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UNICEF fails to secure funding for its work in Mozambique

The United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) lamented in its latest situation report that, during 2021, it had to cope with a shortfall of just under US\$56 million for its life-saving and life-sustaining work with children and their caregivers in Mozambique.

Last year the organisation appealed for US\$96.5 million for its work with a particular emphasis on the northern province of Cabo Delgado where islamist terrorists forced around three quarters of a million people to flee their homes – 59 per cent of whom were children.

UNICEF notes that “an important development in the Cabo Delgado crisis was the arrival of Rwandan and Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) security forces which enabled the government to reoccupy locations that had been inaccessible for months or years”. It added that troops conducted clearance operations and regained substantial swathes of territory but warned that “insurgents continue to carry out attacks on civilians”.

UNICEF also notes that food insecurity conditions are prevalent across the country. It expects that between November 2021 and March 2022 about 1.9 million people will be in “high levels of acute food insecurity and in need of humanitarian assistance”. It explains that the major causes of the food insecurity include armed conflict in Cabo Delgado, irregular rainfall, increasing food prices, and COVID-19 restriction measures.

Despite these alarmingly high needs, in 2021 UNICEF only received US\$27.5 million in funds from its donors which, along with a US\$13.3 million carry-forward, left a 58 per cent funding gap. As a result, it only received 16 per cent of the funds needed for its education work in Mozambique, 32 per cent of funds for child protection, and 38 per cent for social protection.

UNICEF thanked the governments of Canada, Italy, Japan, Norway, Sweden, United Kingdom, and the United States, along with the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), Education Cannot Wait, the Global Vaccine Alliance, the Japan National Committee for UNICEF, and the UN’s Central Emergency Response Fund for their donations. “Without them, we would be unable to support the children of Mozambique”, it added.

This is a condensed version of the AIM daily news service - for details contact pfauvet@live.com

MoU signed between government and TotalEnergies

The Mozambican government and the French oil and gas company TotalEnergies on 31 January in Maputo signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) under which the two sides will establish a training programme for 2,500 young people who will contribute to future projects the company is going to develop across the country.

Under the MoU, signed by the Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy Max Tonela and TotalEnergies Executive Committee member Nicolas Terraz, the two sides will develop a wide range of activities for job creation, education, and training with a focus on the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

According to TotalEnergies chief executive Patrick Pouyanne, “we want the villagers, the people, and the region to understand that we are there to bring them prosperity. We want more young people from Cabo Delgado and Mozambique to be involved in the projects”. He added that TotalEnergies wants to increase local content in its operations.

TotalEnergies heads the consortium building the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) facilities on the Afungi Peninsula, in the Cabo Delgado district of Palma. Construction was suspended after the company withdrew all its staff in the wake of an attack by islamist terrorists on the town of Palma on 24 March last year.

Questioned about when TotalEnergies will resume its activities in Afungi, Pouyanne stated that security and stability have been achieved but more progress is necessary to ensure that security is sustainable.

He stressed that “tremendous progress has been achieved and I would like to commend the Mozambican Defence Forces, and the Rwandan troops as well as the Southern African Development Community Military Mission (SAMIM) for the great strides made. But more is needed”.

Pouyanne added that TotalEnergies is committed to helping Mozambique bring life in Cabo Delgado back to normal.

Twenty die as cyclone Ana hits Mozambique

Twenty people have so far been confirmed dead and 196 injured following the passage of tropical cyclone Ana across northern and central Mozambique on 25 and 26 January. According to the government's relief agency, the National Disaster Management Institute (INGD), nine people died in Zambezia province, five in Tete, three in Manica, and three in Sofala,

In these four provinces, 5,136 houses were totally destroyed, 13,337 were damaged, and 5,000 were flooded. The INGD is sheltering 10,814 people in twenty accommodation centres.

INGD also report that 543 classrooms in 249 schools were damaged - affecting around 47,000 pupils. The tropical storm also damaged 23 water supply systems and 13 health units. About 1,048 kilometres of road were affected by the storm, 144 electricity pylons were brought down, and 37,930 hectares of farmland flooded.

