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Number of malaria cases cut by a third

The number of cases of malaria diagnosed in Mozambique fell from six million in 2007 to four million in 2009, according to the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Health, Jorge Tomo. Speaking at the opening in Maputo of a meeting of SADC (Southern African Development Community) specialists on malaria programmes, Tomo said that Mozambique's success is a clear sign that it is possible to reduce the prevalence of malaria consistently, thus giving hope for its elimination in the medium term.

The three day meeting assessed progress made by SADC member states, and identified the priorities that need to be addressed to eliminate malaria from the region. It also looked at the financial gaps facing national and regional anti-malaria programmes, and finalised a budgeted plan of action to guide the next steps towards eliminating the disease.

The challenge facing the region is to secure enough funding for programmes aimed against the anopheles mosquito that transmits the malaria parasite. Chemical spraying inside and outside houses is the main way of controlling mosquitoes, while the use of insecticide treated bed nets, particularly for children and pregnant women, can prevent mosquitoes from biting people in their sleep.

Tomo stressed that SADC members must do more with the few resources available, and coordinate better their interventions.

He took as an example of success the Libombos malaria programme, which has dramatically reduced the number of malaria cases in a wide area of Maputo province, from Matola to the borders with South Africa and Swaziland.

"In Maputo province, and in the whole area covered by this initiative, malaria has ceased to be an important cause driving people to seek medical help, and deaths from malaria have become rare events", said Tomo.

The success of the Libombos Programme is largely due to funding from the Mozal aluminium smelter. When the Mozal management realized that malaria was a major cause of absenteeism, sickness and death among its workforce, it launched, through the Mozal Development Trust, mass home spraying campaigns. It

is claimed that in the area covered by this initiative, the number of malaria cases fell by 80 per cent and among children by 90 per cent.

Mozambique can supply energy for region

President Armando Guebuza declared on 5 November that the abundance of energy resources in Mozambique puts the country in a strong position to contribute to the development of the electricity sector throughout southern Africa.

Speaking in Maputo at the opening of the first conference of Energy Ministers of the African Union, President Guebuza said that Mozambique's determination to build infrastructure for the generation and transmission of electricity will, over the medium to long term, endow the country with a sizeable capacity to supply energy, not only for its own industrialisation, but also for export.

The Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Erastus Mwencha, told the conference that, to reach the desired level of development, Africa will need to invest about \$90 billion a year on infrastructure. "This is critical if the continent is to achieve the projected positive growth rate of five to ten per cent per annum, as was the case before the global economic and financial crisis", he added.

This is a condensed version of the AIM daily news service – for details contact aim@aim.org.mz

New international air terminal inaugurated

President Armando Guebuza on 12 November declared that the new look Maputo International Airport should not be regarded simply as a new passenger terminal but as a facility to encourage increased tourism.

Speaking during the inauguration of the new terminal, President Guebuza said "by making available infrastructures of international quality such as these, our government is responding to the challenges of national development, within a national and international context in which airports are playing a predominant role".

The construction of the new international passenger terminal took 18 months, and cost about \$75 million, provided by China as a low interest loan.

The project to modernise the airport also includes a new cargo terminal, a VIP lounge, an air traffic control tower, a car park that can hold 600 vehicles, and water storage facilities.

The international terminal can now handle 900,000 passengers a year. It offers modern check-in facilities, and passengers can enter and leave aircraft by means of retractable gates, instead of walking across the apron.

The Chinese ambassador to Mozambique, Huang Songfu, said that the ceremony was not just a delivery of a completed building, but a symbol of the cooperation between China and Mozambique.

"We hope that the new terminal will create a good image for passengers who come to Maputo, allowing contact between Mozambique and the rest of the world, stimulating the development of aviation in Mozambique, and strengthening the friendship between Mozambique and China", he said.

New domestic terminal to be constructed

Meanwhile, Mozambique's publicly-owned Airports Company (ADM) has announced that it will soon embark on the construction of a new domestic passenger terminal at Maputo Airport, budgeted at \$110 million.

