Angola - A Paradigm Shift Until 2050

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Abstract: In May 2023, the Angolan government presented a long-term strategic plan in a comprehensive document - Angola 2050 - which projects the country's development for the coming decades, reaffirming the need to diversify the economy and the political will to extend economic growth beyond oil. Despite the criticisms that can be made to the agenda, it has the merit of acknowledging that a paradigm shift is needed. This article presents and summarises the Angola 2050 strategic plan, in which the government defines its vision for the coming decades. It is intended to be a work of reflection and discussion about the current situation and the future of the Angolan economy. It is hoped that it can contribute positively to the analysis of the Angolan economy. This strategic plan acknowledges and boldly identifies the weaknesses of the development model followed so far, as laid out in the previous strategic plan, Angola 2025, which hasn't had the desired outcome.

Keywords: Angola, development, economic growth, strategic plan.

INTRODUCTION

In the Spring of 2023, the Angolan government presented its long-term strategic plan in an extensive and detailed document - Angola 2050 - which projects in detail the country's development for the following decades, reiterating the need to diversify the economy and the political will to extend economic growth beyond oil sectors. Despite all the criticisms that can be leveled at the document, it accepts that a paradigm shift is needed. The previous strategic plan, Angola 2025, was conceived in a different historical context. Its main objectives were centered on consolidating peace and national reconciliation. These objectives were achieved, but the previous strategy also promoted policies with very negative consequences for the economy and its development. One of these aspects is that it placed the state at the center of the economy, as the leading economic agent, neglecting and even undermining the role of the private sector in boosting the economy. So, it is not unexpected that, after the acknowledgment of this weak point in the Angolan economy, with an omnipresent state that dominated most sectors of the economy, the need to give space to the private sector, giving it the role of the main driver of the economy for the coming decades, will require a new paradigm, a new development model based on new assumptions and new players. Between 2002 and 2008, rapid economic growth was caused by the post-war recovery and the wealth from oil. Until 2008, there was very rapid convergence with other more advanced economies, particularly with the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which was created in 1992 and which

Angola is a member of. From 2008 to 2014, economic growth significantly slowed down, and from 2015 to 2021, it was negative (World Bank, 2023).

This new strategic plan is based on the need to grow concertedly, but expand beyond the oil sectors without focusing on the state's role. The strategic plan for 2050 is a dual plan, with two objectives that complement each other (MEP, 2023). On the one hand, the aim is to establish a defined strategy with quantified objectives for 2050. It is also linked to short-term initiatives to combat the economic crisis. The Angola 2050 plan is based on four key principles in this context.

Firstly, it is designed to be a realistic plan, with aspirations and decisions based on facts. It is acknowledged, however, that making projections almost three decades out, with all the uncertainty that this entails, is a tremendously difficult task. "Even in the best of times, economic forecasting is challenging" (Chow and Choi, 2022; 4). The many variables that have to be taken into account are unpredictable, and there are unexpected aspects that can jeopardise an entire trajectory of sustained growth. Take the recent example of the crisis caused by the global pandemic. "Today, economic forecasts are increasingly impacted by external influences and shocks, such as the coronavirus pandemic or migrant crises, which make the decision-making process more complex. These do not come directly from the economy but from other areas" (Buturac, 2022; 23).

It is both a top-down approach, with the definition of global and sectoral targets, and a bottom-up approach, with evaluating the targets set. For each sector and the country as a whole, two scenarios have been drawn up, one conservative and the other more optimistic, making it possible to re-

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Fig. (1). GDP growth rate SADC (2002-2022).

Source: World Bank, 2023.

adjust and recalibrate against the actual evolution of the economy.

Secondly, it is a plan that is the result of broad consultations. According to the Angolan government, it guarantees that it has included a wide range of national and international institutions in the plan, including academia, government institutions, multilateral institutions, and the private sector. Some of the criticisms directed at this strategic plan refer to insufficient consultations undertaken. Comparing this plan with the previous one, we realise that the consultation base has been broadened to include as many relevant participants as possible. However, some entities left out of this consultation may feel somewhat resentful at not being heard when the document was drawn up.

