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Mozambique elected to UN Security Council

The United Nations General Assembly on 9 June elected Mozambique to the Security Council as a non-permanent member. Mozambique received 192 votes out of the 193 members of the UN. The 193rd member, Venezuela, was unable to vote since it is in arrears with its UN membership fees.

Mozambique's vote was higher than that obtained by the other four successful candidates representing other parts of the world. They were Ecuador (190 votes), Switzerland (187), Malta (185), and Japan (184).

The margin of the victory was a triumph for Mozambican diplomacy: a team of seasoned Mozambican diplomats, including former Foreign Minister Leonardo Simao, worked behind the scenes to maximise support.

Fears that Mozambique's position of neutrality towards the conflict between Russia and Ukraine might damage its bid proved unfounded. Indeed, both Ukraine and Russia voted for Mozambique. In addition, all five permanent members of the Security Council (United States, China, Russia, France, and the United Kingdom) voted for Mozambique.

One person delighted at the result was former President Joaquim Chissano, who built up Mozambican diplomacy from scratch during his 11 years as the country's first foreign minister (1975-1986). One of Chissano's goals had always been to secure "more friends and fewer enemies", and the vote showed that this goal has certainly been achieved.

In his first reaction to the vote, President Filipe Nyusi pledged that, during its two years as a member of the Security Council, Mozambique would do its utmost to prove "a constructive and effective partner in the construction of peace". He stated that "we shall be the voice of African countries who are seeking to build a peaceful and prosperous future for all".

Mozambique's fundamental goals, he added, also included consolidating the respect the country enjoyed in the concert of nations, "and thus contribute to achieving the desired development of our country, heading towards peace and prosperity".

"Mozambicans will spare no effort until this collective desire is fully attained", President Nyusi promised.

"Our country has a history, a record and an experience in defending measures to mitigate conflicts, and above all to promote negotiated solutions for peace. Our commitment remains unshakeable", he declared.

President Nyusi cited the 2019 general peace

agreement which he had signed with Ossufo Momade, leader of the main opposition party, Renamo, as an example of how peace could be achieved through dialogue.

The President pledged that Mozambique will also give priority to the threat posed by climate change instead of simply reacting to climate emergencies as they occur. "We shall work to affirm our capacity as a champion of disaster risk management", he said, "in favour of vulnerable countries, particularly African countries who are facing growing insecurity and massive migration due to climatic impacts".

President Nyusi guaranteed that Mozambique remains committed to the protection and promotion of human rights. He believed that the work of the Security Council must take into consideration the principles of humanitarian action, including the need to alleviate suffering and save lives.

Covid-19: over 150 new cases in 24 hours

The Mozambican health authorities on 14 June reported 151 new cases of the Covid-19 respiratory disease, the largest number of new cases in a single 24 hour period since 27 January, when 301 cases were reported.

According to a press release from the Ministry of Health, of the new cases, 88 were women and 63 men, 30 were children under the age of 15, and the oldest of those infected was 80 years old.

As has been the norm throughout June, the vast majority of the cases – 90.7 per cent – were from the four southern provinces (55 from Maputo province, 46 from Maputo city, 20 from Gaza and 15 from Inhambane). The seven provinces north of the Save River (the conventional boundary between southern and central Mozambique) only contributed 15 cases – 11 from Cabo Delgado, two from Zambezia, one from Nampula and one from Sofala.

The Ministry release reported two deaths from Covid-19: an 80 year old man in Maputo and a 45 year old woman in Gaza. This brought the total Covid-19 death toll in Mozambique to 2,208.

President Nyusi promises to alleviate cost of living

President Filipe Nyusi on 14 June promised that the government will soon take measures to alleviate the cost of living, which is rising largely due to increases in the world market price of fuel and grain.

Speaking in Maputo, at the ceremony where he swore into office the newly appointed Transport Minister Mateus Magala, and the Deputy Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy, Antonio Saide, President Nyusi said the government is considering short term fiscal measures that will affect the cost structure of imported fuels.