There will first be a three million dollars investment on acquiring new fire fighting equipment and a new VOR (very high frequency omni-directional radio), a standard radio navigation system for aircraft.

ADM is negotiating with private companies on the possibility of building a new hotel and a range of offices on land owned by the airport.

ADM is responsible for managing 19 airports and aerodromes, of which five have the status of international airports.

Modernisation plans cover not only Maputo, but several other key airports. Thus the old military air base at Nacala, on the northern coast, is to be turned into an international airport. The runway will be repaired and extended, and a new apron will be built that can accommodate four planes simultaneously, including two large aircraft for international flights.

"All the airport buildings will be entirely new, with a total covered area of 16,000 square metres", according to an ADM document on Nacala. The Brazilian government has promised to finance the Nacala airport to the tune of \$80 million.

\$90 million grant to improve education

Mozambique has qualified for a grant of \$90 million from the Education for All - Fast Track Initiative (EFA FTI) to build classrooms, support schools and provide text books.

The funds are part of a new \$180 million grant from EFA FTI that will benefit Mozambique, Rwanda and Papua New Guinea. According to EFA FTI, the funds will help a million children who are not currently at school, support programmes to improve the quality of learning, enable pupils to complete basic education, and help children move on to secondary schools.

The three-year FTI grant will also be used to raise the overall quality of education by financing teacher training, HIV/AIDS prevention and decentralized school management and supervision.

The Fast Track Initiative is supported by all major donor countries and agencies working in education. It is a global partnership of donor and developing countries, multilateral institutions and civil society organizations, dedicated to ensuring that all children receive quality basic education. It currently endorses the education plans of 43 developing countries around the world, including 25 in Sub-Saharan Africa and has allocated \$2.2 billion in financial aid.

Globally, these funds have helped to train around 330,000 teachers, construct 29,000 classrooms, and distribute more than 200 million text books.

Mozambique has greatly expanded its education system since joining EFA FTI in 2003, with primary school enrolment rising from 3.3 million to 5.3 million.

Cashew nut production to reach 120,000 tonnes by 2015

Mozambican cashew nut production is expected to reach 120,000 tonnes a year by 2015. During the 2009 marketing season the country produced 96,000 tonnes.

According to the deputy director of the National Cashew Institute (INCAJU), Raimundo Matula, during the same period the weight of processed nuts will increase from the current 35,000 tonnes to reach 60,000 tonnes.

Matula made these predictions on 9 November in the run up to the launch of the National Cashew Forum in Maputo. He told the daily newspaper "O Pais" that this optimistic forecast stems from the continuous growth rate achieved between 2006 and 2009, which was due to investments made by the government.

"The Government has invested \$50 million over the past five years to improve the performance of the cashew sector, including the installation of the 18 new factories currently operating across the country", explained Matula.

A new report from INCAJU shows that overall the cashew sub-sector grew by 5.8 per cent during the period 2006/09 as a result of a 12.5 per cent growth in the production and distribution of saplings. During the same period, trade increased by 11 per cent, and the processing of cashew kernels by four per cent.

Exports grew by an annual average of 6.2 per cent as a result of a seven per cent increase in the export of unprocessed nuts and a 5.4 per cent increase in the export of processed cashew kernels.

China pledges support for Mozambique

Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao on 13 November told his Mozambican counterpart, Aires Ali, that China will continue to give material and financial support to Mozambique so that the country can rapidly eliminate hunger and poverty.

Prime Minister Wen was speaking during an audience he granted to Ali, shortly after both men had attended the opening, in the Chinese city of Macau, of the Third Ministerial Conference on Economic and Commercial Cooperation between China and the Portuguese-speaking countries. He stated that Mozambique is at the top of the agenda among the countries with which China maintains special links of friendship and of economic, social and commercial ties.

