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MOZAMBIQUE: PROSPECTS FOR STABILITY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. UNOMOZ AND AFTER	1
1.2. DEMOCRATIZATION AND THE RETURN TO STABILITY	2
1.3. THE REGIONAL CONTEXT.....	3
2. POLITICAL ISSUES.....	4
2.1. THE ROLE OF THE OPPOSITION	4
2.2. ETHNIC AND REGIONAL QUESTIONS	5
2.3. LAND REFORM	6
3. ECONOMIC ISSUES	8
3.1. AFTERMATH OF FLOOD DISASTER	8
3.2. MIGRANT LABOUR	10
3.3. PRIVATIZATION	12
3.4. POVERTY.....	14
4. SOCIAL ISSUES.....	16
4.1. REHABILITATION OF REFUGEES	16
4.2. DEMOBILIZATION	18
4.3. LANDMINES.....	20
4.4. AIDS.....	22
5. CONCLUSIONS	24
6. BIBLIOGRAPHY	26

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1. Introduction

The prospects for stability in Mozambique hinge on a number of interrelated factors, many of which historical, that constrain the country's scope for political peace, economic development and social harmony. The three sections which make up this report detail the political, economic, and social issues which are most likely to affect the evolution of the country in the next few years. Taken together, they provide a comprehensive (though obviously not exhaustive) overview of the key questions most likely to determine the success of the Government's present efforts at long-term development.

1.1. UNOMOZ and After

The successful implementation of the General Peace Agreement (GPA), signed in Rome in October 1992, which culminated in the October 1994 legislative and presidential multiparty elections, laid the basis for all subsequent efforts at rebuilding the country. However, the end of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (UNOMOZ) in January 1995 left a country still devastated by 30 years of conflict and utterly dependent on foreign assistance for reconstruction and development.

Although UNOMOZ is generally deemed to have been a success in that it made possible a transition to peace within what was seemingly an intractable context, it did not solve the issues which most troubled Mozambique at the time. In some ways it was itself part of a pattern of precedents which had made Mozambique habitually dependent on external support for the resolution of its most difficult domestic issues. Chris Alden writes:

Ironically, the evacuation of the thousands of personnel and tons of material, a substantial financial and institutional feature of the Mozambican landscape for two years, was itself a potential destabilising event. FRELIMO [Front for the Liberation of Mozambique - Frente de Libertação de Moçambique] and RENAMO [Mozambican National Resistance - Resistência Nacional Moçambicana], accustomed to the participation of the UN as both moderator and guarantor of the peace process, would now have to learn to conduct their political conflicts without recourse to direct and interested international support on the scale seen between 1992 and 1994.¹

Indeed, since then foreign assistance has grown apace and foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have become ever more active throughout the country.²

UNOMOZ's greatest achievement was the consolidation of peace in Mozambique. That peace has held despite the persistence of some low-intensity conflict and acts of armed banditry in rural areas. Nevertheless, there have been few signs of real political

¹ Alden, C., *The United Nations, Elections and the Resolution of Conflict in Mozambique*, in S. Chan and M. Venâncio, *War and Peace in Mozambique*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998, p. 92

² Hanlon, J., *Peace without Profit: How the I.M.F Blocks Rebuilding in Mozambique*, Oxford: James Currey, 1996

reconciliation between the FRELIMO government and its former armed foe, RENAMO, although there is increasing pressure on the latter to accept its political role. Indeed, it looks as though RENAMO will eventually forego the military option - and that is good for the future of the country.

Thus, the political landscape in Mozambique today is broadly comparable to a large number of other African countries, where multiparty elections have not resulted in a change of government and where the opposition is increasingly frustrated at its lack of political and economic power. The tensions which fuelled the civil war in Mozambique are not far from the surface, and it remains an open question whether there can be enough developmental progress to make stability more likely in the years ahead.

1.2. Democratization and the Return to Stability

The consolidation of peace has been strengthened by the efforts at democratization. The holding of regular elections has set a precedent for open and civil political competition.

The country's first multiparty elections for the presidency and the 250-seat National Assembly held in October 1994 gave a clear, though not overwhelming, indication that the incumbent government of President Joaquim Chissano retained legitimacy. This was demonstrated by FRELIMO's control of 129 seats, representing 44.3 per cent of the votes, with the opposition RENAMO gaining 112 seats and 37.7 per cent of the votes. In the presidential election, Chissano was credited with 53.3 per cent of the national votes while his opponent, the RENAMO leader, Afonso Dhlakama, received 33.7 per cent.³ However, the elections indicated that RENAMO had much more support than most observers had believed and, more ominously, that that support was concentrated in the central and northern areas of the country.

If anything, fresh polls in 1999 confirmed these trends and showed that political life in the country had polarized further. In the legislative elections, FRELIMO received 48.5 per cent of the votes and 133 seats while RENAMO (now allied with some of the minor parties) obtained 38.8 per cent and 117 seats. The presidential elections displayed a similar trend. President Chissano maintained roughly the same level of support with 52.3 per cent of the votes but Afonso Dhlakama increased his share markedly and reached a very creditable 47.7 per cent (largely because opposition support rallied behind him).⁴

Once again, the pattern of votes in 1999 was strongly regional with RENAMO winning six central and northern provinces and FRELIMO taking four southern provinces (including Maputo City) as well as the northernmost province of Cabo Delgado, where (because of the history of the anti-colonial war) it has always had strong support.⁵

³ Other parties obtained around 18 per cent of the votes and 9 seats in the National Assembly. In the presidential elections, other candidates polled a total of 13.3 per cent. *Keesing's Record of World Events*, Vol. 40, Harlow: Longman, November 1994, p. 40262

⁴ AWEPA, *Mozambique Peace Process Bulletin*, No. 24, 28 December 1999, <http://www.mozambique.mz/awepa/> [accessed 1 March 2001]

⁵ *Ibid.*

The 1998 municipal elections demonstrated, however, that political reconciliation had not yet occurred. Long seen as a crucial test of democratization, decentralization has been one of the most contentious issues since the GPA. The controversy intensified in 1997 when FRELIMO delayed the holding of municipal polls amid allegations by RENAMO that the Government was reluctant to devolve power even in areas where RENAMO had a majority. It was claimed that having rejected calls to share power at the centre after 1994, FRELIMO now sought to limit the prerogatives of local government. These profound disagreements about the nature of political decentralization and the economic and political power to be devolved to the local level could not be breached, so that when polls in 33 municipalities were finally held in June 1998, their results were inconclusive.

RENAMO and 15 other opposition parties boycotted the elections. Turnout at around 15 per cent was extremely low and, not surprisingly, FRELIMO won the contest in all 33 municipalities. In Maputo and Beira, the two major cities, “independent” candidates (with no party affiliation) ran successful campaigns and garnered a substantial number of votes, though not enough to win the contest against FRELIMO. The Government’s credibility was seriously dented, both by the limited nature of decentralization and by the percentage of the electorate that did not bother to vote.⁶

There is no doubt that the holding of regular elections, in which opposition is expressed through the ballot box, has strengthened political stability in Mozambique. Nevertheless, the growing political polarization of the country between two regionally based political forces is potentially disruptive.

1.3. The Regional Context

Another contributory factor to stability has been the improvement in Mozambique’s relations with neighbouring countries. The GPA was only made possible by the changes taking place in South Africa. The election of President Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress in 1994 completed a radical transformation in the politics of the region.

Meanwhile the political demise of President Hastings Banda of Malawi, following multiparty elections in 1994, removed a long-standing opponent to the FRELIMO government. President Banda’s successor, Bakili Muzuli, who was reelected in 1999, has withdrawn support from RENAMO and is keen to ease tension in the region.

Indeed, between 1994 and the present, Mozambique has encountered few threats from its immediate neighbours. Although the current political tensions in Zimbabwe have generated some unease in the region, President Robert Mugabe’s internal political troubles have not resulted in violence spilling across from the country’s borders. At the same time, President Chissano has called for a peaceful solution to the land conflict in Zimbabwe, which has led to the seizure of white-owned farms, and this could affect relations between the two countries. A recent decision by the FRELIMO

⁶ AWEPA, *Mozambique Peace Process Bulletin*, No. 21, 21 July 1998, <http://www.mozambique.mz/awepa/> [accessed 1 March 2001]

government to allow a number of white Zimbabwean farmers to settle in Mozambique [see section 2.3] could also strain bilateral relations.

