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LOURENÇO

STRATEGIC THINKING

From the Inauguration to the State of the Nation
2017-2026

The Strategic Thinking of João Lourenço

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Analytical essay

The Strategic Thinking of João Lourenço

A comparative reading of the Inaugural Address (2017)
and the State of the Nation Address (2026)



Lagos · October 2026



Title

The Strategic Thinking of João Lourenço

Subtitle

From the Inauguration to the State of the Nation, 2017-2026

Publisher

AfricaHeadline Media Group

Series

State and Development

Place and date

Lagos, October 2026

Original language

Portuguese. English edition translated by the
AfricaHeadline editorial team

ISBN

To be assigned

Legal deposit

To be assigned

Format

Digital edition designed for mobile reading

Primary sources

Inaugural Address of the President of the Republic (2017)
and State of the Nation Address (15 October 2026)

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Renewal and transformation within continuity, improving what works and correcting what does not.

João Lourenço, Inaugural Address, September 2017

We have reached a point of no return. From now on, Angola is the developed Angola we have long aspired to.

João Lourenço, State of the Nation Address, 15 October 2026

Editor's Note



AfricaHeadline Media Group exists to report, explain and give visibility to the major issues facing Angola and Africa, in Portuguese, English and French, with rigour, editorial independence and a commitment to the continent's development.

It is in that spirit that we publish *The Strategic Thinking of João Lourenço*. The book starts from a simple observation. Read together, the Inaugural Address of September 2017 and the State of the Nation Address of 15 October 2026 form a rare record, because they allow the programme announced by a Head of State to be measured against the account the same Head of State gives nine years later.

We offer readers, policymakers, students, researchers, diplomats and investors an organised, accessible reading that stays faithful to the sources. Every figure cited comes from the two presidential speeches, and editorial analysis is always clearly marked in the strategic reading boxes. For this English edition, quotations have been translated by our editorial team from the Portuguese originals.

This publication sets out to feed public debate with facts and perspective. Angola's development is, as the President of the Republic puts it, a collective and permanent mission, and the media also has a role in ensuring that this mission is understood, followed and scrutinised by every citizen.

We thank everyone who made this edition possible and dedicate it to Angola's young people, to whom the future discussed here belongs.

The Editorial Board
AfricaHeadline Media Group
Lagos, October 2026

Foreword

OPENING

Some speeches open a term of office; others render account. Rarely does the same statesman give his people, nine years apart, the two texts needed to measure precisely the distance between promises made and work delivered. That is the analytical opportunity now open to anyone studying the governance of President João Manuel Gonçalves Lourenço.

In September 2017, before the Constitutional Court, visiting Heads of State and the entire nation, Angola's third President set out a programme of government. On 15 October 2026, in the National Assembly, the same Head of State delivered the State of the Nation Address, a long, documented, sector-by-sector account of the road travelled.

This book places the two texts side by side. It is not a mere compilation. It seeks to identify the **underlying framework of thought** that runs through both, the principles behind the choices made, the priorities that held, those that evolved, and the results the figures allow us to verify.

The book follows the form, style and vocabulary of Angolan institutional journalism, in a sober register, with facts first, faithful quotation and careful context. The analysis added to it

is openly strategic and patriotic, because no serious reading of Angola's future can be indifferent to its success.

All figures cited come from the two presidential speeches. Where the analysis goes beyond the text, this is flagged in the strategic reading boxes.

Two speeches, one vision

INTRODUCTION

From Cabinda to Cunene, from the sea to the East

President João Lourenço took office in 2017 pledging to put Angola “on the path to development”. Nine years later, the Head of State told lawmakers that the country had reached “a point of no return”.

Between those two moments, the world changed profoundly. Angola weathered the oil price slump, recession, the COVID-19 pandemic, disruption to global supply chains, international conflicts and rising food, fuel and fertiliser prices. The 2026 address does not gloss over this context and acknowledges that delivery of the plans “was affected by adverse factors”.

Even so, a side-by-side reading reveals remarkable **strategic consistency**. The major themes of 2017 (the democratic rule of law, the fight against corruption, economic diversification, the social sector, decentralisation, youth, economic diplomacy) return in 2026, no longer as promises but as a record.

The starting point

In the State of the Nation Address, the Head of State recalls the country he inherited, marked by shrinking economic activity, budget deficits, rising public debt, widespread price increases, exchange-rate instability, falling net international reserves and difficult access to foreign currency.

He also recalls its assets, including 15 years of peace and reconciliation and a young, growing population, “a people who know their history, love their country and are always ready to contribute to its development”.

We took on this challenge head-on because we felt the time had come and the country had the conditions needed to do so.

State of the Nation, 2026

The argument of this book

João Lourenço's strategic thinking rests on one central idea, that **development is a collective and permanent mission** that does not end with each political cycle. On this idea stands a framework of nine pillars, which structure the chapters that follow:

- The Constitution as compass and renewed continuity as method.
- National reconciliation as a precondition for progress.

- Cleaning up the State as a condition for trust.
- Macroeconomic stability as the foundation.
- Productive diversification as the destination.
- Human capital as the top priority.
- Infrastructure as development corridors.
- Bringing the State closer to citizens as a way of governing.
- Peace diplomacy as an assertion of sovereignty.

Part I · Vision and method

The principles that shape governance, with the Constitution as compass, reconciliation as foundation and a cleaner State as the condition for trust.

The constitutional compass and the doctrine of renewed continuity

CHAPTER I

“The Constitution will be our compass and the law our yardstick for decisions.”

