

# Mozambique News Agency

## AIM Reports

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## President Nyusi calls for promotion of African history

President Filipe Nyusi on 18 May in the Zimbabwean capital of Harare challenged African leaders to join efforts in order to keep the history and culture of Africa alive for the benefit of future generations, especially by promoting the legacy of national heroes.

The President argued that the liberation struggles of African countries should serve as a memory for current and future generations to know their origins and history.

Mozambique's first President Samora Machel "believed that the struggle of the people of Zimbabwe was also the struggle of the Mozambicans", said President Nyusi. "Therefore, the victory of Zimbabwe is the victory of Mozambique; above all, it is the victory of Africa and militant internationalism. To honour Samora Machel is also to exalt the memory of Mozambicans who fought on Zimbabwean soil, side by side with their brothers for the liberation of this country".

President Nyusi was speaking, during the ceremony of laying the first stone for the construction of a monument in honour of Samora Machel. The monument, he added, "will also exalt the Zimbabwean citizens who fought in Mozambique, defending our sovereignty during the war of aggression and destabilisation, imposed by the racist regimes of Rhodesia and Apartheid".

At the ceremony, the Mozambican President thanked Zimbabwe for welcoming the African Union project for the construction of an African Liberation Museum, to be built in Harare. President Nyusi said that the African Liberation Museum will be the convergence point of Africa's history.

"This is an institution that belongs to all African countries, and that aims to be the guardian and the witness of the liberation struggles of the people of our continent", he continued. "The African Liberation Museum should be the mirror and reflection of our history with much suffering, resilience, sacrifice, heroism, and victories told by the Africans themselves".

President Nyusi, who also addressed the Mozambique-Zimbabwe Business Forum, acknowledged that there is still a certain slowness in the increase of trade between the two countries. "Nothing justifies the fact that products available in Zimbabwe or Mozambique are surpassed by imports from distant countries and it is in this sense that we are relying on actions to improve infrastructures that facilitate more investment and mobility of goods and people", he said.

As part of his three-day state visit, President Nyusi also held a meeting with the Mozambican community living in Zimbabwe.

### Exports to Zimbabwe rise to US\$200 million

Mozambican exports to Zimbabwe reached US\$200 million in 2022, which was a growth of 342 per cent when compared with the figure for 2016, President Filipe Nyusi announced on 18 May.

Speaking in Harare, at a Mozambique-Zimbabwe Business Forum, President Nyusi said that the balance of trade between the two countries last year was US\$165 million in Mozambique's favour.

As for Zimbabwean investment in Mozambique, between 2013 and 2022, this amounted to US\$146 million, including in industry, aquaculture, tourism, and agro-processing.

"As may be concluded, we are still doing very little", said President Nyusi. "There is plenty of room to increase our commercial transactions. There is no reason why products available in Zimbabwe or Mozambique should be surpassed by products imported from distant countries". Hence the Mozambican government, he added, has been working on improving the infrastructures that facilitate investment and the mobility of people and goods.

As an example, President Nyusi cited the investment of US\$200 million in rail and port complexes, notably the rehabilitation of the 317-kilometre railway line from the central Mozambican port of Beira to Zimbabwe.

There have also been substantial investments in the port of Maputo. As a result, the Limpopo line, connecting Maputo to Zimbabwe, handled 368,846 tonnes of goods last year, which is an increase of 33 per cent on the 2021 figure. "We intend to put the country in a better position to serve Zimbabwe and the other countries of our region", said President Nyusi.

President Nyusi stressed that the world is going through a phase of energy transition in which strategic resources such as lithium and graphite, present in Mozambique and Zimbabwe, offer opportunities for producing materials of high industrial value. The production of batteries, he added, will require a reflection by business people in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on the creation of value chains which allow the transformation of raw materials in both Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

## **CNE confirms suspension of Beira STAE director**

Mozambique's National Elections Commission (CNE) on 19 May confirmed that it has suspended the director of its executive body, STAE (Electoral Administration Technical Secretariat), in the central city of Beira.

This decision was taken at a CNE meeting in Maputo on 17 May, but it was not immediately published. So on 18 May the STAE Director, Nelson Carlos do Rosario, appeared before television cameras as if nothing had happened. The news broadcast on the television station STV, even denied the suspension, attributing the story to Mozambican social media.

