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UNHCR lacks funds to help refugees in Cabo Delgado

The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has lamented that it has only managed to raise sixty per cent of the funds needed for its work with nearly one million people who have fled their homes in the northern province of Cabo Delgado as a result of terrorism.

At a press briefing in Geneva on 4 October, UNHCR pointed out that “this week marks five years since extreme violence erupted in northern Mozambique’s Cabo Delgado province, forcing nearly one million people to flee during that time”.

It added, “tragically, conflict has not subsided, and thousands of families are still being forced to leave their homes because of attacks by non-state armed groups”.

UNHCR called for an end to the violence and on the international community to “provide sustainable support to reduce the suffering of the displaced population and local host communities in northern Mozambique”.

In particular, it warned that by September only 60 per cent of the US\$36.7 million needed for UNHCR to provide life-saving protection and assistance services in Mozambique has been funded.

The UN agency paints a bleak picture for those affected, pointing out that “extreme violence and displacement have had a devastating impact on the population, who have watched their loved ones being killed and raped and their homes and other infrastructure reduced to ash”.

It adds that “men and boys were also forcibly enrolled into armed groups. Livelihoods were lost and education stalled, while access to necessities such as food and health care was hampered. Many people have been re-traumatised after being forced to move several times”.

Islamist terrorism since 2017 has forced almost a million people to flee from their homes and livelihoods in parts 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 success in dislodging the terrorists, many people are still waiting for more stability before returning home.

Despite this progress, the situation continues to deteriorate in some districts. According to UNHCR, “the humanitarian situation in Cabo Delgado has continued to deteriorate and the number of displaced people increased by 20 per cent to 946,508 in the first half of this year”. It added that the conflict has “spread to the neighbouring province of Nampula, which witnessed four attacks by armed groups in September, affecting at least 47,000 people and displacing 12,000”.

WFP hit by lack of funds

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has announced that it was only able to distribute half rations to people in northern Mozambique from April to September due to a lack of funds.

According to its latest country brief, the organisation planned to provide 945,000 people in northern Mozambique with life-saving food rations in August and September and distribute agricultural kits to 45,000 people in five districts of Cabo Delgado province.

However, WFP warns that it needs US\$16.2 million per month to sustain its operations in northern Mozambique and explains that “if additional funds are not received in a timely manner, a complete disruption of food assistance is expected in January 2023”.

WFP warns that “following two decades of relative peace and stability, the intensification of violence in Cabo Delgado province since 2017 threatens lives and socio-economic development”. It adds that “Mozambique is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, with drought and pests regularly affecting staple crops, while extreme weather events, particularly cyclones and tropical storms, lead to agricultural losses, destroyed infrastructure, assets and livelihood, and internal displacement”.

In particular, it points out that “severe tropical cyclone Gombe made landfall in March 2022 affecting more than 700,000 people in Nampula, Zambezia, and Tete provinces”. In response, WFP is “providing affected populations with three-month recovery food assistance complemented with seed vouchers to revive their livelihoods in Nampula, Zambezia, and Tete provinces”.

WFP summarises the seriousness of the humanitarian situation by pointing out that “significant challenges remain in achieving food and nutrition security. Most Mozambicans cannot afford the cost of a nutritious diet. High levels of malnutrition affect almost half the children under five years of age. Around 1.45 million people face severe acute food insecurity, as per the latest Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) assessment. Of those, 932,000 are in Cabo Delgado province alone. Nearly half the population remains below the poverty line”.

Mozambique calls for new funding model for sustainable development goals

Prime Minister Adriano Maleiane has argued that it is time for the world to adopt new funding models to fast-track the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030.

Prime Minister Maleiane made his remarks at the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 24 September. He stressed that Mozambique still views the SDGs 2030 as relevant for the design of collective solutions for the challenges facing the world. Therefore, according to Maleiane, the government shares the view that the SDGs should not be scrapped. However, finance is still confined to domestic resources and each country is expected to mobilise its own funds to cover the expenses to meet the set targets.

“We are working to reach the targets, but we are facing major difficulties. Therefore, we propose a model that will incorporate multilateral financial institutions, such as those linked to the United Nations, to provide funds for this agenda”, he said.

Speaking at a press conference, Maleiane explained that this was one of the motivations for Mozambique's participation. Another reason was to express Mozambique's gratitude for the country's election as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.

“We achieved our independence years ago, but we had never been to this forum. One hundred and ninety-two countries out of a total of 193 voted in favour of Mozambique and that is very good for the country and for Mozambicans”, he said.

