

Mozambique News Agency

AIM Reports

Report no.630, 11th April 2023



President calls for digital inclusion to empower women

President Filipe Nyusi on 7 April challenged the country to speed up the expansion of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), as an essential measure for digital inclusion, the promotion of gender equality, and the empowerment of women.

President Nyusi was speaking in Maputo, during a ceremony marking Mozambican Women's Day, taking place under the slogan “Digital Inclusion, Innovation and Technology for the Promotion of Gender Equality”.

President Nyusi stressed that “the Covid-19 pandemic showed how beneficial digital inclusion can be for the training and empowerment of populations, especially women and girls”. According to President Nyusi, despite the progress made in digital inclusion, which has increased the productivity and success of women in social, economic, academic and cultural areas, there are still a large number of women and girls without access to ICTs. The President cited data from the 2017 census, indicating that only 22.4 per cent of women and 30.8 per cent of men own a cell phone and 5.3 per cent of women and 10 per cent of men have access to the Internet. He added that “regarding the use of mobile financial services, only 9.5 per cent of women and 14.5 per cent of men have access”.

Women, he said, are engaged in institutions of power and decision-making, as well as professions that were once dominated by men, “but despite these advances, challenges persist in the field of digital inclusion”.

Speaking to reporters, former President Joaquim Chissano agreed with President Nyusi and declared that digital inclusion is an essential factor for women’s empowerment. “No one should be excluded from the digital reality”, he said. “We must make efforts so that we all develop, so that all women have access to technology”.

When questioned about the difficult access to the Internet in Mozambique, Chissano remarked “not even Rome was built in a single day. In a society, it takes the necessary time for things to happen”.

For her part, Nyelete Mondlane, the Minister of Gender, Children and Social Welfare, argued that

the main ingredient for women’s empowerment lies in the retention of girls at school, in an environment of dignified coexistence with the family and the community. “The family and the community should help girls remain in school until the final stage of their studies until they choose their professional destiny”, she said.

Police seize ten elephant tusks in Tete

Mozambique’s National Criminal Investigation Service (Sernic) on 31 March detained two individuals, in Zumbo district, in the western province of Tete, who were caught red-handed in the possession of ten elephant tusks that they were trying to sell.

The individuals were caught when it was found that five elephants had been killed in Magoé National Park (PNM).

According to Sernic spokesperson, Fernando Junior, cited in the Beira daily “Diário de Moçambique”, both men were seized when trying to negotiate the sale of the tusks. “Two other buyers succeeded in running away but the police are taking measures to find them so that they can be held accountable”, he said, adding that the men were caught, thanks to coordination with the National Administration of Conservation Areas (ANAC).

“The tusks weighed 25 kilos and the poachers intended to sell each of them for 3.500 meticaís (US\$55). These men were already wanted by the authorities because it is believed that they have been poachers for a long time”, Junior explained.

The case, he said, will be transferred to the Attorney-General’s Office for subsequent steps

The authorities seized 21 tusks, in November, in the Tete districts of Magoé, Cahora Bassa and Moatize.

Renamo insists on district elections in 2024

Mozambique's main opposition party, Renamo, has once again insisted that the first elections for district assemblies must be held in 2024. At a Maputo press conference on 10 April, the Renamo General Secretary, Clementina Bomba, dismissed an announcement by the government that it will set up a commission to reflect on the pertinence or otherwise of holding district elections.

This commission, said Bomba, was no more than an attempt by the ruling Frelimo Party to make the district elections impossible. "The ultimate aim of this commission is to legalise the decision already taken by the Frelimo Party to deny the district elections and override the Constitution itself", she declared. Bomba regarded this as a coup d'état against the democratic rule of law.

It was a scheme, she said, "which intends to alter the established legal order, and to radicalise the dictatorship and tyranny of the regime".

So far, the Commission only exists on paper. Nobody has yet been appointed to it, and Bomba's uncompromising approach makes it unlikely that anybody from the opposition will sit on it.

Bomba added that the main reason why the final military base of Renamo, in the central district of Gorongosa, has not been closed is "the lack of commitment of the government" to the agreements it had signed with Renamo.

She protested that the government is not yet paying pensions to demobilised Renamo fighters.

The election of district assemblies was included in the amendments to the Constitution passed in 2018, but was never seriously discussed at that time. There are 154 districts. Electing assemblies in all of them in 2024, at the same time as the elections for the President, the parliament and the provincial assemblies, would be a formidable task.

