

Luanda International Airport set to open in late 2019-early 2020

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The Minister of Transport of Angola, Augusto Tomás, has announced that the completion of the new Luanda International Airport, for which construction started in 2004 after the Angola Civil War ended in 2002, will be further delayed by two years, and is now set to open at the end of 2019. The previous completion date had been set at the first half of 2017. The cost of the airport, including access roads, already exceeds US\$6 billion, more than US\$2 billion over an already-revised budget.

According to Tomás, the airport is halfway to completion and the further delay is being caused by financial difficulties.

The entire construction project, including rail access, equipment and airport construction, was awarded to various Chinese companies, including a consortium that also counts Brazil's Odebrecht as a member. The project is being financed by a credit line opened by China for the post-war reconstruction of Angola. The use of predominantly Chinese workers has sparked protest by Angolan workers, which may have also contributed to the delay.

The pace of growth in Angola has continuously accelerated since the end of the war, and the airport is expected to become a major hub for sub-Saharan Africa. The airport was initially designed to accommodate 13 million annual passengers, but is now expected to exceed that number.

The modern passenger terminal building occupies 160,000 square meters of land and the cargo terminal occupies 6,200 square meters, giving it an annual cargo capacity of 35,000 tonnes. The passenger terminal building will have 12 aircraft finger-docks. The northern runway is 4,200 meters in length and the southern runway is 3,800 meters long, with both being 60 metres wide. The total area of the airport will be 50 square kilometers.