Machel our closest ally

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THE late President Samora Machel of Mozambique has always been a very close ally of Zimbabwe.

In August 1980, Cde Machel became the first head of state to pay a five-day official visit to independent Zimbabwe, an honour befitting the revolutionary leader who offer ed his country to the ruiing Zanu (FF) as springboard for launching its liberation war against the Smith regime in Rhodesia.

President Machel was further honoured by renaming the main Jameson Avenue in Harare Samora Machel Avenue. All schools were closed in Zimbebiwe on August 4 1980 to enable children to participate in welcoming the illustrious son of Africa.

The Prime Minister, Cde Mugabe paid tribute to Cde Machel before the official visit: "Mozambique deserved the nonour Zimbabwe has given it on the first official visit."

He added that the support of the people and President Machel had never wavered during the war and 150 000 Zimbabweans had been housed in its refugee camps. "He is an admirable friend."

On President Machel's first visit, agreements in transport, banking, communication, information and trade were signed between Mozambique and Zimbabwe, bringing the two countries closer together.