The stability of the southern African region has benefited Mozambique. Since the consolidation of peace in the country, South African capital has flowed towards its Portuguese-speaking neighbour. The FRELIMO government has encouraged South African investment, while its policy of economic liberalization has allowed foreign business to buy into the newly privatized economy. Similarly, the need for an increase in agricultural production (both for food and export) has meant that white South African farmers have been able to establish sizeable farms in Mozambique. Finally, the greater stability of the southern African region as a whole has encouraged more distant foreign investors from Europe, particularly Portugal, and from Asian countries to set up businesses in South Africa and Mozambique.

2. Political Issues

2.1. The Role of the Opposition

Whilst the holding of the 1998 municipal and 1999 general elections have undoubtedly contributed to greater political stability in Mozambique, they have not resolved the difficult issue of political reconciliation. The holding of regular multiparty elections is not, in and of itself, sufficient to consolidate democratization.

The problems are threefold. First, the FRELIMO government has refused to share power with the opposition, as it had been encouraged to do after the 1994 polls. This has led the RENAMO opposition to view politics from a zero-sum game perspective: that is, there is nothing to be gained politically from being in opposition, even with widespread electoral support. Second, the central government has been reluctant to devolve meaningful autonomy (backed by tax raising powers) to the local level, thus depriving the RENAMO opposition of the benefits, which it believes its regional dominance warrants. Finally, the operation of the National Assembly has not given the opposition the means strongly to challenge the Government.

From the point of view of the consolidation of democracy, these problems are serious. Indeed, the failure of the National Assembly to function as a plausible forum for opposition is the core of the problem. The difficulties arise as much from the fact that there is no precedent for the running of a multiparty democratic legislature as from the fact that FRELIMO is extremely reluctant to allow the opposition to question government policy. In a situation where the RENAMO opposition is short of expertise and experience it lacks the knowledge and the means to assert itself as a working opposition in parliament. Since the Government finds it difficult to come to terms with a National Assembly where its policies should be debated and its conduct questioned, and since it controls both the financing and the organization of the chamber, the transformation of the National Assembly into a viable forum for a working opposition has been difficult to realize.

In practice, therefore, the operation of the political system in Mozambique appears to the opposition to be little different from what it was under the previous one-party system. As is common in most of Africa, both the ruling party and the opposition view elections as a means of taking control of the resources which the state commands

rather than of testing different political programmes. Indeed, there are today no significant differences in the policies advocated by either of the two main parties in Mozambique. Such an outlook on political competition is understandable in the present context but it is not likely to consolidate political stability in the long run. If RENAMO concludes that, despite its strong national showing in the polls and its control over a majority of the country's provinces, it continues to be excluded from the benefits of democratic politics, it could become alienated from the present political system. Political dissatisfaction could then threaten the national integrity of the country.

A recent increase in political violence provides disturbing evidence of this trend. In November 2000, Carlos Cardoso, the owner and editor of the independent journal *Metical*, was assassinated as he was investigating claims of fraud connected with the privatization of a state-owned bank. It is alleged that it was Cardoso's knowledge of corruption at the centre of power that led to his death.

Demonstrations in late November in the capital city, Maputo, which resulted in the deaths of 40 opposition supporters, while another 80 are alleged to have suffocated in jail, also underlined the extent of the opposition's political frustration. The demonstrations had been triggered by RENAMO's anger at a Supreme Court ruling upholding the results of the 1999 general elections, which it had challenged, and the refusal of the Government to appoint any opposition provincial governors or to consult with RENAMO, even in provinces where RENAMO had received a majority of the votes.⁷ Outraged by the action, RENAMO leader Afonso Dhlakama has threatened that he will "no longer appeal for calm".⁸

2.2. Ethnic and Regional Questions

Mozambique's greatest weakness - a direct consequence of the failure of the Portuguese successfully to consolidate the colony into a "national" entity - is the current division of the country into two opposing political regions. For historical reasons, having to do both with the legacy of intra-African hostilities between the southern Shangaan/Ngoni and the central Shona/Ndau ethnic groups in the nineteenth century and with the rivalry between the Makonde and the Makwa in the north of the country, there are today strong regional tensions because of the current political polarization of the country.⁹

Although RENAMO was originally organized by the then Rhodesian intelligence services to help the Ian Smith regime fight Zimbabwean nationalists led by Robert Mugabe's Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU, now ZANU-Patriotic Front) based in Mozambique, it is no coincidence that the largely Ndau-led opposition to FRELIMO should eventually have crystallized most clearly in the central and northern regions (other than in Cabo Delgado, where the Makonde have always supported FRELIMO). FRELIMO is seen by RENAMO largely to be in the hands of the southern elite (and its Indian, *mestiço*, and white allies) - whose Ngoni forefathers are

⁷ *The Economist*, Mozambique: Bad Times, 2-8 December, 2000, pp. 89-90

⁸ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Mozambique/Malawi - Country Report: October 2000*, London, 2000, p. 13

⁹ Newitt, M., *A History of Mozambique*, London: Hurst, 1995, pp. 243-313; 517-538

deemed to have subjugated them in the nineteenth century. Although such distant historical memories cannot be said to determine popular thinking on a day-to-day basis, the continuation of the regional political divide is potentially hazardous.

Paradoxically, the holding of multiparty elections has intensified regional and ethnic divisions which had hitherto not been politically salient. This has generated a sense of grievance which, for all the efforts made by the Government to spur development in the whole country, could result in greater locally based instability and even violence. In this respect, the successful boycott of the municipal elections by opposition parties is ominous. It represents a vote of no-confidence by the opposition in the potential usefulness of a devolved administration. Since RENAMO already considers the Government to be determined to exclude it from decision-making at the centre and to deny it any influence in shaping economic policy through membership on the board of public companies, the realization that it may not gain power where it sees itself as having a popular mandate, that is, at the local level, does not augur well for the continuation of its acceptance of the status quo.¹⁰

The potential for heightened regional or ethnic conflict is tied to RENAMO's perception that, despite periodic elections, it has no stake in the present political system. Although there is at the moment no indication that the opposition party intends to use its regional strength to challenge the Government through unconstitutional means, there is little doubt that decentralization reform has failed to satisfy RENAMO. This has generated serious dissatisfaction in large swathes of the country.

2.3. Land Reform

Land distribution remains a politically contentious issue. Despite the enactment of a new land law in July 1997, there is still no consensus on the resolution of fundamental questions relating to the status of "traditional leaders" or the precise mechanisms required to settle disputes between local communities. The FRELIMO government's controversial decision to allocate land to outside interests, including the Heaven on Earth Development Company headed by the cult leader Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and most recently, to white farmers from South Africa and Zimbabwe, also threatens to complicate land reform.

The issue of land rights gained momentum soon after the 1992 peace settlement when millions of refugees returned to their homes to find their access to land obstructed by rival claimants. Under the GPA, refugees and displaced persons had been guaranteed a restitution of property as well as "the right to take legal action to secure the return of such property from individuals in possession of it".¹¹ However, as all land formally belonged to the state (a provision retained under the 1990 constitution), there was no obvious legal recourse. Traditionally farming families had gained use rights through titles (leases) which could be granted for up to 50 years, confirmed orally by district authorities and inheritable. Conflicting titles were generally settled by traditional authorities (*régulos*) in rural areas, many of whom had been drafted by FRELIMO as party officials.