The Conference was organised by “Forum Macau”, a body set up in 2003 to stimulate cooperation between China and members of the CPLP (Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries). All CPLP members except Sao Tome and Principe are also members of Forum Macau. Sao Tome is unable to join because in 1997 it opted to recognise Taiwan, prompting China to cut off diplomatic relations.

According to Wen Jiabao, Forum Macau has successfully encouraged trade between China and the Portuguese speaking world. In 2005 this trade stood at just \$10 billion a year, but in 2008 it reached \$77 billion.

Speaking at the opening of the conference, Prime Minister Ali declared that China “even at the most critical moments of the international financial crisis, has remained determined to assist the socio-economic programmes of developing countries”.

He added that he was firmly convinced that the Plan of Action for Economic and Commercial Cooperation for the period 2010-2013, agreed by the conference, “will open broader horizons in strengthening our cooperation”.

During his speech, Prime Minister Ali stressed “it would not be just were we not to recognise that our relations with China have, since the early days of our national liberation struggle, undergone noteworthy development witnessed by the high level of cooperation in several areas, and the constant exchange of high level delegations, as shown by our presence here”.

Prime Minister Ali was last in China in June, when the Chinese authorities announced that they were making a further \$200 million available to Mozambique mainly for the building of infrastructure. Following the Prime Minister’s invitation, a delegation from some of the largest businesses in Shanghai visited Mozambique in August. If all their investment promises are kept, this group of businesses will invest \$13 billion in Mozambique over the next five years.

At the conference China promised to grant a further \$65.5 million to Mozambique. Most of this sum (\$64 million) is for concluding the second phase of the modernisation of Maputo International Airport (which will include a new domestic passenger terminal). The remaining \$1.5 million is for school construction. Repayment of this loan begins in three years, at an interest rate of three per cent.

Briefing journalists, Prime Minister Aires Ali explained that China has set up a special fund of \$1

billion, for which Mozambique is one of the eligible countries. This fund, which is included in the Plan of Action agreed by the Conference, is intended in particular to finance agricultural projects in counties facing food shortages.

Prime Minister Ali also confirmed that China has opened a line of credit of \$2.8 billion for CPLP members, to fund infrastructure to speed up their socio-economic development.

Among the support offered by China both directly and via these funds is the development of human resources. Prime Minister Ali said this takes the form of scholarships which will allow more Mozambicans to be trained in Chinese institutions. China has put at the disposal of CPLP members a total of 1,500 scholarships a year

“These scholarships are vital for our development, because what we most need in order to make the great leap that will take us to the progress we desire is knowledge”, stressed the Prime Minister. “Knowledge is the great secret which makes China what it is today”.

According to the Prime Minister the Conference had exceeded expectations, adopting a Plan of Action so consensual that there is every chance that it will be fully implemented. The plan includes a commitment to increase trade between China and CPLP members so that, in the next three years, it will reach \$100 billion a year.

President Lula visits Mozambique

Outgoing Brazilian President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva announced on 9 November that Brazil is to finance long distance learning and a human milk bank in Mozambique.

President Lula made the announcement during an official dinner hosted by his Mozambican counterpart, Armando Guebuza.

The Brazilian authorities have provided \$32 million for the establishment of the Mozambican National Distance Learning Institute (INED), which has set up its first centres in Maputo, the central port city of Beira, and Lichinga, capital of the northern province of Niassa. There is funding for the expansion of INED to other parts of the country.

The Brazilian delegation also announced funding for a human milk bank in Maputo Central Hospital at a cost of \$519,000. The money will be spent over two years, and covers the acquisition of equipment, technology transfer and the training of staff.

Brazil is a world leader in human milk banks, which are used to reduce infant mortality. The milk bank provides milk for new-born infants, in cases where the mother is unable to provide breast milk. This is an initiative to help Mozambique reach the Millennium Development Goal of cutting mortality among under-fives by two thirds between 1990 and 2015.

Brazil has the largest network of human milk banks in the world, with over 190 units helping 100,000 infants a year. European countries now import this technology from Brazil: the Spanish health authorities recently set up a milk bank in Madrid using Brazilian equipment.