These measures could include some form of subsidy for passenger transport. President Nyusi warned that such “extraordinary” measures could have a negative impact on the public accounts. However, they might help mitigate the effects of the current price shocks.

“The government should immediately assess measures for relief”, said President Nyusi, “with a focus that attacks the cost structure of fuels, as well as exchange management that might reduce the effect of the costs”. Here President Nyusi appeared to suggest an administrative approach to the exchange rate, at least for some imported goods.

President Nyusi announced that the government has already set up a team that is looking into solutions that could mitigate the impact of the generalised rise in prices that is hitting Mozambicans in their pockets. “The cost of living is no longer just a song, and it’s not something to make jokes about”, he said. “It’s a reality in Mozambique, in Africa, and the world”.

The government, he continued, is well aware of the effect of inflation on eroding the purchasing power of Mozambican families. “We are living through a moment in which the economic conjuncture is characterised by inflationary pressures arising from the increased fuel and grain prices, which has affected all countries”.

The moment was one of crisis, he stressed, and it required firm intervention by the government.

President Nyusi was doubtless concerned by the likelihood that the fuel regulatory authority (ARENE) will declare another rise in the price of petrol and diesel. According to a report in the independent newsheet “Carta de Mocambique”, ARENE will increase the price of a litre of petrol from the current 83 meticaís (US\$1.3, at the current exchange rate) to 93 meticaís - an increase of 12 per cent. Under the ARENE proposal, the price of a litre of diesel would rise from 79 to 96 meticaís (21.5 per cent).

According to “Carta de Mocambique”, the fuel distribution companies wanted higher rises – 98 meticaís for a litre of petrol and 103 meticaís for a litre of diesel. The government rejected that proposal. The companies complain that they are running at a loss and that the government owes them US\$140 million. This money should have been paid into a compensation fund for the fuel companies, but that fund is empty. This situation could endanger fuel imports later in the year.

One strong argument in favour of the fuel price rise proposed by ARENE is that it would bring prices in Mozambique into line with those in South Africa. Currently, Mozambique is subsidising South African truckers, who cross the border to fill up their tanks with the cheaper Mozambican fuel.

US to finance reconstruction of Cabo Delgado

Mozambique will benefit from funding of about US\$14 million a year from the United States government over the next decade for the reconstruction of the districts affected by terrorism in the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

The funding was announced by the US Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, Victoria Nuland, at a Maputo press conference on 14 June, held shortly after President Filipe Nyusi had granted her an audience.

“This sum will allow the United States government to work on the reconstruction of Cabo Delgado and the rest of the country, and in training young people for employment, thus discouraging them from being recruited by the terrorists”, said Nuland.

According to Nuland, “the fund has already been approved by the United States Congress and the agreement could be signed within the next two months”.

Nuland also discussed food security with President Nyusi. Africa, in general, is suffering from drought, and in Mozambique’s case, the situation has been worsened by the sharp rise in grain prices following the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

“The United States and other partners are committed to solving food insecurity”, declared Nuland. She stated that 30 per cent of the wheat consumed in Mozambique comes from Ukraine and that this is affected by blockages at Ukrainian Black Sea ports.

Nuland added that the US will also disburse a further US\$40 million for food security, particularly in Cabo Delgado. She also announced a grant of ten million doses of the Covid-19 vaccine produced by the pharmaceutical company Pfizer. These will be used to vaccinate Mozambican adolescents aged between 11 and 17.

So far, Mozambique’s mass vaccination against Covid-19 has been aimed at adults, but the Ministry of Health hopes to extend the vaccination to people under the age of 18 later this month.

Nuland congratulated Mozambique on its election to the United Nations Security Council as a non-permanent member. She believed Mozambique has valuable experience to share with other countries, particularly in peace processes.

On her African tour, Nuland has already visited Djibouti and Somalia, and will now travel on to Nigeria.

