

Mozambique News Agency

AIM Reports

Report no.639, 10th August 2023



National dialogue has made country stable – President Nyusi

President Filipe Nyusi has stressed that national dialogue has made Mozambique a stable country, with a fully functioning justice system. The President was speaking in Prague on 7 August during a meeting with the Mozambican community resident in the Czech Republic on the first day of a two day official visit.

For President Nyusi, Mozambique's current stability is intimately linked with the end of the war of destabilisation, and the end of the process of demobilisation, disarmament, and reintegration (DDR) of the militia of the main opposition party, Renamo.

The Renamo demobilisation ended with the dismantling of the last Renamo military base, and the surrender of its last weapons, in June.

"Mozambique is stable", he declared. "Stability means that all the powers – executive, legislative and judicial – are fully functioning".

"You (the Mozambican community in the Czech Republic) know that up until June there were noises about peace, about zones where people could not travel, but our main weapon was dialogue, which has led us to the end of this tough story", said President Nyusi.

On the economy, the President said that the Gross Domestic Product would continue to grow at a satisfactory rate this year despite difficulties resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic and successive cyclones. "We expect that the GDP will grow by up to 5.3 per cent this year. Everything indicates that the pace will continue. We could even reach seven per cent", he added.

Bank returns to Palma following terrorist attack

President Filipe Nyusi on 3 August inaugurated a branch of the Millennium-BIM bank in the town of Palma, in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, two years after a terrorist attack which had left hundreds of people dead, and destroyed much of the town, particularly the financial services.

It was this jihadist attack which led the French oil and gas company, TotalEnergies, to declare a state of "force majeure", and suspend operations on building natural gas liquefaction plants on the Afungi Peninsula, in Palma district.

But operations by the Mozambican defence and security forces, supported by troops from Rwanda and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), drove the terrorists out of Palma town and the

neighbouring district of Mocimboa da Praia. Many thousands of people displaced from their homes by the 2021 attack have now returned.

"It is with great joy and the hope of a promising future that I have come to witness the reopening of the branch of Millennium-BIM", said President Nyusi. "The bank's activity was interrupted by a cowardly and faceless enemy".

The return of Millennium-BIM to Palma, he added, bears witness to the determination and courage of the bank which is renewing the dreams of the 43,000 inhabitants of the town. The revived availability of banking services will confer greater credibility to the economic prospects of Palma and the surrounding region.

With the bank operating, said President Nyusi, Palma residents would no longer have to risk keeping their savings at home or carry money for long distances in search of another functioning bank.

The return of the bank, added the President, was thanks to stability against the terrorist threat. "We shall not vacillate in defending this part of our country", he pledged. "We will do everything to guarantee peace and stability in the districts of Palma, Mocimboa, Macomia, Nangade, Muidumbe and Quissanga".

President Nyusi launched an appeal to all Mozambicans who are still in the terrorists' ranks, promising that there will be no reprisals against those who surrender voluntarily. Instead, they will be taken back peacefully to their families. But, he warned, this could not happen if they were caught while fighting against the government and its allies.

The Chairperson of the Millennium-BIM Board of Directors, Rui Fonseca, said the return of the bank "shows its commitment to serve the population of Palma, to serve the businesses of Palma, and to ensure that normality returns to this part of the country as quickly as possible".

"We are bringing here all the banking services that exist in any part of the country, and we shall continue to invest in our expansion in Cabo Delgado", declared Fonseca.

President Nyusi calls for maximisation of benefits from electricity

President Filipe Nyusi on 3 August called for the promotion of activities that allow the maximisation of benefits arising from the availability of electricity.

According to President Nyusi, who was speaking at the connection to the national electricity grid to the Chinga administrative post, in Murrupula district, in the northern province of Nampula, “Our goal, as a government, is to improve the well-being and quality of life of Mozambican families in an environment of peace, harmony and tranquillity”.

Chinga becomes the 52nd administrative post, of the 70 existing in Nampula province, to be connected to the national grid, an investment by the Mozambican government of 73 million meticaís (US\$1.15 million).

President Nyusi recommended care in the use of electricity and vigilance against those who might want to vandalise the infrastructure.

The President pointed out that the publicly-owned electricity company, EDM, “often has to interrupt electrification while it repairs systems that have been vandalised, which is delaying the target of bringing electricity to all Mozambicans”.

“The investment made demonstrates the high priority that the mass use of electricity occupies in our five-year governance programme while recognising that we have other public investments to make”, he said.