¹⁰ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Mozambique/Malawi - Country Report: July 2000*, London, 2000, p. 13

¹¹ *General Peace Agreement of Mozambique - Acordo Geral de Paz de Moçambique*, Amsterdam: African-European Institute, 1992, p. 20

The disruption to previous patterns of land use caused by the civil war and the displacement of populations, forced the Government urgently to address the revision of land laws and regulations. The first step in this direction was taken in 1995 following the approval of the National Land Policy which signalled the Government's intention to recognize customary law in matters relating to rights of access to land, transfer and inheritance. It also indicated the Government's willingness to recognize the role of local leaders in preventing and resolving conflicts as well as in legitimizing and legalizing the occupation and use of land.¹²

However, this process was soon mired in political controversy. FRELIMO leaders expressed reservations about the reinstatement of traditional chiefs many of whom had been implicated in colonial rule, and opposed the reintroduction of customary law, which they claimed discriminated against women. On the other hand RENAMO, which was against continued state ownership, strongly championed customary law and the role of traditional leaders (or *mambos*, as loyal bloodline chiefs were known in RENAMO-held territories).¹³

The two main peasant organizations, the Rural Organization for Mutual Help (Organização Rural de Ajuda Mútua - ORAM) and the National Peasants Union (União Nacional de Camponeses - UNAC), also demanded greater scope for customary law and more power for traditional authority. Their intervention was crucial in winning a compromise from the Government on the final bill, which recognized occupancy rights according to customary law (provided it did not contravene the constitution), and forcing the Government to issue a decree in June 2000 legitimizing the role of "traditional authorities".¹⁴ The FRELIMO government's willingness to make these concessions was reportedly prompted by its concern to preempt joint action by RENAMO and peasant leaders of the kind that had brought them together to oppose FRELIMO's policy of forced villagization in the late 1970s and early 1980s.¹⁵

The 1997 land law made several important changes to existing rules. These included provisions for individuals and communities who had occupied land continuously for more than 10 years to be exempted from acquiring title grants in order to gain permanent rights to use the land. The new law also provided for titles to be issued provisionally for two years and made permanent for up to 100 years (instead of 50 years); obliged courts to accept oral evidence about occupancy from the local community, and guaranteed women the right to gain access to and inherit property.

These measures are expected substantially to reduce the problem of material insecurity experienced by many returnees, particularly women, who head about 25 per cent of households in Mozambique [see section 3.2]. The United Nations High Commission

¹² Salamao, A., Institutional Co-ordination & Harmonizing Formal and Customary Law in the Management of Natural Resources, in B. Ferraz and B. Munslow (eds.), *Sustainable Development in Mozambique*, Oxford: James Currey, 1999, p. 86

¹³ Article 19, *Deadly Marionettes: State-Sponsored Violence in Africa*, London: October 1997, p. 44

¹⁴ AWEPA, *Mozambique Peace Process Bulletin*, No. 25, August 2000, <http://www.mozambique.mz/awepa/> [accessed 1 March 2001]

¹⁵ Bowen, M.L., *The State Against the Peasantry: Rural Struggles in Colonial and Postcolonial Mozambique*, Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2000, pp. 95-102

for Refugees (UNHCR) is especially aware of the need for land reform to ensure the security of female-headed refugee households, which “tend to experience particular difficulties in this respect, partly because they are often socially and economically marginalized, and partly because the land tenure laws in many countries do not even recognise the right of women to enjoy secure access to land”.¹⁶

Despite the improvements anticipated in the new law, however, conflict over the distribution of state farmland is set to continue. There is growing public resentment against the Government reserving the right to grant land titles to officials and their families (a right retained in the 1997 land law), and to conclude land agreements with foreign investors.

In September 1997 it was reported that local farmers in the Sanga and Majune districts in Niassa province had reacted angrily after being evicted by white South African families who had arrived in the region under the terms of the 1996 Mosagrus agreement, which allowed Afrikaner farmers linked to the conservative South African Freedom Front to settle in Niassa in return for developing remote land and training local farmers.¹⁷ The Government has also come under pressure since mid-2000 over its decision to approve another scheme to settle 50 Zimbabwean farmers to develop land in the Barue and Macossa regions in Manica province.¹⁸

3. Economic Issues

3.1. Aftermath of Flood Disaster

In February 2000 Mozambique was hit by the worst floods in living memory, which caused damage estimated by the UN at US\$520 million in lost assets and production.¹⁹ Hundreds of people were killed, hundred of thousands displaced and the country’s fragile infrastructure virtually devastated. Not since the end of the civil war had Mozambique faced a crisis of such magnitude nor its Government been subjected to as severe a test of its capabilities.

The floods were precipitated by a combination of factors, including seasonal but exceptional rains in Mozambique; heavy rain across the southern African region, and the ferocious impact of Cyclone Eline, which struck coastal regions on 21-22 February, and again on 25 February. Eventually, rising water levels led all the main rivers from the Incomati to the Buzi to break their banks and inundate vast areas of land. The Government’s lack of preparedness (despite the experience of regular and sometimes quite heavy flooding as in 1997 and 1999 when more than 100 people died and 700,000 were affected),²⁰ was due partly to the unreliability of its national early warning system, which is still primitive and dependent on forecasts from the South

¹⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *The State of the World’s Refugees, 1997-98: A Humanitarian Agenda*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997, p. 158

¹⁷ AWEPA, *Mozambique Peace Process Bulletin*, No. 19, September 1997, <http://www.mozambique.mz/awepa/> [accessed 1 March 2001]

¹⁸ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Mozambique/Malawi - Country Report: July 2000*, p. 22

¹⁹ United Nations, *Mozambique Common Country Assessment*, September 2000, p. 9, <http://www.unsystemmoz.org> [accessed 3 January 2001]

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15

African Weather Bureau. Casualties were also said to have been compounded by the number of people who returned prematurely to high-risk areas after ignoring warnings of potential flooding and rising river levels or failing to receive messages in local languages.

The country's National Disaster Management Institute was hopelessly ill-prepared to respond to the crisis, crippled as it was by the lack of financial resources and logistic support, especially air transport, for which it had to rely almost entirely on foreign military services. Stockpiles of food and medicines were low as there is virtually no provision of official government food reserves for use in response to disasters, while warehousing facilities for health supplies are limited. The scale of the disaster and the shortage of skilled relief workers meant that much of the relief effort was coordinated by 2,000 or so foreign relief workers who were drafted in to work with government agencies and local NGOs.

Among the areas worst affected by these floods were the southern and central provinces of Maputo (including Maputo City), Inhambane, Gaza and Sofala, and the districts of Machaze, Machanga and Govuro along the Save river. According to UN estimates, 800 people died and some 650,000 were affected or displaced.²¹ Many of the victims were children. The British charity, Save the Children Fund, estimated that up to 50 per cent of rescued children had been separated from their parents.²²

The disaster caused extensive loss of livestock and damage to schools, health centres, roads, railways and bridges. Rural households were devastated. In Gaza province it was reported that an estimated 200,000 head of cattle were lost, while elsewhere the floods dislodged buried land mines in cultivated areas.²³ Some 140,000 hectares of cultivated land were flooded,²⁴ which the Government estimated to represent about 10 per cent of the total cultivated area.²⁵ The floods also ruined power lines, communications and transport; in Maputo alone power supplies were disrupted for three months following the disaster.²⁶

Help was quick to arrive in response to Mozambique's appeal for flood relief assistance. In May 2000 international donors meeting in Rome pledged US\$453 million to support Mozambique's reconstruction efforts. This was higher than the US\$450 million originally estimated by the Government of Mozambique and the World Bank.²⁷

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Keesing's Record of World Events*, Vol. 46, Harlow: Longman, March 2000, p. 43447

²³ Okere, L.C., British Press Reporting of the Mozambique Floods: the Baby Rosita Factor, paper presented to the International Conference on Mozambique in the Commonwealth: Urban and Environmental Realities after the Flooding, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London, October 2000

²⁴ United Nations, Mozambique Common Country Assessment, p. 16

²⁵ *Africa Research Bulletin: Economic, Financial and Technical Series*, Vol. 36, No. 7, 16 July-15 August 1999, p. 14321

²⁶ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Mozambique/Malawi - Country Report: May 2000*, London, 2000, p. 23.