Naturally, Maleiane said, the Mozambican government reaffirmed its position that peace and sustainable development are sacred values. It was precisely for this purpose that the United Nations Organisation (UNO) was created, Maleiane said, stressing that this was also the content of the message of his speech delivered at the General Debate.

Asked about Mozambique's position on the military conflict between Russia and Ukraine, Maleiane said that the Constitution of the Republic is very clear on the matter. “Our Constitution is very much for peace and dialogue and everything we are doing is in line with these principles and values”. Mozambique, Maleiane said, argues that it is necessary to give dialogue a chance rather than embark on violence. “We are not taking sides. We are doing what our constitution says to do. It is good for the country and the interests of Mozambique”.

Maleiane took the opportunity to announce that he was the bearer of a message from the Mozambican President, Filipe Nyusi, addressed to the Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, who played a very important role in consolidating peace and reconciliation in Mozambique and invite him to visit Mozambique. “We believe that its important to invite him to witness the end of this first phase of demobilisation and reintegration of the residual force of Renamo, the largest opposition party in Mozambique”.

Demobilisation to be concluded this year

President Filipe Nyusi on 4 October reiterated that the process for the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) of the residual force of Renamo, the largest opposition party in Mozambique, will be concluded by the end of this year and will be a major step towards lasting peace.

President Nyusi was speaking at Mozambican Heroes Square in Maputo during celebrations of the 30th anniversary of the General Peace Agreement. Signed in Rome on 04 October 1992 by the then head of state, Joaquim Chissano, and the late Renamo leader, Afonso Dhlakama, the Rome Agreement put an end to the 16-year conflict between the government and Renamo.

According to the President, “we have made progress in the DDR process, and so far we have demobilised over 4,000 former Renamo guerrillas out of a total of 5,221 registered”. He stressed that “we expect that by the end of this year we will be able to conclude the DDR process, which will be a milestone in the implementation of the Peace and National Reconciliation Agreement”.

He pointed out that constant communication between the government and Renamo has contributed to building mutual trust. In addition, “we have learned to live together and to respect differences. The agreements allowed Mozambicans to participate in electoral spaces. These actions contribute to building a Mozambican society eager to embrace development through the continuous promotion of peace”.

President Nyusi also called for the promotion of Mozambique's history to reach out to younger and future generations. “Our history of conflict and peace must be told because the people who made it are still alive. If it is not told, it risks being adulterated” said the President, who also praised the role of religious institutions in the promotion of peace and reconciliation among Mozambicans.

In addition, he expressed “gratitude to our cooperation partners who, with their invaluable support, have contributed to us achieving our goals in all sectors”.

Turning to the future, the President reaffirmed “our commitment to the country's development agenda. We extend our recognition and appreciation to those who, over the last three decades, have selflessly contributed to the promotion of peace and development of the country, on different fronts: social, political, economic, cultural, and sports, honouring our country with responsibility and sacrifice”.

Businessman kidnapped in Maputo

An armed gang of criminals in Maputo on 3 October kidnapped a businessman of Asian descent, according to the newssheet “O Pais”.

The kidnappers followed their victim to his destination where he was dragged into their car at gunpoint. Both the Mozambican Police and the National Criminal Investigation Service (SERNIC) have not yet made any public statement.

Mozambique needs \$9.5 billion to improve water and sanitation

The Mozambican government is working to mobilise US\$ 9.5 billion to improve the supply and management of water and sanitation systems, especially in rural areas. This would allow the country to meet the Sustainable Development Goal established by the United Nations “to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” by 2030.

Of this amount, \$4.1 billion is to be invested in improving water supply and sanitation and the remaining \$5.4 billion is for the management and maintenance of related infrastructure.

These figures were announced by Prime Minister Adriano Maleiane, on 23 September at a high-level roundtable on water supply, water management and sanitation held in New York.

The Prime Minister accepted that this is a huge sum of money but noted “I believe that using some financial institutions like the World Bank and other regional institutions we can get there, and I would like to mention some strategic partners such as the Netherlands”.

The Prime Minister guaranteed that the Mozambican government is doing its best to provide water to the population, particularly in rural areas. “If we go to the countryside we will see people benefiting from water and we have also trained them how to use water systems”, he said, stressing the need for maintenance to ensure better performance. “We are doing our best, and today women spend less time fetching water because we are bringing water closer to them”, said Maleiane.