In fact, it was the Centre for Public Integrity (CIP) which first broke the story which was swiftly picked up by several media organisations. To check the story, AIM phoned a member of the CNE who confirmed that Rosario had indeed been suspended, even though the decision had not yet been published.

Any remaining doubt should have been removed when on 19 May the CNE issued a release which confirmed the "preventive suspension" of Rosario. It also suspended from their duties all the supervisors in the Beira voter registration posts.

According to CIP, this followed the discovery of a WhatsApp group, created by Rosario, with the purpose of benefitting the ruling Frelimo Party and damaging the opposition parties.

The CNE communique said the Commission "has followed, with great concern, anomalous situations, not envisaged in the law on voter registration, and reported through the media". The CNE took measures to ascertain the truth of the reports – and then suspended Rosario and all the supervisors.

CIP had access to the illicit WhatsApp group and published several of the compromising messages. These messages showed that the first measure to block voters from the opposition was taken on 25 April, when Rosario instructed the supervisors to reject complaints from the monitors of the opposition parties stationed at the registration posts.

"Do not sign or accept the complaints from the monitors. We cannot facilitate them", he wrote. The instruction from Rosario was to make it as difficult as possible to register those whom he called "the enemy". "The mission", according to Rosario "is to knock out the enemy".

"Strike hard at the enemy were the words of our chief, our general staff. Today we are applying them", commented one of the supervisors, Gito Tomas Nhanombe, who urged his colleagues to block registration by those he called "monkeys".

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This is a condensed version of the AIM daily news service - for details contact [pfauvet@live.com](mailto:pfauvet@live.com)

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## **US concerned with anchorage of sanctioned Russian ship**

The United States considers "worrying" the fact that a Russian ship under sanctions from Washington docked in January in the central Mozambican port of Beira.

The cargo ship in question is the "Lady R", which, according to the US ambassador in South Africa, Reuben Brigety, had loaded arms and ammunition at the Simon's Town Naval Base near Cape Town, before making its way back to Russia.

According to the Portuguese news agency Lusa, citing a US embassy spokesperson in Maputo, the concern was also addressed to the Mozambican government.

Mozambique has taken a position of neutrality towards the Russian invasion of Ukraine, abstaining in votes condemning Russia at the United Nations and calling for dialogue to end the conflict.

"Before the beginning of Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine, the United States and partners have worked with governments around the world to restrict Russia's access to anything that supports its military", the US source added.

Following Brigity's comments, South African President Cyril Ramaphosa said that an investigation had already been launched (with help from US intelligence services) into the visit of the 'Lady R' in December, adding that his government had no evidence of any arms sales.

According to Associated Press (AP), "The Lady R freighter is linked to a company that has been sanctioned by the United States for having previously transported arms to the Russian government and aiding in its war effort.

## **11 missing after shipwreck in Zambezia**

Eleven people are missing after a shipwreck that occurred on 14 May on the Shire River, in the central province of Zambezia.

The boat was carrying over thirty illegal immigrants coming from N'sange, in neighbouring Malawi. They intended to enter Zambezia's Morrumbala district, with the final goal of reaching South Africa.

According to eyewitnesses, the boat hit a hippopotamus and the passengers fell into the river. "This is not the first time that this type of accident has occurred. There are always boats carrying illegal immigrants", said the witnesses.

For his part, Joao Nhabessa, the Morrumbala district administrator, said that the search for the bodies is still underway. "There are always boats crossing the Shire River, but sometimes they do not obey security regulations, and, they become overcrowded", the administrator acknowledged.

He added that the river is frequently used by illegal immigrants of various nationalities coming from Malawi, despite the surveillance by the Mozambican police.

## IMF expects 8 per cent growth in 2024

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects Mozambican economic growth of around eight per cent for 2024, strongly influenced by the production of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG).

These hopes build on growth of 4.5 per cent in 2022 and expected growth of five per cent in 2023, which is higher than the regional average of 3.5 per cent over the last two years.

The data was unveiled in Maputo, by the IMF representative in Mozambique, Alexis Meyer, during the Economic and Financial Forum, an event that aimed to reflect on the prospects for investment and financing the economy.

“For 2024, we project in our base plan an eight per cent growth, influenced by the liquefied natural gas that has started to flow. Even with the various shocks such as natural disasters that have cyclically plagued the country, the good outlook remains”, Meyer said.

