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ANGOLA

Angola did not progress much in freedom of speech or freedom of the press since last year. Despite a modestly higher score given by this year's panelists, there are many signs of trouble concerning the future of the media sector. While the government enhanced its control of the public media prior to the general elections held in August 2012, unnamed companies strengthened their control over most of the private-sector media. This development ran counter to the fact that Angolan legislation forbids any media outlet from being owned and/or controlled by unknown companies. As a result, entities hidden from the public's eye seem to exercise a high degree of censorship over the content of the news offered through private media and public media are clearly under the sway of the ruling party.

As examples, two weekly newspapers—*A CAPITAL* and *Semanário Angolense*—were censored after they tried to publish an interview and a speech of opposition leaders Vicente Pinto de Andrade and Isaias Samakuva. The leadership of both papers cited differing explanations that did not convince the public in general, and the media community in particular, of their sincerity.

All reports of media organizations and unions, both national and international, have noted an almost abusive excess of media coverage of the ruling party by the public media. Meanwhile, activities, entities, and views of the opposition and the so-called independent civil society are often severely edited to minimize their relevance and exposure. In addition, more progressive media legislation remained unapproved by the National Assembly, and private media outlets and journalists continued to be taken to court charged with defamation, including by the major opposition party, UNITA.

In all, the panelists and moderator concluded that although the legislation continues to be largely favorable toward freedom of speech, in reality the application of the laws has worsened compared with the previous year. Furthermore, they felt that most of the actions taken against free media came from government and quasi-governmental institutions and officials.

As noted above, the country has improved its overall score by 0.21 point (from 1.57 to 1.78). That modest improvement can best be explained by similarly better evaluations by the panelists of most of the Objectives; only Objective 4, Business Management, remained unchanged compared with last year. Paradoxically, the increase in score does not necessarily mean improvement in the working conditions for media professionals has been seen, nor has there been an improvement of the content media outlets carry. Angola remains in the same place as 2010: the upper half of the "unsustainable, mixed system" scoring category.

ANGOLA AT A GLANCE

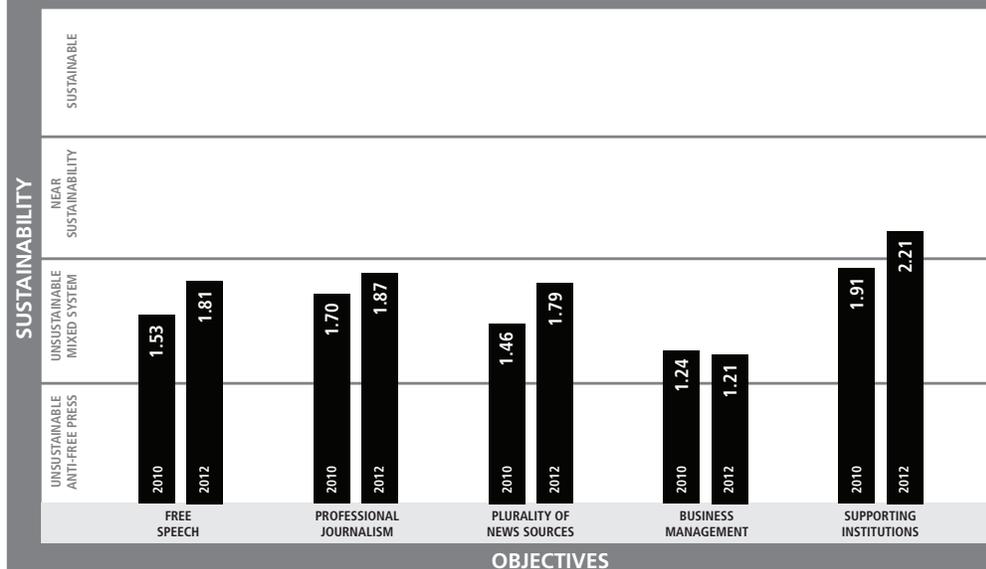
GENERAL

- > **Population:** 18,056,072 (July 2012 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Capital city:** Luanda
- > **Ethnic groups (% of population):** Ovimbundu 37%, Kimbundu 25%, Bakongo 13%, mestico (mixed European and native African) 2%, European 1%, other 22% (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Religions (% of population):** indigenous beliefs 47%, Roman Catholic 38%, Protestant 15% (1998 est., *CIA World Factbook*)
- > **Languages:** Portuguese (official), Bantu and other African languages (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **GNI (2011-Atlas):** \$79.72 billion (World Bank Development Indicators, 2012)
- > **GNI per capita (2011-PPP):** \$4,060 (World Bank Development Indicators, 2012)
- > **Literacy rate:** 67.4% (male 82.9%, female 54.2%) (*CIA World Factbook*)
- > **President or top authority:** President Jose Eduardo dos Santos (since September 21, 1979)

