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Talks held between government and Renamo

Delegations from the Mozambican government and from the main opposition party, Renamo, resumed their dialogue in Maputo on 2 May in what was described as a “cordial” atmosphere. However, the talks did not reach any of the issues on the agenda because Renamo insisted on raising what it called “previous points”.

Thus Renamo demanded the “immediate and unconditional” release of 15 Renamo members who are currently detained in the central city of Beira. These are the 15 people whom the police arrested in a swoop on the Renamo office in the small town of Muxungue in early April.

At the time police claimed that Renamo was gathering large numbers of demobilized fighters in Muxungue and transforming it into a military base. The police used tear gas to clear the area and made 15 arrests. A day later Renamo attacked the Muxungue police post in an attempt to release the 15, and killed four members of the riot police.

After the meeting, the head of the government delegation, Agriculture Minister Jose Pacheco, said he had suggested Renamo hire a lawyer to defend its 15 detained members, and follow the case through all the legal procedures. He pointed out that the separation of powers is enshrined in the Mozambican constitution, and so the executive is forbidden from interfering in the administration of justice. It cannot simply order the release of people facing court proceedings.

Renamo also demanded the removal of the riot police from its office in the northern city of Nampula, occupied by the police after clashes in March 2012, and from the vicinity of Satunjira in the central district of Gorongosa, where Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama is currently living.

Pacheco said this was not a purely administrative issue, but concerned “matters of an operational nature” for the defence and security forces. The police, he pointed out, take up their positions depending on the needs of the moment.

Renamo also wanted national and foreign “facilitators and observers”, from bodies such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the African Union and the European Union to attend future rounds of the dialogue between the government and Renamo.

Pacheco said Renamo has promised to produce terms of reference for these “facilitators and observers”. “We think it would make more sense to exhaust the dialogue at our own level”, he added, “but in any case the definitive position will depend on the terms of reference that Renamo has promised to present.”

Renamo general secretary Manuel Bissopo has been replaced as head of the delegation by a senior Renamo parliamentarian, Saimone Macuiana. He denied reports in the

press that Renamo intends to use the dialogue with the government to demand more money – Renamo, he claimed, was only interested in “the equitable distribution of wealth throughout society”.

The main points that Renamo put on the agenda were the same as those discussed in the previous rounds of dialogue in December – namely revising the electoral legislation, questions of defence and security (including alleged political discrimination inside the armed forces), and the equitable distribution of wealth.

But Macuiana made discussion of these points conditional on solving Renamo’s “previous points”. The strong implication is that, if Renamo does not get its way on these three issues, there will be no further talks.

“We think it pertinent that these questions be solved before the start of negotiations on our demands”, said Macuiana.

Pacheco stressed that the government is open to dialogue with all forces of civil society, including the political parties, and aims “to consolidate the culture of peace, democracy and national unity”.

As for Renamo’s demand for the equitable distribution of wealth, Pacheco said that this occurs in the framework of implementing the government’s five year programme. Examples of such distribution were the allocation from the state budget of the Fund for the Development of Youth Initiatives, and the District Development Fund. Under the latter funds are decentralised to district level and lent to people who present viable projects that can boost food production and generate employment.

Pacheco stressed that it was not just a question of handouts, and that poverty can only be defeated through work.

He denied that the opposition is frozen out of business opportunities, and said there are members of Renamo who have mining concessions.

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

Ombudsman reports to Assembly

Mozambique's Ombudsman, Jose Abudo, has told the country's parliament, the Assembly of the Republic, that he is satisfied with the work of his Office during its first year in operation.

Speaking during his first annual address to the Assembly, Abudo said that between June last year and this March his Office opened 249 cases of which 161 have been concluded.

Citizen's complaints or petitions may be presented orally or in writing to the Ombudsman, and Abudo stated that his Office has been receiving an average of five submissions a day, of which most were from Maputo city and province.

The Ombudsman said that 52.6 per cent of cases were related to public administration, 30.5 per cent were about courts, 6.4 per cent concerned local authorities, 1.6 per cent regarded public companies, 1.6 per cent dealt with public institutions, with 7.3 per cent being categorised as "other".

On issues where the Ombudsman does not have jurisdiction seven cases were forwarded to prosecutors; eight to the regulatory body for judges, the Higher Council of the Judicial Magistracy; and two to the police.

In regards to fundamental rights, the Ombudsman has dealt with complaints regarding environmental rights and quality of life; social rights; the rights of state employees; and justice and security.