With Lula’s rise to power eight years ago, relations between Brazil and Africa improved dramatically. With Mozambique, Brazil now has strong ties in the areas of mining, health and education.

Third mobile phone licence awarded

Mozambique's telecommunications regulatory body, the INCM (National Communications Institute of Mozambique), has awarded the country's third mobile phone licence to Movitel, a consortium between the Vietnamese company Vietel, and SPI, the holding company of Mozambique's ruling Frelimo Party. Movitel's financial bid was \$28.2 million.

Movitel is proposing to invest more than \$400 million over the next five years, and claims that this will allow it to cover 85 per cent of the population.

The third operator may well find it difficult to break into the market. The total Mozambican population is 22.4 million, of whom around half are under the age of 15. The longest established mobile phone operator, the publicly-owned M-Cel, claims over four million subscribers, while its rival, the South African company Vodacom, claims 2.8 million.

Mozambique and Qatar strengthen cooperation

President Armando Guebuza declared on 8 November at the end of a two day visit to Qatar that business cooperation between the two countries will be strengthened following the interest expressed by Qatari businesses to invest in Mozambique.

The visit was aimed at strengthening political and diplomatic relations and to attract more investment.

President Guebuza told reporters that he is interested in cooperation with Qatar in the area of natural gas, where this Gulf country is a world leader. Qatar is the main producer of liquefied natural gas in the world, with an annual production estimated at 77 million tonnes.

President Guebuza launches campaign against violence

President Armando Guebuza on 4 November launched a national campaign against violence against women and girls. His signature in a book of pledges to reject violence is intended to demonstrate the commitment of the Mozambican state at the highest level to this campaign.

The campaign will be developed in all provinces, districts, towns and villages across the country to raise awareness among all Mozambicans about ways to prevent violence and about the negative effects it causes in society.

The campaign was launched simultaneously with the African Decade of Women, 2010-2020, which aims to accelerate the achievement of gender equality through the implementation of major commitments on the continent to establish equality between men and women at all levels.

Korean deal with ENH

The publicly-owned Mozambican Hydrocarbon Company (ENH) and the South Korean company KOGAS on 3 November signed in Maputo a memorandum of understanding to maximize the use of natural gas in Mozambique.

The agreement, witnessed by the Mozambican Mineral Resources Minister, Esperanca Bias, and the Korean Deputy Minister for the Knowledge Economy, Young Jun Park, will lead to technical cooperation between the two companies and the development of a series of activities for the exploration of natural gas in Mozambique.

Mozambique currently consumes 15,000 barrels of oil per day, and that entire amount is imported, since no commercially viable oil reserves have yet been discovered in the country. Moreover, the country has been producing natural gas since 2004, but most of the 120 million gigajoules produced a year is exported to South Africa, leaving only five per cent for the domestic market.

KOGAS has been in the Mozambican market for some time, and together with the Italian company ENI, GALP of Portugal and ENH is involved in exploring for hydrocarbons in a block of the Rovuma Basin, in northern Mozambique.

KOGAS is the largest buyer of liquefied natural gas in the world and the only retailer of gas in Korea, where there are about 10 million customers for this resource.

Loans from Korean bank ratified

The Mozambican government on 2 November ratified two agreements for loans from the Export-Import Bank (Eximbank) of South Korea, which had been signed in Seoul in September.

According to the government spokesperson, Deputy Justice Minister Alberto Nkutumula, one loan, for \$49 million, will finance rural electrification in the southern province of Gaza.

The second loan, for \$45 million, is intended to finance a new 600 bed Central Hospital in Quelimane, capital of Zambezia province. This will be the fourth central hospital in the country – the others are in Maputo, Beira and Nampula.

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Mozambique News Agency, c/o 26 Withdean Crescent, Brighton BN1 6WH, UK. Tel: +44 (0)7941890630 - mozambique-news@geo2.poptel.org.uk

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