Thirdly, the strategic plan claims to be a sustained plan with a holistic approach, in the way that it seeks to address issues in their totality and comprehensiveness. Thus, it recognises the interdependence between economic development, the need to improve human capital, the improvement of infrastructure, and environmental sustainability. The goal of the methodology of Angola 2050 is not to study the several pillars or structural dimensions aspects separately but to penetrate within their interactions, establishing communication between the five pillars or structural dimensions and thus accessing the holistic and systemic approach to economic development. This is the essence of the holistic approach (Drakou and Symeonidis, 2023).

Fourthly, it aims to be a manageable plan, with clear initiatives already in action.

Table 1. Angola's vision for 2050.

Areas of Intervention	Variables	2022	2050
Demography	Population	33 million	68 million
	GDP	USD 122b	USD 286b
	Non-oil GDP	USD 84b	USD 275b
	GDPpc	USD 3,675	USD 4,215
	Non-oil GDPpc	USD 2,537	USD 4,042
Economy	Unemployment	30%	20%
	Debt (% of GDP)	66%	60%
	Non-oil exports	USD 5b	USD 64b
	Annual FDI inflow	USD 6b	USD 33b
	Non-oil tax revenue (% tax revenue)	32%	88%
Health	Average Life Expectancy	62	68

	Under-5 mortality rate	71%	19%
	(per 1000 live births)		
Education	Years of Schooling Adjusted for Learning	4,8 years	6,3 years
	Literacy Rate (≥ 15 years)	76%	95%
Human Capital	Human Capital Index	49 gyzantila	29 gyzantila
	Percentage of the population living below the poverty line	4° quartile 31%	3° quartile 18%
	threshold	3170	1870

Source: adapted from MEP (2023).

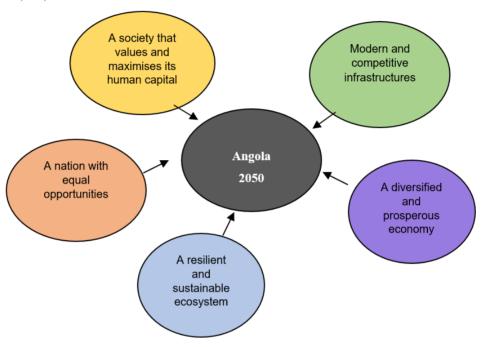


Fig. (2). Pillars of Intervention.

Angola aims to achieve these goals in the context of a demographic explosion. Forecasts suggest that Angola's population will increase from the current 32 million inhabitants to around 68 million by 2050. The growing pressure on resources that the population poses increases the risk of becoming a source of social tension. Once again, the need for sustained growth, breaking cycles of poverty, and diversifying the economy is the ultimate goal of this strategic plan.

The main challenge facing public management in the contemporary world is to promote sustainable economic and social development in an environment of rapid and profound change (Matias-Pereira, 2020). In addition to this significant challenge, public sector management has characteristics that make managing the population's expectations highly complex due to the state's limited investment capacity.

THE ANGOLA 2050 STRATEGIC PLAN

The strategy for Angola 2050 is based on five pillars of intervention, each divided into several areas. For each of these areas, the primary goals, the vision, the solutions, and finally, a set of immediate priorities for 2027 are presented. These priorities are necessary to overcome the serious shortcomings and serve as a precursor to the long-term strategy.

PILLAR 1: ENHANCING HUMAN CAPITAL

Education is one of the key sectors for the country's development in the coming decades.

The role of education in Africa can never be underestimated. Individuals with access to education can better contribute to their country's economic, social, and political development (Krzykawska and Zur, 2020). The importance of education is clearly expressed in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, SDG 2 - Quality of Education. With the real threat of a demographic explosion putting pressure on resources, investment in people seems vital. Angola has the difficult task of improving its ranking on the Human Capital Index, one of the world's lowest. The assessment made of the country in this area is disturbing: one of the lowest levels of human capital in the world, a poor performance in education, whose quality component is below the average for SADC or Sub-Saharan Africa, and one of the highest fertility rates in the world. This is the portrait of a country with huge contrasts and very different levels of development.

We know that "the new development model can only materialise if we ensure that every Angolan can make the most of their potential, and we will only reap the benefits when this happens" (MEP, 2023; 25).

To achieve this, Angola needs to invest heavily in education and health. Improving the quality of teaching and widening access to the education system make education a top priority in Angola's long-term strategy.

Table 2. Enhancing Human Capital.