President Nyusi said that between 2021 and 2022, over three million Mozambicans gained access to electricity for the first time. The number of people with electricity in their homes rose from 42 to 48 per cent of the Mozambican population.

The electrification project of the Chinga administrative post included the construction of 35 kilometres of medium voltage transmission line and 10 kilometres of low voltage line. Five transformer stations were installed, which allowed the immediate connection of 121 sites out of the 500 planned, in addition to the installation of 150 streetlamps.

Paved road brings Mozambique and Tanzania closer

President Filipe Nyusi on 4 August inaugurated a road in Mueda district, in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, which provides easier access to the border with Tanzania. The 70-kilometre paved road runs from Moma to Negomano. It ends at the Unity Bridge over the Rovuma River, which forms the boundary between Mozambique and Tanzania.

The first stone for the new road was laid in October 2018. It was budgeted at two billion meticaís (US\$31.3 million), and financed by the African Development Bank (ADB).

President Nyusi told the ceremony that the road will facilitate trade and the movement of people between the two countries. It would reduce journey time and the cost of maintaining vehicles.

“This road will facilitate national, international and cross-border trade, contributing to an increase in incomes, and a growth of the economy”, he stated.

Paving the Roma-Negomano road, President Nyusi continued, is part of the government’s vision of connecting the entire country by road, “from the Rovuma to the Maputo” (the rivers marking Mozambique’s northern and southern limits), from the village of Negomano to the resort of Ponta de Ouro (on the frontier with the South African province of Kwazulu-Natal).

“The Roma-Negomano road is a palpable asset for implementing the goals of the African Continental Free Trade Area”, the President added.

He believed the road will stimulate tourism since it is near the eastern end of the Niassa National Reserve, the country’s largest conservation area. It could also develop agricultural value chains and promote the industrialisation of the continent.

“The road crosses the buffer zone of the Niassa National Reserve”, said President Nyusi, “and so we are asking motorists to respect the speed limits to avoid traffic accidents and running over wild animals that are part of the biodiversity we want to protect”.

He added that the road expresses the dream of the founding Presidents of Mozambique and Tanzania, Samora Machel and Julius Nyerere, who had always worked to bring the two peoples closer together.

Cabo Delgado to reopen borders with Tanzania

Mozambique’s General Director of Immigration, Felizardo Sede, has guaranteed that conditions now exist to reopen the border posts on the frontier with Tanzania which were closed five years ago due to terrorism in the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

The border posts in question are at Nametil in Mueda district, Namoto in Palma district, and Chacamba in Nangade district.

According to Sede, who was addressing reporters in Pemba, the Cabo Delgado provincial capital, during the delivery of four vehicles to reinforce patrols in the districts of Mocimboa da Praia, Montepuez, and Pemba, “on our side, we have no problems; we are waiting for our Tanzanian counterpart, so it is an administrative process”.

“With the equipment that we are going to leave there, we are going to respond positively in the inspection of the districts”, he added.

The reopening of these border posts has been requested by the population, as a result of the improvement of security conditions following the operations carried out by the Mozambican defence and security forces, with support from Rwanda and the SADC Mission in Mozambique (SAMIM).

Cabo Delgado has been plagued by Islamist terrorism since October 2017 and, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the conflict has left one million people displaced and about 4,000 dead.

FlySafair to fly to Maputo

The low-cost airline FlySafair has announced that it will open a new route between O.R Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg and Maputo.

The flights will begin on 5 October and operate four times per week with tickets from 1,400 rand (US\$75) for the Johannesburg to Maputo leg, with the return flights starting at 2,000 rand.

The company is also launching new services between Johannesburg and Harare, Livingstone, and Victoria Falls. According to Kirby Gordon, Chief Marketing Officer at FlySafair, “plans for these routes have been in the pipeline for several months now. We are so pleased to finally be able to announce the addition of these routes and more importantly, begin operations just in time for the festive season”.

He added, “We are happy to offer customers our low fares and on-time services on these additional routes. Tourism in Africa is definitely on the road to recovery. We hope to help play our part in growing the tourism industry both at home and abroad by connecting people through our passion for aviation”.

The airline operates a fleet of 54 Boeing 737s, comprising 43 737-800s, eight 737-400s, two 737-400Fs and one 737-800F.

