolan refugees and the potential for the return of normality to cross-border relations between the two countries.

On the ground, throughout this period of conflict, the border was never an impermeable barrier. Even during the cross-border conflicts people continued to cross the border which was not fenced or otherwise demarcated; the border is still unfenced. Cross-border family and ethnic ties, refugee movements from Angola to Namibia, and cross-border

trade ensured that cross-border traffic in people and goods continued throughout the decades of instability. The return of peace to the region and the commitment of both governments to increased cooperation and economic relations have provided a new political and economic framework for the normalization of cross-border activity.

Exactly what kinds and volumes of cross-border traffic in people and goods are now flowing across the border between the two countries is largely unknown. Also undocumented is the manner of governance of movement across the northern border. Does border management facilitate or inhibit the movement of people and goods? What kinds of pressures exist at official border crossing-points and how could these be better managed? How much irregular border-crossing takes place in the region and with what results? These, and other questions related to movement and management on the Angola-Namibia border need investigation in order to facilitate the overall SADC goal of freer movement of people and goods across the region. This study aims to provide such baseline information as well as to assist both governments in their planning for greater economic interaction and cooperation.

This study is the second detailed study of local border interaction carried out by the Southern African Migration Project (SAMP). The first study examined the nature of cross-border movement and management across the Lesotho-South African border.⁶ That study demonstrated not only that the nature and volume of cross-border movement is poorly understood, but that border management acts as a blockage to the freer movement of people and goods. Out of that study came recommendations for more effective and efficient border management which have been considered at the highest political level in the two countries. This study is modeled on the methodology of the South Africa-Lesotho and reaches conclusions which will hopefully be of great interest to the governments of Namibia and Angola.

Resource and time constraints prevented a study of the whole border between the two countries. The study therefore focused on cross-border traffic and management issues at Oshikango. Oshikango is the major northern border post between Angola and Namibia and is linked to the capital city, Windhoek, by tarred road. Truck transport is the major way goods are transported to the border. However, soon a new rail link and new Chinese manufactured passenger trains will also connect Tsumeb (the end of the rail link from Windhoek to the north) to Oshivelo which is on the way to Ondangwa and Oshikango. The Oshikango border post has received considerable attention from the government since independence in terms of economic development. This is primarily because of its central physical location and designation as an Export Processing Zone (EPZ) for imported goods. This was done with the

intention of stimulating economic growth and investment within the region. Bonded warehouses, mostly foreign-owned, have been established at Oshikango from which mostly Angolan and Congolese purchase goods and import them into their own countries.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted at the Oshikango border post and surrounding area in October 2003. Oshikango is located in the Ohangwena region in the northern part of the country. Oshikango area has a population of more than 27,500 inhabitants who mainly practice subsistence farming. Oshikango, together with other main villages (Ohangwena, Omafo and Engela) has been proclaimed as the Helao yaNafidi Town. This is a positive initiative from the government as it may boost the development of the border area.

The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods. The two methodologies were combined to provide a broader picture of the movement at the border, border operations and control issues. In terms of quantitative methods, an Origin and Destination (O&D) Survey was conducted. The O&D focused on people crossing the border at the time of interviews. A total of 495 O&D questionnaires were completed of which 35% was administered to those leaving Namibia and 65% to those entering Namibia from Angola. Five enumerators collected the data from people crossing the border over a period of two weeks. Respondents were randomly selected from the queue while they were waiting for their documents to be processed.

The qualitative research consisted of detailed case studies of migrants, in-depth interviews with border officials, councillors, financial institutions, clearing agents and the business community. Border officials included Immigration Customs and Excise, Police, Road Administration Fund and Veterinary officials.

Angolan migrants working and living in 8 villages in the proximity of the Namibia/Angola borders were interviewed in greater depth. The villages were: Oshali, Eenghoshi, Okalondo, Onakutumba, Okafitu, Odibo, Omafo and Eengela.

Data on border crossings for the period 1990-2003 were obtained from immigration officials at the Oshikango border post immigration. The following data was collected:

- Statistics on border crossing in both directions (annually for the last 5 years and monthly data for 2003)
- Data on the numbers of illegal immigrants arrested; people given limited hours; court cases and people refused entry.

VIGNETTE 1

OSHIKANGO, A LIFELINE FOR ANGOLANS

The other side of the fence looks no different from this, but in some respects it is a world away. Namibian Daniel Shindini, who runs a supermarket a stone's throw from this border post, has never ventured beyond the blue and white sign reading "Bem Vindo Em Angola." Yet 80 per cent of the customers at his Safe Way supermarket are Angolans who cross the border to do their shopping in spite of the punitive rates customs officials charge them on the way home. A few years ago at the height of apartheid South Africa's war against the Marxist Angolan government and its Namibian pro-independence allies, trying to cross this border was a very different affair. "In those days you could not come here, where we are driving now. The bush here was full of South African army," said Paulo Pinto, who was born in Namibia to Angolan parents during South African rule. The war between the Luanda government and Unita dragged on until 2002. The wrecked infrastructure and adverse effect on development partly explains why so many Angolans queue up to cross the border, some daily, only to return home at night. "There is nothing there," said 22-year-old Elena Jamba. "There is land, but sometimes because of the weather conditions, there are no vegetables," she added as a man helping her wheeled a bicycle piled high with sacks of cabbages and carrots to take back to Angola to sell. Some areas across the border are still mined from decades of warfare, reducing agricultural output further. The huge steel warehouse of International Commercial boasts "Armazem Sem Impostas" — Duty Free. It is packed with treadmills, exercise bikes, gazebos, Yamaha motorbikes and mopeds, beds, dining tables, miles of fabric, and crates of metre-long cuddly lions. On one shelf stand dozens of identical framed icons of the Virgin Mary. Everything is priced in US dollars, and much of it is off limits to Namibians because of its duty free status. Nearby is a car lot with row upon row of Toyota, Mitsubishi and Nissan four wheel drives, mini-buses and saloons. At the entrance a security guard stands nursing an AK47 rifle. "It is easy to buy European cars, but maintenance and spares are a problem. Japanese cars are easy to buy, and spares are easy too," said Mohammed Nouman of Pacific Motors. His business cards are in English on one side, Portuguese on the other. Almost all