The Constitution merely states that the district elections shall be held in 2024. It does not explain what powers the district assemblies will have, and how these will be balanced against the existing municipal and provincial assemblies. It does not even state how many members each district assembly will have, much less how the assemblies will be financed.

Years were allowed to pass without any consideration of how district assemblies could operate. One possibility, aired on social media now, is that the elections might be held initially in only a few districts, starting with the districts with the greatest economic potential.

This was the gradualist approach followed when establishing the municipal assemblies in the 1990s.

Lack of decent roads hinders development

President Filipe Nyusi warned on 3 April that the lack of decent roads is a factor delaying the development of Africa. The President was speaking in Maputo at the opening of a meeting of the General Assembly of the African Roads Maintenance Fund Association (ARMFA), an event which brought together representatives of 35 national Roads Funds.

The absence of good roads leaves the continent in a situation of "atrophied development", said President Nyusi. The lack of a road network isolates people from the transport corridors, from links to the commercial centres, from access to education and health, as well as from growth opportunities.

"This situation derives from the precarious maintenance of the existing roads, due to the shortage of money for this purpose", said the President.

At a time when the continent is heading towards economic integration, through the creation of a free trade zone, President Nyusi regarded road transport as a sector that should facilitate that integration. He believed that trade should be based on robust and well-maintained road networks.

President Nyusi said that the network of classified roads in Mozambique covers over 30,000 kilometres, but only 27 per cent of this network is paved. 69 per cent of the roads are in "reasonable" condition, but the remaining 31 per cent of the roads are "bad, very bad or impassable".

President Nyusi stressed that those who use the roads should pay for them. The two main forms of payment were road tolls, and increased taxes on fuel, neither of which is popular with motorists.

The President said Mozambican fuel taxes provide US\$56 million for road maintenance a year, while road tolls bring in US\$12 million. This is not enough.

President Nyusi pointed out that fuel taxes have not been increased recently – in a period of high inflation, "this compromises the capacity of the National Road Fund to maintain the road network".

Indeed, rather than increase taxes, the government effectively reduced them. The government used to take 12 meticaís (about 19 US cents) from every litre of petrol or diesel sold. But President Nyusi noted that, rather than increase fuel prices, the government had reduced its tax take to just four meticaís per litre of fuel.

Mining companies contribute to local communities

Montepuez Ruby Mining (MRM) and Kagem Mining have contributed 537,625,000 meticaís (US\$8.4 million) to projects for local communities in Mozambique and Zambia. According to a statement released on 9 April, “the two companies have also contributed with over 23 billion meticaís (US\$359 million) in taxes, royalties and dividends to Mozambique and Zambia”.

This data, according to the document, was shared at the Mozambique-Zambia Business Forum, which took place in the central Mozambican city of Beira City, when President Filipe Nyusi and his Zambian counterpart Hakainde Hichilema visited the event.

“The data was shared with the Presidents when visiting the joint exhibition of Montepuez Ruby Mining (MRM) and Kagem Mining, in an event aimed at accelerating trade and investment between Mozambique and Zambia, strengthening the partnerships between the two countries”, the statement reads.

This event, the document stresses, “is unprecedented in that this is the first time that the president of a country, one of the world's largest producers of ruby (Mozambique), meets with the president of the country that is the world's largest producer of emeralds (Zambia), highlighting the relevance of the mining sector for both countries”.

Policeman among gold thieves

Four people, one of them a member of the Mozambican police force were detained on 3 April in the central province of Manica, accused of stealing two kilos of gold and 750,000 meticaís (US\$11,800) in cash.

The theft occurred on 1 April on the premises of a gold mining company. There were five alleged thieves: two informal gold miners, a supervisor of the mining company, and two policemen, one from the Rapid Intervention Unit (UIR – the Mozambican riot police), and one from the Frontier Guard. The latter evaded arrest, and is currently a fugitive.

Manica provincial police spokesperson, Mateus Mindu, confirmed the theft and the arrests. Speaking to AIM in the provincial capital, Chimoio, he said efforts are underway to capture the fifth member of the group. “Four of them have fallen into the hands of the police. The member of the Frontier Guard is a fugitive, but attempts are underway to neutralise him”, said Mindu.

The four members of the group arrested “were picked up on 3 April due to intelligence work undertaken by the police after receiving a denunciation”.

Mindu said the police involved in the theft would face both disciplinary and criminal proceedings. “They will all be taken to court to be held responsible for this crime”, he added.