At his inauguration, the Head of State set out his method before his programme. He pledged to govern “using all the powers that the Constitution and the strength of the votes” confer on him, but always within the law.

The first hallmark of João Lourenço’s strategic thinking is **institutional**. Before announcing economic or social targets, the President laid down the rules of the game, with the Constitution as compass, the law as yardstick and the national interest above private or group interests.

The national interest must stand above private or group interests, so that the defence of the common good prevails.

Inaugural Address, 2017

President of all Angolans

Elected at the head of the MPLA list, the new Head of State was keen to stress that, once sworn in, he would be “the President of all Angolans”, promising inclusive governance “regardless of place of birth, sex, mother tongue, religion, economic condition or social position”.

This was not rhetoric for the occasion. It foreshadowed the boldest gesture of his presidency, the public apology of 2021 and the reconciliation policy examined in Chapter II.

The formula of renewed continuity

The motto chosen in 2017, “Renewal and transformation within continuity, improving what works and correcting what does not”, is perhaps the most precise summary of the President’s strategic thinking. It rejects revolutionary rupture, but equally rejects standing still.

In the 2026 address, the Head of State traces the historical line in three stages: Independence, proclaimed by President António Agostinho Neto; peace, reconciliation and reconstruction under President José Eduardo dos Santos; and, finally, the responsibility to “put the country on the path to development”.

STRATEGIC READING

Renewed continuity is a doctrine of legitimacy. By placing his term within the sequence of Independence, Peace and

Development, João Lourenço presents his reforms not as a rejection of the past but as the next stage of the same national project. This allowed him to undertake deep change, including the fight against corruption, while preserving political stability.

Democracy built day by day

“Democracy must be built every day,” the President said in 2017, adding that it “is not the responsibility of the organs of State power alone” but “a project for the whole of society”.

Hence his appeal, in the same speech, to churches, traditional authorities, trade unions, professional bodies, non-governmental organisations and civil society to take part “in designing and implementing public policy”. Hence, too, his commitment to the press, with greater investment in the media and a call on public servants to “learn to live with criticism and differences of opinion”.

By 2026, the same line had taken the form of concrete participation tools, such as participatory budgeting, municipal accountability forums, community consultation councils and the Best Municipality in Angola award.

Planning to govern

The President's strategic thinking is also planned thinking. The 2026 address identifies the "guiding compass" of government, namely the Interim Plan of October 2017, the National Development Plan 2018-2022 and the National Development Plan 2023-2027, complemented by long-term instruments such as the National Human Capital Development Plan 2023-2037 and the Hydrocarbons Strategy 2025-2050.

Reconciliation, peace of mind as a foundation

CHAPTER II

“Our capacity to embrace and forgive is fundamental to building a prosperous country.”

The Head of State believes it would not have been possible to work together for development “if we were unable to heal the wounds left by the long political and military conflict”.

In 2017, the President paid tribute to the heroes of resistance, such as Ngola Kiluanji, Ginga Mbande, Ekuikui II, Mutu ya Kvela and Mandume, and to Dr António Agostinho Neto. Memory, at the time, was above all the memory of liberation.

The 2026 address reveals a decisive shift, because memory now also encompasses the nation’s **internal wounds**.

The 2021 apology

In 2021, as Head of State, João Lourenço took it upon himself to apologise publicly for all crimes committed during the political conflicts that took place between 11 November 1975 and 4 April 2002.

I did so because I believed it was essential to strengthen national reconciliation, and that it would not be possible to work together for the nation's development if we were unable to heal the wounds left by the long political and military conflict.

State of the Nation, 2026

The tools of reconciliation

- **CIVICOP.** The Commission for the Implementation of the Reconciliation Plan in Memory of the Victims of Political Conflicts, tasked with paying fitting tribute to the victims.
- **A dignified funeral.** The right of the family of the founder of the largest opposition party to repatriate his remains and hold a funeral in keeping with Christian culture and African traditions.
- **Tribute to the signatories of the Alvor Agreements.** To mark 50 years of Independence, Angola honoured António Agostinho Neto, Álvaro Holden Roberto and Jonas Malheiro Savimbi.
- **Memorial to the Victims of Political Conflicts.** Inaugurated on the eve of the 2026 address as “a place of memory, reflection and reconciliation” and of “patriotic education”.

STRATEGIC READING

In João Lourenço's thinking, reconciliation is not an isolated moral gesture but **political infrastructure for development**. A country divided by its memories does not invest, cooperate or trust. By embracing the memory of all victims, the State broadens the nation's base of legitimacy and lowers political risk, an asset that investors also measure.

The President makes this stance a shared responsibility: "It is the responsibility of all of us to work to consolidate national reconciliation and political stability, a fundamental guarantee for the country's economic and social development and the wellbeing of Angolans."

Cleaning up the State and fighting corruption

CHAPTER III

“No one is too rich or too powerful to escape punishment.”

The fight against corruption, announced in 2017 as “an important front”, has become one of the most visible hallmarks of the administration. In 2026, the Head of State presented figures on prosecutions, seized assets and progress in international rankings.

In his inaugural address, João Lourenço described corruption and impunity as having “a direct negative impact on the capacity of the State and its agents to implement any programme of government”, urging “all our people to work together to root out this evil”.

Citizens need to believe that no one is too rich or too powerful to escape punishment, and no one is too poor to be protected.

Inaugural Address, 2017

From pledge to action

According to the 2026 address, legal instruments were strengthened, financial and property assets recovered, court cases opened, administrative practices changed and new control mechanisms introduced against corruption, embezzlement, nepotism and influence peddling.