MEDIA-SPECIFIC

- > **Number of active print outlets, radio stations, television stations:** Print: 13 reasonably regular newspapers (1 national daily (state-owned), 12 national private weeklies). Radio Stations: 1 state-owned with national reach and 7 private local FM stations. Television Stations: 1 state-owned with national reach and 1 private local station. Online: 2 private digital journals.
- > **Newspaper circulation statistics:** No verifiable statistics exist; *Jornal de Angola* (state owned), *Semanário Angolense*, *Novo Jornal*, and *O País* (all privately owned) are regarded as the widest circulating newspapers
- > **Broadcast ratings:** N/A
- > **News agencies:** ANGOP Angola Press (state-owned)
- > **Annual advertising revenue in media sector:** N/A
- > **Internet usage:** 606,700 (2009 est., *CIA World Factbook*)

MEDIA SUSTAINABILITY INDEX ANGOLA



Unsustainable, Anti-Free Press (0-1):

Country does not meet or only minimally meets objectives. Government and laws actively hinder free media development, professionalism is low, and media-industry activity is minimal.

Unsustainable Mixed System (1-2):

Country minimally meets objectives, with segments of the legal system and government opposed to a free media system. Evident progress in free-press advocacy, increased professionalism, and new media businesses may be too recent to judge sustainability.

Near Sustainability (2-3):

Country has progressed in meeting multiple objectives, with legal norms, professionalism, and the business environment supportive of independent media. Advances have survived changes in government and have been codified in law and practice. However, more time may be needed to ensure that change is enduring and that increased professionalism and the media business environment are sustainable.

Sustainable (3-4):

Country has media that are considered generally professional, free, and sustainable, or to be approaching these objectives. Systems supporting independent media have survived multiple governments, economic fluctuations, and changes in public opinion or social conventions.

OBJECTIVE 1: FREEDOM OF SPEECH

Angola Objective Score: 1.81

By the time the panel met (December 2012), attacks on two journalists that were reported on in the previous year were still not solved. The first was the murder of Alberto Chakussanga in November 2010. He was a journalist from Radio Despertar and was believed to be close to UNITA. The second was the knife attack on António Manuel "Jojó," also with Radio Despertar, during the same year on his way home from work. His program was quite popular and critical of the current regime. Jojó later left the radio station, claiming that his life was in peril; he is rumored to have joined the staff of a soon-to-be-launched radio station close to the ruling party.

Although freedom of speech is widely and thoroughly safeguarded in the newly approved constitution that was enacted in February 2010, the year 2011 saw more people suffering physical harassment for trying to exercise this right. In the aftermath of the Arab Spring, a number of young people, the so-called Movimento Juvenil Revolucionário (Youth Revolutionary Movement), tried to organize several demonstrations. They were brutally beaten by men whom they accused of working with the police. Both parties entered into a spiral of violence, with the *revolucionaries* shouting insults to those they did not see as siding with them and the hired thugs retaliating with attacks, sometimes after the event in the demonstrators' own homes. Two activists who

LEGAL AND SOCIAL NORMS PROTECT AND PROMOTE FREE SPEECH AND ACCESS TO PUBLIC INFORMATION.