Cholera spreads to Nacala

The current Mozambican cholera outbreak has now spread to the northern port of Nacala. On 6 April, the Nampula provincial health authorities declared a cholera outbreak in Nacala, with one death recorded. “Right now, there is a cholera outbreak in Nacala Port. We have 32 patients hospitalised”, the Nampula provincial chief doctor, Celma Xavier, told reporters.

Nampula province as a whole has recorded 157 cases of the disease in the past two weeks, and currently, the Nacala Port general hospital is receiving an average of 15 suspected cholera cases a day.

“Rapid response teams have been activated”, said Xavier, and tents have been erected on the hospital grounds, to act as cholera wards.

In addition to Nacala, the Nampula authorities are on the alert in the districts of Malema, Murrupula, Moma and Liupo due to the increase in cases of diarrhoea. It is not yet clear whether any of these cases have been caused by cholera.

According to the Ministry of Health, about 1.2 million people have been vaccinated against cholera in the central provinces of Zambezia, Manica and Sofala. This is around 100 per cent of the target figure for the vaccination campaign.

Since September 2022, 24,516 cases of cholera have been confirmed, of whom 111 have died. This is a lethality rate of 0.45 per cent.

The African Union’s Centre for Control and Prevention of Diseases (Africa CDC) on 6 April appealed for support from the international community to combat the cholera outbreaks in Mozambique and Malawi. The health situation in the two countries has deteriorated due to the impacts of tropical cyclone Freddy.

“The health and social infrastructures of Mozambique and Malawi have been damaged”, said the acting director of Africa CDC, Ahmed Ogwel, in an online press conference. “We are appealing to all those with the capacity to help to cooperate with these countries to restore normality”.

Attorney General bans housing project in mangrove area

The Mozambican Attorney General's Office (PGR) has banned the construction of a housing project on top of a mangrove area in the Costa do Sol neighbourhood, in Maputo city, according to the Centre for Public Integrity (CIP), an anti-corruption watchdog body.

According to a release from CIP, the PGR ordered Maputo Municipal Council to cancel a decision of June last year "which served as the basis for allocation of the construction of a housing project in the mangrove area of Costa do Sol, given that it is devoid of legal grounds and violates the principles of legality and justification of administrative acts".

The PGR's decision was communicated to CIP on 3 April, after CIP had denounced the project to build a luxury condominium, on the Costa do Sol mangroves. Despite the environmentally sensitive nature of mangrove forests, the project had been authorised by the Municipal Council and by the Ministry of Land and Environment.

The PGR also ordered the Municipal Council to revoke the Land Use Title (DUAT) granted to Top Logistica, SA, the company that was about to build the luxury condominium of 28 villas.

The attribution of a DUAT in ecologically sensitive areas is a violation, both of environmental legislation and the Maputo City PPU [Partial Urbanisation Plan of the coastal area], said the PGR. It stressed that "building houses in areas of environmental protection is prohibited".

According to the PGR, mangroves are qualified as sensitive ecosystem areas, owned by the State, which has the responsibility to ensure the adoption of measures for their protection.

CFM records US\$25.5 million in losses from cyclone Freddy

Mozambique's publicly owned Ports and Rail Company (CFM) has recorded losses of US\$25.5 million caused by cyclone Freddy. "The preliminary data indicate that, with the paralysis of the lines, the company had an accumulated loss, in infrastructures and equipment, in the central rail system, of US\$2.4 million and, in the southern system, of US\$6.1 million", according to CFM chairperson Agostinho Langa, speaking at a meeting in the northern city of Nampula.

The costs of lost business were much higher. According to Langa, "for not transporting cargoes in railways and ports, we had a total loss of US\$17 million". "We will have to make an additional

financial effort, and for this, human capital plays a preponderant role, not only in the replacement of the damaged equipment but also in ensuring the necessary regular maintenance, so that we reduce to zero the level of accidents and derailments", Langa said.

As for operational efficiency, the CFM Chairman revealed that, in 2022, the degree of achievement was 70 per cent of what was planned. That year was characterised by a return to normality after the Covid-19 pandemic, but also instability at all levels caused by the conflict in Ukraine.

"The economic and financial performance for 2022 was positive. The results, before taxes, were about 6.2 billion meticaís, (US\$97 million), against 9.6 billion meticaís budgeted. This was 64 per cent of what had been planned and a 29 per cent growth, compared to 2021", Langa said

"At the terminals under CFM management, some 13.2 million metric tonnes were handled in 2022, representing 23 per cent of the total handled in all the country's ports, equivalent to a six per cent growth compared to the same period in 2021", he stressed. According to Langa, CFM is continuing to subsidise the cost of passenger tickets by 85 per cent.