The introduction of the new route will provide competition for Mozambique Airlines (LAM) which offers flights between Johannesburg and Maputo starting at 2,366 rand. The other operator on the same route, Airlink, has ticket prices that are slightly more expensive than LAM.

LAM announces new domestic routes

Mozambique Airlines (LAM) on 26 July announced that in August it will introduce several new domestic routes, flying directly between various provincial capitals.

In a statement, LAM explained that using these routes passengers will no longer be required to change planes in the country’s capital, Maputo.

The new routes are:

Beira - Nampula – Beira: daily

Beira - Tete - Quelimane – Beira: on Tuesdays and Saturdays

Beira - Quelimane - Tete – Beira: on Mondays and Thursdays

Beira – Pemba – Beira: on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays

Beira – Tete – Nampula – Beira: on Wednesdays and Sundays

Beira – Nampula – Tete – Beira: on Fridays

LAM states that it has undergone a revival since it began operating under the management of the South African company Fly Modern Ark.

Among the recent improvements are the reduction in LAM fares of more than 30 per cent on some routes and an increase in the size of the LAM fleet with the

acquisition of two Bombardier JRC 900 aircraft.

At the end of June, Transport Minister Mateus Magala said that there have also been improvements in LAM’s operational efficiency with a reduction in the number of cancelled or delayed flights and improved punctuality.

He added that LAM’s expenditure had been reined in and there had been a considerable increase in revenue, with a consequent improvement in LAM’s financial situation. “Miraculously, the company that was regarded as technically bankrupt three months ago is today technically solvent”, he declared.

Date for 2024 general elections proposed

The Council of State, a consultative body that advises the President of the Republic, has proposed 9 October 2024 as the date for the next general elections.

On 4 August, President Filipe Nyusi chaired a meeting of the Council of State, which is legally obliged to issue an opinion on the date for general elections.

According to a press release from President Nyusi’s office, the date was proposed by the National Elections Commission (CNE), and accepted by the Council. Thus, the presidential and parliamentary elections and the elections for the ten provincial assemblies will take place simultaneously on 9 October 2024.

The Council of State could not give an opinion until the Mozambican parliament, the Assembly of the Republic, had decided whether elections for district assemblies would also be held on the same date. But on 3 August parliament passed a constitutional amendment, proposed by the parliamentary group of the ruling Frelimo Party, which eliminated the constitutional requirement to hold district elections in 2024. Instead, the constitution now states that the first district elections will be held when the necessary legal, material and financial conditions have been met.

Meanwhile, an independent citizens’ group in the northern province of Cabo Delgado has become the first organisation to submit nomination papers of its candidates for the municipal elections scheduled for 11 October. This group is the Association of Natives and Sympathisers of Mocimboa da Praia (UMODJA) which, as its name suggests, is standing candidates only in the municipality of Mocimboa da Praia. UMODJA submitted its nomination papers to the CNE on 3 August, thus becoming the first of the 26 parties, coalitions and citizens’ groups registered for the elections to submit its list of candidates.

The submission of nomination papers began on 20 July and the deadline is 11 August. The CNE has urged all those contesting the election to submit their papers in good time. For the nomination papers of each and every candidate must be scrutinised to ensure that they comply with the electoral legislation. With 65 municipalities, and 26 competing parties and groups, the CNE may have to inspect the papers of thousands of would-be candidates. The CNE fears that, based on previous experiences, many of the parties will wait until the last moment before submitting their papers.

A million doses of vaccine needed to fight foot-and-mouth disease

Mozambique's veterinary authorities are mobilising funds for the purchase of a further 800,000 doses of vaccine against foot-and-mouth disease, aiming to complete the immunisation of cattle in the country. The doses are destined for the southern provinces of Maputo and Gaza, central Manica and Tete and northern Niassa, the last two of which are facing active outbreaks of the disease.

Zacarias Massicame, head of the Department of Disease Prevention and Control at the Ministry of Agriculture, cited in the Maputo daily newspaper "Noticias" on 8 August, said the country needs over one million doses to ensure the protection of livestock. He explained that the import of about 300,000 vaccines is underway for areas with active outbreaks and a high risk of spreading foot-and-mouth disease. This will reinforce the doses recently allocated to Manica, Tete and Niassa and which are already under administration.

"The late and limited availability of vaccines and the limited capacity to move technicians to the field is affecting the immunisation calendar. In recent years, the sector has not been able to meet the minimum recommended vaccination requirements to achieve herd health defence", Massicame said, adding that the sector is mapping the fever-free zones to allow the Foot and Mouth Disease Control Committee to determine, in the coming days, the easing of restrictive measures, enabling the resumption of the movement of cattle, sheep, goats and pigs.

