

# Mozambique – garden of Africa

MOZAMBIQUE is a potential "garden of Africa" and its reconstruction would not be expensive.

That is the view of David Screen, national director of the Institute for a Democratic Alternative in SA (Idasa), after an 11-day tour of Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe with alumni of the Wits Business School. The 11 Wits alumni members, representing companies such as Engen, Rio Tinto-Zinc, PC, Sentrachem, National Airways and Middelburg Steel, were welcomed in all three countries.

Mr Screen says: "The pur-

## But it needs aid to to nourish growth

Business Times Reporter

pose of the trip was to enable the WBS alumni to look at business opportunities and to familiarise themselves with the political situation. It was also an important learning experience for all of us.

"My role, as the Idasa man, was to help on the political

side. We arranged meetings at high level with all three governments and with the ANC in Lusaka."

Lily Mitchell, chairman of the WBS Association and co-leader of the trip, says improving communications of all types is a priority in all

three countries. Road, rail and telecommunications are mostly in a sorry state. Mozambique, for instance, is connected to the outside world by six telephone lines.

Mrs Mitchell says developing a work ethic will be an important part of reconstruction. Mozambique and

Zambia are particularly keen on joint ventures.

The message from Mozambique is: "We need SA capital and expertise. Let's get reconstruction going now."

Zimbabwe's attitude is distinctly cooler, probably because its economic straits are not as desperate as those of Zambia and Mozambique, which rank among the poorest nations in the world.

Mr Screen says: "With good rainfall, fertile soil and a warm climate, Mozambique can produce outstanding cotton, citrus and other crops. Tiny Rowland and John Hulett of Loureiro have been there for six years.

"Land costs virtually nothing and labour is cheap. The infrastructure is badly run down, but the buildings and facilities can be renovated cheaply."

Jorge Martins, of transmission line company Feralin, grew up in Mozambique and left virtually as a refugee at 17. He says: "Chances for business are good. I would like to bring my family here."

Mr Screen says Mozambique, and possibly Zambia, are moving to multi-party democracies. Frelimo and Renamo are talking.

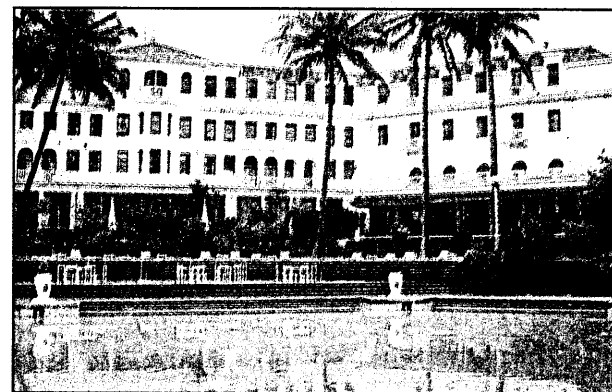
### Jobless

Some members of the party were present at the opening of the Preferential Trade Area (PTA) council in Harare. The PTA is an economic co-operation agreement among 19 African states. They heard prolonged applause when it was put to the conference that a post-apartheid SA should be allowed to join.

Members of the Zambian Association of Manufacturers (ZAM) will visit SA early next year as a result of the WBS visit.

Unemployment is rife in all three countries, but in stark contrast to Zimbabwe and Mozambique, Zambia has a thriving informal economy.

Mr Screen says Zimbabwe's conciliation policy of the past 10 years is showing signs of strain. There is growing resentment at white affluence in the midst of black poverty.



ONE-TIME POSH HOTEL ... Maputo's Polana to become a showpiece again

SA Foundation director Gavin Lewis says: "The doors stand open. The desire among our neighbours for co-operation is strong and the potential is apparent. All now depends on the policies we adopt."

Mr Screen says Idasa's role in a changed SA is to be "an ally of the transition process". Idasa is trying to promote communication and understanding between such divided factions as the AWB and the PAC and the ANC and Inkatha.

"We try to be more than mediators and facilitators. We are also involved in development studies, education and health."

"Aids is the major health concern of the sub-continent.

We found it interesting that Aids is hardly talked about in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. The Zambians have an anti-Aids programme."

### Horizons

Idasa, comprising 50 members, is funded by "European foundations and governments". Its head, Frederik van Zyl Slabbert, is on the Wits Business School faculty.

Mrs Mitchell says the WBS is broadening its horizons. A tour to West Africa is planned.

All neighbouring territories lack management talent. Wits believes it can become the Oxford or Harvard of the sub-continent.

The WBS has granted 1 166

MBAs in the past 20 years. Activity has increased sharply in recent years and 1 800 students do MBAs, executive development programmes and other shorter courses every year.

The WBS-inspired junior achievement programme involves thousands of high-school children in real-life business education all over the country. In addition, WBS trains hundreds to run small businesses. Its community-based development programme teaches management to people involved in community affairs.

The WBS will hold a seminar on business possibilities in neighbouring states on November 2.