"Ninety passenger carriages, including five railcars for the southern and central systems, were acquired and inaugurated in August last year. Our perspective is to continue to look at this area with special attention, contributing to the mitigation of the problem of the lack of urban and interurban transport", he said.

80 kilos of drugs seized in Cabo Delgado

The Mozambican police in the northern province of Cabo Delgado on 30 March seized 80 kilogrammes of illicit drugs, according to a report in the newssheet "Mediafax". The seizure consisted of 42 kilos of cocaine, 32 kilos of amphetamine and four kilos of heroin.

The drugs were seized in Mecufi district. The police told reporters that the seizure resulted from three months of intelligence gathering, as part of the police plan to combat drug trafficking.

In addition to seizing the drugs, the police arrested a driver, a 38-year-old Mozambican man whose name has not yet been released, and who lives in the Cabo Delgado provincial capital, Pemba.

The police suspect that drug trafficking may be one of the sources of finance for the islamist terrorist groups who have been operating in Cabo Delgado since 2017.

Finland supports fight against child marriage

The Finnish government is disbursing nine million euros (US\$10 million) per year to finance activities to protect girls from child marriages in five Mozambican provinces. According to the Finnish ambassador to Mozambique, Anna Kaisa, speaking on 3 April in the central city of Chimoio, the programmes are underway in Manica, Zambezia, Niassa, Cabo Delgado and Nampula provinces.

Kaisa said the programme will contribute to retaining girls at school. "The situation of child marriage is very serious in Mozambique", she said. "Many girls marry and become mothers before they are 18 years old. Although there is a law against child and forced marriages, I think it is important to focus on the training of girls, as a way of fighting against poverty".

She stressed that the main commitment should be to believe in the training of girls so that they have a prosperous future, and this is an action that should be undertaken by all Mozambicans.

In April, regarded as "women's month", a team of five ambassadors are visiting the five provinces. "Our interest", said Kaisa, "is understanding how work is being done to ensure that girls stay at school. Finland is not working alone. There are four other countries involved, namely Sweden, Canada, Holland and the United Kingdom".

"The greatest difficulty is in remote areas where we are still recording many cases of child marriages", she added. "But, since our main goal is to discuss the rights of girls, we are working together with the community and religious leadership to make society aware of the danger of these practices. We cannot permit that we still have girls marrying before the age of 18".

The governor of Manica province, Francisca Tomas, told the meeting that the government is open to working with all countries interested in educating and empowering girls.

Many of the victims of child marriage, she said, are rescued and re-admitted to school. "In the schools, we have focal points, and teachers control the girls, making them aware of the importance of studying".

She added that the delivery of school uniforms and the distribution of bicycles to the girls form part of an initiative by the government and its partners to ensure that girls participate in the teaching and learning process.

Tomas believed that the rate of child marriage is falling, "and we think that, with the participation of everyone, in future, we will have a society free of child marriage".

Zambia pays its electricity bill

The chairperson of Mozambique's publicly owned electricity company, EDM, Marcelino Alberto, on 5 April announced that the Zambian government has paid off its debt of US\$22 million to EDM.

Alberto was speaking during a visit by Zambian President Hakainde Hichilema to the Maputo Thermal Power Station which is owned by EDM. This power station, inaugurated in 2018, is the largest investment in electricity generation for 30 years, and it can generate 106 megawatts of power.

Alberto said a project is on the drawing board envisaging the interconnection of the Mozambican and Zambian electricity grids. A viability study has been carried out, and measures are underway to mobilise the funds necessary. Alberto said the interconnection will require 376 kilometres of 400 kV transmission line. This will cost US\$411 million.

When the Zambian government stopped paying its accumulated electricity debt, in 2018 EDM halted all further supplies. Now that the debt has been paid, Alberto said, negotiations are underway for the resumption of electricity supplies. The debt had once stood at US\$75 million but Zambia had gradually paid off the other US\$53 million.

Japan donates air traffic equipment

The Japanese Government has donated equipment worth US\$22.5 million to improve air traffic control systems in Mozambique. The equipment will be allocated to the airports of Maputo, Beira, Nampula, Pemba and Mocimboa da Praia.

According to Mozambican Foreign Minister Veronica Macamo, the ground and air communication radios and air navigation and surveillance systems, among others, will be installed at Maputo and Beira international airports.