²⁷ *Africa Research Bulletin...*, Vol. 36, No. 7, p. 14321

The task of reconstruction remains a daunting one. Although rural households devastated by the floods were promised assistance in the form of seeds and agricultural equipment, an estimated 150,000 people are reported still to be waiting for such assistance.²⁸ Although more than 70 per cent of the population displaced by the floods are believed to have returned to their homes,²⁹ reports indicate that commerce in many rural areas has suffered from “the localised disruption of consumer markets as well as supply chains and distribution channels, due to dislocated populations and damaged roads”.³⁰

Despite these major setbacks, the economic outlook for Mozambique remains optimistic. According to the UN the floods affected less than 10 per cent of the country’s total agricultural output.³¹ The reconstruction effort, largely funded by foreign aid, is also expected to stimulate economic activity. The UN concludes that “as a result, initial projections of GDP growth in the region of 9-10% over 2000-2001 have been revised and are expected to fall to 6% in 2000 and will regain momentum thereafter, with an expectation of 10% growth in 2001”.³² Other more recent estimates suggest that real GDP growth will reach 8.5 per cent in 2001, representing “one of the highest rates in the world”.³³

3.2. Migrant Labour

Migration from Mozambique as a means of survival in times of war and natural disaster was a well-established pattern long before the consolidation of the colonial state.³⁴ However, migration as an economic choice and a major formative influence on the lives of thousands of Mozambicans only began in earnest in the twentieth century with the opening up of overland routes, railways and shipping, much of it under the auspices of Portuguese colonial rule. Migrant labour to the mines in Witwatersrand became a mainstay of southern Mozambique’s economy. Soon it became “an essential aspect of the people’s life pattern as the social economy of different regions became in one way or another dependent on migration”.³⁵

After independence the question of migrant labour from Mozambique, especially to sustain the South African gold-mining industry, became a vexed political issue as Mozambique sought to become more economically autonomous and lessen its dependence on South Africa. The crucial importance of remittances from South Africa ensured however that successive Mozambican governments continued to press for ever higher rates of recruitment from Mozambique.³⁶

²⁸ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Mozambique/Malawi - Country Report: October 2000*, p. 23

²⁹ *Ibid.*, *Mozambique/Malawi - Country Report: July 2000*, p. 10

³⁰ *Africa Research Bulletin...*, Vol. 36, No. 7, p. 14333

³¹ United Nations, *Mozambique Common Country Assessment*, p. 4

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Mozambique/Malawi - Country Report: October 2000*, London, 2000, p. 11

³⁴ Newitt, pp. 413-15; 482-516

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 414

³⁶ Hall, M. and Young, T., *Confronting Leviathan: Mozambique since Independence*, London: Hurst, 1997, pp. 113, 154

Today labour migration from Mozambique to neighbouring countries, especially South Africa and Zimbabwe, is regarded as the norm, with men routinely leaving their homes and families for long periods in search of work. Projections from the 1997 census indicate that up to 22 per cent of Mozambican households in 2000 will be headed by women.³⁷ The last such survey in 1995 showed that 23 per cent of households were officially headed by women though it was acknowledged that this figure could be higher if households with migrant husbands were included.³⁸

Migration of a different sort involving internal displacement, affected thousands of Mozambicans during the civil war. An estimated 3,000,000 Mozambicans settled around towns and cities to escape the insecurity and the devastation of the rural economy caused by fighting in the rural areas. According to a recent study, Mozambique's urban population rose from an estimated 9 per cent in 1970 to 50 per cent by 1992; this included the population living in urban areas or "in zones directly under the influence of urban areas".³⁹ This distorted picture of a predominantly rural country has been partially corrected since the end of the civil war. The 1997 census showed that only 28.6 per cent of Mozambique's population lived in cities, with the remaining 71.4 per cent concentrated in rural areas.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, even today, most migration within Mozambique continues to be rural-urban (although there is also some degree of inter-city migration), with more than half of the urban population concentrated in one of Mozambique's three main cities - Maputo, Beira and Napula. This ongoing movement from the rural hinterlands towards the urban periphery has led to what one observer describes as the "ruralization" of Mozambique's towns and cities.⁴¹

Recent measures by the Government suggest that it is keen to encourage Mozambicans to return to the countryside where the local economy is desperately in need of social capital and investment. The economy of rural areas is severely depressed with levels of rural poverty standing at around 71 per cent, against 62 per cent in the cities.⁴² In December 1999 the Government approved an *Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty 2000-2004* (PARPA) which aimed, among other things, to stimulate labour migration back to the countryside by outlining plans for the regeneration of rural areas through the expansion of private sector activity.⁴³ The normalization of the rural economy, however, will depend on the resumption of local food production, the improvement of trade and communications and the reconstruction of social life, especially education and health-care.

³⁷ United Nations, Mozambique Common Country Assessment, p. 1

³⁸ Hanlon, p. 72

³⁹ Rosário, Mario dos Anjos, Participatory Development and Urban Management, in Ferraz, B. and Munslow, B (eds.), *Sustainable Development in Mozambique*, Oxford: James Currey, 1999, p. 185

⁴⁰ Mozambique, Instituto Nacional Estatística, *Anuário Estatística, 1997*, Maputo, 1998

⁴¹ Rosário, p. 183

⁴² Mozambique, *Understanding Poverty and Well-Being in Mozambique: The First National Assessment 1996/97*, Maputo, 1999

⁴³ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Mozambique/Malawi - Country Report: 4th Quarter 1999*, London, 2000, p. 17

Whatever the outcome of the Government's efforts to moderate the current trend of rural-urban migration, the mounting pressures on Mozambique's congested towns and cities cannot be sustained indefinitely. Although the incidence of poverty among the urban population is lower than in rural areas, the majority still live in abject conditions. Mozambique's impressive rates of economic growth, averaging 10 per cent real annual growth since 1996, hardly appear to have touched the formal sector where job creation has been extremely slow and living standards impossibly high.⁴⁴ On the other hand, the informal sector, as in most other African countries, has flourished; this has meant an increase in economic activity, especially trade, most of which is essentially unregulated and where there is little or no expectation of job security, even if there are thus opportunities to eke out a living.⁴⁵

The precarious existence endured by the vast majority of Mozambicans, both rural and urban, is the main reason for the displacement and migration of thousands. According to current UN estimates, around 500,000 Mozambicans cross the border annually, especially to South Africa, which offers competitive employment opportunities on short-term contracts, ranging from between 6 and 18 months.⁴⁶ Some other estimates suggest that this number could be as high as one million if illegal workers are included.⁴⁷

In 1999 there were about 83,000 legally registered Mozambicans working in the South African mining industry,⁴⁸ although this number was expected to fall by the end of the year with the retrenchment of some 2,500 Mozambican mineworkers.⁴⁹ About 33,000 Mozambicans are employed in South African agriculture, while large numbers are said also to be working illegally as casual labour in the South African construction industry.⁵⁰ The involvement of substantial numbers of illegal and casual Mozambican workers suggests that remittances from South Africa to Mozambique, currently estimated to stand at around US\$60 million a year, could be much higher.⁵¹

3.3. Privatization

In the late 1980s the Mozambican Government launched a programme of economic and social recovery. The aim was to boost job creation and combat poverty, especially among the rural population, as well as to ensure a minimum income and level of consumption.⁵² This entailed a decision, among others, to privatize and restructure the state enterprise sector. Privatization was formally endorsed in 1990 by the country's new constitution.

⁴⁴ Rosario, p. 186

⁴⁵ Chingono, M., *The State, Violence and Development: The Political Economy of War in Mozambique*, Aldershot: Avebury, 1996

⁴⁶ United Nations, Mozambique Common Country Assessment, p. 2

⁴⁷ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Mozambique - Country Profile*, London, 2000, p. 16

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, *Mozambique/Malawi - Country Report: 4th Quarter 1999*, p. 18

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, *Mozambique - Country Profile*, p. 16

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Mozambique, Strategy and Programme for Economic and Social Development, 1992-94, Maputo, 1991 (mimeo.). This came later to be more commonly known as the Economic and Social Rehabilitation Programme with the Portuguese acronym PRES.