the vehicles here are left-hand drive, shipped in second hand from Europe, the Americas and Asia and destined for export to Angola. The border post a few metres away lies on a motoring fault-line between left and right-hand drive that stretches from here round the vast Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi and Rwanda, demarcating those parts colonised by Britain from those grabbed by other European powers during the Scramble for Africa. "It's mostly Angolans — but at the moment business is not good," Nouman said. "I think Angola has increased its customs. They are making problems for us." He is not the only one complaining about the charges. Antonio Martins lives in the Angolan town of Santa Clara just over the border, but he says he must pay Angolan immigration officials N\$50 every time he crosses it. He comes regularly to sell jeans, T-shirts and shoes imported from Brazil by way of Luanda through Portuguese-speaking trading links. Sometimes he has music CDs from Luanda and Cape Verde, another former Portuguese colony off West Africa. "In Angola there are no jobs for people. In Namibia business is good. I'm always coming," he said. Seeing Angolans working can be irksome for young jobless Namibians who hang around in small groups waiting for odd jobs. Here in Oshikango they don't give jobs to Namibians, only to people who speak Portuguese. We run after Angolans, offer to carry their bags to the border, to get something to eat," said 22-year-old Bernard Johanes. Not that anybody seems particularly enchanted with life in Oshikango, which is regarded by most as a functional place to come and trade — and then to go home from. Down the road South African kwaito music blasts defiantly from a bar, emphasising the absence of other amusements. "Living here?" said Nouma, originally from Pakistan, who has run Pacific Motors for the past three years. "Well, you can see — it's dead."

Alistair Thomson, The Namibian 2 December 2004

BORDER OPERATIONS

Oshikango is easily the busiest border post along the Namibia/Angola border with people, cars, trucks and bicycles moving through. These movements slow down at sunset when the border post closes its gates at 18h00. One would expect a busy border post such as this to operate for 24 hours, but it only operates for 10 hours a day starting its daily activities at 08h00.

There are about 11 immigration officials operating at the Oshikango border post. These immigration officials handle more than 500 border crossers each day. Despite the low numbers of personnel, the current staff is highly experienced due to low turnover. The daily duties of the immigration official are to process necessary documentations and make records of all departures and arrivals. The daily records are compiled into monthly reports. At the end of each year, information is put together for an annual report. Most of the recording is currently done manually. Those in possession of passports are required to fill in departure/arrival forms that are recorded in the computer. The other border posts between the two countries do not keep records.

The officials are responsible for checking the validity and authenticity of travel documents and, when satisfied, they endorse the documents and allow travelers to proceed. People crossing the border into Namibia are required to carry passports, emergency traveling documents or border passes. A border pass is normally valid for 3 days and allows movement within 30 km distance from the border. People moving beyond the 30 km limit are required to have passports or emergency travel documents.

There are also police officials at the border post. They are mainly responsible for the physical checking of goods that pass through the border. Police officials also patrol the adjacent border and deal with criminal cases as they come up. These cases range from illegal crossing, stock theft, vehicle theft and smuggling of goods between the two countries. Cases of overstay and use of invalid travel documents are also handled by the police. Punishment of offenders depends on the nature of the case.

Various economic activities take place at and around the Oshikango border post. Oshikango is emerging as a business centre for Namibians, Angolans as well as people from other countries north of Namibia such as DRC and Zambia. The Government's initiative to make Oshikango an Economic Processing Zone (EPZ) has proven fruitful to date. The Off-Shore Development Corporation (ODC) has been established to provide infrastructural development at various border posts including Oshikango. There are about nine warehouses owned by foreign investors, mostly of South African, European and Asian origin. These bonded warehouses provide employment to Namibians in the vicinity of Oshikango. The

warehouses are set up for the export of goods from Namibia to Angola and other African countries. If Namibians purchase from these warehouses, they are required to pay tax (export tax) on goods.

Officials from the Customs and Excise Department of the Ministry of Finance control the import and export of goods and collect tax revenue on these goods. They also do periodic inspections of the bonded warehouses and verify the registration of goods leaving the country.

Due to the workload, handymen are recruited to assist Customs and Excise officials in their operations. Their duties include: ensuring that papers from the warehouses correspond to the stock leaving the country; assisting in clearing the goods; filling the required forms and counting the goods (to check the quantity and the price in order for them to work out the export duties to be paid). These people are poorly paid which makes them more likely to contravene the regulations. For example, they are known to make deals with travelers for "quick service."

