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Say no to false and divisive promises – President Nyusi

President Filipe Nyusi on 30 June urged the residents of Morrumbala district, in the central province of Zambezia, to reject “false and divisive promises”. Addressing a rally on the second day of his working visit to Zambezia, President Nyusi warned his audience not to be distracted by those who purvey such promises, since they will only delay development. The riches of Morrumbala belong to all Mozambicans he said, insisting that natural resources must be exploited in such a way as to bring benefits to all.

“Where does the electricity you use come from?” President Nyusi asked the crowd, which replied, correctly, “Tete” (the province where the Cahora Bassa dam is located).

“If you want to be another country, where will the energy you use come from? Who will bring it to you?” President Nyusi continued.

The President was referring obliquely to calls for “provincial autonomy”, made by the country’s largest opposition party Renamo and its leader, Afonso Dhlakama. Zambezia is one of the provinces where Dhlakama topped the poll in last October’s presidential election.

Morrumbala needs to emerge from its current poverty, said the President, and for that to happen it had to concentrate on increasing production and productivity, and it must be at peace. He urged his listeners to concentrate on production as the only way to advance their district and their province.

To ensure increased production, the government was working on agricultural mechanisation in partnership with the private sector, continued President Nyusi, and was setting up parks of agricultural equipment that could support peasant farmers. “The sole condition for attracting investment and bringing development, and with it jobs for young people, is peace”, he said.

“We don’t want to promise things that we are not going to do”, added President Nyusi. “We want to promise things that are really going to happen, in Morrumbala, but also in Tete, Gaza, Cabo Delgado, Inhambane and the other provinces, because I am the President of all Mozambicans”.

“Morrumbala, you have just one President and it’s me”, he stressed.

In a message clearly aimed at members of Renamo’s illegal militia, President Nyusi said he did not want to see people “exclude themselves from society. Everyone must feel that they own the development process, because this country belongs to all of us”.

“There can’t be people staying in the bush and saying that they’re being excluded”, he exclaimed. “It would be better for them to come home and live with their brothers and work for the good of all”.

President inaugurates Mocimboa da Praia water system

President Filipe Nyusi on 17 June inaugurated a new water supply system that will dramatically improve life for the 55,000 inhabitants of the town of Mocimboa da Praia, in the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

Speaking at a rally immediately following the inauguration, President Nyusi said that the previous system only provided enough water for 5,000 people. But the new system, built with the support of the World Bank and the government of Australia, can provide water for 50,000 people 24 hours a day.

“Now it is just a matter of connections”, said the President – and connections have already been established for 35,000 people.

“This isn’t enough”, President Nyusi recognised. “Mocimboa da Praia district is not just the town. So we shall be drilling more boreholes in accordance with our programme”.

The provincial delegate of the Water and Sanitation Infrastructures Administration (AIAS), Terencio Duarte, told reporters that the total investment in the new system was 250 million meticais (US\$6.8 million). Work began in 2012, and was scheduled to last for 15 months. But it was only concluded in 2014, because “the initial project had to be re-adjusted”.

The system includes a water impoundment unit with a capacity for 200 cubic metres an hour, and a treatment station that can treat 120 cubic metres an hour. The treated water is stored in a tank that can hold 250 cubic metres. There are two water distribution centres, and a network of 43 kilometres of pipes.

As for the management of the new system, Duarte said it was the philosophy of the AIAS to make water systems sustainable by farming them out to private business. A tender was launched to select a private operator. It was won by the company Kutenda, which has been managing the system for about six months.

Principles on separation of party and state signed

The Mozambican government and Renamo on 23 June signed in Maputo a “Declaration of Principles” on the separation of political parties from the state.

The matter had been under discussion for months in the weekly dialogue between the government and Renamo. What was signed is much the same as a document drawn up by the Mozambican mediators in February. Renamo, however, added last minute demands which the government found unacceptable.

Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama dropped these demands and, at a meeting of the Renamo National Council in Beira earlier in June, told the Renamo negotiating team to go ahead and sign what was consensual.

The declaration states that political parties may not have branches in public institutions, and may not use state owned premises for political party activities.

The Declaration bars public servants from undertaking party political or religious activities in their workplace. Public servants must refrain from party political activities during working hours, and magistrates, ambassadors and members of the defence and security forces are barred from political activities at all times.

The practice of deducting sums from public servants’ wages for political purposes must end. The declaration seeks to outlaw deductions from wages “for any purposes except those envisaged by law”.

It is, in fact, already illegal to make political or trade union deductions from workers’ wages without their express consent. But despite this illegality, deductions have been made from wages, particularly of teachers, to finance Frelimo events. This has sometimes erupted into scandals, and Frelimo centrally has denied authorising the practice.