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

Mozambique annually discards 100,000 tonnes of plastic

The Minister of Land and Environment, Ivete Maibaze, revealed on 13 June that 100,000 tonnes of plastic waste are annually discarded into the environment, polluting the country's rivers and oceans. Maibaze, who was speaking in Maputo at a seminar on the impact of a plastic bag ban, pointed out that "of this amount, 17,000 tonnes go into rivers and oceans."

She lamented that the polymers used in the production of disposable plastics are not biodegradable and on average only begin to decompose after 500 years. In addition, she warned that there was a health risk posed by the contamination of hot food and drinks packaged in plastics that may contain chemicals such as Benzene and Stellan.

The minister, citing 2018 data from the International Union for Conservation of Nature, stated that in Mozambique the average plastic waste produced is 6.1 kilogrammes per capita per year, a level far below the world average of 29 kg per capita per year.

"However, Mozambique's waste collection rate is 30 per cent and the collected plastic waste is improperly disposed of in open dumpsites, with only a small amount is recycled", the minister explained.

Maibaze also noted that the negative impacts caused by the proliferation of plastic bags include the clogging of drainage ditches, urban flooding, the emergence of diseases, and the loss of marine and terrestrial fauna. In addition, "the burning of plastic causes air pollution through the emission of gases that, when inhaled, are harmful to human health and other living beings".

For his part, the conservation manager at the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in Mozambique, Rodrigo Fernandez, stated that in 1990 the world production of plastic was 150 million tons per year and today, 32 years later, this has risen to 308 million tons per year. He added that only 75 per cent of all plastic produced throughout history is recyclable. "We are talking about 6,200 million tons of plastic waste. And it is estimated that one-third of the plastic produced annually reaches nature as pollution. In the specific case of the oceans, there are about 150 million tons accumulated in the marine environment", he said.

Fernandez noted that the absence of a systemic and effective response to this problem threatens economic and sustainable growth and has direct consequences on the environment, wildlife species and people. "We, therefore, call on all governments to set national targets for plastic reduction, recycling, and management and to adopt legal and appropriate instruments to encourage innovation and viable alternatives to plastics".

Mozambique has already taken some steps in this direction. A law of 2015 banned the use of ultra-thin (less than 30 micrometres) plastic bags, with a few exceptions. Shops were banned from distributing free plastic bags to their customers. When shoppers had to pay for their plastic bags, they tended to use them more than once, and, in the best cases, opted for bags made of other materials.

Norway donates US\$3.1 million to protect women and children

The government of Norway has donated US\$3.1 million to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to safeguard the health and protection needs of conflict-affected women and girls in northern Mozambique.

The 30 million Norwegian krona donation will support UNFPA's efforts to strengthen sexual and reproductive health and gender-based violence prevention and response services.

According to a UNFPA press release, the project will last until the end of 2024 and "bridges immediate service delivery with resilience-building efforts to reduce unmet needs, lessen long-term risks and improve development outcomes".

It will support over 400,000 people, with a focus on women of reproductive age, adolescents, youth, and persons with disabilities, from host and displaced communities across Cabo Delgado, Nampula, and Niassa provinces.

According to Norway's ambassador to Mozambique, Haakon Gram-Johannessen, "sexual and reproductive health and rights are a priority in Norwegian development cooperation, and we are therefore pleased to support UNFPA's important efforts".

He added that "a person's right to a healthy body and the autonomy, education and healthcare to freely decide who to have sex with and how to avoid sexually transmitted infections or unintended pregnancy are essential for human development and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals".

The project is designed to contribute to the Mozambican government's recovery and resilience strategies for the northern region. It will use data to "identify gaps in service quality, delivery, and accessibility and inform evidence-based decision and policy making that puts vulnerable women, girls, and youth at the forefront of implementation".

Islamist terrorism has since 2017 forced around 800,000 people to flee from their homes and livelihoods in parts of the northern province of Cabo Delgado. Although the Mozambican defence and security forces, supported by the Rwandan military contingent and soldiers from SAMIM (SADC Military Mission in Mozambique), have had some success in dislodging the terrorists, many people are still waiting for more stability before returning home.