Macamo was speaking on 6 April in Maputo, moments after the signing of the Exchange of Notes between the Mozambican and Japanese Governments on the donation of air traffic equipment. Other Japanese equipment envisaged includes fire-fighting vehicles; generators and large-capacity electric current stabilisers; airport meteorological stations; and air traffic control simulators.

Alongside this donation, a training programme will also be implemented for operational personnel, namely air traffic controllers and maintenance staff.

Final Renamo base to close by end of April

The final military base of Mozambique's main opposition party, Renamo, will be closed by the end of April, according to Mirko Manzoni, the Special Envoy to Mozambique of United Nations Secretary General, Antonio Guterres.

The base, located in Gorongosa district, in the central province of Sofala, should have closed on 19 December, but Renamo refused to cooperate on the grounds that pensions had not been fixed for its former guerrillas. Renamo says that 350 guerrillas are stationed at the Gorongosa base. These are supposed to be the last members of what is politely referred to as Renamo's "residual force".

Dismantling the Gorongosa base will bring to an end the "Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration" (DDR) of the Renamo forces, under the peace agreement signed by President Filipe Nyusi and Renamo leader Ossufo Momade in August 2019. So far, 15 of the 16 bases declared by Renamo have been dismantled, and almost 5,000 former guerrillas have been demobilised.

Speaking to reporters, at United Nations headquarters in New York, where he took part in sessions of the Security Council chaired by President Nyusi, Manzoni said that all remaining agreements concerning the DDR should be achieved.

Cited by Radio Mozambique, Manzoni said "I will return to Mozambique next week, and I shall speak with the parties. I think we shan't have any problems and we shall close the base by the end of April". He guaranteed that all the conditions for the pacification of the country had now been met.

The obvious stumbling block is the payment of pensions to thousands of former Renamo fighters. It is not clear where the money for the pensions will come from. Most pension schemes, in Mozambique and elsewhere, depend on the beneficiaries paying contributions over their working lives. But men who spent years, or decades, in the bush fighting to overthrow the government, have not paid any contributions.

Nonetheless, at a press conference in New York, President Nyusi stated that the scheme for paying the pensions is sustainable. He recognised that it is "an exceptional model", but believed it was necessary to safeguard peace and national reconciliation and to strengthen democracy.

The President added that the government is open to implementing other initiatives to reintegrate into society the former guerrillas and their dependents.

World Bank loan for access to finance and economic opportunities

The Board of Directors of the World Bank on 31 March approved a US\$300 million loan for the Mozambique Access to Finance and Economic Opportunities project. The project will last for six years (2023-2029) and is financed by the International Development Association (IDA), the branch of the World Bank Group that provides grants and low to zero-interest loans for projects and programmes in the world's poorest countries that are intended to boost economic growth, reduce poverty, and improve poor people's lives.

According to a World Bank press release, the project directly supports the Mozambican government's reform initiative, the Package of Economic Acceleration Measures - PAE.

This includes the creation of a national Credit Guarantee Fund, the purpose of which, according to the release, is "to help mobilise liquidity in the banking system and unlock financing to small and medium enterprises, including women-owned firms and those operating in regions or sectors vulnerable to climatic shocks. It will also increase economic opportunities by deepening business environment reforms, expanding market access, and providing training and financing".

The project is expected to create over 26,000 new jobs over six years. According to the World Bank, it will also "promote financial inclusion by linking members of informal savings groups with formal financial institutions to promote sound resource management and resilience to shocks, particularly for women-owned or led businesses". "Generating enough jobs, particularly green and productive jobs", the release continues "is a critical challenge for Mozambique. To keep pace with the country's young and rapidly growing population, estimated to reach 50 million by 2040, the economy must create 500,000 jobs every year – 20 times the 25,000 formal jobs currently created annually".

"The innovative approach to combining private and financial sector development interventions aims to address key constraints limiting financing for SMEs in Mozambique and mobilise private capital through the creation of a national Credit Guarantee Fund, which the Ministry of Economy and Finance will establish," said Julian Casal, World Bank Senior Financial Sector Economist for Mozambique.

The Credit Guarantee Fund, the release adds, will open lines of credit to complement the credit guarantees from private capital and matched savings programmes.

USAID grants US\$75 million to improve nutrition in Zambezia

The United States government, through its Agency for International Development (USAID), will disburse US\$75 million over the next five years to support actions aimed at reducing malnutrition in six districts of the central province of Zambezia.