≈ USD 13 bn

in assets and funds seized and frozen in Angola and abroad (2022-2026)

466

criminal cases processed over the past four years

+28

places in the African ranking of the Corruption Index

+19

places in the Transparency International Index

EUR 900 m · USD 500 m

held in Switzerland and Singapore, whose return to the Angolan State, “their sole and legitimate owner”, is still being sought

A new ethic of public office

Today, anyone holding public office must be aware that it is not a privilege but an opportunity given to us to carry

out, with integrity, a mission of serving the State and, through it, the Angolan people.

State of the Nation, 2026

The Head of State pledges that recovered funds will go “to public investment projects for the benefit of the population”, particularly social infrastructure.

Justice as a pillar

In 2017, the President promised to give “fresh impetus” to justice reform. By 2026, the country had 53 courts in operation (the Supreme Court, four Courts of Appeal and 39 district courts), 835 judges, 779 public prosecutors and the **judge of guarantees**, introduced in 2023, which has helped reduce arbitrary detention and excessive pre-trial custody.

STRATEGIC READING

For João Lourenço, cleaning up the State is not only a criminal matter; it is also **economic policy**. The 2026 text explicitly links the fight against corruption to “creating a good business environment”. Without predictability and equality before the law, there is no sustainable private investment, and without private investment, there is no diversification.

Part II · Economy and production

From macroeconomic stabilisation to productive diversification, the road to an economy less dependent on oil.

Putting the house in order and stabilising the economy

CHAPTER IV

“Less tax revenue going to interest payments and more resources for essential services.”

Angola’s economy grew by 5.3 per cent in the first quarter of 2026, driven by the non-oil sector, which expanded by 6.2 per cent, the President said in his State of the Nation Address.

In 2017, the Head of State pledged to “keep inflation within acceptable and controllable limits” by imposing “strict exchange-rate and fiscal policy rules”. He also wanted a State that was “less and less interventionist”, focused on its role as “supervisor and regulator”.

The 2026 address describes the road travelled, with the overhaul of public finances, subsidy reform, better debt management, new exchange-rate rules, stronger tax collection and tighter spending control. These were demanding measures, which the President describes as “decisive in restoring the State’s ability to carry out public investment projects”.

 The indicators of a turnaround

115.9% (2020)

51.2%

public debt as a share of GDP (2026), now within legal limits

27.5% (2024)

10.8%

inflation in June 2026

31.5% (2024)

21.3%

unemployment in Q1 2026

reserves

USD 16.2 bn

net international reserves, covering eight months of imports

Kz 4.4 trn (2022)

Kz 8.9 trn

credit extended to businesses and households (May 2026)

nominal GDP

USD 141.7 bn

Angola strengthens its position as a growing regional economy

Diversification is already moving GDP

The most significant structural shift is the change in the growth engine. Over the past two years, non-oil GDP grew by

an average of 5.2 per cent, becoming “the main driver of the economy”, while the oil sector grew little because of ageing wells, operational problems and lower investment.

Foreign investment in the non-oil sector rose by 54 per cent on the previous period, a sign of outside confidence in the diversification strategy.

A sounder financial system

The National Bank of Angola is described as “a pillar of the country’s macroeconomic and financial stability”. Milestones include the creation of the Bank Resolution Fund, stronger supervision, the restoration of correspondent banking relationships with US banks and a Financial Inclusion Index of 54.8 per cent. Notice No. 10 accounted for 16.8 per cent of total credit, establishing itself as a tool for diversification and formalisation.

Among tax and capital-market reforms, the address highlights the VAT overhaul cutting the burden on essential goods, the first issue of sustainable bonds, electronic invoicing, the Privatisation Programme and the creation of the first national reinsurer.

The state of the nation is not measured by GDP growth alone; it is measured by the number of families who are

able to live better, the number of young people who find work, the children who attend school.

State of the Nation, 2026

STRATEGIC READING

Here lies an essential feature of the President's thinking. Macroeconomic stability is not an end but a **means**. Fiscal discipline is justified by its social payoff, namely less interest and more schools and hospitals. It is a vision of rigour with a human purpose, which distinguishes technical austerity from reform with a national purpose.

Diversifying to produce, process and export

CHAPTER V

“Produce more, process better, distribute efficiently and export with quality.”

Use of installed industrial capacity rose from 31 to 54 per cent, non-oil exports grew by 66 per cent and fish production increased by 30 per cent, according to the record presented by the Head of State.

In 2017, João Lourenço made diversification his “watchword”, calling for a “drastic reduction in imports” and a “push for exports”, with an emphasis on rural areas and on raising domestic agricultural and industrial output. The 2026 address shows how far the country has come.

The countryside as the basis of food sovereignty

About 50.7 per cent of the employed population, roughly 6.4 million people, make their living from agriculture, livestock, forestry and fisheries. The President describes the countryside as “a decisive base for increasing national production, reducing imports, raising household incomes and strengthening the country’s food sovereignty”.

2,850 t (2023)

6,930 t

certified seed available (2025), +143%

13,000 t (2022)

173,604 t

fertiliser for family farming (2026)

2023-2025

1.03 m t

of meat produced, up 4.6%

Luinga project

10,000 ha

irrigated, ≈4,000 families and 100 companies

The Head of State does not hide the structural weakness, however. Of the 5,858 commercial farms registered, only 125 are actually producing. Investment in irrigation schemes such as Cacála and Coreia, Quizenga and Luinga reflects the choice of farming that is “more irrigated, mechanised, productive and resilient to the effects of climate change”.