Intervention Areas	Main goals to be achieved by 2050 ¹
	Increase the years of schooling adjusted for learning from the current 4.2 to 6.3
Education	Increase the Human Capital Index from the 4th quartile to the 3rd quartile
	Increase the literacy rate for those aged 15 and over from 76 percent to 95 percent
	Increase average life expectancy from the current 62 years to 68
	Decrease the fertility rate from 5.4 to 3.2
Health	Reduce the under-5 mortality rate (per 1,000 live births) from 71 to 19
	Decrease the infant mortality rate (per 1000 live births) from 50 to 17
	Decrease the maternal mortality rate (per 100,000 live births) from 199 to 70
	Improve position in the Global Innovation Index and reach the Top 80
Science & Innovation	Increase investment in Research and Development (R&D) from the current 0.1 percent (as a % of GDP) to 1 percent
Culture	Increase the export of cultural and creative goods (as a % of total exports) from the current 0.01% to 0.11%
	Increase the population employed in the cultural and creative sector to 2.5 percent.
	Increase the population's participation in physical exercise and sporting activities from 36 percent to 47 percent.
Sports	Increase its ranking in the world, High Competition Sports ranking
	Increase ranking in the African Games, the SADC, and the CPLP

Source: Adapted from MEP (2023).

One of the main drivers of poverty in Angola is the lack of education. It is estimated that around 10 million Angolans are illiterate. Although this literacy rate aligns with many other lower-middle-income African countries, the figures are far too poor. Literacy is fundamental for individual and community well-being and economic development in general (Welborn et al., 2020).

Health, too, is expected to be one of the priority areas for intervention. Health outcomes have generally improved in recent decades. Average life expectancy has improved dramatically from just 39 years in 1975 to around 62 years and is expected to rise to 68 years by the middle of the century. Infant mortality, although still very high compared to other lower-middle-income African countries, has fallen to around 50 deaths per 1,000 live births. Regarding health, access to primary health care, generalised family planning education, and a reduction in the infant mortality rate are the main aspirations.

PILLAR 2: MODERN AND COMPETITIVE INFRASTRUCTURE

The causal link between the existence of modern and adequate infrastructure and economic growth is well documented in the literature (Akinshipe and Aigbavboa, 2020; Koppa, E.T., Musonda, I. and Zulu, 2023; Makhathini, M; Mlambo, V and Mpanza, S., 2020). Infrastructure directly affects productivity and output as part of GDP formation and as an input in the production function of various sectors of activity. Indirectly, better infrastructure reduces transaction and other costs, leading to more efficient use of productive resources. For example, a poor electricity network can cause additional costs for companies due to idle workers, lost production, or damaged equipment. By contrast, a modern transport system can increase the competitiveness of output by moving raw materials more quickly and getting final goods to consumers. This applies not only to Angola but to the entire African continent. In Angola's case, with a clear commitment to diversifying the economy beyond oil, investment in infrastructure seems critical.

The existence of a modern and competitive infrastructure is "a driving factor for inclusive economic growth, productivity, and social development" (MEP, 2023; 28). The physical infrastructure and services associated with the energy, telecommunications, transport, and housing sectors are fundamental to increasing productivity in the other sectors of the economy.

Table 3. Modern and Competitive Infrastructure.

Intervention Areas	Main goals to be achieved by 2050 ²
	Increase the electrification rate (on the grid) from 43 percent to 72 percent.
Energy	Increase installed capacity
. 3	Increase the percentage of renewable energies, including hydroelectric (as a % of energy supply)
Telecommunications and IT	Increase the telecommunications and information technologies sector's contribution to GDP from USD 0.6M to USD

¹Data from 2022 or the most recent.

²Data from 2022 or the most recent.

	9.4 M.
	Also, increase the sector's contribution as a % of GDP from the current 0.3% to 3.3%
Transports	Increase the transport sector's contribution to GDP by % (from 1.2% to 1.5%) and absolute value.
	Reduce the population deficit (in % of households) from 32% to 23%
Housing	Reduce the urban population living in informal settlements (as a % of the urban population) from 49% to 33%

Source: Adapted from MEP (2023).