As many Angolans depend on the Namibian markets for goods, transportation of these commodities into Angola becomes very important. Angolan nationals in possession of passports travel as far as Windhoek to do their shopping. When goods are bought in Windhoek, local bus operators transport the goods to Oshikango. These buses are normally registered for this type of business and are all marked "heavy transport." Their major customers are Angolans and traders from the Democratic Republic of Congo, as well as some members of the Chinese business community at Oshikango. The buses only have permission to transport goods up to Oshikango; their permits do not allow them to transport goods into Angola. Fees for vehicles crossing the border are high, and many people prefer to cross the borders using bicycles.

One young man operating with a bicycle between the two countries indicated that he had been in this type of business for a number of years. His main task was to transport goods for Angolan migrants from the Namibian side of the border to the Angola side. These "bicycle entrepreneurs" ensure that goods bought by their customers in Namibia arrive at the other side of the border. They do not necessarily take them to their final destination. Bicycles are commonly used because they do not pay any levy: "Bicycles do not pay anything for crossing the border, they can travel as much as they can or load as many goods as they wish."⁷ This kind of business is not only beneficial to low income people who buy goods in bulk, but has created an income generating opportunity to many unemployed local "boys."

Although there are officials checking what type of goods are transported across the borders, most bicycle men are not aware of what they transport, and in fact most of these goods are sealed. Not all goods passing through Oshikango borders are bought from the warehouses or

locally; some of them are purchased from as far as Windhoek.

A number of local Namibian entrepreneurs also go into Angola to do business. In most cases, they buy goods in Namibia and travel for a time in Angola selling goods. When they run out of stock they return to Namibia. These goods include blankets, radios, clothing, perishable and consumable goods. Items such as fridges, televisions, and ovens are also exported into Angola. Despite their treatment from Angolan officials, Namibian business people believe that business prospects are good in Angola and this has encouraged more Namibians to join the trade routes into Angola.

CROSS-BORDER MIGRATION PATTERNS

Oshikango border post handles by far the greatest number of legal travelers between Namibia and Angola. Overall, traffic from Angola is much higher than vice-versa. Between 1999 and 2003, for example, there were a total of 1,321,365 arrivals from Angola and 780,050 departures from Namibia (Table 1). The arrivals are dominated by foreign citizens (86%) but include 189,432 Namibians returning from Angola.⁸

Perhaps the most striking feature of the data is the discrepancy between arrivals and departures. In the case of Namibians crossing into Angola, some 200,300 people left Namibia for Angola and 189,452 returned (a minor discrepancy). In the case of foreign citizens, however, the discrepancy is large: 1,131,933 people crossed into Namibia but only 579,750 left (a discrepancy of 552,183). In other words over half a million more foreign citizens entered Namibia from Angola through Oshikango than left during this time period.

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	Total
Foreign arrivals	143 992	175 189	248 435	296 813	267 504	1 131 933
Foreign departures	84 617	89 915	123 263	153 147	128 808	579 750
Namibian arrivals	20 128	46 963	47 559	33 236	41 546	189 432
Namibian departures	25 876	31 835	34 491	46 876	61 222	200 300

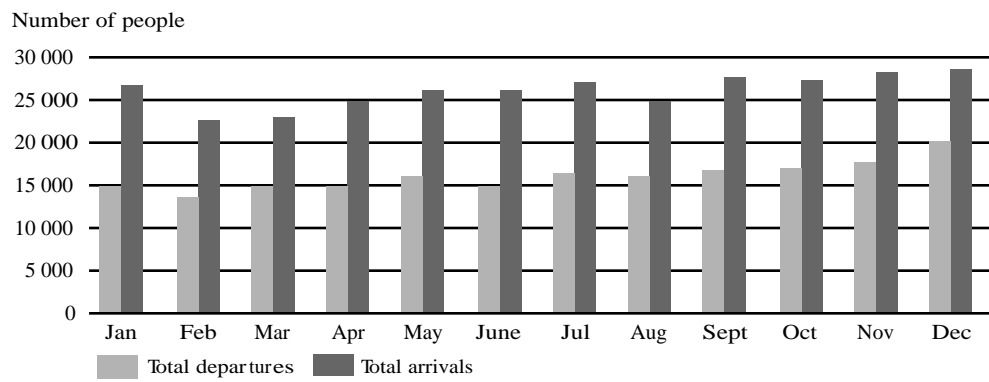
Source: Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration Division, Oshikango Border Post, March 2004

Whether all of these people are still in Namibia is doubtful. First, many will have left during 2004, particularly as refugees have begun to return home in growing numbers. Second, it is possible that some of these people returned home through other border posts. Overall, however, the data does seem to indicate that a large number of foreign citizens who crossed into Namibia from Angola are probably still in the country.

Another point of note is the greatly increased cross-border traffic between 1999 and 2003 in all categories, foreign and Namibian. Each year, the flow is much higher from Angola into Namibia than the reverse. The annual number of foreign citizen arrivals in Namibia nearly doubled from 143,992 in 1999 to 267,504 in 2003. In the case of Namibians moving to Angola, the number more than doubled from 25,876 in 1999 to 61,222 in 2003.