Technical staff are assessing the necessary conditions for the return of the affected families. According to INGD spokesperson Paulo Tomas, "we believe that over the next few days the number of displaced people will reduce as a result of the work underway on the ground".

In a bid to ensure access and communications, the INGD and the National Roads Administration (ANE) are currently looking at installing metal bridges to replace collapsed concrete bridges.

Prime Minister stresses importance of adaptation to climate change

Prime Minister Carlos Agostinho do Rosario has warned of the need to adapt to climate change as the country will remain vulnerable to extreme events such as the latest cyclone, Ana, which swept through much of the northern and central provinces on 25 and 26 January.

On 27 January the Prime Minister visited the northern province of Nampula to assess the damage caused by the cyclone and hold a meeting with the Emergency Operational Committee (COE).

The Prime Minister highlighted the need for an inclusive and integrated approach, as the threat of climate change has come to stay. He pointed out that "in 2019 and 2020, there were five to six cyclones whose frequency and severity push us to adopt an even more structured approach to prevent and adapt to climate change. We must build resilient infrastructures".

Prime Minister Rosario pointed out that "we are a country which only makes a tiny contribution to pollution, but we are one of the most affected by climate change. Some will say that we are holding out our hands for foreign aid, but what we have to do for prevention and adaptation is huge and no country can do it alone".

During the meeting of the Emergency Operational Committee, the secretary of state for Nampula province, Mety Gondola, said that Ana affected 24,775 people in the province, brought down 77 electricity pylons and destroyed or damaged 5,518 houses. Over 72 million meticais (US\$1.13 million) is needed for purchasing goods, shelter, water, and sanitation.

Government to investigate infrastructure resilience

The Mozambican government is to investigate the poor resilience of infrastructure following the damage caused by cyclone Ana which swept through the central and northern provinces on 24 and 25 January. In particular, roads and bridges, some of which were opened less than a month ago, were wrecked by the storm.

Speaking on 27 January in Tete province, Minister of Agriculture Celso Correia lamented that this is a recurrent problem of great concern to the government since millions of US dollars are spent every year on repairs to infrastructure.

The minister was speaking shortly after visiting the site where on 24 January vehicles in the motorcade of the Tete provincial governor Domingos Viola were dragged into the Revubue River, causing the death of Tete district administrator, Jose Maria Mandere.

Correia added that a survey of the main infrastructure devastated by Ana is underway which will uncover the root causes of the problem. "If irregularities are detected, we shall not hesitate to take appropriate measures," he said, adding that should the government conclude that the forces of nature exceed initial projections then climate change adaptation measures will alter to ensure the resilience of the bridges and other infrastructure.

The bridge over the Revubue River was only recently rehabilitated and is among the infrastructure which collapsed during the storm. This stranded dozens of residents of Moatize district because road traffic could no longer pass over the river between Tete city and Moatize.

President Nyusi calls for support for UN Security Council seat

President Filipe Nyusi on 20 January requested diplomatic support for Mozambique's bid to become a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

The request was made in Maputo when President Nyusi received the credential from six ambassadors and one high commissioner: Francisco Branco of East Timor; Constant-Serge Bouda of Congo-Brazzaville; Fahad bin Abdullah Al-Issa of Saudi Arabia; Pham Hoang Kim of Vietnam; Choi Won Sok of South Korea; Walid Elmeligy of Egypt; and Wezi Moy of Malawi.

Speaking moments after the ceremony, Foreign Minister Veronica Macamo explained that President Nyusi had requested support for the Mozambican bid for a Security Council seat during the ceremonies. She added that the President had also expressed his government's willingness to develop and strengthen ties with the countries.

The UN Security Council is composed of 15 members, ten of which are non-permanent and elected for two-year terms. In June five of these positions are up for election with the successful candidates taking up the post on 1 January 2023.