Earlier this year, Minister of Public Works Carlos Mesquita expressed the government’s concerns during a ceremony in Maputo to mark World Water Day. In particular, he lamented “statistics show that 66 per cent of the population do not have any source of safe water. In urban areas, clean water reaches 83 per cent of the population, but in rural areas the figure is 53 per cent”.

EDM to invest over \$400 million on access to electricity

The publicly owned company Electricidade de Moçambique (EDM) is investing US\$413 million for the implementation of the second phase of the Energy for All programme to increase access to electricity service across the country as part of the target of universal energy access by 2030.

Speaking on Radio Mozambique on 5 October, EDM director of electrification and projects, Claudio Dambe, pointed out that “we are now launching tenders and we are working with the Confederation of Economic Associations (CTA) and the Chamber of Commerce to challenge Mozambique’s business community to participate”.

He noted that, since the tender specifications use World Bank guidelines, there is a need to build the capacity of the local business community so that they can compete on equal terms and participate in the country’s electrification process.

EDM invested US\$156 million in the programme’s first phase, which is scheduled to end by February when the equipment for the second phase is due to arrive.

Launched in 2020, Energy for All is made up of three components, namely the massification of new connections, the expansion of the electricity grid to administrative posts, and improvements to the quality of the service rendered to customers. In 2020, EDM connected 223,000 households to the national electricity grid and last year it connected a further 307,000. This year, the goal is to connect 320,000 households.

Government concerned over high rate of early pregnancies

Half of the girls in Mozambique aged between 15 and 19 are either pregnant or have had a child. According to the Health Ministry (MISAU), the leading cause of unwanted pregnancies is the low rate of adolescents and young girls of reproductive age who use a modern method of contraception, at around 14 per cent.

These figures were released in Maputo on 3 October by the Health Minister, Armindo Tiago, during events marking World Contraception Day which this year was held under the theme “Family Planning is a Human Right”.

According to Tiago, “in Mozambique, early pregnancies are a serious problem. One in every two girls aged 15 to 19 is a mother or pregnant for the first time”. He added that “the majority of pregnant adolescents are unaware of the psychosocial consequences of early pregnancies such as the high risk of dropping out of school”.

According to the Minister, early pregnancies are often associated with obstetric fistula or even death. He pointed out that “the negative consequences of early pregnancy for the girl, her baby, her family, and society are high. Obstetric fistula occurs most frequently among girls at the age of 14 to 24 years”.

The Minister added that “the younger the girl, the greater the chances for premature births and the greater the risks of premature babies”.

The minister stressed that the government is implementing a wide range of initiatives, particularly with the dissemination of family planning. “As the government, we have been accelerating interventions aimed at responding to the needs of the people. Family planning and contraception are clear examples of these interventions”.

For his part, the Sexual and Reproductive Health Programme Officer at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Amir Modan, lamented that the contraceptive prevalence rate in Mozambique is around 35 per cent, which is much lower than in neighbouring countries. “Compared with the prevalence of family planning of around 60 per cent in neighbouring countries, we need to make a huge effort to take services to the community level, especially to young people. Access to services has to improve greatly and the type of information given according to the age group is also very important”, he declared.

Mozambique holds aquaculture census

The Mozambican government and its partners are investing US\$2.2 million on an Artisanal Fisheries and Aquaculture Census (CEPAA), to update and improve existing statistics.

The Census, officially launched on 3 October, will be carried out nationwide over forty days and will pave the way for better planning and design of strategies to boost Mozambique's development.

Speaking in Ka Tembe municipal district, in Maputo, the Minister for the Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries, Lidia Cardoso, said that a wide range of activities will be undertaken, including training census takers on data collection and the purchase of electronic equipment such as tablets and smartphones.

Cardoso recalled that the last Census of Artisanal Fisheries was conducted ten years ago. Hence, it is outdated as in recent years new players have entered the sector. In addition, this will be the first time that the country has carried out an aquaculture census.

She stressed that "fisheries and aquaculture are priority activities for the government, so our concern is quite naturally to know how we are doing - taking into account that the last census was undertaken ten years ago. We need this data for better planning using statistical data that is as close to reality as possible" she stressed.

Poacher sentenced to 30 years imprisonment

The Judicial Court of Maputo Province on 28 September sentenced Vusi Geraldo Mucavele to 30 years imprisonment.

According to a press release from the National Administration of Conservation Areas (ANAC), 22-year-old Mucavele was convicted of poaching and having made several incursions to slaughter wild animals, mainly rhinos, for the extraction and trafficking of horns.