FREE-SPEECH INDICATORS:

- > Legal and social protections of free speech exist and are enforced.
- > Licensing of broadcast media is fair, competitive, and apolitical.
- > Market entry and tax structure for media are fair and comparable to other industries.
- > Crimes against journalists or media outlets are prosecuted vigorously, but occurrences of such crimes are rare.
- > State or public media do not receive preferential legal treatment, and law guarantees editorial independence.
- > Libel is a civil law issue; public officials are held to higher standards, and offended parties must prove falsity and malice.
- > Public information is easily accessible; right of access to information is equally enforced for all media and journalists.
- > Media outlets have unrestricted access to information; this is equally enforced for all media and journalists.
- > Entry into the journalism profession is free, and government imposes no licensing, restrictions, or special rights for journalists.

organized one such demonstration, Kassule and Chamulingue, were reported missing several months ago and the police say they do not know their whereabouts. The opposition party, CASA-CE, is preparing to call the Minister of Interior to give a full account of these mysterious disappearances.

That discrepancy between those constitutional rights and their practice is the reason why all the panelists generally agreed that the gap between the legal system and the practice of free speech has widened considerably since last year. "I think freedom of speech has back-stepped a long way in the past year," said Ana Margoso, a senior journalist at the weekly *Novo Jornal*, one of the leading publications in Luanda. "There have been much better times regarding [free speech] in the country. Licenses are very difficult to obtain. The state television Channel 2 is under the management of two of the president's children, who obtained [their permit] without a competitive process. Radio Despertar from UNITA and Ecclesia from the Catholic Church are still not transmitting out of Luanda for unknown reasons," she added.

Ana Celeste, a freelance journalist, lawyer, and human-rights activist, said: "From a legal point of view, there are laws that safeguard free speech, such as Articles 40 and 44 of the Constitution of the Republic, the Press Law, and the Law of Access to Administrative Documents (Nº 11/02). [There are also] institutions that enforce those laws, such as the National Council of Social Communications, the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, the relevant National Assembly committee, and journalists unions. However, in practice, there are many limitations to the effective exercise of that right, due to significant interference from interest groups who deliberately impede the access of journalists to sources of public information." Adriano de Sousa, a journalist from *Semanário Angolense*, a Luanda weekly, concurred: "The problem is not in the legislation, but in its application."

Sérgio Conceição, a communications consultant for the Ministry of Territorial Administration, had a different view. After concurring with the other panelists that the Angolan constitution safeguards free speech, he pointed out that the deficient application of free speech is due to the poor development of that law, not necessarily the government's lack of political will. "The Angolan constitution has been sufficiently clear on those safeguards," he said. "Now the next task is to detail [how it is] applied. Until this has been done, its lack of application will continue to be an obstacle."

Last year, the panelists called on media outlets to promptly pay their taxes. The panelists generally agreed that media outlets did not address these calls.

Access to public information has worsened for the private media, who are blocked by a burdensome bureaucracy in

accessing a minister or even public institutions. "They ask us to write a formal request and wait to receive the information at a time of their convenience, not the deadlines of the newspaper. When we publish the story without their version, they claim 'defamation' and take us to court," said Salas Neto, director of *Semanário Angolense*.

A panelist, who asked to remain anonymous, said the direct interference from the government is "obscene." This issue was discussed at length, and all the panelists agreed that it is the worst problem facing the media in Angola today. It was noted that every instance of reporting on the August 2012 elections mentioned the public media's performance in the most negative manner. While the public media went to great lengths to directly attack opposition leaders and parties, the private media (Folha 8 and Radio Despertar) did the same in favor of the parties they supported (CASA-CE and UNITA).

Entry into journalism continues to be free, the panelists agreed. They further agreed that, in practice, the government imposes no licensing restrictions or special rights for journalists. The laws that were being put forward for public discussion in 2010 appear to have reached a standstill and to have never been brought to parliament; that helped drive an increase in the score of indicator 9. Those laws stipulate that in order to enter the profession, the candidate must hold a university degree in social communications or related sciences, plus a 12-month certification course in journalism. However, this only applies to those entering the profession after the law comes into effect.

All in all, free speech has improved in Angola, compared with the previous year. Two reasons seem to account for this. The first is that as government censorship increases, the private media react by broadening news and stories critical of the executive. The second reason is the gradual strengthening of independent digital outlets, such as blogs that are very critical of both the government and of *angonotícias*, which are edited by professionals aligned with the government. Examples of such blogs include Club K (edited mainly by the Angolan diaspora), Morrodamaiana (edited by one of the most senior journalists in the country, Reginaldo Silva), and Angola 24 horas and Makaangola (edited by journalist and human-rights activist Rafael Marques).