The declaration states that vacancies in the state apparatus must be advertised, and recruitment must be by tender rather than appointment. This requirement covers the permanent secretaries in provincial and district governments, the heads of administrative posts and presidents of localities and villages. Tenders must also be held for the chairpersons of publicly owned companies, or companies in which the state holds shares, and the chairpersons or general managers of public institutes.

All phases of the tenders must be publicised, including the launch, the presentation of candidates, the presentation of the jury, and the results.

The declaration requires state recognition of “traditional authorities” who must come from “the family lineage”.

The document also proposes revising the powers and attributes of the Supreme Mass Media Council (CSCS), the press freedom watchdog set up under the constitution. But the main powers are stipulated by the Constitution and cannot be changed without a constitutional amendment.

The declaration proposes a commission to monitor the separation of parties from the state. This body would be set up by the Assembly, and would consist of representatives of government, parliamentary political parties, and civil society.

Renamo was enthusiastic about the declaration, but the government regarded it as largely irrelevant. The head of the government delegation to the dialogue, Agriculture Minister Jose Pacheco said it was “a redundant document, since its content is expressed in several laws that are already in force in the country”.

The government would always be willing to sign documents that might lead Mozambique to lasting peace, he added. He was also hopeful that Renamo now understood “that its project to divide the state between two parties

(Frelimo and Renamo) in the name of separating party and state is contrary to the Constitution and to the consolidation of the rule of law”.

The head of the Renamo delegation, Saimone Macuiana, claimed the signing ceremony was “an important act for the country and for future generations”. The success in the dialogue meant “a new page in the history of the country”.

He admitted that some points demanded by Renamo had been excluded, but declined to go into detail.

If Renamo expects the Assembly to rubber stamp the declaration, it may be in for a shock. For there is a third force in the Assembly, the Mozambique Democratic Movement (MDM), which has drawn up and submitted its own bill on the separation of party and state, which is already on the agenda for the current parliamentary sitting.

Dhlakama admits to ordering ambush

Afonso Dhlakama, leader of the country’s largest opposition party Renamo, has admitted that he personally gave the order for an ambush against government forces in the western province of Tete on 14 June.

Speaking on 22 June in the central city of Beira, Dhlakama said that attack took place three kilometres from a Renamo military base at Mucombedzi, in Moatize district,

“I can’t hide it. I gave the orders”, said Dhlakama. He claimed that “more than 35” members of the riot police died in the ambush, and a further ten died in hospital.

However, according to the spokesperson for the General Command of the Mozambican police, Pedro Cossa, two policemen were wounded in the ambush, one of whom died on the way to hospital. According to Cossa, the police unit concerned had been taking supplies to a police post in the Tete interior.

Dhlakama’s statement contradicted that given immediately after the ambush by Renamo spokesperson Antonio Muchanga, who claimed that it was the armed forces who had attacked Renamo, and not the other way round.

The ambush was a blatant violation of the agreement on a cessation of military hostilities, signed between Dhlakama and the then President, Armando Guebuza, on 5 September.

Dhlakama claimed there had earlier been four government attacks against the Renamo militia – one in the Mocumbedzi area, one in Funhalouro district, in the southern province of Inhambane, and two in Guija and Dindiza, in the neighbouring province of Gaza.

Dhlakama said he had authorised the ambush, after the Mocumbedzi commander had contacted him for instructions.

“Our force noted that government troops were about five kilometres from the base”, he said. “The commander, who is a major, asked – do we have to move the base again, because they’re going to attack us? I said – no, go and meet them and the clash occurred three kilometres from the base”.

Dhlakama said his patience was running out, because of what he called “frequent provocations”. He threatened that he would retaliate against any future government attack, and claimed he was under pressure from local Renamo commander to respond. The government, however, has repeatedly denied that it is mounting such attacks.

“I am a man of peace”, claimed Dhlakama. “I fought for democracy. I shall continue fighting, and I don’t want to frighten away local and foreign investment, or to scare the public, but I am tired of Frelimo playing around”.

This is a condensed version of the AIM daily news service – for details contact pfauvet@live.com

Road improvements cover 21,000 kilometres

The Mozambican government improved 21,000 kilometres of road in 2014, according to the Minister of Public Works Carlos Bonete.

Speaking on 29 June at the opening of a National Joint Review meeting on the roads sector, Bonete said this figure was about 96 per cent of the target figure of 22,000 kilometres and cost 21 billion meticaís (US\$549 million).

As the national road network is about 30,000 kilometres long, the government's interventions covered about 70 per cent of the network (which consists mostly of dirt roads).