The sea as an economic frontier

The Blue Economy has gained strategic status. Between 2022 and 2025, national fish production rose from 558,000 to 725,000 tonnes, and per capita consumption climbed from

14.5 to 18 kilos a year, approaching the average recommended by the FAO.

In the sea we find an abundant supply of food, work, science, trade and a clear outlook for the future.

State of the Nation, 2026

The Kalunga programme, which builds scientific knowledge of marine resources, and the Integrated Fisheries Inspection Project round out a vision of “Angola’s sovereign presence in the Atlantic”.

Industry and trade adding value

31%

54%

use of installed industrial capacity

2022-2025

–USD 595 m

in food imports

exports

+66%

non-oil (iron, steel, cement, fish and beverages)

PRODESI

≈6,300

projects supported and over 100,000 jobs

Domestic production now covers almost all local demand for flour, pasta, beer, soft drinks, soap and cement. The **Made in Angola** label covers more than 4,300 products, and more than 49,000 micro, small and medium-sized enterprises have been certified. The Barra do Dande Free Zone, the Biópio hub linked to the Lobito Corridor, the Strategic Food Reserve and the Transforma Aqui programme, which brings processing to rural areas, give the strategy substance.

Targets for 2027 include raising capacity utilisation to 65 per cent, cutting informality in trade from 85 to 69 per cent and creating more than 200,000 jobs.

Natural resources with added value

In oil and gas, the President's thinking combines realism and reform, with new regulators, the restructuring of Sonangol, the Local Content regime and a target of keeping output above one million barrels a day. The first phase of the Cabinda Refinery and the Barra do Dande Ocean Terminal reduce dependence on imported refined products.

In mining, highlights include PLANAGEO, which gave the country "better knowledge of its mining potential" and greater "bargaining power with investors", the resumption of gold

production for the first time since Independence, the Luele Project, the Saurimo Diamond Hub and the first pig-iron plant, opened in 2023.

STRATEGIC READING

In João Lourenço's thinking, diversification follows a **value-chain** logic: produce on land and at sea, process in industry, organise through trade, move goods along logistics corridors and export with certification. Each link depends on the one before. That is why the 2026 text connects agriculture, industry, quality laboratories, ports and railways as parts of a single system.

Part III · People at the centre

Health, education, social protection and youth, with human capital as the top priority of all.

Human capital at the centre

CHAPTER VI

“Investing in young people is investing in our future.”

Life expectancy in Angola rose from 61 to 64 years and under-five mortality fell from 68 to 52 per 1,000 live births, the President said, naming children’s and young people’s education as “the top priority of all”.

In 2017, the Head of State said that prioritising the social sector, “with a serious commitment to human resources”, was “the only way” to lift the country from its position on human development indicators. That conviction runs through the entire 2026 address.

Health, the largest investment ever

2,612 (2017)

3,348

health facilities; 736 built

human capital

28,429

new health workers hired in four years

170

maternal deaths per 100,000 live births

65% (2023)

75%

access to and use of health services (2026)

HIV, ages 15–49

2% → 1.6%

prevalence among the lowest in sub-Saharan Africa

malaria

28 → 20

deaths per 100,000 people (2023–2025)

More than 80 per cent of the new facilities are for primary health care, “bringing care closer to the population”. The National Health Service has 45,146 beds, including 1,675 in intensive care.

At the same time, Angola is entering advanced medicine, with 136 robotic surgical procedures, ten of them by telesurgery with the surgeon in the United States and the patient in Luanda; 1,391 cardiac operations at the Cardeal Dom Alexandre do Nascimento Hospital Complex; and the first stroke fast-track at the Pedro Maria Tonha “Pedalé” Hospital Complex.

STRATEGIC READING

The design is twofold and deliberate, with a **broad base** (primary care, vaccination, maternal health) and a **peak of excellence** (robotic surgery, neuroscience, cardiology). The base saves the most lives; the peak reduces medical evacuations abroad, saves foreign currency and establishes Angola “as an African benchmark in health innovation”.

Education, the school as a lever

104,366 (2021/22)

141,678

classrooms (2026/27)

system

9.14 m

pupils enrolled and 252,419 teachers

≈1 m (snacks)

3.43 m

children in the National School Meals Programme

literacy

72.6%

of people aged over 15

The education budget reached 6.9 per cent of the 2026 General State Budget. Some 1,664 priority schools are planned to bring 1.88 million children and young people into the system, and 8,000 new teachers will be hired. More than 13.3 million locally produced textbooks were distributed for the 2026/2027 school year.

The Head of State acknowledges frankly that the 2024 Census reveals “a considerable number of children and young people outside the education system and a shortage of teachers”, and that the National Learning Assessment confirms the need to strengthen reading in the early grades.

Higher education, science and innovation

The network grew from 64 higher education institutions in 2016 to 106 in 2026, with about 352,873 students and a presence in 18 of the 21 provinces. Three new universities were created in 2020, and the Luanda Science Centre and the Luanda Science and Technology Park have opened.

The priority must shift from quantitative expansion to consolidating the quality, efficiency, relevance and impact of higher education.

State of the Nation, 2026

This sentence marks a **change of phase** in the President's thinking. Having expanded access, it is now time to demand quality, employability and links with business. It is a move from a logic of quantity to a logic of results, the same shift that runs through the whole 2026 address.

Family, social protection and youth

CHAPTER VII

“Strengthening the family is strengthening the nation.”

