

Sweetness and light at Maputo meeting

F.W. DE Klerk, South Africa's president-in-waiting, and Joaquim Chissano, President of Mozambique, both achieved what they were looking for at their three-hour meeting yesterday.

Besides gaining additional foreign exposure, Mr de Klerk flew back to Pretoria with a pledge from Mr Chissano that if South Africa dismantled apartheid and introduced significant degrees of equality, then Mr Chissano would support South Africa's reintegration into the southern African community of nations.

Mr Chissano suggested that "if there is a sound process of change in South Africa" a de Klerk government could look forward to Mozambican support for a regional conference with neighbouring African states, which South Africa so desires.

Mr de Klerk and Pik Botha, his Foreign Minister, had given assurances, Mr Chissano said, that "during the mandate of the future president this problem of discrimination will be solved so then there will be real democracy in South Africa". The South Africans, he said, had promised that their "commitment is to work to achieve this goal as quickly as possible, not a solution to be dragged out indefinitely".

Mr Chissano, in turn, obtained Mr de Klerk's public support for his new peace initiative, aimed at ending the 14-year-old war against the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo) rebels, which have enjoyed South African support since 1980. "Renamo should, according to our view, stop violence and become part of the efforts for peaceful development in Mozambique," Mr de Klerk said.

What Mr de Klerk described as the "interaction" between South Africa and Mozambique has often been a stormy affair. South African military forces have attacked African National Congress

forces in Mozambique at least three times since the former Portuguese colony gained independence in 1975, and much of Renamo's military prowess is due to nearly a decade of South African sponsorship.

Both Mr Chissano, who was foreign minister, and Mr de Klerk

From Karl Maier in Maputo

symbolise the rise of the politician over the military man. In recent years, co-operation between the two countries has risen sharply. South Africa has promised to help Mozambique repair the giant Cahora Bassa hydroelectric complex in the northwestern province of Tete, and has lent \$2m (£1.2m) to rehabilitate the port of Maputo, which is the best outlet for South African coal and citrus exporters.

Mr de Klerk's visit to Maputo came at a time when the whole of southern Africa is swirling with diplomatic activity. As Javier Perez de Cuellar, the United Nations Secretary-General, was across the continent visiting Namibia, representatives of the MPLA government in Angola reopened peace talks in Zaire with their counterparts from Jonas Savimbi's Unita rebel movement. Daniel Arap Moi, President of Kenya, is due in Maputo tomorrow for talks on Mr Chissano's peace initiative, while diplomatic sources said a summit of the six African Frontline states was possible at the weekend.

"We all need to play a positive role to break out of the cycle of violence," Mr de Klerk said, summing up the mood.