

Samora Urge Closer Cooperation

The visit that the President of the People's Republic of Mozambique (RPM) paid to Portugal resulted in a huge success. From its start there was already a growing expectation around the presence of Samora Machel — the last of the historical chiefs in the struggle against Portuguese colonialism — who came to Portugal for the first time.

When the Mozambican President landed at Portela airport and addressed himself to Ramalho Eanes with an informal and good-humoured "My friend, how are you?" he definitely gave the tone for the visit. Joy, firmness, openness, a great capacity for dialogue and popular contact, that was the image conveyed by Machel wherever he went. It was therefore no wonder when the RPM President confided to the former Secretary of State for Cooperation, Luis Fontoura, during the farewell banquet, on the eve of his departure: "Tomorrow I'm going abroad!". The sentence is in itself expressing the man's mood while in Portugal.

Samora Machel's six-days visit to Portugal was the result of an invitation by the President of the Republic, Ramalho Eanes, and it was included in a 3 weeks long European journey by the FRELIMO leader which was to take him also to Belgium, Holland, Yugoslavia, France and Great Britain.

Principal matters discussed in the conversations during this visit, centered on the search for economic aid — in order to lessen the serious consequences of the drought affecting Mozambique's central and south regions — and the strengthening of relations with the Common Market's ten countries. At political level, the Mozambican President endeavoured to sensitize European Presidents and governments to the risks his country is facing as a result of South-African aggressions — an attack against one A. N. C. office in Maputo on the 17th October was the most recent example — and raids of armed bands supported by the Pretoria regime, expressing at the same time the Front Line Estates' con-

cern over the delay in finding a way out for Namibia's independence problem.

In Portugal, in addition to several meetings with his Portuguese homologous, Machel had conversations with the Prime Minister, Mário Soares, with the President of the Parliament, Tito de Morais and the leaders of the major political parties.

He visited the monasteries of Batalha and Jerónimos, the University of Coimbra and the city of Oporto, common people acclaiming, and welcoming him warmly at all places. In those moments, Machel managed to escape from the rigidity of the State protocol and offered the image of a great African statesman he really is by maintaining brief and friendly chats — many of which are sufficiently demonstrative of the secular ties binding the two peoples — always surrounded by popular and warm affection.

During his two meetings with businessmen, the Mozambican President showed his desire in seeing cooperation extended to all do-

mains", adding that "in various sectors our economies can be complementary". The very same idea would be defended by Mário Soares who during the lunch offered to the President emphasized his government's engagement in the support of Portuguese businessmen over "the creation of Luso-Mozambican mixed companies" and the development of tripartite cooperation.

For the Portuguese, two acts by Samora Machel assumed a very special meaning: the first, by depositing a wreath of flowers in memory of soldiers who died in Africa, during his visit to a base of parachutists at Tancos; the second, by awarding Ramalho Eanes with the Order of Friendship and Peace, never awarded before.

The President of Mozambique also went through a moment of great emotion when he heard from the Minister of Culture, Coimbra Martins, that mortal remains of Emperor Gungunhana, the first Mozambican resistant to colonialist occupation, would soon be resting at his birthplace.

However, aside from these touching moments, there were concrete results of the visit. The major aspect was probably the signature of a 10-year friendship and cooperation treaty, through which both parties committed themselves to intensify the economic cooperation, by reinforcing and widening it in industrial, trading, agricultural, fishing, technical, scientific and technological domains.

It was also decided to ascribe the greatest importance to cooperation actions in the investments by the private sector, namely through the creation of mixed companies, new projects for direct and reproductive investments, thus affording the Mozambican economy with a greater capacity for exports, in order to promote "an additional impulse in the exchange of goods and services between the two countries".

In the industrial sector, a protocol was signed aiming at the construction and operation of a professional training center, integrated in the Mozambican iron and steel project. At financial level, both parties admitted that Portugal is to be compensated for the onus it has assumed in the Cabora Bassa hydro-electric station and steps were taken in order to unblock, shortly, Portuguese credits so far immobilized (cases of Maconci and TAP).

The only setback in financial matters resulted from a decision of the Portuguese government's negative attitude to maintain the credit limits, not allowing the opening of a new credit line amounting to 10 million contos (85 million dollars), contrary to what was already announced. This refusal, to which some members of the Mozambican government reacted unfavorably, would however be insufficient to darken the success of the visit, thanks to Samora Machel's prompt intervention and it is now anticipated that the agreement over the line of credit is to be renegotiated during the coming year.



By invitation of President Machel, Eufrignia dos Reis will return to Mozambique after 13 years, to look for her three brothers which she left in Inhambane

"The international economic crisis", Machel said, "should not constitute a shadow, the obstacle blocking our cooperation. On the contrary, it should act as a catalyst for complementary actions, bilateral or multilateral. Coordinating the resources of each of our countries constitutes an essential element in the context of bilateral cooperation enabling us to overcome, for mutual benefit, the crisis our economies are now facing".

Moving forward in joint actions

After an initial phase of mutual misunderstandings, visits to Mozambique by Ramalho Eanes and the former Prime Minister Pinto Balsemão made it possible to file away the existing litigious matters and to open a new era in the relations between the two countries with fruitful results.

A few weeks ago, the exchange of ambassadors — Paulouro das Neves was nominated for Maputo, while João Baptista Cosme was appointed Mozambican Ambassador in Lisbon — was enough proof of the interest that both States confer to bilateral relations. And that was the reason why the Portuguese President of the Republic declared to the Mozambican official news agency (AIM) before Samora Machel's visit, which "should also constitute a very important step on the way to a more advanced phase of our cooperation considering that it's now time for an effective definition of the joint actions to be developed".