According to the IMF, the medium and long-term outlook is for higher growth in the country compared to the regional average and should peak in 2027 and 2028 with growth accelerating to above ten per cent.

The growth is due to the start of natural gas exploration through TotalEnergies' Mozambique LNG project and the development of ExxonMobil's project, both in the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

But there is no certainty about either of these projects. TotalEnergies declared “force majeure” in 2021, after a major terrorist attack against the town of Palma, and pulled out all its staff. Although the security situation in Palma and the neighbouring district of Mocimboa da Praia has greatly improved, there is still no firm date for a resumption of its LNG project. As for ExxonMobil, it has yet to take a Final Investment Decision on its project.

The IMF warns that the medium and long-term outlook indicates that the economy may face challenges due to high public expenditure. It, therefore, urges the government to work to ensure fiscal sustainability. “Only a sustainable fiscal policy will allow good levels of growth to be achieved”, Meyer said.

He also warned of Mozambique's high levels of public debt, arguing that it is urgent “to consolidate public finances to achieve stability”.

For her part, the Deputy Minister of Economy and Finance, Carla Louveira, acknowledged that in the last five years, the national economy has suffered endogenous and exogenous shocks due to natural disasters, the Covid-19 pandemic, terrorism in Cabo Delgado, and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

“Economic growth in 2023 has been revised upwards to seven per cent reflecting the new assumptions on the production capacity of the Coral South LNG Project - South Coral”, she said, referring to the floating LNG platform off the coast of Cabo Delgado, operated by the Italian energy company, ENI. This growth projection is much higher than the IMF's forecast.

## Global Fund to disburse US\$770 million

The Global Fund will disburse US\$770 million for the fight against AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria in Mozambique. The executive director of the Global Fund, Peter Sands, told reporters on 16 May, in Maputo, that although the country continues to make progress in the fight against the three diseases, very high infection rates still persist. “We have US\$770 million for the next three years and we will probably have much more than that because we will have additional funds that may be available during this period”, he said.

“There is progress against the diseases mentioned but there is still a lot of work to be done. Today, Mozambique has the second-largest population of HIV-positive people in the world. It is the third country with the highest number of malaria cases and is in the top 10 for tuberculosis cases”, he added.

The Global Fund makes, in each three-year cycle, an investment to combat these three diseases and the next cycle will benefit Mozambique starting in January 2024.

In addition to the amount mentioned, the Global Fund has a million dollars available to support the Mozambican government in the fight against malaria, cases of which have shown an increasing trend in recent months, after the passage of tropical cyclone Freddy.

The Global Fund guarantees that, together with its partners, it maintains its commitment to work with Mozambique and believes that the country will continue to register significant progress against these diseases and develop mechanisms to benefit all Mozambicans.

## HIV/Syphilis community surveillance underway

The National Health Institute (INS), through the Polana Canico Health Centre (CISPOC), is carrying out HIV/Syphilis community surveillance in Maputo suburbs. The campaign is currently taking place in the Polana Canico neighbourhood, on the outskirts of the city, to respond to a growing demand for evidence related to HIV social and behavioural determinants.

According to Americo Jose, general coordinator of the surveillance study, the phase of counselling and HIV/syphilis testing will cover a total of 2,444 people aged between 15 and 59 years. He stated “The surveillance determines the specific causes of mortality, as well as caring for HIV-positive patients, and the prevention of HIV. It also collects data on risky behaviours and cultural practices related to HIV/syphilis, including high-risk factors that can lead to morbidity and death”.

In addition to testing, the researchers also advise HIV-positive people to take up Antiretroviral Treatment in the Maputo health facilities that offer this treatment.

HDSS Polana Canico is being carried out in partnership with the Ministry of Health, the Centre for Disease Control (CDC), the US President's Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), Mozambique's National Statistics Institute (INE), and the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI/CDC).

## President Nyusi and Momade discuss conclusion of DDR

President Filipe Nyusi on 16 May in Maputo received Ossufo Momade, leader of the main opposition party, Renamo, and the two men agreed that all is ready to conclude the Demobilisation, Disarmament, and Reintegration (DDR) of members of the Renamo militia.