Foot-and-mouth disease is regarded as one of the most important cross-border diseases of hoofed animals in the world because of its rapid transmission and spread capacity, with negative economic impacts due to restrictions on the movement of animals and their derivatives from one area to another.

Promotion of police officers suspended

The promotion of police officers has been suspended until problems with the payment system is solved under the Single Wage Table (TSU) for the public administration.

According to the General Commander of the Mozambican Police (PRM), Bernardino Rafael, who was speaking on 7 August during a parade with the Border Guard Police, in Nangade district, in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, promotions and progressions cannot go ahead until the backlog of wage arrears is overcome.

Rafael said the same problem is behind the failure over the last two months to pay the wages of some members of the police force. This problem emerged in April when the government decided that all wage payments to members of the Defence and Security Forces (FDS), should be made by the Ministry of Economy and Finance and not by the Defence and

Interior ministries.

It is thought that this change may have upset officials who were benefitting corruptly from the previous system. Nonetheless, Rafael denied that within the ranks of the PRM there are "ghost agents", who do not exist, but have been earning wages through various corrupt schemes. The denial comes after information was circulated that there were "ghost agents" and that they were probably being identified under the new salary payment system.

"This information is not the truth", said Rafael. "We know each other. If there is a ghost, he will be discovered. The PRM system is well structured. The argument that we are disorganised is false".

However, the Ministry of Economy and Finance clarified, at a Maputo press conference on 7 August, that the delay in paying wages to the FDS is due to the inconsistency of the data provided by the General Police Command and some units of the Mozambican Armed Forces (FADM).

The national director of Public Accounts, Manuel Matavel, explained that some of these inconsistencies included the repetition of names, the variation in the value of wages between what was paid previously and what should be paid now, and the lack of banking and tax data.

In April, a multi-sector team involving staff from the ministries of Economy and Finance, Defence, and the Interior began a reform of human resource management, including the processing and payment of wages. This reform is essentially aimed at providing the sectors with a tool to manage the life cycle of human resources from entering the armed forces or police until passage to the reserves, in order to improve payroll control.

According to Manuel Matavel, based on this process, 94 per cent of the staff reported by the Ministry of the Interior have already been registered, and data verification is underway for the remaining staff not yet registered in the system.

To this end, the Ministry of Economy and Finance is working with the human resources department of the General Command and the National Criminal Investigation Service to prepare the data of each member, including the Personal Tax Identification Number (NUIT), the Bank Identification Number (NIB), the person's rank and the date of joining the defence and security forces.

As for delays in paying wages to staff in the public administration who are not members of the FDS, Matavel said these state functionaries had not yet provided "proof of life" – that is, they had not yet proven that they really exist.

He said that in July 99 per cent of the wages of state employees had been paid. Those who had not yet received their July wages either had not provided "proof of life", or had been recently admitted to the public administration, and were not yet enrolled in the computerised system.

Cholera reappears in Nampula

Cholera has reappeared in the northern city of Nampula, with 120 cases reported in the last few days, one of whom died.

According to Geraldino Avelinho, of the Nampula Provincial Health Service, cited in the daily newspaper "O Pais" on 8 August, the death occurred on 5 August, and the victim was a 15-year-old homeless boy who was living on the streets. He died 15 minutes after entering the Cholera Treatment Centre, on the outskirts of the city.

The Treatment Centre has been activated because of the current spike in cholera cases. Avelinho said that currently 24 patients are undergoing treatment in the Centre.

80 per cent of the cases are from the Carrupeia neighbourhood, one of the parts of the city with serious problems with access to drinking water. The population of Carrupeia resorts to water from traditional wells, which is unsafe to drink. Untreated drinking water easily leads to the spread of water-borne diseases such as cholera.

Earlier in the year, cholera outbreaks were declared in five Nampula districts – namely Nacala, Memba, Nampula, Erati, and Meconta. The first two of these districts have recently been declared free of the disease, but some of the parameters fixed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) need to be met before Erati and Meconta too can be declared free of cholera.

The major concern now is with Nampula City and the surrounding area.