According to the ANAC, Mucavele was arrested in flagrante delicto at 10 p.m. on January 13 2022 while returning from poaching in the cross-border Lebombo region. He was caught in possession of a 375 calibre handgun, ammunition, and an axe for cutting rhino horns.

Between 2008 and 2022 poachers killed over 8,000 rhinos in the Great Limpopo Transfrontier Park which encompasses the Kruger National Park in South Africa, Zimbabwe's Gonarezhou National Park, the Limpopo National Park, and the Game Farms which are located in Mozambican territory along the border with the Kruger National Park, also known by the acronym GLC (Great Lebombo Conservancy). The area stretches from the south bank of the Elephant River in Massingir, Gaza province, to Ressano Garcia, Moamba district, Maputo province. This year, alone poachers have slaughtered over 107 rhinos.

The success in preventing and combating poaching in the GLC region (Lebombo Game Farms) results from the combined and coordinated action of the Protection

and Inspection Services of the National Administration of the Conservation Areas, Natural Resources and Environment Protection Police, the Provincial Command of PRM in Maputo, and the inspectors positioned within the wild farms.

They are working in coordination with the ANAC Regional Centre of Joint Operations and Inspection, located in Captine, Magude district, in the southern province of Maputo, from where they carry out joint operations against poaching.

The Public Prosecutor and the courts also play an important role in protecting biodiversity by improving the judicial processes and handing down heavy penalties to the perpetrators of crimes against the environment, especially poaching.

Bank of Mozambique raises interest rate

The Bank of Mozambique on 30 September increased its benchmark interest rate by 200 base points from 15.25 to 17.25 per cent.

According to a statement issued by the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee (CPMO) and signed by the governor of the Central Bank, "the decision aims to ensure the return to single-digit inflation in the medium term".

The Central Bank explains that this comes in a context of volatility in both energy and food prices in the international market which is expected to continue, fuelled by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine. This has the potential to trigger a spiral of sustained price increases at the domestic level, with the Bank warning that the "outlook points to a continued increase in the short term and a deceleration in the medium term".

In August, annual inflation accelerated to 12.1 per cent after 11.8 per cent in July. For the medium term, a return to single-digit inflation is foreseen, reflecting the effects of the increases in the interest rate and the continued stability of the metical.

The Bank warns that the risks and uncertainties associated with inflation projections remain high. On a domestic level, for instance, uncertainties prevail regarding the adjustment of prices of administered goods and their impact on the prices of other goods and services. Externally, uncertainties remain about the magnitude and persistence of the effects of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

On a positive note, the Central Bank states that forecasts for economic recovery in 2022 and 2023 are maintained, despite the prospects of slowing external demand. "These forecasts are supported by the implementation of energy projects in Inhambane and the Rovuma basin and by the beginning of liquefied gas exports, in a context of the implementation of the programme with the International Monetary Fund and the resumption of foreign aid from cooperation partners", explains the document.

Domestic public debt, excluding loan and lease agreements and overdue liabilities, stands at 263.1 billion meticais (US\$4.1 billion), an increase of 44.3 billion compared to December 2021.

eVisa to be available from end of October

Foreign nationals who wish to visit Mozambique for tourism, business, and investment will soon have their lives made easier with the adoption of a new platform, eVisa, which will be launched by the end of October.

eVisa is a Mozambican platform, built from scratch by the Government to improve competitiveness and boost the economy and tourism industry.

The announcement of the eVisa was made on 30 September by Deputy Finance Minister, Amilcar Tivane, during a meeting held at the Foreign Affairs Ministry on the implementation of the Economic Acceleration Stimulus Package.

The new platform, eVisa, will allow foreigners entering the country for tourism, business, and investment purposes to get online pre-approval for visas. It consists of a user-friendly graphical interface where the applicant enters all the required information and submits all the necessary documentation such as passport details, air ticket, and proof of accommodation.

Once completed the information and documentation is submitted to the National Migration Service (SENAMI) where it is processed. Within five days the applicant is informed if the application has been approved. If the request is approved, the applicant receives a digital pre-authorisation document to be presented to the SENAMI officer at the point of entry in Mozambique. After payment of the fee at the border post, SENAMI will issue the visa allowing entry into the country.

Gemfields auction raises \$4.2 million

The London-based mining company Gemfields on 27 September announced that it has raised US\$4.2 million from an auction of predominantly commercial-quality sapphire, corundum, and low-quality ruby. In total, 3.6 tonnes of material (18.1 million carats) were sold.