The Kwenda programme operates in 21 provinces and 200 municipalities, with about 5 million people registered and 1.5 million households receiving cash transfers, 71 per cent of which go to women.

In 2017, the President called for a “welfare State”, the eradication of hunger, the fight against poverty and the empowerment of the poorest families. The 2026 address sets out the instruments of that policy.

Kwenda, from cash transfers to self-reliance

Launched as a pilot in five municipalities, Kwenda was rated “Highly Satisfactory” by the World Bank. It has moved towards productive inclusion, with 235 Solidarity Production Groups, 161 community savings funds and 56 community mills. The exit strategy rests on encouraging production and self-employment.

The **Single Social Registry** and 90 Integrated Social Action Centres, with more than a million users served, ensure social

policy is based on “reliable information, accurate targeting and constant follow-up”.

Children and women

The approval of the National Early Childhood Policy and the announcement of a Penal Code revision toughening penalties for crimes against minors reflect a principle stated without ambiguity: “No child should be a victim of violence, neglect or abuse.”

The Law against Domestic Violence, the National Policy for Gender Equality and Equity and the Green Portal deliver on the 2017 commitment that women should “stand shoulder to shoulder with men” at school, at work and in public office.

Youth, the nation’s greatest asset

2022-2026

+920,000

net new jobs created

training

≈600,000

people trained by the National Vocational Training System

JOBE

+140,000

young beneficiaries

JOVEM+ to 2030

+500,000

young people aged 16 to 35, 40% women

By investing in and betting on young people, we are investing in the country's present and future.

State of the Nation, 2026

The Head of State announced a **National Conference of Angolan Youth**, bringing together young people from across the country and from different backgrounds to discuss ways for them to play a fuller part in development.

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In 2017, youth was described as the “objective basis” of public policy; in 2026, as “the top priority of all”. Demography is treated as a **strategic opportunity**, not a threat. A young, well-trained and employed population is the most powerful growth driver Angola has.

Part IV · Territory and the State

Energy, water, development corridors and a State reform that brings public services closer to citizens.

Energy, water and development corridors

CHAPTER VIII

“Turning energy into a true factor of national unity.”

Installed power generation capacity rose from 4,659 megawatts in 2017 to 6,322 megawatts and is expected to reach about 8,000 megawatts by the end of 2027, when the first turbine at Caculo Cabaça comes on stream.

In 2017, the President promised to keep up “the push for electrification and industrialisation”, improve power and water supply and invest in mobility and an “integrated logistics plan”. The 2026 record confirms a structural transformation.

A clean and sovereign power mix

4,659 MW (2017)

6,322 MW

installed capacity; target ≈8,000 MW in 2027

≈43%

>50%

access to electricity

828,000 m³/day (2017)

1.326 m m³/day

drinking water production

coverage

>62%

water supply; target >65%

The commissioning of Capanda, Laúca, the raising of the Cambambe dam and other schemes has made hydropower dominant, reducing dependence on fossil fuels. The National Transmission Grid now covers 5,860 kilometres of lines and connects 13 provinces.

Beating drought in the South

The Programme to Combat the Effects of Drought in Southern Angola (PCESSA) is presented as one of the efforts with the greatest human reach. The Calucuve (100 million m³) and Ndue (145 million m³) dams, handed over in September 2026, will serve tens of thousands of people and hundreds of thousands of head of cattle.

The President reveals how the programme began, with a visit to Ombala Yo Mungo, in Cunene, that inspired him “to conceive PCESSA and begin building the CAFU canal”.

STRATEGIC READING

This episode illustrates a method: **see for yourself on the ground, acknowledge the problem, turn an emergency into structure**. The stated goal is to “replace emergency responses with structural water-security solutions”, applying long-term thinking to a social crisis.

From transport corridors to development corridors

Our main objective is to turn our transport and logistics corridors into genuine development corridors.

State of the Nation, 2026

- **Lobito Corridor**. A competitive Atlantic route that has drawn more than USD 750 million in investment, linking Angola to Zambia and the DRC.
- **Luena-Saurimo branch line**. 260 km, the first railway project of this scale built from scratch since Independence.
- **North-South Corridor**. About 700 km linking Malanje, Cuito and Menongue and connecting the three railways.
- **Dr António Agostinho Neto International Airport**. 2 million passengers and 6,000 direct jobs.
- **Ports**. Concessions at Lobito and Luanda have generated USD 380 million in revenue and USD 1.3 billion in

investment commitments; the Caio deep-water terminal in Cabinda.

Housing and land

The country has 18 new urban centres and 40,419 homes, benefiting about 2.4 million people, along with 370,000 plots for guided self-build. Over the past nine years, about 3,500 kilometres of national roads have been rehabilitated and paved.

Digital sovereignty

More than 1,300 km of fibre optic cable, free internet in 18 provinces, the National Cloud, ANGOSAT-2, the National Cybersecurity Centre and Angola's move up to Group B, high maturity, in the World Bank's e-government index complete the picture of 21st-century infrastructure.

State reform and governance close to the citizen

CHAPTER IX

“We want a State that works as a single platform serving Angolans.”

The President urged parliamentary groups to break the deadlock over local government, recalling that he submitted the proposal to create it to the Council of the Republic on 22 March 2018.

In 2017, João Lourenço argued that communities’ problems “cannot simply wait for decisions taken in the capital”, announcing decentralisation, administrative and financial devolution and the gradual introduction of local authorities.

Simplifying to serve

The **SIMPLIFICA** project, rolled out in three successive packages, became the main tool for cutting red tape. Measures include identity cards from birth, a single lifetime business licence, a single vehicle title, a one-stop shop for land rights and the end of annual re-enrolment in state schools.