According to UNFPA Mozambique's Resident Representative, Berangere Boell, "one in four people displaced by the conflict are women of reproductive age. Their needs cannot be ignored, and as the conflict continues, their vulnerability and exposure to gender-based violence and health-related complications increase dramatically".

UNFPA points out that the conflict has caused health facilities in eight districts to close, which has affected over half a million people, which includes "displaced women who face a greater risk of complications during childbirth without access to obstetric care, as well as female survivors of violence who may experience

greater vulnerabilities without immediate access to protection services or post-rape care”.

Globally, Norway is among UNFPA’s top five donors, ranking second in contributions to UNFPA’s core financing in 2021. In Mozambique, UNFPA has partnered with Norway with funding for projects focused on the Covid-19 response, recovery from Cyclones Idai and Kenneth, the 2017 Population and Housing Census, and a United Nations joint program focused on the protection of persons with albinism.

Minister urges tougher action against terrorism

The Minister of the Interior, Arsenia Massingue, has encouraged the Mozambican Defence and Security Forces, and their allies from Rwanda and SADC (Southern African Development Community) to continue intensifying actions against the terrorism that has been plaguing parts of the northern province of Cabo Delgado since 2017.

The minister was speaking on 10 June during a meeting with the command of the SADC Military Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM).

“We visited SAMIM, we interacted, we were given a very thorough report, and we found the reality of a force motivated to work, a force committed to work, a force concerned with restoring peace in our country and this is what we will convey to the public. We encourage them to continue working”, she said.

The visit of the minister to Cabo Delgado also assessed the level of compliance with the Government’s Five-Year Plan, and the Economic and Social Plan for 2022.

Massingue’s visit coincided with a switch in the geographical focus for terrorist raids. This month, for the first time, the jihadists attacked villages in Ancuabe district, bringing them close to the provincial capital, Pemba. On 11 June the terrorists murdered and beheaded at least four people in the Ancuabe village of Ntutupue, about 50 kilometres west of Pemba.

In response, according to a report in the newsheet “Mediafax”, Mozambican forces and their foreign allies stepped up patrols around the entrances to Pemba and the periphery of the city.

There are also reports of terrorist attacks south of Pemba, in Chiure district. One of these attacks, against the village of Retene, was claimed by the self-styled “Islamic State”, which boasted it had killed “two Christians and burnt down 70 houses and their churches”. This attack has yet to be confirmed by Mozambican sources.

It is thought that the terrorist groups in Ancuabe have moved from districts in the north of the province, where they had come under heavy pressure from the Mozambican forces and their allies. Fighting was continuing in Macomia district on 11 June and ten terrorists were killed in clashes near the Chai administrative post. On 8 June, Rwandan forces were reported to have killed 13 terrorists in Namaluco, an abandoned village in Quissanga district.

Renamo satisfied with pace of demobilisation

The leader of Mozambique’s main opposition party, Renamo, Ossufo Momade, declared on 30 May that he regards as satisfactory the pace of the Demobilisation, Disarming and Reintegration (DDR) of former members of the Renamo militia.

DDR was agreed under the general peace agreement that President Filipe Nyusi signed with Momade in August 2019. To date 12 Renamo military bases have been closed, and there remain four to be dismantled. 3,486 former Renamo fighters have been demobilised.

“In achieving this process, we are continuing to work with the government, in the person of President Nyusi”, said Momade, at the opening in Maputo of an Extraordinary Meeting of the Renamo National Council.

DDR had made headway, Momade said, due to the commitment of the Renamo leaders and former fighters, President Nyusi, and the international community.

“We can state that, although there are some constraints, such as slowness in implementing some stages, the process is advancing satisfactorily”, he continued. “We would like to recognise the collaboration of the government and of the international community, our partners who are contributing to these advances”.

Momade said that 91 of the demobilised fighters had once belonged to the self-styled “Renamo Military Junta”.

This was a breakaway from Renamo, led by Mariano Nhongo (who promoted himself to the rank of general). Nhongo had described Momade as “a traitor” and did not recognise the peace deal with the government. The Junta mounted sporadic attacks throughout 2020 in the central provinces of Manica and Sofala, mostly against vehicles using the main roads.