However, the introduction of the free-market economy has inflicted a heavy burden on Mozambicans, most of whom have experienced little improvement in their living conditions. A former Finance Minister, Abdul Magid Osman, is reported to have admitted that the new economic regime had done nothing to reduce poverty and had not created as many jobs as were lost because of liberalization.⁵³

A recent UN report also underlines the difficulties currently besetting the Government's economic policy. It notes that "employment is a major challenge in Mozambique: although the country has undergone positive economic growth in recent years this has not been accompanied by similar trends in job creation".⁵⁴ The report shows that less than half, about 45 per cent, of the population is economically active; of this the majority, some 75 per cent, are engaged in subsistence agriculture, while 19 per cent are employed as waged workers and 5 per cent are self-employed outside agriculture.⁵⁵

The employment prospects of most Mozambicans have been made worse by their lack of education and qualifications: according to the 1997 census 60.5 per cent of the population aged 15 and above are illiterate.⁵⁶ Many Mozambicans therefore face stiff competition from foreign labour, which has tended increasingly to dominate the privatized sector owing to the dependence of this sector on foreign finance, especially from Portugal, South Africa, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Mauritius.⁵⁷

The Government's failure effectively to secure the livelihood and protect the jobs of Mozambican workers, particularly in the formal sector, following privatization, has been sharply criticized by trade union leaders organized under the banner of the Organization of Mozambican Workers (Organização de Trabalhadores Mozambicanos - OTM). In 1995 union leaders claimed that 38,000 workers had lost their jobs as a result of the Government's economic policies. More recent estimates also acknowledge that "large scale redundancies", resulting from the divestment of some 900 formerly state-owned companies, have made the Government's privatization programme extremely unpopular.⁵⁸

Privatization has also affected the lives of those Mozambicans fortunate enough to have a job. The introduction of strict wage controls resulting from austerity measures imposed by the International Monetary Fund since the early 1990s has meant a steady decline in the industrial minimum wage from an equivalent of US\$38 per month in 1987 to below US\$18 per month in 1993.⁵⁹ Although wages had again risen since 1996 to reach US\$36 per month in 1999, inflation had pushed this back to US\$28.⁶⁰ In July 2000 businesses agreed to a minimum monthly wage of US\$35 but only after

⁵³ Hanlon, p. 78

⁵⁴ United Nations, Mozambique Common Country Assessment, p. 71

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ AWEPA, *Mozambique Peace Process Bulletin*, No. 23, 8 October 1999

⁵⁷ Alves, J. G., Privatizing the State Enterprise Sector, in Ferraz, B. and Munslow, B (eds.), *Sustainable Development in Mozambique*, Oxford: James Currey, 1999, p. 60

⁵⁸ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Mozambique - Country Profile*, p. 29

⁵⁹ AWEPA, *Mozambique Peace Process Bulletin*, No. 25, August 2000

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

pressure from the Government which had been threatened by a general strike called by the OTM.⁶¹

Elsewhere workers with guaranteed jobs in state companies in the process of privatization have experienced hardship resulting from the non-payment of salaries for extended periods because of a scarcity of funds, and losses incurred in the immediate pre-privatization phase.⁶² Their outlook is poor.

All these elements have compounded the prospect of the continuing displacement of Mozambicans in search of jobs, which in the long-run is likely to slow down the important task of the rehabilitation and the reintegration of vast sections of the population already unsettled by years of civil war. This applies as much to rural as to urban areas, where economic rationalization and cuts in the workforce have reduced the purchasing power of thousands of ordinary Mozambicans.

3.4. Poverty

With an estimated per capita income of US\$80, Mozambique is one of the poorest countries in the world. Almost 70 per cent of its population live below the poverty line (i.e. US\$0.40 per day).⁶³ According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index (HDI) Mozambique ranks 168 out of 174 countries, and well below the average for sub-Saharan Africa and the Least Developed Countries (LDC).⁶⁴

Mozambique's standing on the scale of the UNDP's Human Poverty Index (HPI), which measures deprivation in four basic areas of life relevant to present well-being and future prospects (long and healthy life, knowledge, economic provisioning and social inclusion), exceeds 50 per cent, implying that more than half its population suffers from poverty.⁶⁵

The causes of poverty in Mozambique are both historical and structural. Under Portuguese rule, Mozambique like most other colonies, suffered from the systematic exploitation of its resources to balance colonial budgets. Indeed, one of the principal objectives of colonial policy was to extract wealth from Mozambique's predominantly peasant society, either through taxation or through the forced implementation of a cash-crop economy to service exports.⁶⁶ Another major source of revenue under colonial rule was the export of Mozambican labour.⁶⁷

With the end of colonial rule in 1974, Mozambique plunged into a deep recession, which was precipitated by the mass exodus of white settlers and qualified black and

⁶¹ *Ibid.*; Economist Intelligence Unit, *Mozambique/Malawi - Country Report: October 2000*, p. 18

⁶² Alves, pp. 60-61

⁶³ United Nations, Mozambique Common Country Assessment, p. 3

⁶⁴ United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report, 2000*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 160

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 150-1

⁶⁶ Newitt, pp. 391-431

⁶⁷ Hall and Young, pp. 4-5; Abrahamsson, H. and Nilsson, A., *Mozambique: The Troubled Transition*, London: Zed Books, 1995, pp. 17-18

coloured workers. A steep fall in remittances from abroad, brought on by the retrenchment of thousands of Mozambican workers in South Africa, coupled with a decline in world prices for the country's main cash crop, cashew, compounded the economic crisis.⁶⁸

The new FRELIMO government sought to respond to the problem by launching a programme of nationalization which left huge sectors of the economy, ranging from major plantations and factories to small retail outlets, under state control. However, these policies quickly foundered as growing numbers of state enterprises failed to meet targets set for investment and production, opening up a huge trade and balance of payments deficit.⁶⁹ Meanwhile Mozambique's vital and substantial peasant family sector, which at independence had accounted for some 30 per cent of marketed (including exported) agricultural production, was forced back into subsistence farming as the loss of opportunities for urban employment reduced migrant remittances.⁷⁰

Today the incidence of poverty is greatest in rural areas where it stands at 71.3 per cent, with some of the worst affected areas concentrated in Sofala province in central Mozambique. Years of low agricultural productivity, natural disasters (including recent droughts and floods), poor education, and wage levels that are too low to sustain the growing number of dependants in a family, are among the main determinants of rural poverty. The aftermath of the civil war also continues to hamper the development of rural areas. Even now a significant number of rural families, who were forced to abandon productive land during the war and flee to militarily secure areas, remain cautious about returning to these regions. Many are deterred by the fear of uncleared landmines [see section 4.3] and discouraged by the lack of an adequate social infrastructure, especially schools and health-care centres.

In urban areas, which have borne the brunt of migration from the rural hinterland, poverty levels have reached 62 per cent. A recent investigation estimates that the vast majority of Mozambique's urban population lives on the verge of absolute poverty.⁷¹ Other studies show that the food intake of the urban population has fallen.⁷² High rates of illiteracy among those aged 15 years and over, unemployment and falling wage levels have also aggravated urban hardship. In addition, responsibility for relatives left behind in rural areas, or those who have migrated to towns and cities, has forced many urban households to remain trapped in poverty.

Mozambique's crippling poverty has made it heavily dependent on foreign aid despite far-reaching structural reforms, which have boosted growth since 1993. In the period 1993-1998, Mozambique received a total of US\$4.8 billion, making it the largest recipient of international development assistance in sub-Saharan Africa.⁷³ International creditors have also sought to alleviate Mozambique's poverty by agreeing to a series of measures since 1997 which have enabled Mozambique to qualify for debt-relief under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative and

⁶⁸ Newitt, pp. 551-558

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p. 557

⁷¹ Rosário, p. 186

⁷² Abrahamsson and Nilsson, p. 129

⁷³ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Mozambique/Malawi - Country Report: July 2000*, p. 25

seek a reduction of its total external debt, estimated in 1997 to stand at some US\$5.9 billion - with the cost of debt-servicing amounting to 18.6 per cent of the total value of exports of goods and services.⁷⁴

However, one of the main conditions attached to these debt-rescheduling initiatives has been the Government's commitment to a systematic programme of poverty alleviation, which aims to reduce the overall rate of poverty from the current level of 69.4 per cent to 60 per cent by 2004, and to 50 per cent by 2010.⁷⁵ Among the areas targeted for expansion are education, agriculture, infrastructure, employment and food security.

4. Social Issues

4.1. Rehabilitation of Refugees

The rehabilitation of almost six million Mozambicans who were forced by the civil war to live as refugees in neighbouring countries or displaced within their own country, remains one of the most pressing issues confronting the ruling FRELIMO party.