Government seeks review of terrorism laws

President Filipe Nyusi on 1 February said that the government will later this year deliver a package of proposals to the country's parliament, the Assembly of the Republic (AR), as part of a review of the structural laws against terrorism and violent extremism.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the 2022 Judicial Year in Maputo, President Nyusi declared that the move is intended to ensure an effective response to the growing challenges and threats. Since the first attacks by Islamist terrorists in October 2017, in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, the jihadists have murdered over 2,000 people. More than 800,000 people have been driven from their homes by the conflict.

President Nyusi pointed out that "over the last few years, important legal instruments have been passed to strengthen the fight against terrorism and related crimes, and the country enjoys the advantage of having a framework aligned with the core instruments of international law".

He added that the country is also adopting a package of urgent and all-inclusive measures which will dissuade criminal and terrorist groups operating in the north from luring youngsters into the illegal mining of mineral resources and looting communities' livelihoods, forcing them into poverty.

President Nyusi stressed that terrorism contributes to the destruction of social and economic infrastructures, and public and private assets, thus disrupting production levels. He highlighted that the judiciary has not been spared by the terrorists. "Whenever terrorists attack a district the courts are among the first targets", he said. "There are magistrates and court clerks who have had to seek refuge in neighbouring districts to escape the cruelty of the terrorists,"

President Nyusi urged the judiciary to continue the fight against crimes such as trafficking in drugs, people and weapons, illegal immigration, money laundering and corruption which may open the path to clandestine and seditious political organisations.

Speaking on behalf of the judiciary, the President of the Supreme Court, Adelino Muchanga, declared that since the 2017 outbreak of terrorism 306 individuals (Mozambicans, Tanzanians, and Iranians) have been tried in Cabo Delgado and Niassa courts for various offences, of whom 143 were sentenced to jail terms of between six and 40 years and the remaining 155 acquitted due to the lack of evidence.

Terrorists attack five villages

Several villages in the northern province of Cabo Delgado came under renewed attack by Islamist terrorists during the last week of January, according to a report in the newsheet "Mediafax" on 31 January.

The Nova Zambezia village in Macomia district was raided on 26 January and the next day Mitambo, in Meluco district, was attacked. At least one person was beheaded in Nova Zambezia and one in Mitambo.

The jihadists attacked Iba, also in Meluco, on 28 January. They killed at least six people, burnt down homes and looted property. The same group moved on to attack Muiaguide village, where they murdered at least eight people.

Survivors fled from Iba and Muiaguide and sought shelter in Macomia town. The head of the Iba administrative post was one of these displaced people and he told "Mediafax" he had counted 12 bodies.

Meanwhile, Mozambican and Rwandan forces are reported to have killed two terrorists whom they ambushed in the area of Nankidunga, about six kilometres from the Mocimboa da Praia district capital. One of the dead terrorists was identified as a Tanzanian citizen named Twahili Mwidini, who usually operated in Macomia. Two AK-47 assault rifles were recovered from the bodies.

In the neighbouring province of Niassa, the local police command has denied that the armed group that attacked a minibus in Maua district on 28 January had anything to do with the Cabo Delgado terrorists. They said the minibus was ambushed "by a group of criminals", who are now being pursued by the defence and security forces.

There were two masked attackers, one armed with an AK-47 and the other with a machete. They murdered the driver of the minibus and injured two of the passengers. They stole about 800,000 meticaís (about US\$12,500) and various other possessions of the passengers.

Leader of poaching ring sentenced to 30 years

The Maputo Provincial Court, sitting in the southern city of Matola, has sentenced the leader of a gang of poachers, Admiro Chauque, to 30 years imprisonment, according to a press release from the National Administration of Conservation Areas (ANAC).

Chauque led a gang that operated in Magude and Massingir districts in Mozambique and the Kruger National Park in South Africa.

He was arrested on 3 May 2021, after an abortive attempt to poach rhinoceros. This was the second time he has been caught. In January 2020, he was questioned by the authorities when he sought medical help from a traditional healer for one of his fellow poachers who had been injured during a failed operation.

Chauque organised criminal activity which targeted rhinos with the intention of trafficking rhino horns to buyers in Asian countries such as Vietnam. He was found guilty of the crimes of poaching, possessing banned weapons, and criminal conspiracy.