However, after Nhongo died in a clash with the police in October 2021, nothing more was heard of Junta activities.

Momade said followers of Nhongo had joined the DDR thanks to “collective efforts to promote peace and national reconciliation”.

He added that 46 officers from Renamo have now been recruited into the Mozambican police force (PRM) and have concluded their police training. They are now awaiting placements in previously agreed police units.

Momade said that land has been allocated to demobilised fighters and they have also been given technical and agricultural training.

Momade also expressed Renamo’s concern at the jihadist terrorism affecting parts of the northern province of Cabo Delgado. “The war waged by the terrorists is still a mystery that needs to be explained”, he declared.

Momade urged the government to help reduce the price of liquid fuels, either by further cutting the taxes on them or by subsidising fuel distribution companies.

Renamo demands elections for district assemblies must go ahead

Mozambique's main opposition party, Renamo, has insisted that elections for district assemblies must go ahead in 2024, even though there is no clarity on what these assemblies will do or how they will be paid for.

On 28 May, at the closing session of a meeting of the Central Committee of the ruling Frelimo Party, President Filipe Nyusi suggested postponing the district elections. He called for "a reflection on the feasibility and sustainability of the country advancing to the election of district assemblies in 2024".

The election of district assemblies was a demand raised by Renamo in the negotiations over a package of decentralisation measures that were included in constitutional amendments passed in 2018.

There are currently 154 districts (more if urban districts are included).

This Renamo demand will certainly complicate national elections. Voters will already be faced with three ballot papers in 2024, for the presidential, parliamentary, and provincial assembly elections.

Adding a fourth, for the district assemblies, would inevitably lengthen the time taken to count the votes and declare the results. Even discounting the possibility of deliberate fraud, tired polling station staff are likely to make more mistakes if the count is extended deeper into the night.

Just as with the municipalities and the provinces, the district assembly elections will be organised on a party list basis. The head of the list of whichever party wins will become the new district administrator. The administrator heads a district government, known as the District Executive Council, which answers to the District Assembly.

The Constitution says nothing else. The powers of the District Administrator and of the District Executive Council are to be fixed by laws which do not yet exist. Even the sizes of the district assemblies are not yet known.

However, it seems certain that they will provide hundreds, if not thousands of new jobs, with wages and allowances adding to the pressures on the state budget.

There is also no clarity about where the powers of the provincial assemblies end and those of the district assemblies begin. Indeed, if the district assemblies are granted any real powers, then the provincial assemblies will become superfluous.

President Nyusi told the Central Committee that decentralisation "is not a linear or finished process", and so there should be "a functional analysis" to maximise the opportunities of the current scheme and "to reduce the potential overlapping of the attributes and powers of the bodies of provincial governance and those that represent the State in the province".

"This is a reflection which should be made, with a cool head, and with our feet on the ground, so that the

decision most appropriate for our country is taken", said President Nyusi.

Renamo was outraged by this approach and claimed that President Nyusi is trampling on the Constitution. It became even angrier when Albano Macie, a judge on the Constitutional Council, recently pointed out that the district assemblies are only in the Constitution because of Renamo pressure. Agreeing to district assemblies was part of the price paid to persuade Renamo to lay down its guns and dissolve its illegal militia. Macie could see no use for district assemblies.

At a press conference in Maputo on 8 June, the chairperson of the Renamo National Jurisdictional Council, Saimone Macuiana, expressed outrage at the positions taken by President Nyusi and Macie. He claimed that the government is "retreating" from its commitment to decentralisation and is showing a "lack of honesty and seriousness".

As for Macie, Macuiana thought it "unacceptable" for members of the Constitutional Council, which is effectively the highest court in the land, to make political statements.

Macuiana did point to one real problem – the Constitution cannot be amended less than five years after the last amendment, which was in 2018. That provision can only be overridden by a super-majority of three quarters of the parliamentary deputies – in other words, the commitment to district elections in 2024 can only be removed from the constitution by the vote of 188 deputies. Although the ruling Frelimo Party has an absolute majority, it is not that large.