A statement from President Nyusi's office said the meeting was part of the regular consultations held about progress in the DDR. "During the meeting, it was noted that the logistical and material conditions have been established for concluding the DDR process", said the statement. After the conclusion of the demobilisation, "the payment of pensions will begin under the terms of the decree that fixes the social security benefits for those demobilised under the Agreement on Peace and National Reconciliation". (This is a reference to the agreement signed by President Nyusi and Momade in August 2019).

The payment of pensions has been a key point of disagreement between the government and Renamo, and Renamo has used it as an excuse for not dismantling its final military base, in the central district of Gorongosa. The statement follows up the government's recent approval of paying pensions to members of what is delicately referred to as Renamo's "residual force" and their descendants.

President Nyusi and Momade also discussed the current voter registration ahead of the municipal elections scheduled for 11 October, and the conclusions of the report from the Commission set up to reflect on the viability of holding elections for district assemblies in 2024. The Commission (known by the acronym CRED) recommended postponing the district elections. Renamo, however, has insisted that the elections must go ahead.

According to the statement from the President's office, the two men considered the need to set up an expanded working commission which will continue to reflect on the powers of the bodies of decentralised governance.

## President Nyusi receives British Minister

President Filipe Nyusi on 17 May granted an audience to the British Minister of State for Development and Africa, Andrew Mitchell.

Mitchell, who arrived in Mozambique on 16 May, said his visit is intended to strengthen the cooperation between Britain and Mozambique, particularly in trade and climate change. Mitchell told reporters that "during this visit, I had the opportunity to visit the projects of partners, and to meet with business people who are seeking more trade opportunities".

He also delivered an invitation to President Nyusi from British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, to participate in the Africa-United Kingdom summit due to take place in 2024.

"We also assessed the opportunities for business

between Mozambique and the UK", said Mitchell. "During my meeting with President Nyusi, we discussed some regional challenges, including Zimbabwe. Clearly, I congratulated Mozambique on its performance when it occupied the rotating presidency of the United Nations Security Council".

"We discussed the cooperation between Great Britain and Mozambique", he continued, "and we reaffirmed our commitment to continue cooperating in trade, investment, the challenge posed by climate change, and regional development".

## Municipalities urged to become sustainable

President Filipe Nyusi has encouraged the top representatives of the 53 existing municipalities in the country to work harder and produce innovative solutions to improve the sustainability of the municipalities, which currently generate less than 40 per cent of their budget.

"Data in our possession indicate that most local authorities in Mozambique are unable to cover even 40 per cent of their budgets with their own revenues, so they function solely at the cost of budgetary transfers from the State", President Nyusi said on 15 May at the opening of the 12th Meeting of Municipalities, a two-day event held in the city of Quelimane, capital of the central province of Zambezia.

According to the President, when the municipalities were created it was expected that they would operate with their own revenues, collected within their jurisdiction. "Unfortunately, the current reality shows the opposite", he noted. "It is urgent to find innovative solutions to increase revenue so that the municipalities gradually become sustainable".

President Nyusi warned that the increase in revenue should be done gradually, avoiding suffocating citizens, and avoiding a sudden increase in fees. President Nyusi also addressed the need for municipalities to design exemplary growth models, taking into account internal experiences, through the sharing of good practices among municipalities as well as with international counterparts.

He explained that this could be one of the best ways to improve the management of municipalities because tertiarisation allows the passage of some responsibilities to the private sector.

He warned, however, that this must be done through transparent and corruption-free processes.

"We would like to call the attention of the mayors who have governed unblemished during the last five years not to fall into the temptation of corruption. If you make this mistake you run the risk of sinking close to the shore, ending up in the dock and compromising all the good work that you have done over the past five years", he said.

President Nyusi also called on the mayors to pay more attention to the circulation of "dirty money" in the areas under their management, calling for collaboration with the government in the fight against money laundering.

## **Government priority remains access to electricity – President Nyusi**

President Filipe Nyusi reiterated on 11 May that his government's priority in the energy sector is to expand access to electricity throughout the country, as a factor driving socio-economic development.

President Nyusi was speaking in the Mapulanguene administrative post, in Magude district, Maputo province, where he inaugurated a solar power station, under the government's "Energy for All" national programme (PRONAE).

"We repeat that the priority of my government is the continual expansion of access to electricity throughout the country, alongside the construction of transport, irrigation, and water supply infrastructures", said President Nyusi.