It is estimated that just over 3 in 10 Angolans have access to electricity, with a marked difference between rural and urban areas. According to 2018 figures, only 8 percent of the rural population had access to electricity, while the figure for the urban population was around 43 percent. Since public utilities cannot generate and distribute electricity uninterruptedly, residents and businesses rely heavily on petrol or diesel generators (Welborn et al., 2020). Additional efforts will be needed if the country is to achieve its goal of increasing the national electricity access rate to around 72 percent by 2050. As the population grows and the economy intensifies and diversifies, the country will need more energy for domestic and industrial use. Energy demand is set to rise sharply in the coming years and the renewable energy sector has the potential to meet this growing demand. The country must consider a combination of renewable and fossil fuels to meet its future energy needs. Renewable energies are particularly suitable for use as part of micro-grids not connected to the national grid, to meet global demand.

PILLAR 3: A DIVERSIFIED AND PROSPEROUS **ECONOMY**

The need to diversify the Angolan economy is an absolute and indisputable necessity. It is necessary to grow, but to expand beyond oil. One of the significant problems of almost all countries rich in natural resources is their excessive dependence on these resources, which results in poor development and poor utilisation of all available resources. In Angola's case, dependence on oil has long eclipsed the other sectors of the economy, resulting in an unbalanced economy, with an excessive weight of the state and serious corruption problems. The "resource curse", a concept widely used in the literature (Auty, 1993), explains why many resource-rich countries show poor economic growth. The previous growth model was based, above all, on oil wealth, with the state as the leading economic agent. In this new development paradigm mirrored in Angola 2050, an attempt is being made to give space to the private sector, encouraging foreign direct investment (FDI) outside the oil sector, to boost the economic environment. To this end, greater participation by the private sector outside the oil sector is needed. It is well known that "by 2050 oil will no longer be the backbone of our economy" (MEP, 2023;23), so the new development model must be rooted in genuine economic diversification. However, this doesn't mean oil isn't strategic for the country's future. On the contrary." The sector will continue to play an important role in our economy over the next 10 to 20 years, acting as a bridge between the present and the future" (MEP, 2023; 23). The Angolan economy is still very vulnerable to the volatility of oil market prices, which raises uncertainty about the coming years. If we add to this the foreseeable depletion of some of Angola's proven reserves, the need to diversify the economy beyond oil is more than justified, it's imperative. Although there have been recent investments in oil and gas exploration, their financial viability is still uncertain even if new reserves are discovered.

The Angolan government recognises that hydrocarbons alone cannot sustain sufficient economic growth to improve the economy and ensure growth capable of supporting population growth. It has acknowledged the need to strengthen other sectors, such as manufacturing, agriculture, and tourism, as future growth engines (Welborn et al., 2020).

Angola's renewable energy potential is among the country's most significant opportunities. Accelerating the transition from hydrocarbons to renewable energies is indispensable to the economy's diversification and stability.

While recognising the private sector as the engine of future growth, the Angolan government must create the conditions for this. As such, and to rationalise the public sector, it will embark on a wide-ranging privatization program in partnership with the World Bank. The main aim of the approved privatisation programme is to promote more favorable conditions for private initiatives and private investments and to acquire know-how and specific skills for restructuring and resizing the public business sector. The program provides for the sale of around 195 companies/assets.

Table 4. A Diversified and Prosperous Economy.

Intervention Areas	Main goals to be achieved by 2050 ³
Mining	Strengthen the mining sector's weight in GDP, both in absolute values and percentage, from 1.3% to 2.3%.
Agriculture and Livestock	Increase the importance of agriculture in GDP, both in absolute values and in %, from the current 8.6% to 14.1%
	Increase the importance of livestock in GDP, both in absolute values and in %, from the current 0.6% to 1.7%.
Fishing	Increase the fisheries sector's contribution to GDP, both in absolute values and as a %, from the current 4.1% to 5.5%.
	Increase total fisheries production (in thousands of tonnes) from 596 to 1234.
	Increase salt production (in thousands of tonnes) from 201 to 857
	Increase aquaculture
Industry	Increase the number of jobs in manufacturing (in mil-

³ Data from 2022 or the most recent.

Source: Adapted from MEP (2023).