The support is part of a programme called Okhokelamo ni Solho (Resilient Nutrition, in the Elomwe language), aiming to combat chronic child malnutrition.

According to a document unveiled on 22 March, malnutrition in early childhood hampers development throughout life, and the rural regions of Zambezia have particularly high indicators. 45 per cent of children under five are stunted and 77 per cent are anaemic.

The Okhokelamo ni Solho activities focus on the nutritional needs of mothers, children, and girls, and will involve community leaders, in coordination with government health services. As additional support, the program will distribute nutrient-rich food products to needy families during the rainy season, when food diversity is markedly lower.

“Tropical Cyclone Freddy, which this March also hit Zambezia, proves the need for resilient and prepared communities in the districts participating in Okhokelamo. To maximise its impact on resilience, the activity is designed to work closely with other USAID food and nutrition-related activities focused on Zambezia as part of the Feed the Future (FTF) initiative”, reads the document.

The promotion of maternal and child nutrition is said to be a critical component of broader US government assistance in Mozambique.

The document states that, in close collaboration with the Mozambican government, the US provides more than US\$700 million annually to improve the quality of education and health care, as well as to promote economic prosperity, and support the overall development of the nation.

World Bank promises US\$250 million for urban water security

The World Bank has reaffirmed its commitment to support water supply in Mozambique, according to the Minister of Public Works, Carlos Mesquita, after a visit to World Bank headquarters in Washington.

Cited in the newssheet “Mediafax” on 23 March, Mesquita said that a Project for Urban Water Security is being finalised. It will increase access to water and improve the capacity to provide water

services in selected cities in southern Mozambique. The project has an overall cost of US\$250 million.

Mesquita met with the World Bank’s Vice President for Eastern and Southern Africa, Victoria Kwakwa, and other senior bank staff, with whom he discussed the current stage of World Bank operations in his sector.

According to sources on Mesquita’s delegation, the Minister appealed to the Bank’s leadership “to be more flexible and to ponder some of its decisions which to some extent end up delaying project implementation”. He urged continued World Bank support in financing water supply and storage infrastructures.

Mesquita also attended the United Nations Summit on Water. The UN has warned of worsening shortages of drinking water across the globe, linked to climate change which has boosted the frequency and severity of extreme weather events.

The international NGO WaterAid has warned of a likely increase in water-borne diseases, including cholera. “A perfect storm of climate change, conflicts and financial crises, together with migrations, has created an unprecedented global cholera crisis”, WaterAid said. The deteriorating situation “is provoking outbreaks on a large scale in countries which, for many years, had been free of this highly contagious disease”.

Beira general hospital receives equipment

The construction of Beira General Hospital, in the central province of Sofala, budgeted at €27.6 million, is concluded and it has started to receive equipment. “The first batch of equipment is already in the city. We are waiting for the second one to be received in the current quarter”, revealed Ermelinda Maquenze, the Spokesperson of the Sofala State Representation Council, cited in the daily newspaper “Noticias” on 4 April.

According to Maquenze, the equipment for imaging and the stomatology laboratory is on the way. “The health sector has been making efforts to bring more equipment to Beira General Hospital”, she said, adding that the hospital will almost have the services of a second-level hospital, equivalent to a district hospital.

Beira General Hospital occupies 1,500 square metres. It has two floors and will have 290 beds, three operation theatres, physiotherapy, maternity and intensive care facilities, and a laboratory for urgent services. The General Hospital should relieve the pressure on Beira Central Hospital, the largest health unit in central Mozambique.

President Nyusi proposes greater cooperation between Security Council and African Union

President Filipe Nyusi believes that greater coordination between the United Nations Security Council and the African Union can help control the spread of terrorism in Africa and the Middle East.

The President was speaking on 28 March at the United Nations headquarters in New York, where he was chairing a high-level debate on the theme “Threats to International Peace and Security, Caused by Terrorist Acts: Combating Terrorism and Preventing Violent Extremism”.

“The Republic of Mozambique would like to propose the revision of the project to be debated in July 2023, and to establish instruments for the prevention of terrorism, including the creation of a fund that can be translated into the promotion of jobs in Africa and the Middle East”, he said.

According to President Nyusi, greater cooperation among regional groups in the world can also help curb the spread of extremist groups. “The approach should include interventions and socio-economic security dimensions and other factors that lead us to the real causes of attacks by terrorist networks”, he said. The President thought it necessary to disclose the “modus operandi” of terrorists so that regional blocks can defend themselves in the best possible way.