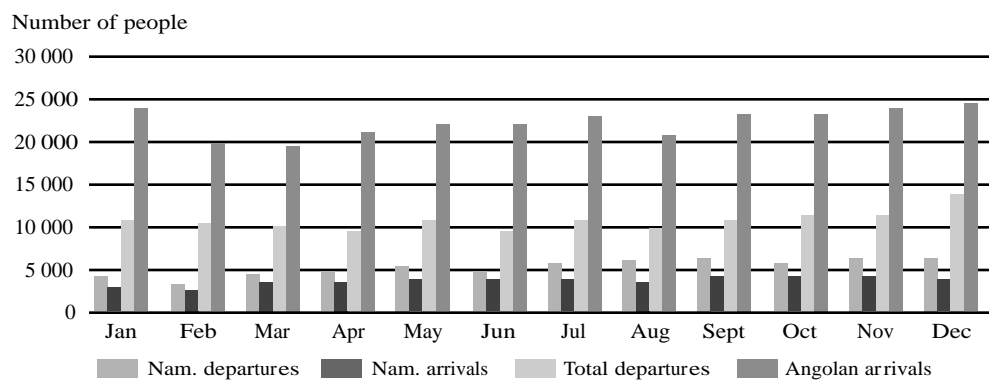
Monthly data for 2003 confirms that the pattern of arrivals in Namibia exceeding departures from the country occurs throughout the year. In every single month of 2003, the volume of arrivals was greater than the number of departures (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Total monthly arrivals and departures, Oshikango, 2003



The data does not show any marked seasonality in migration patterns although the numbers entering Namibia tend to be a little higher towards the end of the year. Figure 2 also shows that in every month of the year, there are significantly more foreign arrivals than departures through Oshikango.

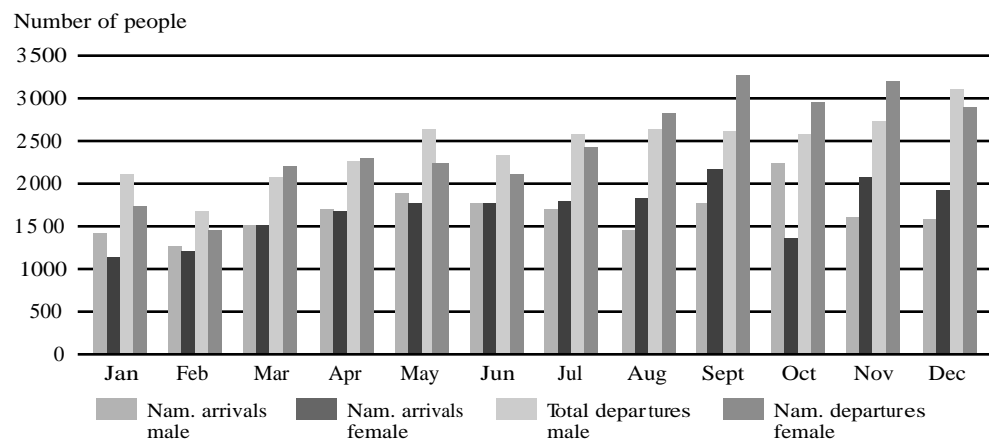
Figure 2: Monthly patterns of arrivals and departures, Oshikango, 2003



In sum, the migrant stream handled at the Oshikango border post is dominated by foreign citizens, mainly Angolan nationals. The workload in terms of processing documents is therefore far heavier on the arrivals than on the departures side.

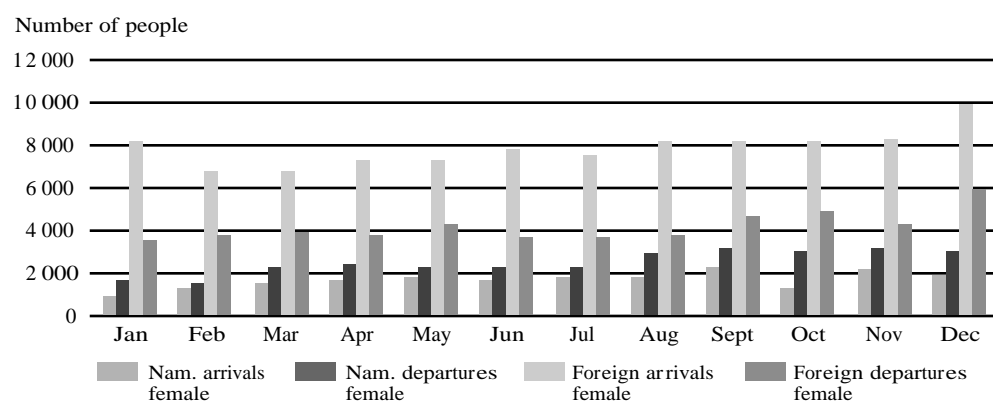
Cross border movement at Oshikango also has distinct gender characteristics. Overall, men dominate cross-border movement from Angola. In the case of Namibian migrants, the pattern is somewhat different. As Figure 3 shows, there is little discernible difference between the numbers of male and female border-crossers although women do dominate during some months. Interestingly, during the course of 2003, the number of Namibian women crossing into Angola did increase significantly.

Figure 3: Namibian male and female cross-border movement, Oshikango, 2003



Comparing the movement of foreign and Namibian female migrants (Figure 4), it is clear that foreign females by far outnumber their Namibian counterparts. Some 6-10,000 foreign female migrants arrive

Figure 4: Namibian and foreign female cross-border movement, Oshikango, 2003



in Namibia each month from Angola. By comparison, only 2-3,000 Namibian females cross into Angola each month.

Records of undocumented migrants arrested at the border are contained in the annual reports. Over the past 5 years (1999 – 2003), a total of 2,602 undocumented migrants were arrested at the Oshikango border post (Table 2). The number of these migrants increased drastically in 2001, almost double the number arrested in 1999 but dropped again in 2002 and 2003. A possible explanation for the higher number in 2001 could have been the intensity of the war in Angola that subsequently led to the death of the UNITA leader in early 2002.