The first step in the energy programme was to increase electricity supply capacity by 600 megawatts, by the end of President Nyusi's current term of office in 2024.

There would be a resort to a variety of power generation sources, to meet the growing needs for electricity posed by industrialisation and urbanisation. The government hoped to guarantee "a sustainable energy balance".

He stressed that, in 2022, there were 470,889 new domestic electricity connections. The proportion of the population with access to electricity rose from 41 per cent in 2021 to 48 per cent in 2022.

The new solar power station at Mapulanguene cost the Mozambican state over 79 million meticais (US\$1.2 million).

## **Government raises US\$153 million to repair Cyclone Freddy damage**

The Mozambican Ministry of Public Works has raised about 9.8 billion meticais (US\$153 million) to finance the repair of social and economic infrastructures destroyed by cyclone Freddy.

According to Public Works Minister Carlos Mesquita, cited in the Maputo daily newspaper "Noticias" on 16 May, over three billion meticais will be used to rebuild the national and regional road network and 1.1 billion will be for municipal roads in Lichinga, Alto Molocue, Milange, Quelimane and Quissico. 2.3 billion Meticais, according to Mesquita, will be used in the repair of water supply systems and sanitation and 1.3 billion meticais will be for providing agricultural kits to farmers. The remaining amount will be destined for the repair of schools, power networks, and health facilities within 18 months.

The damage caused by cyclone Freddy affected much of the country, particularly the southern provinces of Gaza and Inhambane, the central provinces of Sofala, Manica, Tete and Zambezia, and the northern province of Niassa.

According to government data, 314 people lost their lives and 137,000 hectares of various crops were lost due to the passage of cyclone Freddy.

## **Bus company closes down making 500 unemployed**

The Mozambican interprovincial bus company Maning Nice has ceased operating leaving 500 out of work. A statement from the Nampula-based company blamed the poor state of the main north-south highway, EN1, for the decision of Maning Nice to end its transport activities.

Alongside the sharp degradation of EN1, the flow of passengers and cargo using interprovincial bus services had declined sharply and Maning Nice has found itself running up heavy losses.

Speaking to reporters, the Chairperson of the Association of Nampula Road Transporters (ASTRA), Luis Vasconcelos, said that the current state of EN1 is making transport services unsustainable. He revealed that Maning Nice has a debt of more than six million meticais (US\$94,000) to the bank. It has also been unable to pay wages. The last time its workers received their wages was in November 2022.

One of the workers of Maning Nice, Faustino Mirasse, cited in the Maputo daily "Noticias", said that with the closure of the company, he has no hope that the wage arrears will ever be paid.

## **CDD condemns police for deaths during Nacala riot**

The Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD), a prominent Mozambican NGO, has condemned members of the Mozambican Police (PRM) for allegedly killing four individuals in the port of Nacala, in the northern province of Nampula during riots that took place on 10 May.

"We vehemently condemn the police action and demand accountability from the police agents and also from the state itself", says CDD in its daily newsletter.

According to local media in Nampula and other reports cited by the organisation, the victims were hit by stray bullets when the police were trying to control a riot caused by rumours about people allegedly spreading cholera in the Nacala neighbourhood of Quissimajulo.

In some parts of Mozambique, deadly diseases are believed to be the work of witchcraft rather than micro-organisms. Over the years, these rumours have led to mob attacks on public services, including health units. Thus the very people fighting against cholera are accused of spreading it.

"They burned and destroyed the house of the neighbourhood secretary, the police station, and a part of the Quissimajulo health centre", reported Watana, a local radio station.

Nonetheless, CDD accused the police of disproportionate use of force. "The police must not carry weapons of war, knowing that when they shoot, they can kill", the organisation said. "It cannot be accepted that these are stray bullets. The Mozambican police is trained to contain mass uprisings using proportional force".

## China invested \$1 billion in last five years in Mozambique

The Minister for Industry and Trade, Silvino Moreno, has revealed that China has invested about a billion dollars in Mozambique over the last five years.

“With China, we have very strong bilateral cooperation. China is Mozambique's third largest bilateral partner and has invested in the last five years about one billion dollars in infrastructure and other projects in our country”, the minister said on 15 May during the promotion of the 3rd China-Africa Economic and Trade Exhibition (CAETE), to be held from 29 June to 2 July in Changsha, in the Chinese province of Hunan.