President Nyusi said that the rise in terrorist attacks in developing countries, including Mozambique, reduces economic growth, making them more vulnerable, a fact exacerbated by climate change.

“We had a United Nations study which says that about 54 per cent of the population around the world is currently facing terrorism and climate change”, he said, launching an appeal for more international support for Mozambique, which, since October 2017, has been a victim of terrorist attacks, in the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

Mozambique, he stressed, continues fighting terrorism with positive results thanks to the support of partners, including the SADC Military Mission to Mozambique (SAMIM) and the Rwandan Defence Force.

“We make our appeal for more support to Mozambique and these countries so that terrorism is eradicated in our country and the region”, he said.

Post-cyclone reconstruction/ Beira needs US\$450 million to mitigate erosion

The central city of Beira needs US\$450 million to mitigate devastating erosion, in the context of Post

Cyclone Reconstruction. The cyclone in question, Idai, left a trail of destruction across Beira in March 2019.

“The erosion is generating a great problem in the coastal zone of Beira and a lot of people fear that waters from the sea, in the near future, may invade the city”, said the Beira city Councillor for Construction and Urbanisation, Augusto Manhoca, cited in the daily newspaper “Noticias” on 29 March.

According to Manhoca, “the city is not sufficiently prepared to face extreme events. We learned from Cyclone Idai that the power of nature cannot be underestimated. We must create a great capacity for resilience in our infrastructures”.

“As an emergency measure, the German Development Bank has disbursed €1 million to pave Mateus Sansao Muthemba Avenue, in the coastal zone”, he said.

The Councillor also revealed that construction work of the coastal protection and drainage system, budgeted at US\$60 million, will soon be carried out.

“The project is funded by the World Bank and the German and Dutch governments. With the drainage system, the storm waters will be drained rapidly”, Manhoca explained.

Gaza to vaccinate over 500,000 cattle against anthrax

The agricultural authorities in the southern province of Gaza intend to vaccinate over 500,000 head of cattle against anthrax between April and July.

To achieve the goal, according to Sergio Maneno, head of the livestock department at the Gaza provincial Directorate of Agriculture and Fisheries, the sector foresees an investment of about 1.5 million meticais (US\$23,500). “The amount will be used to acquire fridges and fuel to keep the vaccines, payment of technicians, as well as other expenditures”, Maneno said, adding that “the team is ready to carry out the work and we hope that, by 13 April, the campaign may start in all districts”.

The authorities have already made available 543.852 doses of vaccine, corresponding to the same number of cattle to be covered by the campaign. “We have enough vaccines to start the vaccination”, Maneno said, cited in the Beira daily “Diario de Moçambique” on 30 March, calling on livestock farmers to take their cattle to the vaccination posts to contribute positively to public health.

Thousands bid a final farewell to Pascoal Mocumbi

Thousands of Mozambicans on 28 March bid their final farewell to former Prime Minister Pascoal Mocumbi who died on 25 March after a lengthy illness. The Chairperson of the Mozambican parliament, the Assembly of the Republic, Esperanca Bias, representing President Filipe Nyusi, who was on official business in the United States, gave the funeral eulogy, stressing his legacy in the areas of health, research, and diplomacy.

“Mozambique has lost one of its best sons, a patriot who was dedicated to the cause of Mozambique and its people”, said Bias.

Addressing the mourners at Maputo City Hall, she said Mocumbi was “a teacher and an educator for his leadership cadres and collaborators, and contributed to their training and professional capacity building so that they might better serve the country”. Bias stressed that in all the sectors and institutions where he had worked, Mocumbi distinguished himself by “an unparalleled and transparent leadership, oriented towards results, and always putting first the interests of Mozambique”. “All that is left is for us to say – thank you!”, she exclaimed. “We embrace your legacy as a guiding light, showing us the path to follow”.

Mocumbi’s close friend, former President Joaquim Chissano, told the mourners that he had lost, not only a colleague and a companion, but also a brother. Chissano recalled that he had first met Mocumbi in 1952, in Maputo (then known by its colonial name of Lourenco Marques) and since then their paths were always entwined.

They had been together in the foundation, in 1962, of the Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo), and in all the subsequent developments in the liberation of the country from colonial rule.

“But on this journey, you are beginning today, we cannot accompany you”, said Chissano, “but we know that you will always be in contact with us, and we want to be in contact with you”.