We want an integrated public administration, paperless, without users having to appear in person and without

fragmented institutions.

State of the Nation, 2026

The Civil Service Framework Law, the Single Recruitment Agency, the merit principle and more than 1.4 million services provided at SIAC centres in the first half of 2026 answer the 2017 commitment to “merit, professionalism, transparency, rigour and a public service ethos”.

The new administrative map

The creation of new provinces and municipalities, including Moxico Leste, Cuando and Icolo e Bengo, was presented as a way “to promote more balanced development across the country, ensuring public services are available to the whole population, leaving no one behind”. Two years on, the President says it is already clear “how beneficial it was” to take this step.

The local government file

The Head of State is clear that devolution is “an important but incomplete exercise”, because it remains an extension of the same power, that of the State. Of the 13 bills in the local government package, 10 have been passed. The deadlock persists over whether elections should be held in phases or simultaneously.

The MPLA has that majority, but it is not advisable for a matter this sensitive to be passed by a single party and implemented by the Executive.

State of the Nation, 2026

STRATEGIC READING

This is one of the most revealing moments in the President's political thinking. Although he has the majority to decide alone, he prefers **consensus**. It reflects a view of the State in which structural reforms must be owned across the political spectrum to last, the same logic as reconciliation, applied to the architecture of power.

Justice serving the economy

Some 88 justice service centres were opened and 175,487 companies were set up with support between 2022 and June 2026. The Born with an Identity project installed 123 registration points in maternity units. In the President's words, "justice is also an engine of the economy".

Part V · Angola in the world

Peace diplomacy, sovereignty and the assertion of national identity.

Peace diplomacy and international standing

CHAPTER X

“Signing an agreement is easy; the hardest part, though possible, is implementing it.”

In 2025, Angola held the chairmanship of the African Union for the first time in its history, and President João Lourenço was named “African Union Champion for Peace and Reconciliation”.

In 2017, the new Head of State set out the principles of his foreign policy, based on friendship and cooperation with all peoples, non-interference, mutual benefit, priority for neighbours and SADC, firm support for the African Union and economic diplomacy geared to attracting foreign investment. He also said Angola should maintain “its role as an important actor in keeping the peace in its sub-region”.

The African mediator

As chair of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, Angola worked to bring peace to eastern DRC, the Central African Republic, Sudan and South Sudan. In July 2024, a ceasefire agreement was signed under the direct

mediation of the Angolan government, within the framework of the Luanda Process.

Invited to the signing of the Washington Agreement between the DRC and Rwanda in December 2025, the President warned that the understandings had to be put into practice. “Nearly ten months on, the evidence shows we were right,” he said in 2026.

An African Union chairmanship focused on infrastructure

- **Summit on Financing Infrastructure in Africa** (Luanda, October 2025), with a pipeline of 38 bankable projects and about USD 18 billion mobilised for 13 priority projects.
- **7th African Union-European Union Summit** (Luanda, November 2025), which put the Lobito Corridor and Angolan projects on the European agenda.
- **17th US-Africa Business Summit** (Luanda, June 2025), with more than USD 4 billion in deals for the continent and USD 5 billion in guarantees for the Lobito Corridor.
- **Extraordinary Summit on Conflict Prevention** (Luanda, August 2026) and the **Alliance of Civilizations Summit** (July 2026), which produced the Luanda Joint Declaration.

Angola, a destination for landmark visits

The period was marked by the first visit to Angola by a sitting US President, Joe Biden, and by Pope Leo XIV's first visit to the country, part of his first apostolic journey to Africa. The Framework Agreement with the Holy See consolidated cooperation with the Catholic Church.

From that rostrum we have defended multilateralism, reform of the Security Council, the defence of peace and international law, and reparatory justice for Africans and people of African descent for the crime of slavery.

State of the Nation, 2026

STRATEGIC READING

João Lourenço's diplomacy has a dual nature: **peace diplomacy**, which gives Angola moral authority and political influence, and **economic diplomacy**, which turns that influence into financing. The Lobito Corridor is the clearest example of a national project that has become a summit agenda item with the United States, the European Union and multilateral institutions.

Sovereignty, defence and security

CHAPTER XI

“Without peace, security and stability, there is no sustainable development.”

The country’s political and military situation is stable, the Commander-in-Chief of the Angolan Armed Forces said, while warning that stability “should not be understood as an absence of risk”.

In 2017, the President promised to modernise the FAA and “take solid steps towards creating a defence industry”. In 2026, he reports work under way to complete an assembly line for armoured vehicles and trucks, progress towards self-sufficiency in food and uniforms for the armed forces and the start of construction of the large Kinkankala Naval Base in Bengo.

The sea as a sovereign space

Strengthening the Navy, the Maritime Coordination and Surveillance Programme, upgrading the Soyo and Luanda Naval Bases and the Namibe Regional Maritime Surveillance Centre aim to ensure “an effective State presence along the entire length of our coastline”, out to the Exclusive Economic Zone.

New threats

The Head of State identifies a changing risk environment, including terrorism, transnational crime, piracy, human and drug trafficking and, above all, “the abusive and criminal use of robotics, nanotechnology and, above all, Artificial Intelligence”. The response relies on skills in emerging technologies, intelligence and the control of illicit financial flows.

On public security, an average of about 50 per cent of 39,189 crimes were solved, the replacement of military-grade weapons held by private security firms continues and the Border Guard Police is being reinforced along the borders with the DRC and Zambia.