The gems were mined in the northern Mozambican district of Montepuez by Montepuez Ruby Mining Limitada (MRM), which is 75 per cent owned by Gemfields and 25 per cent by Mwiriti Limitada.

According to Adrian Banks, Gemfields' Managing Director of Product & Sales, "the buoyant conditions prevailing in the coloured gemstone market made this an excellent time to sell several years of accumulated MRM commercial-quality inventory".

He added, "we thank and congratulate the government of Mozambique and our partners at Mwiriti - both of whom attended the auction - on what are very healthy results for material of this quality".

Gemfields stressed that "the proceeds of this auction will be fully repatriated to MRM in Mozambique, with all royalties due to the government of the Republic of Mozambique being paid on the full sales prices achieved at the auction".

Montepuez Ruby Mining (MRM) holds a 25-year concession on an area of 340 square kilometres in Montepuez, in Cabo Delgado province. Since 2014, over US\$830 million have been raised from the auction of rubies and other gems from the mine.

Positive signs for Ncondezi Solar Project

The London-based company Ncondezi Energy announced on 29 September that the initial results of a feasibility study into its proposed integrated 300-megawatt solar power project in the western Mozambican province of Tete have found that sufficient sunlight is available with the first power possibly available to the electricity grid as early as 2024.

In a statement released through the London Stock Exchange, the company reveals that preliminary studies have confirmed a solar resource of 1,980 kWh/m² which it describes as "excellent irradiation results". It adds that "energy yield over 2,000kWh/kWp confirms top tier performance potential".

According to Chief Executive Officer, Hanno Pengilly, "initial results from the solar project study are very positive, confirming the project's excellent location for solar generation with no red flags identified".

He added, "with completion of the feasibility study on track for the end of October 2022 the next step will be to finalise the solar project concept, design, and financial model. These will confirm the target tariff offer for potential offtaker partners. Initial discussions with multiple potential offtaker partners have commenced and we believe we will be able to offer an attractive energy solution through speed of execution and competitive tariff pricing".

Ncondezi plans to connect the project to Mozambique's grid with customers also coming from the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP). It stresses that it "is focused on providing reliable and affordable energy to Mozambique to meet growing energy demands".

The company highlights its role in meeting the Mozambican government's energy strategy of providing universal electricity access by 2030, adding that "our projects would provide reliable and available power helping to close the infrastructure gap of the region and serving as a catalyst for economic development".

The Solar Project will be located within the Ncondezi mining concession 5967C which covers over 25,000 hectares in the districts of Moatize and Chiuta in Tete Province.

Mozambique and Tanzania to set up anti-terrorist police unit

Mozambique and Tanzania on 29 September agreed to establish a special police unit responsible for drawing up strategies to combat terrorism which has plagued the northern province of Cabo Delgado since 2017.

The decision was announced by Mozambique's Defence Minister, Cristovao Chume, in Maputo at the end of a ministerial meeting of the Mozambique-Tanzania Permanent Joint Commission on Defence and Security.

The commission met the week after the signing of a cooperation agreement on defence and security during the visit of Tanzanian President Suluhu Hassanto Mozambique.

Health Ministry most transparent public institution in Mozambique

The Health Ministry is the most transparent public institution in Mozambique for its provision of information, according to a report announced on 28 September by the Mozambican Chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA).

The report was released in Maputo to mark the International Day for Universal Access to Information (IDUAI).

According to the report, besides responding in a timely manner to requests for information, the Health Ministry also updates its website on a regular basis and is present on social networks, particularly Facebook.

MISA chairperson Jeremias Langa said that a survey covered 10 institutions and shows that the Health Ministry provides relevant and useful public information, especially regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, HIV/AIDS, and other diseases.

Speaking on behalf of the Mozambican government, the director of the Institute of Geographical Names of Mozambique, Jose Mahumane, said that universal access to information is a human right, is fundamental for development, and has a central role in empowering citizens. "It is a driving force for transparent, responsible, and effective governance and paves the way for freedom of expression, cultural and linguistic diversity, and participation in public life," he argued.

For the representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), Paulo Gomes, ensuring access to information is a top priority and is enshrined in the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique. He stressed that UNESCO will continue to support Mozambique's efforts to enforce this right broadly, to promote access to public information and knowledge, and empower citizens to build a better future.

