

# Machel firm on economic links with SA

Own Correspondent

PARIS. — President Samora Machel of Mozambique yesterday likened South Africa to a "bandit, murderer, and criminal", but added: "We will keep our economic relations."

In lengthy interviews with the news magazine *Afrique-Asie*, President Machel and Foreign Minister Joaquim Chissano stressed Mozambique's need to maintain trade relations, which would only be broken off if South Africa attacked their country.

Both were answering needling questions of how they could explain trade relations with Pretoria after five years of independence when this was contrary to the policies of non-aligned countries and the Organization of African Unity.

President Machel replied: "So far, as economic relations between Mozambique and South Africa are concerned, there is a golden rule: We can choose our friends, but unfortunately not our neighbours, nor our brothers."

"A brother can be a bandit, murderer, thief, dropout, drug addict or a criminal. But he is your brother and you can do nothing about it. The South African regime is racist, but it is also our neighbour, and that is something that cannot be changed."

## 'We are dependent on SA'

He continued: "On the economic level, we are dependent on South Africa. In a certain way. There is a sort of interdependence. The port of Maputo lives off South Africa and a certain part of South Africa lives from the port of Maputo."

"The situation is rather like that between West and East Germany. All communist countries have relations with West Germany, including East Germany, although there are profound disagreements, notably over the status of Berlin. But there is not only economic co-operation, but also cultural, scientific and technical links."

He said: "There can be all kinds of co-operation, even with differing ideologies."

The Foreign Minister, Mr Joaquim Chissano, stressed the importance of Maputo-Pretoria relations when he said: "If we broke off co-operation there would be catastrophic consequences for our economies."

He said Mozambique did not believe that South Africa planned to attack it, but if this happened "we would break off all economic ties, and South Africa would suffer."