In a second case, a poacher named Leonardo Bernadete Carlos was sentenced on 17 January to nine years and six months imprisonment. He was caught in July 2021 placing snares in the Maputo National Park. The court considered his offence to be even more serious because he was accompanied by a 14 year old boy.

ANAC attributed these successes to its close work with other institutions, including the police and the Attorney-General's Office.

President Nyusi calls for inclusive education

President Filipe Nyusi on 31 January formally opened the 2022 academic year and urged stakeholders to ensure an inclusive, patriotic, and quality education that leaves no one behind across the country.

President Nyusi was speaking in the locality of Chinonanquila, in the southern city of Matola, where he inaugurated a secondary school named after him. At the event, he said that “this day has a very special meaning because rather than just opening the academic year we are also receiving a brand new secondary school, funded by Mozal under the framework of their corporate social responsibility”.

The President added that this is the largest secondary school built in Mozambique since independence in 1975. The new school, with 48 classrooms, an administrative complex, physics, chemistry and biology laboratories, a computer room, a library, and other facilities, will host nearly 5,000 pupils.

Maputo province now has 50 secondary schools which represents an eleven per cent growth compared with 2021.

President Nyusi noted that despite the great strides achieved since independence, recent data indicate that about 2.4 million children are out of school and nearly 40 per cent of the population cannot read and write. This illiteracy rate is particularly high among women. He added that “the reality becomes more complex when we take into account Mozambique’s high rate of population growth, estimated at 2.8 per cent a year”.

The Mozal aluminium smelter in Beluluane is by far the largest industrial operation in Mozambique and the second largest aluminium smelter in Africa.

Maputo Ring Road toll gates open as injunction overruled

The four toll gates on the Maputo Ring Road opened on 1 February and began to collect the tolls from the users of the road, despite the injunction obtained in the previous week by the Centre for Development and Democracy (CDD), a civil society body which has been spearheading a campaign against the tolls.

The CDD injunction led the Administrative Tribunal (TA), which is the supreme audit authority in Mozambique, to suspend temporarily the government dispatch which fixes the tolls.

But on 31 January the government appealed successfully against the injunction. The government document, signed by Public Works Minister Joao Machatine and Finance Minister Adriano Maleiane, argued it was a matter of “public interest” that the tolls should be collected from the beginning of February.

The Tribunal agreed and allowed the government to press ahead with collecting the tolls, as an “exception” to the normal procedures followed when dealing with injunctions.

The government’s critics on social media protested that the government did not define what it meant by

“public interest”. But in the context of the dispute over the tolls, it is clear that the government believes the collection of tolls is crucial to avoid a sharp deterioration in the quality of the road.

The Ring Road was always intended as a toll road. Yet as sections were opened over the past four years, motorists paid nothing to use the road. Allowing this situation to continue risks allowing the road to fall into premature disrepair.

The toll gates are located at Costa do Sol, Zintava, Cumbeza and Matola-Gare. The toll at each gate is 40 meticaís for light vehicles, minibuses, and motorcycles. The toll for vans and buses is 140 meticaís, and for heavier vehicles, with three or four axles, it is 380 meticaís. Heavy goods vehicles, with five or more axles, will pay 580 meticaís every time they use the Ring Road.

Passenger transport vehicles enjoy a discount of 75 per cent. Thus, the toll for a bus is 35 rather than 140 meticaís. The minibuses (known as “chapas”) that provide much of Greater Maputo’s passenger transport will pay ten meticaís instead of 40.

Light vehicles using the Ring Road frequently will receive a discount. The discount for vehicles which make between 11 and 20 journeys along the road in a month is seven per cent, rising to 60 per cent for any light vehicle making more than 60 journeys in a month.

The current exchange rate is roughly 64 meticaís for one US dollar.

Japan donates waste management and cold chain equipment

The Japanese government, through the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), has donated waste management equipment to Mozambique along with cold chain apparatus for preserving Covid-19 vaccines.