He added that the strong cooperation led to the country's participation in the event and that “we are sure that this is the path we have to follow, to attract more Chinese investment and take advantage of the opportunities that are offered, not only for the government or the state but also for private companies that are the engine for the country's development”.

According to Moreno, the government continues to seek access to international markets for exports, but also for investment in various infrastructures. “We need proper roads in this country, tarred roads and bridges in various parts of the country. Infrastructure is our biggest challenge, as well as the agriculture sector. We need to attract large operators in the area of industry, especially in the steel industry, metal transformation, and other large projects”, he said.

The Deputy President of the Mozambique Chamber of Commerce (CMM), Yolanda Fernandes, called on businessmen from the public and private sectors to join the event, as “it constitutes an opportunity in various sectors, such as agriculture, mining and infrastructures”.

For his part, the economic and trade counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in Mozambique, Xu Weili, said that trade between Mozambique and China in 2022 reached US\$4.6 billion with a 16 per cent increase over 2021.

He stressed that “we hope that this conference may open an opportunity to strengthen economic and trade exchanges to further expand the bilateral economic and trade relationship”.

First launched in 2019, the exhibition is an important platform to strengthen economic and trade cooperation between China and African countries.

## Government approves minimum prices for seed cotton

The Mozambican government has approved the minimum purchase prices of seed cotton, the cotton ginning fee, and the minimum purchase price subsidy for seed cotton producers.

The decision was taken on 17 May during a meeting of the Council of Ministers (Cabinet), in Maputo. “The Executive fixed 33 meticaís (52 US cents) per kilo for first quality seed cotton, and 23 meticaís per kilo for second quality”, says a note from the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, adding that the prices will take effect in the 2022/2023 agriculture season.

The government has also fixed a price of eight meticaís per kilo of cotton, as the fee for ginning seed cotton, as well as a subsidy of seven meticaís per kilo for first-quality seed cotton, and 4.8 meticaís per kilo for second-quality seed cotton.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development decided last week to keep the price of seed cotton at the same levels as in the 2021/2022 season, as a way of stimulating producers to increase cotton production. The Minister of Agriculture, Celso Correia, said that the maintenance of the seed cotton price also aims to safeguard the producers' incomes.

The minimum price was negotiated at a tripartite forum between the government, the National Forum of Cotton Producers (FONPA) and the Mozambican Cotton Association (AMM), which consists of the companies that purchase cotton from the farmers.

The AMM had wanted to cut the producer price of cotton to 27 meticaís a kilo, while FONPA was resigned to a reduction to 30 meticaís a kilo, and was thus pleasantly surprised when the meeting opted to keep the price at 33 meticaís a kilo.

## Government looks for new investors in cotton

The Mozambican government is assessing new investors who can continue cotton production in areas that used to be operated by the British company Plexus in the northern provinces of Nampula and Cabo Delgado.

Plexus closed its Mozambican operations last December, supposedly because of financial difficulties. Based in the Cabo Delgado district of Montepuez, it was the only company purchasing raw cotton from Cabo Delgado producers, and one of the largest cotton companies in the country.

The decision by Plexus to pull out threatens to ruin cotton production in Cabo Delgado if no new investors are found to step into its shoes.

Cited in the daily newspaper “Noticias” on 15 May, Agriculture Minister Celso Correia stressed that the government continues to regard cotton production as strategic, both for generating income for many rural households, and for exports. He said that over the past three years, the government has faced many challenges in the cotton sector, including the abandonment of production and companies that were the victims of mismanagement.

Cotton production was falling sharply – from 45,800 tonnes in the 2020-2021 agricultural year to 20,000 tonnes last year. Correia said this fall showed there is a serious risk for the continued existence of commercial cotton production in Mozambique. “That is why the government is working to find a new investor”, he stressed. “We gave Plexus many opportunities, all to safeguard the cotton producers in the area where it was operating”.

Plexus is in such serious financial difficulties that it cannot even pay wages. By January this year, it owed ten months back wages to more than 300 workers.

## **Tmcel appoints new management committee**

The shareholders of Mozambique's publicly owned telecommunications company, Tmcel, on 16 May appointed a new management committee, at a time when the company faces an unsustainable debt of about US\$400 million, according to the government.