Year	No. arrested
1999	394
2000	573
2001	854
2002	374
2003	407
Total	2602

VIGNETTE 2

THE VIEW FROM OSHIKANGO

We Namibians and Angolans have good communication, we do business together, people from Angola come to fetch water from Namibia and our Namibian cattle go for grazing into Angola. Different business activities are also doing well. People are buying goods in large quantities and pass these through the borders into Angola. One can also see the trucks loaded with goods passing through border everyday through Angola to Democratic Republic of Congo. Namibians are also doing business now in Angola, especially after the death of the rebel leader, Jonas Savimbi. Like now, there are a lot of foreign businesses at the Oshikango border. Oshikango is in fact overcrowded now, we even had to shift some homesteads to accommodate new businesses. We still need to move more homesteads as the demand

for space for business is increasing. A lot of Angolans do come for different services in Namibia. People are being referred to Namibian Hospitals. A lot of Angolan children are found at different Primary schools in Namibia, but the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture has rules and regulations to be followed even if a child wants to study here he/she must possess a study permit and this is done internationally. Our main problem is that our own Namibians do not have their citizenship documents as well and this brings complications because you cannot differentiate between Namibian and Angolan people. I think the issue of foreigners studying here is going to grow in future, but the problem is the absence of study permits due to absence of citizenship documents from both Namibians and foreigners. The Namibian community also has a problem; they are protecting people from Angola by pretending that they are Namibians.

Mr Nambinga, Councillor of Oshikango

CROSS-BORDER PROFILE

The Origin & Destination (O & D) survey interviewed 495 people of whom 206 (42%) were Namibians, 270 (54%) were Angolans, 12 (2%) were from other SADC countries, and 1% were of European/North American origin (Table 3). About 65% of the migrants interviewed were coming into Namibia from Angola, while the remainder were traveling from Namibia. The majority of the migrants entering Namibia were Angolans (Table 4). About 60% of the migrants were males while the remaining 40% were females.

Table 3: Nationality and Gender of Migrants

Nationality	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Namibian	115	38	91	45	206	42
Angolan	166	56	104	52	270	54
South African	11	4	1	1	12	2
Other SADC	2	1	1	1	4	1
European	3	1	1	1	3	1
Total	297	100	198	100	495	100

Direction of movement	Namibia		Angola		South Africa		Other SADC		Europe		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
From Namibia	151	73	14	5	5	42	1	33	3	75	174	35
To Namibia	55	27	256	95	7	58	2	67	1	25	321	65
Total	206	100	270	100	12	100	3	100	4	100	495	100

Most of the respondents were relatively young. Some 34% were in the 20-25 age group and another 30% were between 30 and 40. Nearly 10% of border crossers were under 20 years of age (Table 5).

Age Group	No.	%
10-19	41	8
20-29	170	34
30-39	146	30
40-49	77	16
50 and above	58	12
Total	492	100

Most migrants were travelling individually (45%) or in pairs (30%). While more men reported to traveling individually, women preferred to travel in pairs.

The majority of respondents (55%) crossed the border on foot, suggesting a local origin point. Around 43% were traveling by motor vehicle (car, bus or truck) (Table 6). Although only 2% said they crossed the border using bicycles, this is a crucial local mode of transport for moving goods between the two countries. There was no marked differ-

Type of transport	No.	%
Foot	270	54.5
Bus/Taxi	58	11.7
Car	103	20.8
Truck	52	10.5
Bicycle	12	2.4

ence in the mode of transport used by both sexes, although a slightly higher proportion of females walked to Oshikango. Most of the trucks were going from Namibia to Angola.

Most respondents originated from various places in Angola and Namibia, although some were from other parts of Africa. Most Angolans crossing the border came from the southern part of the country. The survey showed that 25% of the respondents were from Santa Clara, while 11% and 8% were from Ondjiva and Onamakunde respectively, also in Angola (Table 8). A smaller number came from Lubango (6%) and Luanda (3%). Similarly, most Namibian migrants were from the surrounding villages in northern Namibia with a much smaller number of respondents having traveled from as far as Johannesburg, Pretoria, Durban, Walvisbay and Harare.

Table 7: Place of origin of migrants from Angola

Place of Origin	Urban/Rural	Region in Angola	%
Santa Clara	Rural	Southern	25
Ondjiva	Rural	Southern	11
Onamakunde	Rural	Southern	8
Lubango	Urban	Central	6
Luanda	Urban	Central	3

Table 8: Destinations of migrants from Angola

Destination Place	Urban/Rural	Regions in Namibia	%
Oshikango	Transitional	Ohangwena (Northern)	34
Windhoek	Urban	Khomas (Central)	6
Oshakati	Urban	Oshana (Northern)	4
Ondangwa	Urban	Oshana (Northern)	3
Other Namibian towns	Rural	Ohangwena	10

Most people crossing from Angola were also going to local destinations such as Oshikango (34%). Some 10% of the respondents indicated villages in the vicinity of Oshikango border post as their destination place. Only 6% were proceeding on to Windhoek or other urban areas such as Oshakati (4%), Ondangwa (3%), Ondjiva (6%) and Lubango (3%). The evidence therefore suggests that a large number of people crossing the border into Namibia at Oshikango are engaged in essentially local, circular movements within the border vicinity.