The donated material was handed to the government on 28 January at a ceremony in Maputo attended by the National Director of Medical Assistance Luisa Panguene, Japanese ambassador Kimura Hajimi, and UNICEF representative Maria Fornara.

“The ten waste incinerators will be installed in every province except Maputo, which already has a system”, said Panguene. She added that “Japan is supporting our country in the acquisition of three cold stores, through the Covax mechanism. They will arrive in February, to increase vaccine storage capacity in Maputo, Sofala, and Zambezia provinces”.

Covax, the Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access initiative, was set up in 2020 by the World Health Organisation, Gavi vaccine alliance, and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations to accelerate the development and manufacturing of COVID-19 vaccines and guarantee fair and equitable access for all countries.

For his part, the Japanese ambassador explained that the equipment will improve systems for the conservation, handling, and transportation of medicines.

The grant is part of US\$39 million that the Japanese government has made available to developing countries suffering from the impact of Covid-19.

Bank of Mozambique maintains interest rates

The Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of Mozambique (CPMO), meeting in Maputo on 26 January, decided to leave the bank's main interest rate unchanged.

Thus, the Interbank Money Market Rate (MIMO), used by the central bank for its interventions on the interbank money market to regulate liquidity, remained at 13.25 per cent. The rate has held steady for a year, after it was raised by 300 percentage points in late January 2021.

According to a statement from the CPMO, this decision "is based on the slight improvement in the prospects for domestic inflation over the short and medium term, despite the worsening risks and uncertainties, notably those associated with fiscal pressure, with climate shocks, and with increased oil and food prices on the world market".

The domestic uncertainties, it continued, included "the extension and magnitude of the effects of Covid-19 on the economy", while on the international scene shadows were cast by "the worsening geopolitical tension in Europe".

Nonetheless, the prospects for Mozambican inflation have been revised downwards, and remain less than ten per cent a year. Annual inflation fell slightly from 6.8 per cent in November to 6.7 per cent in December. Food prices fell slightly, while the Mozambican currency, the metical, held its value.

The CPMO forecast an improvement in economic activity in 2022, arising from the government's relaxation of restrictive measures adopted to slow the spread of Covid-19, and from the start of the export of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the Rovuma Basin, off the coast of the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

The floating LNG unit, operated by the Italian energy company ENI, and built in a South Korean shipyard, is now in position in the Rovuma Basin and should begin production by the second half of the year.

The return to economic growth, the CPMO warned, "will continue to require the deepening of structural reforms in the economy, seeking to strengthen institutions, improve the business environment, attract investment, and create jobs".

Recent macroeconomic prospects, the CPMO concluded, "are consistent with keeping the current level of the MIMO rate in the short term to maintain low and stable inflation which is the main objective of the Bank of Mozambique".

MRG Metals hires consultants for corridor sands project

The Australian based mining company MRG Metals on 27 January announced that it has hired consultants TZ Minerals International (TZMI) to undertake a market study for its heavy mineral Corridor Sands project in the southern Mozambican province of Gaza.

According to MRG Metals, TZMI has extensive

practical experience across global markets for titanium, zirconium, and titanium oxide pigments. The consultants will advise the company on the economic potential of the different product streams across its Mozambique heavy mineral sands portfolio.

The study will focus on the Corridor Sands project where MRG Metals in December released an updated mineral resource estimate for its Koko Massava deposit. The company considers this to be a "World Class" deposit with the potential to support the development of a mine with a lifetime of over fifty years. This deposit is rich in ilmenite, rutile, zircon, and titanomagnetite,

Ilmenite and rutile are used to make white pigments for paints, paper, and plastic. Titanium can be extracted from these ores and used to manufacture metallic parts where lightweight and high strength are needed. Zircon is used for abrasive and insulating purposes and monazite contains rare earth elements.

Port of Maputo sets new cargo record

The Port of Maputo on 26 January revealed that in 2021 it set a new record for handling cargo.

A press release from the Maputo Port Development Company (MPDC) said that in 2021 the port handled 22.2 million tonnes of cargo – an increase of 21 per cent in comparison with the 18.3 million tonnes handled in 2020. The previous record had been set in 2019 (before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic) when the port handled 21 million tonnes.