Among the most important jobs undertaken during the year, said Bonete, was the tarring of key roads in the northern province of Cabo Delgado (between Macomia and Oasse, Oasse and Mocimboa da Praia, and Mocimboa da Praia and Palma). This means there is now a decent tarred road all the way – about 400 kilometres - from the provincial capital, Pemba, to Palma, the district where a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) factory is about to be built.

Key roads are also being tarred in the neighbouring province of Niassa, Bonete said, while further south, in Nampula province, stretches of the main north-south highway between Nampula city and the Ligonha and Lurio rivers were rehabilitated, as was the road from Nampula to Malema, part of the road that will link Nampula to Cuamba in Niassa.

The rehabilitation of the north-south highway also covered the stretch south of the Ligonha River, through Zambezia province to Mocuba and Namacurra. The Mocuba-Alto Benfica road was tarred, and a start made on building 13 bridges in Zambezia.

Work on rebuilding the main road from Beira to Zimbabwe also began, and further west, in Tete city, a second bridge was concluded over the Zambezi River, thus relaxing the pressure on the existing Samora Machel Bridge.

In the south, Bonete said, the road from Mephuza to Mapai and Chicualacuala in Gaza province was tarred. Work continued on the Maputo Ring Road (which is now nearing conclusion), and on the bridge that will span Maputo Bay, from the centre of the city to the district of KaTembe.

The Chairperson of the Mozambican Road Fund, Cecilio Grachane, put investment in roads this year at about 17 billion meticaís. This was an apparent reduction, he admitted, but only because an exceptional effort had been made in the past five years in which the equivalent of about four billion dollars had been invested in the country's roads.

"We're not going to tar all the roads every year", said Grachane. "A great effort was made to install what was missing in our road network, and we shall later follow the noble principle of preserving what we already have. We have to look rather more at maintenance".

Fewer employed in South African mines

Technological and legislative changes are reducing the demand for foreign labour, including Mozambicans, in the South African mining industry, reports the Maputo daily "Noticias".

Some of the gold and platinum mines have closed, while others are making miners redundant. This accompanies a shift from labour intensive to capital intensive mining methods. The militancy of the South African mining unions has won wage increases for miners – but among the employers' responses has been a reduction in the number of workers employed.

New South African legislation will force a reduction in

the number of foreign workers employed on the mines. A maximum of 40 per cent of the workforce in any mines can be recruited from outside South Africa, and that is a figure that will have to be shared between all the countries that supply mine labour (Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana and Swaziland).

Low wages and dangerous conditions used to mean that South Africans were not attracted to the mines – hence the need for the employers to recruit outside the country. Rising wages have changed that, and South Africans now outnumber foreigners on the mines.

The era in which virtually every household in southern Mozambique had a member working on the South African mines is thus coming to an end. That era began over a century ago, in 1909, when the South African authorities signed the first agreement with the Portuguese colonial regime, allowing the recruitment of mine workers in all of Mozambique south of the Save River (Maputo, Gaza and Inhambane provinces).

Figures from the South African Chamber of Mines show that in 1974, on the eve of Mozambican independence, 78 per cent of the miners were from other Southern African countries, with Mozambique making the largest contribution. After independence, the apartheid regime moved to reduce dependence on Mozambican labour, and the employers themselves also began to switch towards local recruitment.

Nonetheless, in 2003 there were still 55,000 Mozambicans working in the South African mining industry. But, according to the regional representative of the mine recruitment agency, TEBA, Jose Carimo, in the ensuing 12 years 23,000 of those jobs have been lost.

Carimo said only 32,000 Mozambicans are still working on the South African mines. Their remittances pump about 750 million rand (US\$61.4 million) into the Mozambican economy annually.

Carimo estimated that some eight per cent of the remaining Mozambican jobs in the mines are being lost every year, and there is no prospect of new recruitment. He predicted that in 20 years there will be no Mozambican miners at all in South Africa – or indeed miners from any other neighbouring country. He foresaw a mining industry exclusively staffed by South African nationals.

The miners' remittances used to be a crucial component in the Mozambican balance of payments. But its significance is in decline and, if Carimo is to be believed, within a couple of decades there will be no mine remittances at all.

Cimentos de Mocambique to build new plant in Nacala

Cimentos de Mocambique (Cement of Mozambique) has announced that it is to build a cement production facility in the northern port city of Nacala at a cost of around US\$250 million.

Production at the new plant is expected to begin in 2018 with an annual output of 1.5 million tonnes of cement.

Cimentos de Mocambique currently employs 1,200 workers and produces 3.1 million tonnes of cement per year. It is owned by the Portuguese company CIMPOR, which is part of the multinational group InterCement.

The announcement came in the same week that Turkish company Limak Holding pledged to invest US\$150 million in a cement factory in the southern city of Matola. This will employ at least five hundred workers in the first phase with a capacity of 600,000 tonnes of cement per year. In the second phase output will increase to two million tonnes a year.