The Frelimo General Secretary, Roque Silva, said “you have left, but the singularity of your virtues will remain engraved on our memories and in our hearts. We, your comrades in struggle, at this moment of final farewell, want to assure you that we shall always keep alive the values and principles you always defended, principles centred on the struggle for the well-being of all”

“With you, we learnt the meaning of the national cause, and of the highest interests of the people and the nation”, declared Silva.

Mozambique submits first assessment report to exit the “grey list”

Mozambique has just submitted its first assessment report to the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), as part of the steps the country is taking to leave the “grey list”, according to a source at the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF).

The FATF is an entity that promotes international policies to combat money laundering and the financing of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The country was placed on the FATF's Grey List on October 21 last year for an observation period of two years (2022-2024) by the International Cooperation and Review Group (ICRG), an entity that brings together experts who monitor the progress of countries in matters related to money laundering and terrorist financing, and within this process, Mozambique is required to report within an established plan.

According to the source, cited in the daily newspaper “Noticias” on 20 March, the ICRG will produce its assessment of Mozambique's performance since the country was placed under surveillance by the FATF in October last year.

To leave the grey list, Mozambique will have to carry out by 2024 a national risk assessment for non-governmental organisations, install a system for the identification of the beneficial owner, and develop national and international cooperation actions regarding money laundering, and counter-terrorism.

The United States, the European Union, and the World Bank are supporting Mozambique’s efforts to have its name removed from the list in the next two years.

National partners have also been suggesting to the relevant bodies, notably the Bank of Mozambique, the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MEF), and the Justice Ministry, to analyse the role of the judiciary in preventing and combating the phenomenon.

Similarly, they also suggest analysing the role of non-financial institutions and the application of sanctions.

2.4 million people living with HIV

The number of people living with HIV in Mozambique rose from 2.2 to 2.4 million between 2021 and 2022, according to Deputy Health Minister Ilesh Jani.

Presenting the latest data on HIV and AIDS on 16 March in Maputo, at a national meeting of the Programme to Control Sexually Transmitted Infections, Jani said at least 266 people are infected by HIV every day (230 adults and 36 children).

“Prevention must continue to be our main priority”, stressed Jani. “One of the challenges in preventive actions, which needs more effective responses and without taboos, concerns increased geographical coverage of interventions to identify and offer a package of prevention to key population groups, taking into consideration the social and structural barriers they face”.

Self-testing, recently introduced in Mozambique, is one of the strategies that should be used, he said, “since it can increase awareness of one’s HIV status”.

The vast majority of HIV-positive Mozambicans are undergoing treatment. Jani said that more than 96 per cent of them are receiving the life-prolonging anti-retroviral therapy, compared with 74 per cent in 2021.

Despite these advances, stigma and discrimination are continuing to block access to treatment.

“The Mozambican government”, said Jani, “believes that people living with HIV have the same rights as anybody else, and it is unacceptable that they should be discriminated against”.

“Our behaviour as health professionals should mirror our commitment to zero discrimination”, he declared.

Mozambique eliminating physical rail borders

Mozambique is working to remove physical frontiers in rail transport with Malawi and Zimbabwe, as one of the strategies found for reducing transit time in the country’s rail corridors. According to Deputy Transport Minister Amilton Alissone, the measure seeks to simplify procedures to make Nacala and Beira Corridors more competitive.

The Nacala Corridor links the northern Mozambican port of Nacala to Malawi, while the Beira Corridor runs from the port of Beira to Zimbabwe.

Alissone was speaking on 31 March in the Malawian city of Lilongwe at the end of a tripartite meeting between Mozambique, Malawi and Zambia, which discussed the development of the Nacala Corridor.

The Mozambican government’s desire to eliminate the rail borders with Malawi and Zimbabwe follows the removal of the physical rail borders with South Africa on 1 July last year and with Eswatini on 8 August.

Under the agreement with South Africa, the trains operated by the Mozambican rail company CFM, and by its South African counterpart Transnet Freight Rail (TFR), cross the border at Ressano Garcia without restrictions and without the need to change locomotives.

Under the same agreement, the Maputo Corridor, in an initial phase, now handles 21 trains of chrome and ferrochrome a week, compared with the previous 15 trains a week.

With Eswatini, the rail border was removed for the transport of goods along the Goba line which links the two countries. Direct trains to and from the port of Maputo are now circulating, operated by CFM and Eswatini Railways.

The two rail companies hope to double, from two to four, the number of daily coal trains using the Goba line. The amount of coal carried along the line will increase from 3,600 to 7,200 tonnes a day.