"This growth", the MPDC release said, "is a result of the post-Covid recovery of the market, but also the efficient use of quays 7, 8 and 9, alongside the expansion of the iron terminal and a dedicated rail line".

Although work on the three quays, which includes dredging, will not be completed until April, "the port has already begun to harvest the fruit of this development of its infrastructure", said the MPDC Managing Director, Osorio Lucas.

"The rehabilitation and strengthening of the pavement of the quays has allowed more space for larger ships to dock", Lucas continued. "Together with the dredging of the approach channel in 2017 and other measures to improve the efficiency of maritime operations, the port has successively beaten all its handling records. It recorded a maximum of 145,545 tonnes of magnetite loaded onto a ship (at the Matola Coal Terminal), and a record of 140,000 tonnes of chromium ore loaded onto a ship".

The amounts of chrome and ferrochrome carried by rail showed a slight decline, of four per cent, in comparison with 2020. The ratio of rail to road transport of cargo fell from 25/75 per cent in 2020 to 21/79 per cent in 2021. However, "with the recent improvements and investment in the rail infrastructure inside the port, there is enormous potential for the growth of cargo carried by rail", said Lucas. Joint work between MPDC and the Mozambican and South African rail companies, CFM and TFR, "has opened the path for improving rail efficiencies", he added.

Tirupati Graphite develops new graphite production process

The British graphite production company Tirupati Graphite on 20 January revealed that it has developed a new floatation process to separate and purify graphite.

Tirupati explained in a note to investors that it has successfully held trials of its pilot-scale version of its Column Floatation System (CFS) which it describes as “a technological milestone which will significantly improve performance of the company's primary graphite and downstream speciality graphite production processes”.

As a result, the company will install in its production plant in Madagascar its first commercial-scale CFS with a capacity of 1.5 metric tonnes per hour.

According to Tirupati, among the advantages this holds over conventional floatation cell technologies commonly used in the graphite processing industry are lowering power consumption by forty per cent during the floatation stage, cutting corrosion which lowers maintenance and production downtimes, and reducing the number of stages required to achieve the required graphite purity levels.

The new system will be incorporated into the company's Balama Central and Montepuez graphite projects in the northern Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado. The company is currently in the process of purchasing these projects from the Australian mining company Battery Minerals and neither are currently in production.

Tirupati's executive chair, Shishir Poddar, commented that the demand for global flake graphite continues to grow, driven by increased demand for electric vehicles and graphite-rich products such as flame retardants and thermal management technologies.

Mozambique is a major global source of graphite with the project of Syrah Resources, which is also located at Balama, having the capacity to produce 350,000 tonnes of graphite concentrate per year over its mine life of fifty years.

Meanwhile, Triton Minerals is developing its graphite project in Cabo Delgado with a planned production of 50,000 tonnes of concentrate per year.

Graphite is a form of carbon that is highly valued due to its properties as a conductor of electricity. It is used in batteries and fuel cells and is the basis for the “miracle material” graphene, which is the strongest material ever measured, with vast potential for use in the electronics industries.

Pequenos Libombos reservoir over 80 per cent full

The Greater Maputo Metropolitan Area will not face water shortages over the next five years, as the reservoir behind the Pequenos Libombos dam on the Umbeluzi River, in Maputo province, is over 80 per cent full, according to a report in the Maputo daily “Noticias” on 24 January.

The dam's managing director, Jaime Timba, explained that “the reservoir is now at over 80 per cent of its capacity. This enables us to say that we have enough water for a wide range of purposes including providing drinking water and water for irrigated agriculture for the next five years. Even if it does not rain or no water flows into the dam, there will be no concern throughout this time”.

This follows a prolonged drought over the last seven years during which water storage dropped to its lowest recorded level of 13 per cent. This not only affected the water supply to greater Maputo but also halted energy production.