So Macuiana called for "rigorous compliance" with "the letter and the spirit" of the peace agreements between the government and Renamo. He stated that Renamo had signed those agreements "in defence of the higher interests of the Mozambican people".

Ban on meat imports from Zimbabwe

The Mozambican government has prohibited the import of animals and animal products and by-products from Zimbabwe due to the resurgence of cases of foot-and-mouth disease in that country.

The measure comes after the Zimbabwean Tax Authority notified the Mozambican authorities on 27 May about the outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease in Mashonaland Central province which borders Mozambique.

The Mozambican government has also decided to ban the import of wild ungulates and fodder for cattle, goats, pigs, and sheep.

In the districts bordering Zimbabwe, it will be compulsory to perform a visual inspection, examination of the mouth cavity and hooves of all cattle, goats, sheep, and pigs on a monthly basis.

Foot and mouth disease is classified as one of the most dangerous livestock diseases in the world because of its rapid transmission and spread.

Justice Minister promises protection for albinos

No crime against albinos will go unpunished in Mozambique, declared Justice Minister Helena Kida in Maputo on 13 June. Speaking at a ceremony to mark International Albinism Awareness Day, Kida called for a determined fight against the myths and superstitions surrounding albinism, which have led to the hunting, mutilation and murder of people suffering from this skin disorder.

“There are clear signs of the violation of the human rights of albinos”, she said. “We know that people suffering from albinism have been murdered, and all those involved will be held responsible”.

Kida said there are “complex social stigmas” associated with albinism, which result in the persecution of people suffering from this condition. The government, she added, is implementing a National Plan of Action on Albinism, which seeks to protect the rights of albinos.

Among the actions being taken is a fight against trafficking in people and human body parts. Albinos are particularly vulnerable to this trafficking because of beliefs that albino body parts possess magical powers, and that rituals involving them can confer wealth or power.

Kida said the government also wants to provide albinos with psycho-social support and quality health care. The lack of melanin in the skin of albinos makes them highly vulnerable to diseases caused by the ultra-violet radiation of the sun, including skin cancer.

Kida pledged that the government will step up awareness campaigns to protect human rights, particularly the rights of albinos.

A representative of UNESCO, Paul Gomis, told the meeting of his horror at the recent murder of an albino in the northern province of Nampula and hoped that those responsible for this crime will be brought to justice.

He praised the advances Mozambique has made in protecting albinos and in its ratification of various international treaties and conventions. In particular, he noted that Mozambique had participated in the Global Summit on Disability in February, where “it renewed its promise to take effective measures to protect and promote the rights of disabled people, including people with albinism”.

Minister defends maximising benefits of the sea

The Minister of the Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries, Lidia Cardoso, on 8 June called for maximising the benefits that the sea offers. Speaking in Maputo, during a seminar held as part of the celebrations of World Oceans Day, Cardoso stressed that by “recognising the importance of the sea to our country, which lives with the sea and from the sea, the government of Mozambique is strongly committed to maximising the benefits that the sea offers, always on a sustainable

basis, hence our commitment to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals” (SDG 14 calls for the protection of marine species through the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas, and marine resources).

The use of the sea, Cardoso added, does not distinguish between races, ethnicities, party, or religious affiliations, “and therefore, as Mozambicans, we must share ideas, visions, strategies and actions for the noble mission that is incumbent upon all, the defence of the sea and marine ecosystems, their sustainable use, and protection for future generations”.

This, said the minister, imposes great challenges, such as combating illegal fishing and other practices harmful to the health of marine habitats, notably the destruction of key ecosystems such as mangrove forests. “And not only that, but the proliferation of garbage and plastic waste in our waters turns the oceans into hotbeds of disease, endangering the lives of us all”, she stressed.