According to the UNHCR some 1.7 million Mozambicans returned to their homeland between 1992 and 1996 from six neighbouring countries - Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe - under the organization's voluntary repatriation scheme.⁷⁶ The UNHCR also reported that "at least twice as many internally displaced Mozambicans are believed to have gone back to their homes during the same period [1992-1996]" although it acknowledges that "precise statistics are not available".⁷⁷

The absence of reliable statistics stemmed mainly from the reportedly large number of refugees who either failed to register or lived outside designated camp areas abroad.⁷⁸ Another factor was the number of migrant workers working illegally as casual labour, especially in South Africa [see section 3.2]. Numbers were also confused by refugee families who chose to be repatriated in stages, with some family members, mainly adult males, returning temporarily to establish their claims to land and make contact with others, while leaving the more vulnerable (women and children) behind to take advantage of services available in their country of asylum.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ *Europa World Yearbook 2000*, London: Europa Publications, 2000, Vol. II, p. 2579

⁷⁵ United Nations, Mozambique Common Country Assessment, p. 3; Economist Intelligence Unit, *Mozambique/Malawi - Country Report: July 2000*, p. 17

⁷⁶ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, p. 145

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 147

⁷⁸ United States Committee for Refugees, *No Place Like Home: Mozambican Refugees Begin Africa's Largest Repatriation*, Washington DC, 1993, p. 16

⁷⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, p. 150

Nevertheless, the rehabilitation of those who were officially repatriated has proved to be an enormous challenge for the Government and international aid agencies. The devastation of the rural infrastructure caused by the civil war, the destruction of farmland ravaged by land mines [see section 4.3] and the spread of the bush have made programmes of rural resettlement extremely difficult to establish. In addition, continuing low-intensity conflict between FRELIMO and RENAMO in some parts of the country has meant that returnees could not always be sure to gain access to lands they had left behind. In southern Gaza province, for example, most refugees have gone home and successfully reclaimed their ancestral homes. However, in parts of central Mozambique and northern Mutarara district in Tete where RENAMO is in control, refugees have reportedly been denied permission by RENAMO *régulos* (traditional chiefs) to go back to their farmland unless they ceased contact with the FRELIMO government.⁸⁰

Inadequate legal security and lack of access to judicial procedures, which currently affects more than 75 per cent of the population,⁸¹ has compounded the problems of physical, social and psychological security experienced by many returning refugees. Yet it is vital for those displaced from rural areas to return to their lands and resume farming if Mozambique is successfully to rehabilitate its war-torn communities. Carolyn Nordstrom stresses that

[b]ecoming self sufficient is an important part of a person's integration into the community ... One powerful way of doing this in Mozambique is through farming. In an agricultural society, the rhythms of working the fields are at the core of healthy life. Victims of violence were encouraged to begin farming plots of land ... redirecting anger and vengeance into community building and positive political action, reminding scarred and battered limbs how to work.⁸²

Of central concern has been the reintegration of an estimated 250,000 wounded and traumatized refugee children who were separated from their families.⁸³ Among them are child soldiers, who are estimated to number around 10,000.⁸⁴ Many of them, some as young as 10, were allegedly recruited by RENAMO,⁸⁵ which was also reported to have abducted young girls to serve as sexual slaves.⁸⁶ Reuniting these children with their families and enabling them to overcome their war-time trauma has formed a

⁸⁰ Waterhouse, R., *Mozambique: Rising from the Ashes*, Oxford: Oxfam Publications, 1996, p. 27; Human Rights Watch, *Clinton Administration Policy and Human Rights in Africa*, March 1998, p. 17

⁸¹ Amnesty International, *Annual Report 2000: Mozambique*, London, 2000

⁸² Nordstrom, C., *A Different Kind of War Story*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997, p. 146

⁸³ Thompson, C.B., Beyond Civil Society: Child Soldiers as Citizens in Mozambique, *Review of African Political Economy*, Vol. 26, No. 80, 1999, pp. 200-1

⁸⁴ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Mozambique/Malawi - Country Report: 4th Quarter 1998*, London, 1999, pp. 10-11

⁸⁵ Vines, A., *RENAMO: Terrorism in Mozambique*, London: James Currey, 1991, pp. 95-6; Honwana-Welch, G., *Mozambique: Feasibility Study*, London: International Alert, 1994, p. 21; Thompson, pp. 191-206

⁸⁶ Thompson, pp. 200-1

major part of the refugee rehabilitation programme.⁸⁷ This has involved the systematic tracing of unaccompanied children through action coordinated by the Government's Welfare Department (Acção Social) and humanitarian aid agencies, most notably the Save the Children Federation.⁸⁸ These organizations have in turn relied on local chiefs, traditional healers, traders and travellers to reintegrate children into their communities and help them overcome their war-time trauma.⁸⁹ The success of the programme has been confirmed by the UNDP, which estimates that some 95 per cent of children affected by war-time separation have been reunited with a family member.⁹⁰

4.2. Demobilization

The prospect of peace in Mozambique is most likely to be threatened in the long-term by problems arising from the demobilization of some 105,000 soldiers, an estimated 25,000 belonging to RENAMO and another 80,000 to the pro-government Popular Forces for the Liberation of Mozambique (Forças Populares de Libertação de Moçambique - FPLM), whose uneven reintegration into society has been blamed for a recent steep rise in rural banditry and urban crime.

According to estimates in early 2000, about 80,000 demobilized soldiers have so far been reintegrated.⁹¹ At the same time, the new national army, the Armed Forces for the Defence of Mozambique (Forças Armadas por a Defesa de Mozambique - FADM), established in 1994, has had difficulty attracting recruits, with troop numbers currently estimated at around 12,000⁹² - well below original target levels set at 30,000. This shortfall prompted the Government to re-introduce compulsory military service in 1997 (five years after it had been abolished), which targeted some 3,000 military-age youth identified in the 1997 census. However, human rights organizations fear that the move will threaten the rehabilitation of former child soldiers.

The process of demobilization in Mozambique was originally hampered by differences between the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Assistance Coordination (UNOHAC) and international donors, which centered on the terms of a package to finance the reintegration of demobilized soldiers. The delays were eventually overcome through the creation of a Reintegration Support Scheme (RSS), backed by the Netherlands, Norway and the UNDP, which allowed demobilized soldiers to claim eighteen months severance pay in addition to the six months salary provided by the Government.⁹³ However, it was estimated that less than half of the expected US\$32 million that was to be provided by international donors had been

⁸⁷ Amnesty International, *In the Firing Line: War and Children's Rights*, London, 1999; Williamson, L., Are the Rights of Refugee Children Protected Adequately Against Torture?, in G. van Beuren (ed.), *Childhood Abused: Protecting Children Against Torture, Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment and Punishment*, Ashgate: Dartmouth Publishing Co., 1998; United Nations, *The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children*, Report of the Expert of the Secretary-General, Ms Graça Machel, submitted pursuant to General Assembly Resolution 48/157, A/51/306, 26 August 1996

⁸⁸ Waterhouse, p. 28

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 200

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*

⁹¹ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Mozambique - Country Profile*, p. 12

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 14

⁹³ Venâncio, M., Can Peace-keeping Be Said to Have Worked in Mozambique?, in S. Chan and M. Venâncio, *War and Peace in Mozambique*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998, pp. 111-13

received by 1995.⁹⁴ Nevertheless, a UNDP survey carried out in 1996 found that 90 per cent of all beneficiaries of the scheme were satisfied and that many had found some form of paid employment.⁹⁵ This was supported by a recent study which concludes that the two-year severance pay had helped many demobilized soldiers to smooth their re-entry into communities and support their families.⁹⁶

Despite this financial settlement, however, the demobilization process continues to be plagued by political controversy. Much of it centres on allegations of government bias in favour of pro-FRELIMO urban areas in the allocation of funds for the rehabilitation of demobilized soldiers. It is also claimed that the FRELIMO government has discriminated in rural areas against demobilized soldiers from RENAMO and is reluctant to pursue development projects in RENAMO-held areas.⁹⁷ These allegations have been fuelled by official support for schemes such as those run by the Mozambican Christian Council to turn soldiers into farmers, which are concentrated in the mainly pro-FRELIMO southern provinces of Maputo, Gaza, Inhambane and Sofala.⁹⁸