TYPE OF PERMIT

The majority of respondents (76%) said they were in possession of a border pass. This is a permit given at the Namibian border for travelers who do not possess any other traveling documentation and is restricted to travel within 30km of the Oshikango border post for a fixed period of time. Table 9 provides a breakdown of type of permit by gender.

Generally, there is not much difference in type of permits by sex.

However, some categories, such as work permits and passports, are more prevalent among men.

Table 9: Type of Permit

Type of permits	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	Percent	Count	Percent	Count	Percent
No permits	9	2	2	0	11	2
Border pass	201	41	175	35	376	76
Study permit	4	1	4	1	8	2
Work permit	17	3	2	0	19	4
Namibian Passport	52	11	12	2	64	13
Angolan Passport	11	2	3	1	14	3
Namibian ID	1	0	-	-	1	0
Visas	2	0	-	-	2	0

Most Namibians crossing the border were in possession of either a Namibian passport or border pass while Angolan nationals predominantly had border passes. Thirteen per cent of Namibians possessed passports, but only 3% of Angolans. Only 4% of the total number of crossers possessed work permits and even fewer (2%) had study permits.

The majority of migrants crossing the border were therefore in possession of legal documents. Only a small number of respondents (4%) reported that they passed through the border without a passport or a permit. They noted that they asked officials at the border to allow them to cross and that they were allowed to cross because their permits had expired or the permit forms were finished. This only occurred when the intended destination was around the border town. No permit at all was required from those who made multiple crossings in a day; for example, those who transport goods by bicycles between the two countries. Other reasons given for being permitted to cross without the required documents included when the migrant was personally known to border officials, traveling documents were forgotten or lost, they were crossing to make a phone call or for “quick” shopping, disability and fetching water.

Respondents were asked to describe any restriction on their permits of which they were aware. Nearly 60% who entered Namibia or Angola were allowed to stay for three (3) days within 30km of the border. In addition, 12% said they were allowed to stay either in Namibia or Angola for one month

FREQUENCY OF MOVEMENT AND DURATION OF STAY

Table 10 provides a breakdown of the frequency of movement and duration of stay of respondents in the country of destination. The local, circulatory character of much cross-border movement is confirmed by the frequency of crossing. Nearly one in five said they crossed the borders every day (17%); 16% a couple of times per week; 17% once a week and 16% once a month (16%) or a couple of times per month (17%). Only 21% were first-time or infrequent users of the border post (twice a year or less). When asked about the duration of stay, over a third of the respondents said they stayed only a few hours in the other country (Table 10). Others said they normally stay for half a day (15%), a whole day (15%) or a few days (16%). Only 9% said they were going for six months or longer.

How often you make the trip	Responses	%	Duration of stay in country you are going to	Responses	%
More than once a day	13	3	A few hours	168	34
Every day	84	17	Half a day	73	15
Couple of times per week	79	16	Whole day	73	15
Once a week	83	17	A few days	80	16
Once a month	80	16	A few weeks	27	6
Couple of times per month	53	17	1-3 months	31	6
Couple of times per year	62	13	6 months	5	1
Once a year or less	41	8	One year or longer	38	8
Total	495	100	Total	495	100

REASONS FOR TRAVELING

Shopping was by far the most popular reason for crossing the border (mentioned by 34% of respondents). About 21% of those crossing the

borders purported to be visiting family members and friends. Those who visited family members and friends stayed for only a few days and then returned back to their country of origin.

Reason for traveling	Responses	%
Shopping	199	34.3
Visiting family/friends	119	20.5
Personal business	90	15.5
Employer's business	41	7.1
Recreation/Leisure	33	5.7
Transit	11	1.9
Education	6	1
Commuting to/from work	3	0.5
Other	79	13.9
Total	495	100

About 23% of the respondents mentioned business as the primary reason for their traveling. Of these, approximately 16% were on "personal business" and only 7% on "employer's" business. A small number (6%) also crossed the border for recreational purposes. Very few indicated that they crossed the borders for educational purposes, commuting to and from work, or transit to other destinations. Overall, the findings from this study in terms of reasons for traveling are not dissimilar to those in Lesotho, where about 36% went to South Africa for shopping, 21% for personal business, 6% for employer's business and 13% for leisure.

Immediate family in the two countries	Angolans in Namibia		Namibians in Angola		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
YES	107	55	114	42	231	47
NO	88	45	156	58	264	53
Total	195	100	270	100	495	100

To assess the strength of family ties as a motive for cross-border movement, the travelers were asked about cross-border family ties. Almost 55% of Angolans and 42% of Namibians said that they have immediate family across the borders who they visited frequently (Table 12). Over a third of Namibians with immediate family in Angola tend to visit them on a daily basis. Angolans prefer to visit their families in

Namibia a couple of times per year (24%) or once a year and less (31%).

BORDER TREATMENT

How visitors are treated at borders is an important factor in attracting people into a country and can also lead to economic advancement or boost the local economy in border areas. As a basic measure of efficiency, respondents were asked about the time it took them to cross the border and about the general way they were treated by the officials at the border (Table 13).