In these situations the Ombudsman makes recommendations to the relevant state body, which has a fortnight to correct illegal actions or injustices, and improve its service.

According to Abudo, since June last year he has made 16 recommendations of which seven were accepted, five rejected and four are still awaiting response.

Abudo lamented that during its first year the Ombudsman's Office has operated without its own facilities and with few staff and a lack of transport. He hoped that these problems can be overcome in the near future.

During the debate, the three parliamentary parties welcomed the work of the Ombudsman.

Carlos Sylia of the ruling party Frelimo called for a revision of the legislation on the Ombudsman to allow for setting up offices at the provincial level.

Alberto Sape, a deputy from the largest opposition party Renamo, raised concerns about the brutal treatment by the police of demobilised soldiers who have been protesting outside the office of the Prime Minister over demands for higher pensions.

He also called for action over the cases of Mozambicans who had once been migrant workers in the former German Democratic Republic who claim that they are still owed money from the government and the killing of a taxi driver by a police officer.

The third parliamentary party, the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM), questioned the Ombudsman on whether he has made recommendations to the Attorney-General over allegations of political intolerance characterised by the vandalisation of political offices.

According to MDM's Jose de Sousa, "the political intolerance in this country is becoming a big problem and could create a rupture between the government and the governed".

Abudo has had a lengthy career in the Mozambican judicial system. He has been a judge on the Administrative Tribunal, a judicial inspector and the presiding judge on the Sofala Provincial Court. He was Minister of Justice from 1995 to 2004.

DP World reports global profits of \$749 million

The annual general meeting in Dubai of DP World, the company that holds the concession to operate the container terminal at Maputo Port in Mozambique, has heard that in 2012 the company made a profit worldwide of \$749 million.

Speaking to AIM after the meeting, DP World's senior vice president Mohammed Al Muallem explained that this profit came from the company's 65 marine terminals located across six continents. In total the company handled 56 million TEU (standard size of a twenty foot long container).

Key to its worldwide operations is avoiding congestion.

In Maputo Port there have been severe traffic delays with trucks waiting to get into the port tailing back onto the EN4 highway. This has mainly been due to a huge increase in the number of trucks using the port because the railway line from Ressano Garcia was closed after damage to a railway bridge.

In response to the congestion, Maputo Port is working on a \$2 million project to improve the access roads, increasing the number of lanes from two to five.

DP World's flagship operation at Jebel Ali Port, just outside the city of Dubai, last year handled 13.3 million TEU of cargo without any delays to trucks. Every day the port handles 3,500 trucks and the company is committed to ensuring that any truck arriving at its gates is able to leave those same gates, having deposited or picked up its container, within half an hour.

Mohammed Al Muallem explained that this was only possible by making sure that capacity is always greater than demand. In addition, the company has invested heavily in installing technology so that all the necessary paperwork, from paying the port, customs and insurance to clearing imports with relevant authorities, can be done online. As long as everything is completed, the system recognises a truck's number plates and it can pass all the port's barriers without even stopping.

Mohammed Al Muallem told AIM of the Emirates' historic link with east Africa, with older members of his family being fluent in Swahili due to their frequent trips along the African coast.

In March Jebel Ali Port was visited by Mozambican President Armando Guebuza, and Al Muallem stressed that "we were very happy with what President Guebuza said about developments in Mozambique".

Worldwide, the company employs 30,000 staff and plans to expand capacity so that by 2020 it can handle 103 million TEU. It is looking in particular to growth in the emerging markets of Africa, the Middle East and Asia.

DP World holds a 30-year concession to operate the container terminal at Maputo Port until 2033, with an option to extend for a further 10 years.

Ministry of Health launches new vaccine

Mozambique's Ministry of Health on 10 April launched a new vaccine to protect children from the illnesses caused by the bacteria *Streptococcus pneumoniae*.

The pneumococcal vaccine PCV-10 targets the main types of bacteria that cause pneumonia. The bacteria are also responsible for a long list of other illnesses ranging from bronchitis to septicaemia or meningitis.

Given to children under the age of 12 months in three doses, PCV-10 offers 80 per cent protection for six years.

The vaccine will become part of the routine immunisation programme run by the Mozambican government, UNICEF and other health partners.

World Bank loans for agriculture

The Executive Board of the World Bank on 25 April approved two credits for a total of \$150 million to improve Mozambique's agricultural performance.

