



CDE CHISSANO

Chissano unveils plans for radical changes

MAPUTO. MOZAMBIKAN President Joaquim Chissano introduced a draft constitution yesterday that would provide for universal suffrage, a secret ballot and direct election of the president and parliament.

Under the draft constitution, which will be debated in meetings throughout the nation, Mozambique would remain a one-party state.

But Cde Chissano, un-

veiling the draft at a public rally in Maputo yesterday, said the question of a multiple-party political system would be freely discussed.

The new constitution, if adopted by the People's Assembly, would also scrap the death penalty, outlaw torture, enshrine the right to strike and reintroduce the private ownership of land which ended with Portuguese colonialism in 1975.

About half the popula-

tion of 13 million people need food aid in Mozambique, one of the world's poorest countries, which has been wracked by a 12-year MNR bandit war.

The ruling party prepared the draft constitution, which will make it possible for any Mozambican between the ages of 40 and 70 to be president if they can gather 5 000 supporters from throughout the country. The term of office would be five years, with no one

serving more than three terms.

Under the current constitution, the president of Frelimo automatically becomes president.

Another major change is the provision of direct elections to the country's parliament, the People's Assembly, which now is chosen indirectly through a complex system of electoral colleges, where delegates are selected in open meetings, with no secret ballot.

The draft constitution provides for more than one candidate to contest each seat in the People's Assembly.

But, Cde Chissano said, Mozambique was not yet ready for more than one party. "Creating national unity is a fundamental task for our people," he said. "... The existence of various parties could distract attention away from the people's problems and towards a struggle for power."

He said multi-party political systems allowed for debate between people of differing views. But such debate, he said, "is not always honest. Sometimes it seeks not to serve the people, but merely to destroy the government because the others are in opposition".

But Cde Chissano stressed that those were his own views and the question of a multi-party versus single-party system should be thoroughly

discussed in the nationwide debates on the proposed constitution.

Cde Chissano called for a free and wide-ranging discussion, but one which would "look carefully at the situation in our own country" and note "experiences from elsewhere in Africa".

The new draft stresses that Mozambique is a "state of law", and establishes the independence of the judiciary. — Ziana-AP-AIM.