Demobilized soldiers have also expressed frustration at the lack of opportunities for technical training, education and employment, and harbour a deeply felt need for compensation to make up for their “lost” years.⁹⁹ This raises the danger of ex-combatants resorting to the only skill they know: the use of guns. Some observers warn that the civil war fostered a “culture of violence” which is still deeply embedded in Mozambique. Abrahamsson and Nilsson claim that “if opportunities for long-term educational or professional development are not offered, there is a risk that after some time the officers will take up arms again and turn into warlords indulging in small-scale and low-intensity conflict on a ‘freelance’ basis”.¹⁰⁰

This was partly borne out by an outbreak of rural banditry between 1995 and 1996 when the rebel Chimwenje movement, with reportedly close links to RENAMO, staged a series of violent raids in Manica province along the Zimbabwean border.¹⁰¹ According to Amnesty International, Mozambique is one of the countries in Africa where low-intensity armed conflict in some areas accounted for between 100 and 1,000 deaths in the period from mid-1997 to mid-1998.¹⁰² The fact that large caches of arms and ammunition in Mozambique still remain to be surrendered was established as recently as mid-2000, when Mozambican police confirmed an extensive arms haul, the sixth such discovery since 1996, in which 14,000 assault rifles and 3.4 million

⁹⁴ Carver, R., *What Future for Mozambique?*, Writenet for UNHCR, March 1995, p. 9, <http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rsd?search=coi&source=WRITENET> [accessed 1 March 2001]

⁹⁵ Venâncio, M., p. 113

⁹⁶ Dolan, C. and Schafer, J., *The Reintegration of Ex-Combatants in Mozambique: Manica and Zambézia Provinces: Final Report to USAID, June 1997*, Oxford: Refugee Studies Programme, 1997 pp. 56-8

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30; 88; 96

⁹⁸ *Africa Research Bulletin: Economic, Financial and Technical Series*, Vol. 37, No. 6, 1-30 June 2000, p. 14024

⁹⁹ Dolan and Schafer, pp. 61-101

¹⁰⁰ Abrahamsson and Nilsson, p. 187

¹⁰¹ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Country Profile, Mozambique*, p. 12

¹⁰² Amnesty International, *In the Firing Line*, map (unpaginated)

rounds of ammunition, anti-personnel mines and unexploded ordnance were recovered.¹⁰³

4.3. Landmines

The extensive use of landmines has had far-reaching consequences for post-war Mozambique. A study conducted by the British aid agency, Oxfam, shortly after the signing of the GPA, maintained that the “repatriation of refugees and internally displaced people, reconstruction, and the rehabilitation of rural infrastructure are all profoundly affected by the presence of mines”.¹⁰⁴

According to a more recent UN report:

Large areas of land are unavailable for productive use due to the presence or perceived presence of landmines, and this is a major obstacle to infrastructure and economic development. Landmines exacerbate lack of human security, especially for rural populations, and reduce people’s opportunities to fulfil their right to a sustainable livelihood.¹⁰⁵

Landmines were first used during the war of liberation in the early 1970s by FRELIMO as well as by the Portuguese, who relied on them as part of a propaganda war to spread fear and terrorize local people into believing that the weapons were more widely planted than was the case. During the civil war landmines were used indiscriminately by both sides; RENAMO laid mines “specifically to discourage or make impossible the return of displaced persons to their homes”,¹⁰⁶ while FRELIMO did so to protect government installations and “deny RENAMO access to food and water sources [as in 1988 and 1989]”.¹⁰⁷

The number of uncleared landmines in Mozambique is currently estimated at around 250,000.¹⁰⁸ The precise scale of the problem however remains difficult to establish owing to recent doubts about the exact number of mines laid over such a protracted period of wars and civil unrest. Original estimates by the UN in 1992 setting the total number of landmines at around two million were questioned by some organizations, notably Human Rights Watch, which maintained that the number was more in the region of “tens or hundreds of thousands”.¹⁰⁹ Nevertheless there is little dispute about the fact that there are significant mined areas and it is “generally accepted that Mozambique will never be completely free of mines”.¹¹⁰

¹⁰³ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Mozambique/Malawi - Country Report: July 2000*, p. 15

¹⁰⁴ McGrath, R., *Landmines: Legacy of Conflict: A Manual for Development Workers*, Oxford: Oxfam Publications, 1994, p. 65

¹⁰⁵ United Nations, *Mozambique Common Country Assessment*, p. 23

¹⁰⁶ Vines, A., *Still Killing - Landmines in Southern Africa*, New York: Human Rights Watch, 1997, p. 69

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 70

¹⁰⁸ Economist Intelligence Unit, *Mozambique - Country Profile*, p. 12

¹⁰⁹ Vines, *Still Killing*, p. 73

¹¹⁰ United Nations, *Mozambique Common Country Assessment*, p. 23

The main danger posed by landmines and other unexploded ordnance is the threat to the physical security of returnees. Since the 1992 peace accord, over 1,000 people have been injured by anti-personnel mines, with some of the worst cases reported in Manica and Sofala provinces.¹¹¹ It is estimated that there are currently some 10,000 amputees whose injuries have been caused by landmines.¹¹² However, the UN estimates that mine awareness programmes across the country, especially in rural areas, have cut the number of victims suffering death or injury as a result of mine-related incidents from 113 in 1998 to 60 in 1999.¹¹³

Despite these encouraging trends, de-mining in Mozambique has been plagued by delays stemming from the politicization of the issue as well as by financial and organizational problems.¹¹⁴ Much of it is a legacy of the differences which emerged between the UN and donor countries over the implementation of the de-mining programme soon after the signing of the 1992 peace accord. The infighting prompted some donors, notably Sweden and Holland, eventually to withdraw funds for the de-mining programme, leaving the UN without any substantive capacity in the field of mine clearance. The situation was partly salvaged when the UN decided to respond to the crisis in 1994 by initiating the Accelerated De-Mining Programme (ADP) in southern Mozambique, which by mid-1996 had trained 450 local de-miners.¹¹⁵ In 1995 the Government's National Mine Clearing Commission took over the programme, and in 1999 paved the way for the establishment of the National De-Mining Institute, which has coordinated mine action and established a database containing approximately 1,800 mined areas throughout the country. According to the UN, most priority areas earmarked for development should be cleared of mines by 2010.¹¹⁶ Much will depend on whether the funds pledged for de-mining, which stood at US\$20.6 million for 1996-1998,¹¹⁷ are actually received, and whether they are spent successfully.

Some experts, however, believe that the main problem is not so much the number of uncleared mines as their impact on refugees seeking to resume normal lives and to contribute to economic reconstruction more generally. In a recent study, Vines and Thompson cite the example of the village of Mapulenge in central Mozambique, which remained deserted for four years after the civil war following (mostly unfounded) hearsay about the presence of landmines. They show how “a simple rumour that an area has been mined can deny land for agricultural production for years, or, in some cases, can deny people access to a cemetery to honour their ancestors”, concluding that “many areas... will need ... to be cleared professionally

¹¹¹ Vines, *Still Killing*, p. 62

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ United Nations, Mozambique Common Country Assessment, p. 23

¹¹⁴ Vines, A. and Thompson, H., *Beyond the Landmine Ban: Eradicating a Lethal Legacy*, Leamington Spa: Research Institute for the Study of Conflict and Terrorism, 1999; Boulder, L.H. and Edmonds, M., *The Politics of De-Mining: Mine Clearance in Southern Africa*, Johannesburg: South African Institute of International Affairs, 1999; Chan and Venâncio, *War and Peace in Mozambique*; Vines, *Still Killing*.

¹¹⁵ Vines, *Still Killing*, p. 87

¹¹⁶ United Nations, Mozambique Common Country Assessment, p. 23

¹¹⁷ Vines, *Still Killing*, 84

before a community is confident to use that land again".¹¹⁸ Landmines have also limited agricultural production in northern Niassa province.¹¹⁹

An additional but no less significant threat, especially to the security of newly settled communities, lies in the recent use of landmines by bandits and criminal groups engaged in drugs and gun-running. In 1994 and 1997, bandits operating in Manica and Tete provinces laid mines to hinder state control. Some of these mines were reportedly found on access roads to the Cahora-Bassa hydro-electric project.¹²⁰

4.4. AIDS

Barring a renewed outbreak of civil unrest, the spread of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) poses possibly the greatest threat to Mozambique's immediate economic and social stability.¹²¹ Ironically, it was the peace settlement, with its attendant population mobility, migration and resettlement, that most dramatically underlined the scale of the crisis. The AIDS pandemic has had profound effects, not least of which is the way it has disrupted traditional family life and eroded social capital.