Timba noted that the dam is regularly blamed for any water supply crisis in Greater Maputo. However, he argued that the problem lies with the Umbeluzi Water Treatment Plant (ETA) which cannot treat the necessary quantities to supply the Greater Maputo Metropolitan Area. “When there is too much water, ETA cannot treat it all as the plant cannot deal with such large quantities. The other constraint is that when we increase discharges from the dam the water is expelled with too much sediment, causing clouding”, he said.

Despite the recent rehabilitation of the Umbeluzi Water Treatment Plant, its capacity is not yet enough to guarantee the water supply of the rapidly growing population of the Greater Maputo area.

Floating hotel on way to Cabo Delgado

A floating hotel, CSS Temis, is on its way to the northern Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado, where it will accommodate workers installing a floating liquefied natural gas platform above the Coral South gas field in the Rovuma Basin.

The FLNG platform arrived in Mozambican waters at the beginning of the year and is currently awaiting certification and licensing from the Mozambican authorities before it can be put into operation. Once that process is complete the platform needs to be secured to the seabed 6,500 feet below the surface with twenty mooring lines and then connected to the gas.

This installation will be carried out by the contractor TechnipFMC whose workforce will be stationed on accommodation support vessel CSS Temis under a contract signed with Singapore's offshore vessel provider Nortrans.

According to Nortrans, the contract provides for 400 client personnel to live onboard during the project period of up to 200 days from the beginning of February.

Currently, the vessel is in the port of Cape Town in South Africa.

The Coral South project is due to begin operating in the second half of this year with a production capacity of 3.4 million metric tonnes of LNG per year, all of which has been secured by British Petroleum (BP) through a long term contract.

The operator of Coral South is the Italian company ENI and the field holds an estimated 16 trillion cubic feet (TCFs) of gas.

Recovery of mangroves key to climate change adaptation

The recovery of mangrove forests is key to climate change adaptation and to mitigating the effects of cyclones and floods, according to Maria Salazar of the Spanish International Cooperation and Development Agency (AECID).

According to a press release from AECID, a project repopulating and conserving the mangroves in Mozambique's capital city, Maputo, is in its pilot phase under a programme run by the Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA). The project is being co-financed by the European Union and AECID.

AECID notes that "Mozambique's vulnerability to climate change is extreme; in fact, it is the country with the highest global climate risk index according to 2019 data". It points out that Mozambique has large coastal areas which are exposed to frequent tropical cyclones, floods, and droughts.

It points out that "Mozambique's coastline has a great ally in the fight against floods and cyclones - the mangroves. They protect the coastline with their dense root systems that act as natural buffers against storm surges. In addition, they also provide breeding habitat for marine biodiversity and play a crucial ecological role in fertilising, stabilising, and regulating the microclimate".

However, the country's mangroves are under threat from rising sea levels, changes to the chemical composition of the oceans, urbanisation, pollution from industries, and the use of mangrove trees for firewood

and building materials such as wooden stakes. AECID laments that "if action is not taken today, it is highly likely that the rate at which these changes occur will exceed the adaptive capacity of mangrove forests and the species that live in them".

AECID says this is why it is supporting the Maputo municipality's pilot project for the recovery of the mangroves. The project involves plans to regenerate 102 hectares of mangrove forest in Katembe using saplings grown in the municipal nursery. This will be done in conjunction with activities to protect the area and to educate local people about the benefits of the scheme.

The project will also renovate the gates that control the entry and exit of water in the Costa do Sol neighbourhood, allowing for the controlled flooding of the mangroves. A pedestrian walkway will also be constructed to allow visitors to view the mangroves without damaging the fragile environment.

Maria Salazar concludes that "coasts such as Mozambique's need action to protect essential ecosystems such as mangroves and to combat climate change".

Since its founding in 2015, the Covenant of Mayors in Sub-Saharan Africa (CoM SSA) has supported local climate action with political commitment from over 250 local governments. The initiative has the support of the European Union through the European Green Deal. CoM SSA also works to strengthen the Africa-EU partnership and supports Agenda 2063 of the African Union Commission. It is the regional chapter of an international alliance of cities, the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.