Time taken to cross the border	Namibians		Angolans	
	Count	%	Count	%
Less than 10 min	52	25	39	14
10-30 min	94	45	125	46
30-1 hr	32	16	86	32
1-2 hr	16	8	18	7
More than 2 hrs	12	6	2	1
Total	206	100	270	100

Seventy percent of Namibians reported that it took them less than half an hour to cross the border (with 25% in less than 10 minutes). Sixty percent of Angolans took less than half an hour (with 14% less than 10 minutes). The proportion of people being held up for longer than an hour was very small on both sides. In sum, it is clearly marginally faster to cross into Angola than into Namibia which may simply be a reflection of the greater volume of traffic in that direction. While border crossing times are not unreasonable, they could be frustrating for those who use the border often. In addition, with so many border-crossers being local residents and having border passes, it is surprising that the number of people taking less than 10 minutes is not higher.

Almost 65% of respondents said that they were satisfied or very satisfied with their treatment from border officials, with 17% indicating that they were very satisfied (Table 14). The nationality and sex of respondents did not have any effect on the level of satisfaction. A minor cause for concern is that nearly a quarter of respondents said that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Various factors were mentioned by those who were very satisfied with their treatment from border officials. Most importantly,

Level of satisfaction	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Very satisfied	49	17	34	17	83	17
Satisfied	127	43	104	52	231	47
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	44	15	28	14	72	14
Not satisfied	58	19	28	14	86	17
Not satisfied at all	19	6	4	2	23	5
Total	297	100	198	100	495	100

immigration officials were considered friendly, helpful and polite (cited by 48%). Secondly, they noted that immigration officials communicate with the travelers and that they were doing their job properly. On the negative side, those dissatisfied with the treatment mentioned that officials were very slow (40%), that they beat travelers and chased them away (14%) and that the officials were also too strict and discriminated against travelers (12%). Questions about possible corruption at the border were considered too sensitive to ask. However, unlike the situation in Lesotho, the “business of the border” does not appear to include any major corruption industry.⁹

BORDER IMPROVEMENTS

Border users were asked to make suggestions on improvements they would like to see at the border post. A number of suggestions were made, amongst which more training for customs and immigration officials was often mentioned. Other suggestions included erection of facilities such as toilets, shaded areas with chairs and the need for computers to facilitate crossing. Some also suggested that the border post should operate 24 hours and that officials properly control the queues to prevent illegal operations. Others called for more cleaners and adequate provision of rubbish bins to keep the border post clean. Other important reasons are listed in Table 15.

Interviews conducted with the police, immigration and customs and Excise officials focused on their own working and living conditions. Customs officers want recreational facilities and better housing. Among the problems experienced at the border post by officials is the heat, which becomes unbearable in summer. They suggested the installation of air conditioners to improve their work environment.

Table 15: Suggested improvements at border post		
Improvement	Responses	% of Mentions
Increase the number of toilets	108	15
Customs and immigration officers need to undergo training	136	19
There is a need for shaded areas with chairs	98	14
More police are needed to control queues and illegal operations	90	13
More computers are needed to do work faster	69	10
Parking areas and immigration offices must be enlarged	78	11
There is a need for more water taps	44	6
More cleaners to be employed and waste bins to be provided	32	5
Officers must treat all travelers with courtesy	24	4
Border should operate 24 hours	29	4
Total	708	100

Note: Respondents could give more than one answer.

CROSS-BORDER LABOUR MIGRANTS

One relatively common form of cross-border movement from Angola is migration for work, primarily on Namibia farms. The numbers involved are unknown but the youthfulness of the migrants is striking. Case study research with a sample of migrants was conducted to provide insights into this movement. Most migrants appear to work either full time or seasonally. Their main duties include looking after cattle, milking, and assisting with cultivation during summer. Most of the farm workers live at their employer's residence; a few stay on their own or with relatives. One migrant commuted from Angola and would fetch cattle from Namibia, graze them in Angola, return them back to Namibia at dawn and return home to Angola.

Migrants stay in Namibia for varying lengths of time. The longest period recorded in our research was eight years. Others were new entrants and had only worked for one to three months. Migrant farm workers earn as little as N\$ 50 to N\$ 100 per month. Some employers pay their workers a wage of N\$ 200 per month. The law in Namibia states that all domestic workers and farm labourers be paid a minimum wage of N\$400 per month.

Despite the low wages, most migrants remit money or goods back across the border. Cross-border remittances include consumer goods (mahangu grains/flour, beans, milk, meat, rice, cooking oil, sweets, milk, sugar, soap, tinned food, clothing, blankets, radios, etc) and cash. Migrants transfer remittances to Angola using various channels. Most Angolan migrants in Namibia prefer informal methods of goods and

cash transfer. The major reason for this is the low cost and efficiency. Goods and money sent through the informal methods also reach the target easily. Also because most of these migrants do not have relevant documents they evade any formalities. The most common methods are to take the money/goods themselves, to send money/goods with relatives or known people from the same village and relatives; or for family members from Angola to come and collect the money. Because most migrants working in the north live not far from the Namibia/Angola border, they maintain very close contacts with home and can easily deliver remittances themselves. Migrants also buy goods, which they take home with them. Bank transfers are rarely used because the banking infrastructure is not well developed on the Angolan side. The cross-border linkages and movements of labour migrants are best illustrated in the testimony of migrants themselves.