Cardoso said that Mozambique, with 60 per cent of its the population living on the coastal strip, should strive for sustainable governance of the sea and in the spirit of healthy coexistence “with other peoples and nations, cooperation, friendship and solidarity, because the sea, without borders or deadlines, unites and brings together all peoples which is the reason for the strong commitment to the development of a global Blue Economy.”

“Since last year, we have set in motion the Mangrove Ecosystem National Restoration Programme, which has been mobilising, on a national scale, Mozambican society to engage in the implementation of the Mangrove Strategy”, the minister said, under which the government is determined to restore 5,000 hectares of mangroves by the end of this year.

Minister calls for research to accelerate transformation of agriculture

The Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Celso Correia, considers research a priority for Mozambique to accelerate the transformation of the agricultural sector on a national scale. “Research is the heart of the transformation of agriculture. Unfortunately, over recent decades, it was not possible to make the investment that we would like to make in research”, the minister said in an interview on Radio Mozambique.

He added that investing in research will allow the country to overcome the grain supply crisis. One possibility is to switch from imported grains to root crops, notably cassava, in which Mozambique is self-sufficient. “In the past, we used to harvest five or six tonnes of cassava per hectare and we have started harvesting ten. It is our technology that has to be improved. It can make a difference in the agricultural sector”, he explained.

Correia said it is also important to transfer technology and modernise agriculture, but without being completely dependent, warning that “we cannot be totally

dependent on imported technology. We have to have our own”.

In Mozambique, he advanced, there are currently about 300 trained researchers and more than 1,500 people working in research areas that need support and investment. In particular, “we need to support these teams so that they can bring solutions for maize, cassava, soy, and sunflower - all crops that in other countries are produced with very high profitability and productivity”.

The minister mentioned that Mozambique, and the world, are under pressure due to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine which is affecting the supply of products that Mozambique imports from the Black Sea area such as wheat and sunflower oil. The invasion has had a major impact on food markets. “Vegetable oil, for example, went from US\$800 a tonne to US\$1,800”, said Correia. “Rice also had a jump but not as big as oil, but significant, and so did wheat. Therefore, there is a need to relieve this pressure, Mozambique must continue to produce and intensify all production programmes”.

CNE proposes voter registration for first quarter of 2023

Mozambique’s National Elections Commission (CNE) has proposed that voter registration ahead of the municipal elections scheduled for 11 October 2023 should be held between January and March.

Speaking in Maputo on 2 June at a meeting with political parties, civil society bodies, and cooperation partners on the current stage of preparations for the elections, CNE spokesperson Paulo Cuinica said the exact dates for the voter registration will be announced by the government, but the proposal from the CNE is the first quarter of the year.

“Naturally, we are making a proposal based on the

time needed to undertake this activity”, he said. “The work must be done before the end of the first quarter of the year. Any later would cause complications”.

Cuinica said that all members of the 11 provincial election commissions have been sworn into office. Now the district elections commissions in the 58 districts that contain municipalities must be appointed and sworn in. The members of the commissions will then be trained to use the computerised electoral equipment. Cuinica added that new equipment is being imported with equipment used in the last elections being upgraded.

The CNE estimates that 3.2 billion meticaís (about US\$50 million at the current exchange rate) is needed for all the election preparations. But to date, the CNE has only been guaranteed one billion meticaís.

“Right now, we are in dialogue with the government to see how this deficit can be overcome”, said Cuinica. “Naturally, if they so wish, the donors may support the elections, but this will also be via the government because it is the State Budget that should fund elections”.

Mozambique’s partners have made it repeatedly clear that Mozambique should move towards self-sufficiency in financing its elections.

Other problems facing the CNE are uncertainties about the Covid-19 pandemic and the threat of terrorism in the northern province of Cabo Delgado. A connected problem is ensuring that people displaced by the terrorists will have the right to vote, although many of them are living in other parts of Cabo Delgado, or across the provincial boundary in Nampula.

Solving these issues, Cuinica said, depends on “other actors” (presumably the defence and security forces), with whom the CNE has been exchanging impressions. As soon as the conditions are created, the elections will be held in that part of the country”.