The loans are intended "to boost the Government of Mozambique's efforts to improve the performance of commercial agriculture and smallholder farmers, while also improving people's food and nutrition security".

One of the loans, for \$50 million, will support the government's First Agriculture Development Policy Operation (AdDPO), described as "the first of three operations designed to promote private sector-led agriculture in order to improve access to food and better nutrition".

According to the World Bank country director for Mozambique, Laurence Clarke, "agriculture offers Mozambique an immediate opportunity to foster balanced economic and social development in the country even as it expands its mining and gas industries".

"This new project", he added, "focuses on providing opportunity to Mozambique's growing ranks of farmers and agribusiness entrepreneurs in a way that will generate higher incomes for farmers while also improving nutrition for the country's rural population."

The second loan is for \$100 million and will support the Integrated Growth Poles Project, which is intended to improve the performance of agricultural companies and smallholders in the Zambezi Valley, in the centre of the country, and in the Nacala Corridor in the north.

The Bank states that the project "will raise employment and agricultural sales and help fund a variety of activities such as upgrading feeder roads, increasing privately executed public investments, and linking small farmers to emerging supply chains".

The two credits come from the World Bank's soft loans facility, the International Development Association (IDA).

Bank of Brazil to finance Maputo water supply project

The Bank of Brazil is to enter into an agreement with the government of Mozambique to finance the construction of the Moamba Major dam that will provide drinking water for the Maputo metropolis.

According to a report in the daily newspaper "Noticias", the project to build the dam on the Incomati River is expected to cost \$500 million and will provide water for drinking and irrigation in the Greater Maputo Metropolitan Area.

The paper cites the director of the National Water Board (DNA), Susana Saranga Loforte, as saying "we are in the final phase of negotiations for releasing the funds. The negotiations are making progress and if this continues we will be in a position to lay the first stone in 2014 or 2015".

She added that the Bank of Brazil has already funded the environmental impact study for the dam along with a preliminary design which together cost \$8.5 million.

In the shorter term the authorities are working on adapting the dam at Corumana on the Sabie River so that it can provide water for the north of Maputo and Matola, Marracuene, Moamba and Pessene.

This project will receive funding from the Dutch government, which has pledged €23 million (\$30.4 million).

Currently the cities of Maputo and Matola and the adjacent areas rely on the Umbeluzi River for their water supply. But the system based on the Umbeluzi treatment station is no longer sufficient to meet the growing demand for water.

Rhino's wiped out of Limpopo National Park

Authorities in the Limpopo National Park (PNL) have announced that no rhinoceros are left in the park in southern Mozambique. According to PNL, this is the result of poaching which over recent years has reached alarming levels. The motive for rhino poaching is clear: the enormous sums paid in China and Vietnam for rhino horn.

According to the park administrator, Antonio Abacar, "since I arrived last January I have never been in the presence of this species inside the park, which means that those who lived in the park are now probably dead".

The extinction has not been formally declared by PNL, but the animals that were in the area have disappeared over the last two years. A census taken in early 2011 concluded that there were still some rhinos in the conservation area, but these disappeared later that year.

After killing off the rhinos the poachers have turned their attention to elephants which are now also being slaughtered.

Abacar lamented that "the big problem that concerns us most is that some of our staff are involved in poaching".

He pointed out that at least thirty members of staff are currently facing disciplinary action.

To strengthen supervision in the park, PNL is in the process of integrating police officers into park patrols.

PNL covers over 1.1 million hectares, and was set up as part of the Greater Limpopo Transfrontier Park, which also includes the Kruger National Park in South Africa, and the Gonarezhou Park in Zimbabwe. Between them, the three parks cover a total area of 5.5 million hectares.

Mozambican poachers have also ventured into South Africa in search of rhino horn. Figures published in February show that between 2008 and the beginning of that month, South African forces killed 279 Mozambicans involved in rhino poaching. A further 300 Mozambicans were detained for poaching between 2008 and the end of 2012. Some of the Mozambicans killed or arrested have turned out to be members of the Frontier Guard or of the armed forces.

Sugar exports reach record levels

The Mozambican sugar industry in 2012 exported 243,583 tonnes of brown sugar worth 126 million US dollars. This represents a 23 per cent increase on the 198,181 tonnes exported in 2011.

According to the government's Centre for the Promotion of Agriculture (CEPAGRI), this is most sugar Mozambique has ever exported.

All the sugar was exported to the European Union through the Everything But Arms (EBA) initiative and Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) under which Mozambique has tariff free access to the EU market.