In order to overcome its backwardness, Mozambique has been seeking abroad for financial aid and the "know how" required for development projects. In the last months the West showed a renewed interest on cooperation matters, while Mozambicans have denoted their interest in the normalization of diplomatic relations with the United States. In this context, Portugal can play a fundamental role either by channeling European financial and technological aids or in the formation at professional level of executives and technicians. This was exactly pointed out in "Portugal Pressscope" August 1982 edition in an article on Portugal-Mozambique relations: "Connoisseur of the African mentality and problems, speaking the same language and with cultural affinities originating from five hundred years of presence in the African continent, good perspectives of cooperation with the ex-colonies are opened to our country".

When the Bank of Mozambique's governor, Prakash Ratilal, visited Portugal last July heading a delegation that took part in the Luso-Mozambican mixed committee for cooperation, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jaime Gama, alluded at the advantages of the tripartite cooperation. "The present economic and financial conditions of our two countries [...] don't favour the full development of all potentialities that our cooperations is able to offer" — the minister said. Why not look for third parties willing to venture with us on some of those enterprises, on fair bases and to everybody's satisfaction?"

In this way, in the economic field, among the last cooperation actions, it should be enhanced the project for the renovation of Nacala-Entre Lagos railway line, through the

financing of about 4.7 million contos /around US\$40 million). This project — covering renovation of 538 kms of main lines and other railway equipment — is also participated by a French banking consortium and the Canadian International Development Agency, led by the Portuguese company SOMAFEL, its cost being estimated at over US\$200million.

During the meeting of the Luso-Mozambican mixed committee, a loan contract for one million contos was also signed, to cover cooperation actions, namely the sending of cooperative teachers and the attendance of Portuguese universities by Mozambican students, the support in conservation and restoration of historical monuments and a study on "Mozambique Ophthalmological Profile". One point is also to be emphasized: in the financial and business area, the Mozambicans are favourable to the constitution of mixed companies in the domains of the extractive industries, tobacco, cotton, sisal, cattle breeding and fruit growing.

Another sector where cooperation may be increased, is the military one, not only for the supply of a certain type of armament but also in training and specialization of Mozambican officers.

Overcoming the external dependence

Although Mozambique is going through a difficult economic situation — still more aggravated by the drought that's affecting about four million persons, the economic sabotage and military interventions perpetrated directly by South Africa or through the medium of the so-called Mozam-

bican National Resistance ("armed bandits" according to the official terminology) — progress achieved during these eight years of independence is indeed remarkable. It would be only fair to emphasize, among it, the projects already accomplished or under way in the domains of civil construction, transports, electrification and hydraulic works.

Between 1977 and 1981 the global production, about 80% of it is already under the planning system, recorded an increase of 11.6%. The state-owned industrial sector represents 65% of the total production.

This outcome becomes still more significant knowing that in addition to attacks against communal villages and unarmed populations by the RNM (Resistance), the main target of the sabotage actions carried out by the "armed bands" and the South-African military has been the regional economic projects developed under the SADCC cooperation agreements, exactly those aiming at liberating Southern African countries from Pretoria's economic tutelage.

In spite of this growth, Mozambican leaders don't conceal that there's a lot to do, not even the fact that results achieved in some sectors were indeed scanty. Last April, during FRELIMO's 4th Congress, there was hard criticism against some party and government members, excessive centralization and bureaucracy, partly responsible for serious problems regarding supplies for the populations, for instance. During a vivacious and participated debate congressmen discussed the matter of insufficient growth in the agrarian and alimentary production (shortages, mainly, in the production of grains, vegetables and oil seeds) — lower than the populational growth — with tragic results on the commercialization circuits ("candonga"), also aggravating the balance of trade.

Two other sectors recorded sensitive progress: education and health. Besides creating the National System of Education, special efforts were made in the opening of new schools in all regions — Mozambican's concern over technical and professional education should be emphasized — the number of pupils in elementary schools jumped from 672.000 in 1975 to 1.330.000 in 1982.

In the health sector, fight against infantile mortality and vaccination campaigns should be emphasized, as well as the increase in the number of doctors and nurses and the opening of new health centers.

In spite of the world recession, lower prices for raw materials, economic sabotage and military aggressions, Mozambique is growing.

For reasons already mentioned, Portugal has an important contribution to offer for its development. Intensifying the cooperation with African countries, particularly with Mozambique, is one of the major ways for the country's economic recovery.

President Samora Machel came to give the Portuguese a hug of friendship and sincere assurances for cementing the historical relations between the two people, and for the strengthening of understanding and advancement of cooperation between the two States.

Let's not waste this opportunity.

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POSITIVE RESULTS IN PORTUGAL-MOZAMBIQUE BALANCE OF TRADE

Portugal presents a credit balance of 2 961 960 thousand escudos on the trade with the People's Republic of Mozambique (RPM) in this year's first seven months, according to figures released by the National Institute of Statistics (INE). During this period, Portuguese exports reached the value of 3 528 941 thousand escudos, while imports stood at 566 981 thousand escudos only. In this way, Mozambique's balance of trade, traditionally deficient, became substantially aggravated: the covering rate in these first seven months is 16% only, against 50% in 1981 and 20.8% in 1982, according to provisional figures.

The main Portuguese exports were textiles (909 000 thousand escudos); canned fish and meat (492 000 thousand escudos); machinery, equipments and electrical material (504 000 thousand escudos); vehicles and railway equipments; tools and pharmaceutical products.

For its turn, Mozambique main exports to Portugal are raw cotton (464 000 thousand escudos); prawns (46 873 thousand escudos) and sisal (31 543 thousand escudos).