A recent study by the World Bank shows that Mozambique has the seventh highest incidence of HIV/AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa after Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Zambia, Swaziland and Malawi.¹²² (These seven countries plus South Africa represent the highest HIV/AIDS prevalence rates in the world, ranging from 12 per cent to 25 per cent of the adult population.¹²³) Mozambique's current ranking on the World Bank's HIV/AIDS table is explained by the steep rise in adult (15-49 years old) HIV infection rates from a mere 3.3 per cent in 1987 to an estimated 16 per cent in 2000.¹²⁴

The total official number of AIDS cases in Mozambique (the first of which was reported in 1986) stood at 17,224 as of December 1999, with the largest number affecting those aged between 20 and 39.¹²⁵ However, these figures are likely to be under-estimates when considered against the background of the long running civil war which made reliable data difficult to obtain.¹²⁶ High levels of under-reporting due to fear of social ostracism and the lack of facilities for proper diagnosis have also blurred the precise extent of the epidemic. Nevertheless, the UN estimates that the number of deaths resulting from AIDS in Mozambique currently stands at about 83,600 people, of whom 14,000 are children.¹²⁷

¹¹⁸ Vines and Thompson, *Beyond the Landmine Ban*, p. 11

¹¹⁹ Vines, *Still Killing*, p. 78

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 8

¹²¹ United States Agency for International Development, *The Economic Impact of AIDS in Africa*, Washington DC, 1999

¹²² World Bank (Africa Region), *Intensifying Action Against HIV/AIDS in Africa: Responding to a Development Crisis*, Washington DC, 2000, p. 63

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 9. See also, United Nations, *AIDS Global Report, 2000*, Geneva: UNAIDS, 2000.

¹²⁴ United Nations, Mozambique Common Country Assessment, p. 16

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ Cross, S. and Whiteside, A. (eds.), *Facing Up to AIDS: The Socio-Economic Impact in Southern Africa*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996, p. 9

¹²⁷ United Nations, Mozambique Common Country Assessment, p. 23

The cumulative total of those infected with the HIV virus in Mozambique rose from 1.2 million at the end of 1997,¹²⁸ to more than 1.3 million at the end of 1999, with around 700 new infections per day during 1999 alone.¹²⁹

On the whole, rates of infection appear to be fairly evenly spread between urban and rural areas. However, there are regional differences, with current infection levels in central regions almost twice as high as those prevailing in the south.¹³⁰ This can be attributed to the high number of refugees returning to Mozambique through the central regions which share borders with Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi, all countries which suffer from an extremely high incidence of HIV/AIDS. For example, the sharp increase in HIV infections in Tete, where antenatal HIV prevalence rates in 1994 reached 18.1 per cent compared with only 2.7 per cent in Maputo, is believed to stem from high levels of interaction between Mozambican refugees and the local population in Malawi to the east and Zimbabwe to the west.¹³¹

Returning refugees are not the only group vulnerable to the AIDS virus in Mozambique. Sex-workers, especially young girls and women, and their clients, long-distance drivers and the armed forces are all affected. It is estimated that up to 25 per cent of Mozambican households dependent on remittances from abroad could also be vulnerable through migrant workers, who are a particularly high-risk category. This has led to projections of increased mortality among female heads of such households, and concomitant increases in the number of child headed households and orphans “who are less likely to attend school ... [and] often end up on streets, where they pursue survival strategies that put them at great risk of contracting HIV themselves”.¹³² At the same time, the loss of adult workers in these families through AIDS-related illness or death is projected substantially to reduce the capacity of such households to earn income or produce food, thus reinforcing poverty.

Poverty is recognized by the World Bank as one of the key determinants of the AIDS epidemic. The World Bank blames it for

forcing people to migrate away from their families to find employment or into commercial sex work for economic survival, placing them at high risk of HIV infection. The epidemic is also increasing poverty for families as resources that otherwise would have been spent on education fees, food, cash crops, or other productive investments are allocated to medical care for those infected.¹³³

Other generally accepted determinants for the spread of AIDS in Mozambique are health promotion and sexual behaviour. Both were affected by years of protracted civil war when short-term priorities, especially physical security and escape from violence, overrode all other considerations. This had negative consequences for the development of sex education and health awareness campaigns in the post-war era. An

¹²⁸ United Nations Development Programme, p. 193

¹²⁹ United Nations, Mozambique Common Country Assessment, pp. 16-17

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18

¹³¹ Webb, D., *HIV and AIDS in Africa*, London: Pluto Press, 1997, p. 19

¹³² World Bank, p. 9

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 33

official Demographic and Health Survey conducted in 1997, found that only 50 per cent of pregnant women had access to antenatal care in Mozambique.¹³⁴

The widespread destruction of health services during the civil war, which left many rural areas without adequate diagnostic and care facilities, has also had a devastating impact on AIDS sufferers, many of whom die without ever being diagnosed or become dependent on their families for primary care.

5. Conclusions

Mozambique has come a long way since the signing of the GPA, not least in the achievement of what can now be considered lasting peace. There is little doubt that when the Bicesse Accord faltered in Angola and civil war resumed, most observers were less than optimistic about the prospects for peace and development in Mozambique. Whatever the problems today, and in many ways they are quite severe, the trajectory accomplished since 1992 is impressive. The very dynamic engendered by the successful completion of the UNOMOZ objectives, and the political and economic progress made, provide stable, though perhaps not entirely secure, foundations for the immense task of reconstruction that lies ahead.

The most positive developments in the last five years have been connected with the opening up of the political system, the maintenance of peace and stability, and the liberalization of the economy. These have acted as a spur for the international community to commit development aid and to reschedule or cancel debt (as part of the HIPC initiative). Equally, stability and more favourable political conditions have encouraged foreign business to invest in a country that now appears ready for economic growth. Domestically, the most promising feature of the present situation is the growing climate of trust which has encouraged ever growing numbers of displaced people to return to their homes in rural areas and resume their long abandoned agricultural life. As transport improves so too will food production, which in turn is likely to boost export crop production. Since Mozambique will continue for some time to depend on agriculture, these positive trends in the rural areas are particularly welcome.

Nevertheless, the situation remains precarious. Leaving aside the recent floods, which devastated large swathes of southern Mozambique (the damage of which will be made good through foreign aid), there are a number of political and economic problems which could jeopardize progress. Politically, there appears to be a fairly well-established system of multiparty politics, with regular elections, and a functioning National Assembly. At the same time, the situation is potentially unstable both because in practice power is still solely in the hands of FRELIMO and because, seen from RENAMO's perspective, politics remains a zero-sum game in which the opposition has little influence. Given that the elections have made manifest a dangerous regional split in political support - with FRELIMO gaining a majority in Cabo Delgado and the four southern provinces while RENAMO is dominant in the six central and northern provinces - the absence of any meaningful devolution of power to the regions could become a source of great tension, if not violence.

¹³⁴ United Nations, Mozambique Common Country Assessment, p. 18

On the economic front there is serious debate as to whether economic liberalization, structural adjustment and the large influx of NGOs will result in a form of development that will benefit all. Although there are undoubted signs of vigorous economic activity - GDP growth per annum has been healthy in the last five years - there are also indications of greater poverty and rising inequalities. Indeed, some analysts argue that it is precisely the type of economic activity currently taking place that is the source of the problem.¹³⁵ In other words, there is fear that economic growth, based as it is on the untrammelled operation of the “free market”, will not in and of itself alleviate the plight of those who have suffered most in the past few years. Unless poverty is reduced, the risk of violence and of population displacement remains significant. Political and economic factors could yet combine to place unbearable strains on a country still on the threshold of reconstruction and consolidation.

¹³⁵ Hanlon

6. Bibliography

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