OBJECTIVE 2: PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM

Angola Objective Score: 1.87

Technical training for media professionals has improved since last year. More university graduates are entering the workforce, and a significant number of practicing journalists have enrolled in evening courses of communication

sciences in one of the several universities. As a result, the number of media professionals with a university degree in communication sciences has increased significantly. In general terms, the numbers have increased from dozens last year to hundreds. This is largely due to the fact that all but one of the four universities with a communications degree program have awarded degrees this year.

However, the panelists agreed that this progress has not resulted in an increase in adhering to acceptable journalistic standards. "We are getting there, but there is a long way to go yet," said Margoso. The reasons for that, explained Celeste, are "first because censorship and self-censorship is still too palpable, and secondly, because the action of those bodies responsible to oversee censorship do very little."

Sérgio Conceição added, "Low salaries encourage journalists to accept bribes. This applies to journalists who do not have proper working conditions and have to depend on bribes." He was referring to those frequent cases where journalists must accept transportation and food from the officials they are supposed to cover, thus limiting their ability to mention negative elements of the story or otherwise report the story in a manner that would offend the host individuals or institutions.

The panelists were of the opinion that coverage of countrywide events has not improved the transparency or equality of journalists' reporting. Private media are still often not invited to cover (and are sometimes barred from covering) high-profile state functions and events, such as presidential and parliamentary activities. These events are reserved for public media, who, in turn, seldom cover events

JOURNALISM MEETS PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS OF QUALITY.

PROFESSIONAL JOURNALISM INDICATORS:

- > Reporting is fair, objective, and well sourced.
- > Journalists follow recognized and accepted ethical standards.
- > Journalists and editors do not practice self-censorship.
- > Journalists cover key events and issues.
- > Pay levels for journalists and other media professionals are sufficiently high to discourage corruption.
- > Entertainment programming does not eclipse news and information programming.
- > Technical facilities and equipment for gathering, producing, and distributing news are modern and efficient.
- > Quality niche reporting and programming exists (investigative, economics/business, local, political).

of the opposition and civil society that may be perceived as opposing the government.

That results in conflicting media coverage of the same event, the panelists said. They noted that this was quite clear during the recent elections. While the public media covered those parts of the election that favored the government, private media tended to do the opposite. *Jornal de Angola* was particularly cited by the panelists for its especially shameful performance. It was not only clearly in favor of the ruling party, but was also violently opposed to the opposition parties and their leaders. The outlet's performance generally was unanimously deplored by the panelists as a particularly bad example not only of the Angolan media community, but of the country in general.

The panelists working for the public media were of the opinion that there is too much entertainment, compared with news. Conversely, those working in the private media felt that there was a good balance between entertainment and news. This was believed to be largely a factor of the nature of private media, in that they must survive solely on subscription sales and advertisement revenues. Some on the panel therefore understood that private media must have attractive entertainment programming in order to attract advertisers. However, all of them agreed that Channel 2 of the Public Television of Angola leans decidedly toward entertainment because it is under private management, but that it should be more balanced because it is financed by taxpayer money. To cite an example of caution that the station should take, the panelists noted that the Conference of Bishops recently called attention to some of the station's content that it considered "alien to the Angolan culture."

OBJECTIVE 3: PLURALITY OF NEWS

Angola Objective Score: 1.79

The panelists agreed that there has been an improvement in the plurality of sources of information with the increased use of the Internet and social networks among university students, journalists, and members of "revolutionary movements." The panelists noted that users also included politicians, NGOs and civil-society leaders, members of the government, and a wide range of opinion leaders. Facebook has become a rather important tool for information sharing and event mobilization (i.e., demonstrations) in a manner that is completely independent from any intermediaries (including the media and journalists).

There was general agreement among the panelists that this lack of involvement is proving to be a window of opportunity

for a true plurality of information sources. It was noted that the percentage of Angolans with access to the Internet is still very low. Furthermore, those who do have access act as information sources for those who lack Internet access. Accessibility of the Internet via cellphones is also contributing to the expansion of plurality.

Regarding the independence of news agencies, the panelists felt that this remained unchanged. The state-owned Angop (whose administration board is nominated by the president) is the sole news agency in the country, and there are no indications that the situation is going to change in the near future.