The new committee consists of Mahomed Adamo Mussa, chairperson and responsible for the Commercial and Systems sector; Nordino Jose Wazo, manager for Operations; and Cezerillo Horacio Eugenio Matuce, manager for Administration and Finance.

"Consequently, the members of the Board of Directors, Mahomed Rafique Jusob Mahomed, Mario Luis Albino and Binda Jocker, who have been in office for six years at the company, have ceased their duties", says a statement issued by the company.

These decisions will be accompanied by other measures, including the reduction of the 1,700 employees by 60 per cent, the sale of a minimum of 80 per cent of the shares, and the government taking over all the company's debts and loans.

However, the employees have been questioning the government about the criteria to be used in the reduction of the workforce. The workers dispute the pessimistic view of Tmcel given by Transport Minister Mateus Magala and do not believe that drastic reductions in the workforce will solve the company's problems.

At the same meeting, the Tmcel shareholders approved a plan to revitalise the company, another to reduce costs, and a cost centre profitability study.

The change in the management structure of Tmcel, as well as the approval of revitalisation and profitability plans, is part of the restructuring of the technically bankrupt company, announced by Magala. According to the Minister, the company in recent times has been losing market share, its revenue is in progressive decline, and it operates in a highly competitive environment with a steadily deteriorating reputation and customer perception of the brand.

## **Gas projects to create over 10,000 jobs by 2025**

The natural gas liquefaction projects in the northern province of Cabo Delgado will generate at least 10,000 direct jobs by 2025.

According to the General Counsel of TotalEnergies, and Total's country chairperson for Mozambique, Maxime Rabilloud, so far this year 6,000 direct jobs have been created, thanks to the links between the French oil and gas company and the Mozambican government.

Speaking after an audience granted by the Minister of Labour, Margarida Talapa, Rabilloud stressed that, in the scope of the LNG (liquefied natural gas) project, the approach to the creation of jobs privileges the population of the Cabo Delgado district of Palma, where the liquefaction plants will be built. According to Rabilloud, help is being provided to young people in the creation of small and medium enterprises, formed

mainly by graduates of the Alberto Cassimo Institute of Professional Training and Labor Studies (IFPELAC).

For her part, Talapa said that, despite the setback caused by the terrorist attacks in the province, the government is making efforts to restore security and stability in Cabo Delgado. Talapa showed the willingness of the government to coordinate with TotalEnergies in order to resume the LNG project in the Rovuma Basin, off the coast of Palma district. The project was halted when TotalEnergies declared "force majeure" in response to a terrorist attack against Palma town in March 2021.

Talapa declared that the LNG project is strategic for Mozambique, mainly because of the job opportunities that will be created, the training of Mozambicans in the oil and gas industries, and the attraction of more investments in various economic areas.

Talapa highlighted the recent government approval of the general revision of the Labour Law, as a way to attract foreign direct investment. The new labour law is awaiting approval by the Mozambican parliament, the Assembly of the Republic.

## **Developing human capital is top priority**

Prime Minister Adriano Maleiane declared on 12 May that the development of human capital is the government's top priority to meet the political, economic, and sociocultural challenges facing the country.

The Prime Minister was speaking in the district of Boane, about 30 kilometres west of Maputo, at a graduation ceremony at the privately owned Unitiva University.

"For our programme of governance, in this cycle, we have chosen, as our number one priority, the development of human capital because we believe that training and education are essential for the affirmation and integration of Mozambicans into social, economic, and political life", said the Prime Minister. To achieve this goal, he added, the government has been adopting policies and actions to ensure that Mozambique has an inclusive and good-quality education system.

The government, he said, has taken measures that contribute to the expansion of higher education, and to equitable access to this sub-system. The institutions of higher education should meet the demands of the public administration, the productive sector, and of society.

Maleiane urged the Unitiva graduates to prepare to face an ever more competitive and demanding labour market. "We are sure that all of you who have graduated here will be able to put into practice the knowledge acquired during our academic training", he said.

The Vice-Chancellor of Unitiva University, Nelson Chacha, said he is proud of the contribution that the institution has made over the years to the academic and technical training of Mozambicans. The graduation ceremony, he added, demonstrated the university's role in the development and the guarantee of access to good quality higher education.

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