According to an analysis by Rocha et al. (2016), the non-oil sector of the Angolan economy is made up of the following activities: agriculture, livestock and forestry, fisheries, manufacturing, energy and water, construction, diamond mining, the provision of non-market services (state), and miscellaneous market services such as trade, transport, banking, finance and insurance, telecommunications, postal services, etc. Segmenting the non-oil economy into two sectors is as follows: tradable sector - agriculture, livestock, forestry, fishing, diamonds, manufacturing, banking, finance and insurance, and telecommunications; non-tradable industry - construction, energy and water, internal transport, some components of internal trade and non-market services. The potential in these sectors is enormous and there is much to do.

Take agriculture, for example, an essential pillar in feeding communities. Angola is one of the largest countries in sub-Saharan Africa and has large tracts of arable land. However, the agricultural sector performs extremely poorly, far below its potential. The government estimates that between 60 and 70 percent of the population depends on family and subsistence farming for income and food (Welborn et al., 2020).

PILLAR 4: PROMOTING A RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE ECOSYSTEM

Sustainable management of natural resources appears as the fourth axis of intervention. It acknowledges that "The basis for a better quality of life for all Angolans is based on a clean environment and following a path of sustainable development that recognizes the interdependence of economic development and environmental sustainability, especially in the context of Angola's vulnerability to climate change" (MEP, 2023; 285).

African countries, not just Angola, are betting heavily on economic transformation through the renewal of their manu-

facturing sectors. However, the environmental impact of industrialisation is a matter of great concern, given the growing focus on maintaining a sustainable environment in line with sustainable development goals.

Numerous studies have been carried out to identify the causes of environmental pollution. Numerous factors, including economic and demographic factors, have been identified as the source of environmental degradation (Mesagan and Nwachukwu, 2018; Omri *et al.*,2019; Chu, 2022). The environmental effects of industrialisation have also been the subject of empirical research (Brahmasrene and Lee, 2017; Jermsittiparsert, 2021).

Table 5. Promoting a Resilient and Sustainable Ecosystem.

Intervention Areas	Main goals to be achieved by 2050 ⁴	
	Reinforce the water supply (in Hm3) to meet the needs of the population and the economy, from the current 1349 to 13139	
Water Re-	Increase water storage capacity (in m3 per capita) from 317 to 400	
sources	Increase the population (as a % of the population) using essential drinking water services from 57% to 80%.	
	Increase the percentage of the population (as a percentage of the population) using essential sanitation services from 52% to 66%.	
	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions	
	Improve overall ranking in the Environmental Performance Index	
Environment	Improve Air Quality	
	Improve score in EPI's Biodiversity and Habitat category	
	Reduce the World Risk Index score	
Forestry	Increase the importance of the forestry sector in GDP, both in absolute values and in %	

Source: Adapted from MEP (2023).

PILLAR 5: A JUST NATION WITH EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

"To meet the challenges of reducing poverty and inequality, we will ensure that every individual has an equal chance of success, regardless of their starting point (MEP, 2023; 325).

Objectives include reducing poverty, strengthening social protection to remain sustainable as demographics evolve, an inclusive, egalitarian society, and strengthening women's participation. The strategic role of young people in the coming decades is also recognised, as they become the dominant segment of the Angolan age pyramid. Finally, still, in the context of building a nation with genuinely equal opportunities, we have the reform of the state, which is necessary for

⁴ Data from 2022 or the most recent.

strengthening the quality of democracy, the separation of powers, the fight against corruption, and guaranteeing the independence of the media, among others.

Table 6. A Just Nation with Equal Opportunities.

Intervention Areas	Main goals to be Achieved by 2050 ⁵
	Increase investment (in billions of USD) from 0.35 to 3.38
	Reduce the percentage of the population living below the poverty line of 2.15 USD/day from 31 percent to 18 percent
Social Protection	Increase the number of insured people with compulsory social protection (in millions) from 2.5 to 13.6
	Increase the surplus in the compulsory social security system (as a % of GDP) from 0.27% to 0.31%.
	Increase complementary social protection.
Gender Equality	Improve the score in the World Economic Forum's "Global Gender Gap" report
Media	Improve the country's World Press Freedom Index ranking from position 99 to the top 80 out of 180 countries.
	Improve the Youth Development Index (from 0-1) from 0.51 to 0.67
	Reduce the teenage pregnancy rate
	Reduce the HIV/AIDS mortality rate in the 15-19 year old population
Youth	Increase the % of young people with completed secondary education from 13% (2014) to 44.1%
	Increase young people's civic and political participation (from 0-1) from 0.27 to 0.38
	Increase the youth employability rate from 36% to 60%
	Improve position in the Rule of Law Index of the World Justice Project (from 0-1) from 0.38 to 0.50
	Improve position in the Ibrahim Index of African Governance (in %) in several areas.
Reform of the State	Improve several World Bank indicators, including Rule of Law, Political Stability, Government Efficiency and Regulatory Quality, and Corruption control.
	Improve position in the Bertelsmann Transformation Index in both Management Capacity and Resource Efficiency.
Justice.	Improve ranking in the Transparency International Ranking, from current position 136 to top 65
	Decrease the crime rate.