The panelists agreed that access to national and international media continues to be generally unrestricted, as it is broadened with greater Internet access via cellphones. There has not been any change in the broadcasting of content in national languages. The panelists noted that a branch of the state-owned Radio Nacional de Angola transmits in 14 local languages. This is believed to be sufficient in covering the universe of non-Portuguese-speaking listeners.

The panelists agreed that if the state media reflected poorly on the opinion of the entire political spectrum last year, it had worsened since then. It not only continued to ignore events or distort the positions of the opposition but also the views of civil-society organizations. Reputable organizations, such as the Conference of Bishops of Angola, the Episcopal Council of Sao Tome, and the Political and Social Observatory have all been inaccurately portrayed by the Angolan media.

MULTIPLE NEWS SOURCES PROVIDE CITIZENS WITH RELIABLE AND OBJECTIVE NEWS.

PLURALITY OF NEWS SOURCES INDICATORS:

- > A plurality of affordable public and private news sources (e.g., print, broadcast, Internet) exists.
- > Citizens' access to domestic or international media is not restricted.
- > State or public media reflect the views of the entire political spectrum, are nonpartisan, and serve the public interest.
- > Independent news agencies gather and distribute news for print and broadcast media.
- > Independent broadcast media produce their own news programs.
- > Transparency of media ownership allows consumers to judge objectivity of news; media ownership is not concentrated in a few conglomerates.
- > A broad spectrum of social interests are reflected and represented in the media, including minority-language information sources.

The panelists noted that there are no community media in Angola. "People confuse some radios that are being opened in municipalities by Radio Nacional de Angola as community radio stations, but they are not. Rather, they are radio stations located in the communities," noted Celeste.

OBJECTIVE 4: BUSINESS MANAGEMENT

Angola Objective Score: 1.21

Last year, this objective was viewed as particularly poor. All the panelists agreed that the independent media continue to be poorly managed in a way that does not generate sufficient income to ensure editorial independence.

The advertisement market is dominated by the state, whose companies and ministries are the largest advertisers. This gives the government the ability to choose which media outlets will receive the best advertising opportunities. It also allows the government to either punish or reward individual media outlets, depending on whether they are critical of the government. "The government, or rather the ruling party, completely controls the advertising market. Those media outlets that are perceived as critical of the government have difficulties in obtaining contracts," noted Margoso.

The same applies to the largest private media outlets. As they are owned or controlled by people close to the ruling party, they tend to follow the direction taken by the state outlets and deny advertisement contracts to media outlets that are seen as "black sheep." This is done despite an outlet's popularity or without consideration for how it affects editorial independence or self-censorship.

INDEPENDENT MEDIA ARE WELL-MANAGED BUSINESSES, ALLOWING EDITORIAL INDEPENDENCE.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT INDICATORS:

- > Media outlets and supporting firms operate as efficient, professional, and profit-generating businesses.
- > Media receive revenue from a multitude of sources.
- > Advertising agencies and related industries support an advertising market.
- > Advertising revenue as a percentage of total revenue is in line with accepted standards at commercial outlets.
- > Independent media do not receive government subsidies.
- > Market research is used to formulate strategic plans, enhance advertising revenue, and tailor products to the needs and interests of audiences.
- > Broadcast ratings and circulation figures are reliably and independently produced.

"In Angola, there is not a single institution that conducts audience surveys; thus, it is difficult to know exactly which media outlet is more popular than others," said de Sousa. The lack of a clear vision of a media outlet's positioning hinders its ability to access advertising contracts. That is one of the main reasons, the panelists said, why Angola's media outlets are generally far from well-managed. Nelson Sul D'Angola, *Semanário Angolense* correspondent in the central coastal province of Benguela, took exception however. He noted, "The private media are almost totally denied advertisement revenues, but still they survive and pay their obligations, such as salaries and printing costs. That is only because they are well-managed."

The panelists noted that the government continues to deny subsidies to the private press that are afforded them by the Press Law. They state that the government does not facilitate access to financial incentives, such as price discounts for paper and other materials necessary to operate. However, the panel did note one potential sign of hope from the new Minister of Social Communications. He is a long-serving media professional who has claimed that he will look into these allegations. However, Neto, the most senior panelist, pointed out, "We'll see. That is not the first time we are fed by promises that are never met."

