

# Renamo vows end to attacks on Cahora line

Argus Africa News Service

SONGO. — Renamo president Afonso Dhlakama has given a firm undertaking to stop all attacks on the 900km powerline between South Africa and the Cahora Bassa hydro-electric dam in northwest Mozambique.

But he will not agree to stop hitting the powerline that feeds Maputo, said Mr Dries Loots, South Africa's representative to the Permanent Joint Committee, a group formed to get the project back on track.

The agreement is the first clear signal that the multimillion hydro-electric project, which has been virtually idle for 15 years, could be up and running within three years.

## Halted in 1983

Continuous sabotage of the line halted electricity to South Africa in 1983.

Mr Loots said the Renamo president conceded that Portugal and not the Frelimo government was paying the highest price for the project's continued inactivity.

Most of the R1.2-billion building and maintenance costs are owed to Portugal.

Argus 901112 p.2  
"Mr Dhlakama is also tired of the war. He wants out of the bush," Mr Loots said.

Eskom's chief executive, Dr Ian McRae, said that if the Cahora Bassa project was not back on track within 18 months it would reach a point of no return. Tariffs would have to be increased so much that the project would not be viable.

## Pylons blown up

The substation at Cahora Bassa has been well maintained but the lines need repair. More than 1 400 electrical pylons have been blown up, dismantled or fallen into disrepair during the 10-year bush war.

It would cost R240 million to rehabilitate the scheme, Dr McRae said.

South Africa has promised a R50-million loan. More money is expected from Italy and the World Bank.

South Africa has a keen interest in restoration because of its past investment.

Dr McRae said the project should be restored because South Africa will need more power by the end of the decade and this would be the cheapest source.