VIGNETTE 3

MIGRANT VOICES

Sebiu, a 19 year old farm labourer, is from Onanghulu village in southern Angola. He works at Eenghoshi village, in Ohangwena region and resides at his employer's house. Sebiu's home in Angola is not too far from the border, and because his employer grazes livestock in Angola he at times passes by his home. Although he has worked for 3 months, he has not sent anything home because his parents come and collect money from him. He earns N\$ 100.00 per month and gives N\$ 60.00 to his parents. In cases of emergencies at home, his father usually comes in person to inform him and demand extra money from him. He does not save and instead borrows from his employer, which he replaces with part payment from his salary. The last time he went home for a proper visit, he did not even take any goods or money home. Any money he sends home is very important for his family because his parents are unemployed and he is obliged to take care of them. Sebiu never attended school and decided to look for a job to earn a living.

Philemon, a 17 year old migrant, is a cattle herder at Eenghoshi village in Ohangwena region. He is originally from Angola and stays at his employer's residence. He has so far sent an amount

of N\$ 180.00 home for his brother's emergency illness. He provided money for soaps, hospital costs etc. which cost N\$ 250.00 for the overall care and hospital cost. The family did send someone to come and inform him about his brother's well being. The money he remits home helped out the parents especially when his brother was sick. The money and goods remitted are valuable for the well being of his family.

Jose Mario Kiss is a 36-year-old mechanic who owns a business at Omafo. He was born in Angola and has been in Namibia for five years. Jose has never tried to send money home with other methods other than by asking it himself. He goes every 4-6 months and takes along N\$2000.00. He has no idea what the family uses the money for, and does not bother asking either. The last time he went home he took food, sugar, maize meal, cosmetics, clothing and blankets, with a value of N\$500.00. In case of emergencies the family do contact him of his cell phone.

Haiping John is 21 years old, born in Angola, and has been a cattle herder in Namibia for two years. He lives at his employers' house. He does not send money home but takes it with him when he visits the family and buys the goods necessary for the family. He believes that it is much safer to take money and goods with him as there is no other method that he can use. He usually visits home about 5-10 times a year. On his last trip home, he bought goods to the value of N\$ 600.00 that included cosmetics, clothing, food (sugar) for his grandmother and family. There are no shops at his home village in Angola and therefore he does not leave money with the family. The goods that he buys are those that he is able to carry with when he visits home. Every time he visits the family he takes along goods to them. His younger brother usually visits him about four times a year from Angola and he gives him around N\$20 when he returns. He also has a relative working as a teacher at one of the schools in Namibia.

Philemon Michael is originally from Oshixweme village in Angola. Philemon usually sends money home with people he knows from his village. The people he sends money with are reliable and deliver the money safely. He also takes money along when visiting his family. He usually sends N\$ 150.00 twice within a four-month period. The family buys food, cosmetics, or clothing with the money remitted. In December 2003

he sent an amount of N\$ 150.00 plus sweets, sugar, rice and cooking oil for Christmas celebrations. He only visits home twice a year and the last time he visited home was in January 2004. He took goods and food to the value of N\$ 180.00. He feels that the money and goods send helps his family very much: "My parents even told me not to stop sending them money and goods as they heavily depend on that."

CONCLUSION

The analysis presented in this study gives a picture of the migration patterns and activities at the main border between Namibia and Angola as well as the transfer of goods and money between the two countries. With the current prevailing economic situation in Namibia and Oshikango in particular, an ever-increasing number of Angolans passing through the border is expected. It is apparent that the driving factors for Angolans crossing the border into Namibia are social ties and economic needs. Shopping and business activities emerged as important economic factors while visiting friends and family are important social motivators.

The majority of travelers passing through the Oshikango border post are short distance travelers. A striking feature is the higher number of Angolans crossing the border into Namibia than vice-versa. This phenomenon is likely to increase in the future. Many more Angolans also enter than leave. This suggests that many are not abiding by the stipulated regulations of 30 km and 3 days entry.

The Joint Defense and Security Commission that has been established between Namibian and Angolan governments has been dealing with various aspects of migration and border control. Joint patrol of border posts are crucial for maintaining peace and positive relations between countries.

The general working conditions of officials at the border and current infrastructure are not very favorable and this creates frustration and inefficiency among officials. The following recommendations are therefore made:

- There is a need to keep records of departures and arrivals at all border crossing points (formal and informal) along the Namibian and Angolan borders. This would assist the immigration department to better understand the movement of migrants between the two countries.

- Not all people use the formal border post for crossing between the two countries and this poses a potential problem of illegal immigration. One response might be to strengthen the patrolling along the borderline between Namibia and Angola but until the scale of the problem is understood, this could be a waste of resources.
- The government of Namibia needs to address the housing of border officials and other necessary facilities in order to enhance efficiency among officials as well as a good working environment for the officials. Facilities such as computers also need to be introduced in order to improve the database.
- The current office space is not adequate for the operations. The immigration department should construct different offices for arrivals and departures. This would improve the efficiency and effectiveness of border operations.
- The joint Defense and Security Commission is an important cooperative body in terms of dealing with matters that are crucial for smooth immigration operations. This commission needs to be further strengthened in order to implement challenges that need to be addressed.
- The farming sector in northern Namibia provides employment to large number of Angolan migrants. Bilateral discussions between the two countries should be encouraged in order to address various labour related matters such as employment of miners, minimum wages for farm labourers and also security for these labourers.
- The two governments should recognize the importance of remittances from migrants working in Namibia on many households in Angola. Therefore, more opportunities need to be created for people who want to engage in the job market of either country.

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- 8 The term "foreign citizens" is used since Angolans are not the only people to use Oshikango to cross into Namibia. However, over 90% of the foreign nationals recorded at Oshikango border post were, in fact, Angolan.
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