There has not been any change in the use of market research to formulate strategic plans, enhance advertising revenue, or tailor media products to the needs or interests of audiences. This is a gap that still exists in Angola, the panelists noted. In the few instances where such research was undertaken, media organizations used questionnaires, phone interviews, and other similar feedback to elicit the views of their audience or the interests of targeted populations. But the panelists said that even in such cases, media outlets very rarely follow through on the findings.

OBJECTIVE 5: SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS

Angola Objective Score: 2.21

As with last year, supporting institutions were seen as the most positive aspect of the media sector in comparison with the other objectives. This objective increased over last year's ranking. According to the panelists, civil society in general, and NGOs and professional associations in particular (notably the Syndicate of Journalists), provided good support to both public and private media outlets. Luisa Rangel, herself a member of the Syndicate at her workplace (Radio Nacional de Angola), recalled a strike that the Syndicate held on the eve of elections. The strike brought the Ministry of Social Communications to the table to negotiate and resolve their

demands. During this event, she noted, the Syndicate played a crucial role in maintaining pressure on the Ministry to lead the negotiations with the workers. "Yet they could be much more assertive," said Agostinho Sitânio Bumba, from Radio Nacional de Angola in the northern province of Cabinda.

The panelists agreed that NGOs actively support free speech. "However, that support is dwindling because foreign NGOs are increasingly channeling their funds to other countries," said Celeste. "The impact of national NGOs remains small due to lack of funds. They depend on international aid agencies to support their activities," according to Adriano de Sousa.

Two social communications university courses have been added in two provinces: Lubango and neighboring Namibe. Guilhermina de Fatima, who attends the course in Namibe, complained, however, that "They are much too theoretical and have little practical experience." Celeste and Bumba agreed.

The panelists agreed that the primary, quality short professionalization courses continued to be provided through the Center of Training of Journalists, which is part of the Ministry of Social Communications. This continues to be the primary institution that ensures successful accreditation of journalists throughout the country, since there is no formal university training program.

Similar to last year, the panelists still did not think the sources for printing were private, apolitical, and unrestricted. Weekly journals continued to circulate mainly in Luanda and a few select provinces. This was largely due to logistical constraints but also was caused by continued harassment from authorities in the provinces to block the circulation of such media products in the territories under their jurisdiction.

SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS FUNCTION IN THE PROFESSIONAL INTERESTS OF INDEPENDENT MEDIA.

SUPPORTING INSTITUTIONS INDICATORS:

- > Trade associations represent the interests of private media owners and provide member services.
- > Professional associations work to protect journalists' rights.
- > NGOs support free speech and independent media.
- > Quality journalism degree programs that provide substantial practical experience exist.
- > Short-term training and in-service training programs allow journalists to upgrade skills or acquire new skills.
- > Sources of newsprint and printing facilities are in private hands, apolitical, and unrestricted.
- > Channels of media distribution (kiosks, transmitters, Internet) are private, apolitical, and unrestricted.

As mentioned above, the panelists felt that there has been an increase in access to information and communications technology (ICT) in general, and among media professionals in particular, "although less than 20 percent of the entire population has access to ICT," said Celeste.

List of Panel Participants

Sérgio Conceição, communication consultant, Ministry of Territorial Administration, Luanda

Lúisa Rangel, senior editor, Radio Nacional de Angola; local representative, Syndicate of Journalists of Angola, Luanda

Salas Neto, director, *Semanário Angolense*, Luanda

Sitânio Agotinho Bumba, senior editor, Rádio Nacional de Angola in Cabinda, Cabinda

Ana Celeste Januário, journalist; human rights activist, Luanda

Guilhermina de Fátima, advertiser, MOVIMENTO advertising agency, Namibe

Adriano de Sousa, reporter, *Semanário Angolense*, Luanda

Ana Margoso, senior journalist, *Novo Jornal Newsweek*, Luanda

Nélson Sul D'Angola, correspondent, *Semanário Angolense*, Benguela

Moderator and Author

Celso Malavoloneke, deputy head, Department of Social Communication and International Relations, Private University of Angola, Luanda

Assistant Moderator

Amor de Fátima Mateus, freelance journalist, media consultant, Luanda

The panel discussion was convened on December 15, 2012.