⁵ Data from 2022 or the most recent.

Territory Devel-	Reduce the gap in GDP per capita between the different provinces
opment	Reduce the number of municipalities with more than 70 percent of households in multidimensional poverty

Source: Adapted from MEP (2023).

The country inherited a government bureaucracy that performs poorly on most governance indicators. As is typically the case with resource-dependent countries, Angola's oil wealth has led to rent-seeking and corruption. Numerous reports of conspicuous consumption and misappropriation of the country's wealth by a small elite (Posel and Wyk, 2019). The targets set along the five pillars of intervention are highly ambitious. Critics claim they are unrealistic and demagogic. However, the fact that concrete targets have been set for all sectors of the economy and society indicates an explicit will and belief that they can be achieved. There is, however, an important question: How can we finance such a largescale project? The total investment needed to fulfill the vision in the Strategic Plan is estimated at 1,000 billion dollars, to be spread over the next three decades. It's an ambitious amount that will come from various sources.

Firstly, greater participation by the private sector, which is so often sidelined from the economic scene, will be guaranteed. Not only is an increase in private credit planned, but large FDI flows are also encouraged. The establishment of stronger relations with the main partners, both bilateral and multilateral, is also planned. At the same time, there is a real effort to improve the environment for doing business, an essential condition for attracting investors. As the economy grows, dependence on oil will decrease, along with the weight of the state in the economy, allowing tax revenues to increase from the growing private sector. The productivity of Angolans who will reach adulthood in the next three decades must be improved. A new development model anchored in a diversified economy and the private sector can be implemented by increasing employment and productivity in the formal economy and more widely among the low-income population.

CONCLUSION

The Angola 2050 agenda is an essential strategic document for Angola's future. It can identify the document's weak points and emphasizes its criticisms. It is a necessary document for reflecting on the country's objectives and how to achieve them. The agenda systematically diagnoses the areas to be intervened in and takes a courageous posture by identifying past economic policy mistakes. At the same time, identifies Angola's lack of significant progress in many areas essential to human development and capital accumulation. It also points to the excessive nationalisation of the economy and the country's lack of economic diversification. It remains to be seen whether the policies chosen will be adequate to achieve the 2050 targets and, above all, whether there is the political will to implement them. The document lacks ambition when it comes to growth. Given the demographic explosion predicted for the coming decades, the effective growth in per capita income will be very modest, considering the time horizon. Strictly speaking, given the increase in population, the strategic plan's target of 2050 is almost no progress.

More ambitious objectives should be put forward, with feasible measures, and what appears to be a misapplication of classic economic doctrines should be overcome. A universal theory of economics based on what is known as classical thinking can work in more mature, more developed economies with solid institutions. This is not the case in Angola, which is still in the institutional construction phase. Institutions are still structuring themselves. That's why the IMF's recipes in Angola seem to have failed. There is indeed a problem of economic doctrine in Angola. In reality, the country is in a pre-institutional situation, so the models to be applied should be those of development and institution building, not stabilisation. These are the issues that could limit the effect of the Angola 2050 plan.

The current strategic plan allows political decision-makers to reflect deeply on the Angolan economy's difficulties by detailing the objectives and identifying the existing limitations. The comprehensive list of intervention pillars and the planned measures provide guidelines for the economic agents pursuing the Plan's goals. The unequivocal acknowledgment that the previous Plan failed allows economic decision-makers to reflect on past mistakes and draw lessons for the future. Similarly, recognizing that a paradigm shift is needed, where the state will no longer be at the center of the economy, may give the private sector a new boost.

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