According to CEPAGRI, Mozambique's sugar production increased by two per cent in the 2012 campaign due to an eight per cent expansion in the area cultivated. In total 3.3 million tonnes of sugar cane was harvested, producing 396,719 tonnes of sugar and 130,357 tonnes of molasses. The total area cultivated was 45,917 hectares.

Last year 164,096 tonnes of sugar was sold in the domestic market of which 28,228 tonnes was white sugar. These sales represent a five per cent reduction over the previous year.

Mozambique imported 15,875 tonnes of sugar, because the mills do not yet produce enough refined (white) sugar to meet demand.

President will not let natural resources overshadow agriculture

President Armando Guebuza on 12 April reaffirmed that the discovery of vast natural resources such as coal and natural gas will not shift the government's attention away from improving productivity in the agricultural sector.

According to the President the focus of the government remains firmly on increasing agrarian productivity in the context of the struggle against poverty because it is in a symbiotic relationship with natural resources.

President Guebuza stressed this point at a ceremony in Maputo to launch the National Investment Plan for the Agrarian Sector (PNISA) which will be implemented over the period 2013 to 2017 at a cost of about \$4 billion. The plan covers food production, market access, food security and nutrition.

"The importance of agriculture to our economy is underlined by the fact that about 88 per cent of households take part in this activity, which employs more than 81 per cent of the active population", explained the President. He added that the agricultural sector forms about 25 per cent of Gross Domestic Product.

The plan has already received pledges worth \$820 million from the African Development Bank, World Bank, United States, European Union and Japan.

It will be implemented through private-public partnerships and engaging the local population, and will be monitored and evaluated using mechanisms set up by the government under the Economic and Social Plan (PES), Poverty Reduction Strategy (PARP) and Five Year Plan (PQG).

Support for small scale fishing

Mozambique is committed to the development of small scale fishing and aquaculture because it considers this to be a strategic vector for developing food security and contributing to improving the balance of payments.

According to the Minister of Fisheries, Victor Borges, the fishing sector in Mozambique plays a strategic role in food and nutritional security, raising foreign exchange and generating jobs with an annual catch of 200,000 tonnes.

Speaking in Maputo on 22 April during a regional meeting on the effects of climate change and natural disasters on the fisheries sector, the Minister pointed out that last year the country had to cope with a serious outbreak of white spot disease that affected about 600 tonnes of production.

Borges stated that "about ninety per cent of the fisheries sector in Mozambique is in the form of artisanal fisheries".

According to Borges, fisheries lies in fifth place in Mozambique's exports, contributing two per cent to Gross National Product through exports worth \$75 million per year.

Mozambicans each consume on average ten kilogrammes of fish per year, which represents about half of all animal protein consumed in the country. However, Borges pointed out that this is still below the internationally recommended level.

Currently the Mozambican government is encouraging private initiatives to develop fish processing on land, especially with tuna fish.

The Minister added that the government is consolidating the national inspection system for the control of quality in fish produce to protect the consumer and export markets.

However, the Minister warned that natural disasters and climate change are adding to recent problems of overfishing, pollution, coastal erosion and the degradation of aquatic ecosystems.

The meeting is organised by the Ministry of Fisheries, the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

Concession awarded for construction of Matutuine port

Prime Minister Alberto Vaquina on 18 April announced that the government has awarded the concession for the construction of a deep water port at Techobanine, in Mozambique's southernmost district of Matutuine.

The Prime Minister was speaking during the annual conference of the port of Maputo. He did not reveal the name of the company involved but stated that the work could be concluded by 2015.

The project will cost \$7 billion which the governments of Mozambique and Botswana are to raise.

According to Vaquina, "the Techobanine deep water port complex will be constructed from scratch for use by deep draft ships, and will complement the port of Maputo. It will involve the construction of a railway line linking Techobanine with Botswana via Chicualacuala (in the southern Mozambican province of Gaza) and Zimbabwe, and the building of an industrial complex".

The port will have the capacity to handle 100 million tonnes of cargo per year and could become an important regional strategic fuel reserve. It is expected to be used for the export of minerals from Botswana, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

Prime Minister Vaquina warned that "the port will provide a challenge to the education sector, particularly for technical and vocational education which will have to train the port staff".

For the project to be viable it will need to handle a minimum of 43 million tonnes of cargo per year.

The port complex will occupy 30,000 hectares, including an industrial development zone covering 11,000 hectares.

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