STRATEGIC READING

The President’s notion of sovereignty is **broad**: military, but also food, energy, health and digital sovereignty. The defence industry, domestic medicine production, ANGOSAT-2 and the Strategic Food Reserve are parts of the same doctrine, that of reducing external vulnerabilities.

Identity, culture, environment and sport

CHAPTER XII

“Unity in diversity and diversity that fosters unity.”

After Mbanza Kongo was declared a World Heritage Site in 2017, Sona was inscribed as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity and a bid was launched for Semba.

Asserting Angolan identity has been a strategic component since the inauguration. In 2017, the President referred to “cultural diplomacy” and to the bids for the Cuanza Corridor, Tchitundo-Hulo and Cuito Cuanavale. In 2026, the Tchitundo-Hulo file was submitted to the World Heritage Committee.

The address lists the National Archive, the National Cinema-Theatre, the future Film Archive, the Liceu Vieira Dias Palace of Music and Theatre, the restoration of historic fortresses and the Memorial to the Sovereigns of Ngola in Malanje.

Tourism and the environment

Angola welcomed more than 223,000 international tourists in 2025, up 28 per cent on 2022, with revenue of USD 667 million. Visa waivers for citizens of 99 countries and the e-visa have opened the country to the world.

On the environment, the reintroduction of giraffes in Iona and Quiçama, the first Marine Conservation Area in Baía dos Tigres and a target of cutting emissions by 11 per cent by 2030 reflect the commitment made in 2017 to “future generations”.

Sport that unites the nation

AfroBasket 2025

12th title

African basketball title, a continental record

women's handball

16th title

African title in 2024

current cycle

227 · 221 · 244

gold, silver and bronze medals won by Angolan athletes

Every track, every sports hall and every stadium we open in Angola represents, above all, a path in life for young Angolans.

State of the Nation, 2026

Part VI · Record and outlook

From promise to delivery, and the challenges that remain.

From promise to delivery

CHAPTER XIII

Comparison 2017 → 2026

The following overview sets commitments made in the Inaugural Address against the results presented in the State of the Nation Address.

2017 COMMITMENT

Fight corruption and impunity

2026 RECORD

466 cases in 4 years; ≈USD 13 bn seized; up 28 places in the African ranking

2017 COMMITMENT

Inflation within controllable limits

2026 RECORD

From 27.5% (2024) to 10.8% (June 2026)

2017 COMMITMENT

Fiscal discipline

2026 RECORD

Debt down from 115.9% (2020) to 51.2% of GDP

2017 COMMITMENT

Economic diversification

2026 RECORD

Non-oil GDP +5.2% a year; non-oil exports +66%

2017 COMMITMENT

A proper role for private enterprise

2026 RECORD

Privatisation Programme; port and rail concessions

2017 COMMITMENT

Electrification and industrialisation

2026 RECORD

4,659 → 6,322 MW; industrial capacity use 31% → 54%

2017 COMMITMENT

Reduce mortality

2026 RECORD

Maternal 239 → 170; under-five 68 → 52; life expectancy 61 → 64

2017 COMMITMENT

Education as a right

2026 RECORD

+37,312 classrooms since 2021; 3.4 m children receiving school meals

2017 COMMITMENT

Quality higher education

2026 RECORD

64 → 106 institutions; National Quality Assurance System

2017 COMMITMENT

Public administration reform

2026 RECORD

SIMPLIFICA 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0; Civil Service Framework Law

2017 COMMITMENT

Introduce local government

2026 RECORD

10 of 13 laws passed; deadlock unresolved

2017 COMMITMENT

Defence industry

2026 RECORD

Armoured vehicle and truck assembly line nearing completion

2017 COMMITMENT

More Angolans in international organisations

2026 RECORD

AU chairmanship (2025); “AU Champion for Peace”

2017 COMMITMENT

UNESCO heritage

2026 RECORD

Mbanza Kongo, Sona; Tchitundo-Hulo submitted; Semba bid

2017 COMMITMENT

School and elite sport

2026 RECORD

AfroBasket 2025; High Performance Centre; 24 sports facilities under construction

STRATEGIC READING

The overview shows a high degree of correspondence between the programme announced and the work presented. The most visible exception, local government, is the one where the final decision does not rest with the Executive alone, which confirms the consistency of the method. The President moves ahead where he has the authority and seeks consensus where the matter concerns the State as a whole.

The challenges that remain

CHAPTER XIV

“We do not hide the constraints, nor do we conceal the shortcomings.”

The President acknowledged that many Angolans still face hardship, saying that “it is in responsibly acknowledging difficulties that we find the determination to overcome them”.

A distinctive feature of the 2026 address is the candour with which it identifies the fronts still open. The President’s strategic thinking is not triumphalist. “Without any triumphalism, we can say today that Angola is on the right path.”

The open fronts

- **Informality.** The low level of formalisation remains a structural challenge; informality in trade stands at about 85 per cent.
- **Oil.** Ageing wells and lower investment require effort to keep output above one million barrels a day.
- **Children out of school.** The 2024 Census reveals a considerable number of children and young people outside the system and a shortage of teachers.

- **Learning quality.** Reading in the early grades needs strengthening.
- **Local government.** Three laws still to be passed and a deadlock over the electoral timetable.
- **Fuel.** Of 1,234 registered filling stations, only 919 are operational.
- **Road safety.** More deaths and injuries, despite fewer accidents.
- **Commercial farming.** Only 125 of 5,858 commercial farms are actually producing.
- **Water.** 62 per cent of water is not billed, alongside vandalism and illegal connections.