Cahora Bassa power reaches Maringue

The district of Maringue, in Sofala Province is now linked to the national electricity grid, based on the Cahora Bassa dam on the Zambezi, a month ahead of schedule.

The decision to bring the electrification forward by a month, so that it would coincide with the 40th anniversary of Mozambican independence, was taken by Sofala Provincial Governor Helena Taipo, to honour a promise she made at a rally she recently addressed in Maringue.

The electrification of Maringue cost just over US\$3 million. The power reaches Maringue on a medium voltage transmission line from Macossa district, in the neighbouring province of Manica.

Previously only Maringue town benefitted from power, provided by a generator that was only switched on for four hours a day, between 18.00 and 22.00.

When Maringue was connected to the grid, the provincial director of mineral resources and energy, Candida Cumbe, urged the local residents “to conserve this investment which cost the Mozambican government a great deal”. She said that as from now Maringue residents could sign contracts with the electricity company (EDM) to connect their homes to the new transmission line.

Geraldo Windo, a local “regulo” (chief), was delighted at the change, since he believed that the lack of electricity had scared investors away from Maringue. “The government has heard our cries”, he said. “Now we can freeze our products. Our houses and the town will be illuminated. Patients, who had to be transferred to other health units because there was no power, can be treated in our own clinics”.

With the electrification of Maringue, all 13 districts in Sofala are now connected to the national grid.

Sofala governor angered by unfinished work

The governor of the central province of Sofala, Helena Taipo, has promised to investigate why building work for which the government has paid lies abandoned and unfinished across the province, according to a report in Maputo daily “Noticias” on 20 June.

Speaking to reporters at the end of a four day working visit to Gorongosa and Maringue districts, Taipo said she was saddened to find state buildings unfinished. Among them were the official residence of the Gorongosa district administrator, and the residence of the Maringue district attorney. Both should have been finished over two years ago.

She said she did not know why the contractors had abandoned these works. She pointed out that the government had paid a hundred per cent of the value of the agreed contracts. This led her to suspect corruption or theft on the part of the contractors.

She was also angered by the failure to complete a dam on the Nhandare River. This should have been completed in May, but to date only 50 per cent of the work has been done.

“I am worried about the state infrastructures”, said Taipo. “What I have seen and heard is not pleasant. The contractor received a hundred per cent of the money, but only 20 per

cent of the work has been done, and the building has been paralysed for years. So what’s going on?”

As for the Nhandare dam, which is intended to provide drinking water and water for irrigation in Gorongosa, Taipo recommended that the work should be completed by September at the latest.

She promised “tough measures” against those who are defrauding the state. “We have to find out who are the culprits for work that is not finished”, Taipo said.

US\$374 million for fight against AIDS, TB and malaria

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria on 17 June announced that US\$374 million will be disbursed to fight these diseases in Mozambique. The Global Fund, the Ministry of Health, the US-based charity World Vision, and one of Mozambique’s main NGOs, the Community Development Foundation (FDC) all signed a memorandum of understanding on the use of this grant.

The money for the AIDS programme is intended to increase the availability of life-prolonging anti-retroviral drugs. Currently an estimated 40 per cent of people with the HIV virus which causes AIDS are receiving anti-retroviral treatment. The target is to raise this to 60 per cent by 2016.

Other targets include extending HIV prevention services to cover 60 per cent of prostitutes, 60 per cent of adolescents, 39 per cent of Mozambican migrants working on the South African mines and 30 per cent of gay men.

For tuberculosis the target is to raise notification rates from 233 per 100,000 inhabitants to 320 by 2017

The subvention for malaria seeks to increase the domestic use of mosquito nets from 53 per cent in 2011 to 70 per cent by 2017. It is also hoped to reduce the rate of hospital deaths from malaria from 13 to eight per 100,000 patients between 2014 and 2016.

Health Minister Nazira Abdula told the signing ceremony that the government is mobilising resources for a qualitative improvement in the health services, recognising that people will only be able to participate in development if they are in good health.

“2014 was characterised by successes achieved in reducing the risk of the transmission of HIV from mother to child, and this fact encourages to work still harder to accumulate more gains”, she said.

The agreement, Abdula added, “cannot just be a signing between the parties, but should be a turning point in our mechanisms of formal and informal relationships, with the target of reducing the weight of the great endemic diseases in our country”.

The head of grant management of the Global Fund, Mark Edington, said effective implementation of the programmes supported by the grant will be fundamental to reduce the number of victims of the three diseases.

This grant comes from a large number of donors to the Global Fund, including the United States, Ireland, France, the Methodist Church, and companies such as BHP-Billiton and the Brazilian mining giant Vale.

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