Investors praise transparency of Mphanda Nkuwa project

Potential investors bidding for the development of the Mphanda Nkuwa hydroelectric project and transmission power lines in the central province of Tete have praised Mozambican authorities for the transparent tender to hire a strategic partner.

On 28 September, bidders were invited to visit the site where Mozambique is planning to build the second-largest hydroelectric in the country to check the environmental and physical conditions of the region.

The five-billion-dollar project is expected to produce energy to feed both the domestic market and the southern African region.

Ian Potgieter, a representative of the Globelec and Scatec consortium, said that transparency was encouraging potential shareholders to bid on the project, and he expects that his company will put forward the best offer. He pointed out that "we checked all the conditions on the ground and we saw that the project has legs. In fact, we were able to carry out a quick study to

check the quality of the rocks and other technical evaluations".

Marie de Montmarin, from Electricite de France (EDF), commented that the conditions are in place and that the Mphanda Nkuwa project will start within the scheduled time frame.

During the visit, technical teams accompanied potential investors to the site where the dam will be built to collect samples and carry out further technical studies.

The Mozambican government is represented in the Mphanda Nkuwa project by the publicly owned companies Hidroelectrica de Cahora Bassa and Electricidade de Moçambique.

Construction of the dam, with a capacity to generate 1,500 MW of power, will take seven years. Besides the dam, the project includes a 1,500 kilometres transmission line.

Raxio Group building first independent data storage centre

The Raxio Group has started building the first independent data storage centre in Mozambique. It will cost US\$20 million and is expected to be commissioned in the first quarter of next year.

On 29 September, the governor of the Maputo province Julio Parruque laid the first stone in Beluluane Industrial Park in the southern province of Maputo.

Speaking during the ceremony, Parruque stressed the importance of investments of that magnitude in Maputo province and added that the data centre will bring added value in terms of cyber security for the country.

He said that the industrial park in Beluluane is a clear example of the provincial government's vision of attracting new investments to promote economic and social development and create more job opportunities for young people.

For his part, Raxio Group chief executive Robert Mullins highlighted the role Raxio Mozambique will play in strengthening the country's digital backbone by providing a secure storage environment.

"We are pleased to inaugurate yet another facility, which demonstrates Raxio's commitment to serving the region's economy. Every day more and more Mozambicans are joining the internet and the number will continue to increase. That is why access to a reliable environment of this nature in Mozambique is more important than ever", he said.

He pointed out that the rapid increase in internet usage in Mozambique is shown by the number of users, which doubled from 15 per cent in 2015 to 32 per cent in 2021.

According to Mullins, the company is on track to complete several investments in data centres across Africa to meet the growing demand for international standard data centre infrastructures in the region.

The new data centre will support the country's digital growth by providing a reliable storage environment that will be operated by a team of skilled young Mozambicans.

Rabies kills 203 people over past five years

At least 203 people died over the past five years in Mozambique after being bitten by rabid dogs and other pets. This figure was made public on 28 September in the town of Chimoio, capital of the central province of Manica, by the inspector general of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Rui Mapatse, during an event to mark World Rabies Day.

According to Mapatse, 23 died of rabies last year and in the first half of this year another 18 people died.

The event also marked the launch of a vaccination campaign against rabies in dogs, cats, monkeys, and other pets which can transmit the viral disease.

Mapatse added that “the figures are worrying because the disease is still causing many deaths. It is important for owners of pets that can transmit the disease to assume more responsible behaviour. They also should know that unvaccinated pets place in danger the entire community”.

“Vaccinate your dog or other pets that can carry rabies at least once a year. We want to eradicate the disease by the year 2030”, urged Mapatse. He also called the population, especially pet owners, to join the vaccination campaigns to prevent human rabies and unnecessary deaths.

“This is an effort from the government to prevent rabies from becoming a major deadly illness within the community. This activity is taking place nationwide and some brigades have already been set up and will be deployed across the districts shortly. We have also set up fixed and mobile vaccination posts”, said the inspector-general.

He added that “more than vaccinating, we also need to keep an eye on our pets. Pet owners have to ensure they are in safe places and prevent them from leaving your homes and causing panic. They are pets, so we need to take care of them”.

Data from the World Organisation for Animal Health indicates that globally rabies is responsible for about 60,000 human deaths per year with dogs the source of infection in the vast majority of cases.

Rabies evolves over time and the symptoms change. There is a “furious phase” and then a “paralytic rabies” in which neurological symptoms are accentuated, such as difficulty swallowing, salivation, lack of limb coordination and even paralysis.

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