The top priority of all

Given their importance for the present and the future, I single out the protection and education of children, the academic and vocational education and training of young people and more job opportunities for Angolans as the top priority of all.

State of the Nation, 2026

STRATEGIC READING

Ending the address with children, young people and jobs is no accident. After nine years devoted to stabilising the economy and building infrastructure, the President's

strategic thinking shifts its centre of gravity to **human capital**. The foundations are in place; what remains is to fill them with skills and opportunities.

The point of no return

CONCLUSION

“In the countryside or in the city, let us all work, produce and contribute.”

Read together, the two speeches reveal a statesman whose thinking is **systemic, gradualist and patriotic**. Systemic, because each policy connects to the others. Reconciliation underpins stability, stability underpins investment, investment underpins diversification, and diversification underpins jobs. Gradualist, because he prefers persistent reform to rupture. Patriotic, because he places the nation and the common good above groups and private interests.

In 2017, João Lourenço asked for “everyone’s support on this difficult journey”. In 2026, he gives the credit back to the collective: business people, doctors, nurses, teachers, engineers, farmers, workers, artists, athletes, religious and community leaders, members of the defence and security forces, diplomats and students, “because, after all, studying is also work”.

This is the state of the nation of an Angola at peace, reconciled, making real progress and developing, determined to keep attracting more and more investment, but aware that it still faces many challenges.

The phrase “point of no return” sums up the ambition of this cycle, to make the foundations of development irreversible, so that the road travelled depends not on one man or one term of office, but on the collective will of a people who, in the President’s words, “know their history and love their country”.

From Cabinda to Cunene and from the sea to the East, the challenge remains the one the President set out at his inauguration, to build “a prosperous and democratic Angola, with peace and social justice”.

Long live Angola!

Ten principles of João Lourenço's strategic thinking

SUMMARY

1

The Constitution as compass The law is the yardstick for decisions and the national interest stands above group interests.

2

Renewed continuity Improve what works and correct what does not, without ruptures that endanger stability.

3

Reconciliation as foundation Embrace and forgive so that all Angolans can build together.

4

Public office as a mission No one is too rich or too powerful to escape the law.

5

Rigour with a social purpose Macroeconomic discipline is justified by the services it frees up for the people.

6

The State regulates, the private sector drives Less direct intervention, more regulation and more room for private enterprise.

7

Produce, process, export Diversification as a value chain from farm and sea to market.

8

Development corridors Infrastructure that integrates the territory and links Angola to the region and the world.

9

A State close to the citizen Simplify, decentralise, listen and be accountable.

10

Peace as diplomacy, youth as destiny Establish Angola as an African mediator and make children and young people the top priority of all.

Key dates

ANNEX I

11 NOV 1975 Dr António Agostinho Neto proclaims national Independence.

4 APR 2002 End of the armed conflict and lasting peace achieved.

SEP 2017 João Lourenço sworn in as third President of the Republic, under the motto “Improve what works and correct what does not”.

OCT 2017 Approval of the Interim Plan of economic and social measures.

22 MAR 2018 Proposal to create local government submitted to the Council of the Republic.

OCT 2020 Creation of the Universities of Luanda, Rainha Njinga a Mbande and Namibe.

2021 Public apology to the victims of political conflicts (1975–2002).

2021–2023 Angola chairs the CPLP; Mobility Agreement signed.

2022 Start of the second presidential term.

JUL 2024Ceasefire agreement for eastern DRC under Angolan mediation.

2025Angola takes the African Union chair; AfroBasket in Luanda and Moçâmedes; 50 years of Independence.

JUN 202517th US-Africa Business Summit in Luanda.

OCT-NOV 2025Infrastructure Financing Summit and 7th AU-EU Summit in Luanda.

FEB 2026End of the African Union chairmanship, in Malabo.

JUL-AUG 2026Alliance of Civilizations Summit and AU Extraordinary Summit on conflicts, in Luanda.

5 SEP 2026Calucuve and Ndue dams handed over in Cunene.

14 OCT 2026Inauguration of the Memorial to the Victims of Political Conflicts.

15 OCT 2026State of the Nation Address to the National Assembly.

Acronyms and sources

ANNEX II

AU

African Union

BNA

National Bank of Angola

CIVICOP

Commission for the Implementation of the Reconciliation
Plan in Memory of the Victims of Political Conflicts

CPLP

Community of Portuguese-Speaking Countries

DRC

Democratic Republic of the Congo

FAA

Angolan Armed Forces

JOBE

Youth, Opportunities and Good Jobs Programme

PAT II

Girls' Empowerment and Learning for All Project

PCESSA

Programme to Combat the Effects of Drought in Southern
Angola

PIIM

Integrated Plan for Intervention in Municipalities

PLANAGEO

National Geology Plan

PRODESI

Programme to Support Production, Export Diversification
and Import Substitution

SIAC

Integrated Citizen Service

Sources

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All statistics cited come from these two documents. The “Strategic reading” boxes contain editorial analysis. Quotations were translated from Portuguese by the AfricaHeadline editorial team.

Cover photograph: publisher’s archive.

Editing and layout: AfricaHeadline Media Group.

--- title: "The Strategic Thinking of João Lourenço" subtitle: "From the Inauguration to the State of the Nation, 2017-2026" creator: - role: author text: AfricaHeadline Media Group publisher: AfricaHeadline Media Group lang: en-GB date: 2026-10 rights: © 2026 AfricaHeadline Media Group ---