RD faces disqualification

Democratic Revolution (RD), a breakaway from Mozambique's main opposition party, Renamo, has declared that it will continue using images of the first commander of Renamo, Andre Matsangaissa, and of his successor, Afonso Dhlakama, despite a ruling from the Constitutional Council, the country's highest body in matters of constitutional and electoral law, that it may not do so.

Renamo protested angrily when it found that RD was using portraits of Matsangaissa and Dhlakama on the election emblem that it plans to use for the municipal elections scheduled for 11 October.

The National Elections Commission (CNE) ruled against Renamo, arguing that there is no similarity between the emblems of Renamo and of the RD. The CNE noted that the Renamo symbol consists of a partridge, ten yellow stars and three arrows, displayed horizontally from left to right; while the RD symbol is a blue square against a white background with a picture of Matsangaissa in the lower left corner and one of Dhlakama, in the upper right corner.

The decision was put to a vote, and the Frelimo majority on the CNE voted against the Renamo complaint. Renamo did not accept this, and so it lodged an appeal with the Constitutional Council.

The Council overturned the CNE's decision. It believed that the question of the similarity or identity of symbols and acronyms "cannot be reduced only to the visual or graphic element". Instead, the substantive identity of the symbols should be analysed, taking into account their impact on the electorate, which should make a free and conscious choice, without confusion, when voting for candidates.

The Constitutional Council warned that the use of Renamo historical figures by the RD "may cause confusion among the electorate at the moment when they are expressing their wishes". That is, it might easily lead voters "to vote by mistake for the candidates of the RD, when in fact they wanted to vote for Renamo".

The Council gave the RD ten days to submit a new electoral emblem – but RD leader Vitano Singano, cited in the newsheet "Mediafax" on 7 August, declared that he had no intention of obeying the Council's ruling. Singano said it is legitimate for the RD to use portraits of Matsangaissa and Dhlakama in its propaganda because it also regards the two men as its founders. He claimed that the RD consists of "beloved sons and admirers of the founders of democracy".

"Cost what it may, the RD will run in the elections with its current symbols", said Singano, who claims that he was one of Dhlakama's bodyguards prior to the latter's death from diabetes in 2018.

Singano believed that the Council's ruling is part of "a conspiracy" against the RD. He accused Renamo of entering an alliance with Frelimo and warned "Even if we change the RD symbol, the harassment by Renamo will never end". Singano also made the extraordinary accusation that President Filipe Nyusi and Renamo leader Ossufo Momade "are as close as a finger and its nail".

There can be no appeal against decisions of the Constitutional Council. If the RD disobeys the Council's ruling and refuses to change its symbol, the only result will be that it is disqualified from standing in the municipal elections.

Price of petrol rises and diesel falls

Mozambique's Energy Regulatory Authority (ARENE) on 27 July announced a slight increase in the price of petrol, but the price of diesel, kerosene, and LPG cooking gas all fell.

The price of a litre of petrol rises from 85.49 meticaais (US\$1.34) to 86.25 meticaais, an increase of 0.9 per cent. Diesel falls in price from 94.75 to 91.23 meticaais a litre – a fall of 3.7 per cent.

The sharpest price cut is for kerosene, which falls by 10.4 per cent, from 79.64 to 71.37 meticaais a litre. The price of a kilo of LPG cooking gas falls by 4.4 per cent, from 90.01 to 86.05 meticaais.

These are the prices at which the fuels must be sold in the port cities where they are unloaded (Maputo, Matola, Beira and Nacala). Elsewhere in the country, fuel distributors are allowed to include their legitimate transport costs in the final price to the consumer.

MRM to triple processing capacity at ruby mine

The London-based company Gemfields on 7 August announced that Montepuez Ruby Mining (MRM) will triple its processing capacity at its ruby mine in Montepuez district in the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

The company revealed that MRM has entered into a legally binding contract with Consulmet Limited for the construction of a second processing plant that is expected to become operational in the first half of 2025. The addition of the plant will increase MRM's processing capacity from the existing 200 tonnes per hour to 600 tonnes per hour. This will allow for the processing of the sizeable stockpile that has built up.

The agreement is a turnkey contract to be paid in South African Rands to an equivalent of approximately US\$70 million. The payments will be made upon reaching set milestones and it is expected that 30 per cent of the amount will be due in 2023, 60 per cent in 2024, and the rest in 2025.

According to the general manager of MRM, Prahalad Kumar Singh, "this investment constitutes the single-largest investment ever made by the Gemfields Group and represents our ongoing commitment to the province of Cabo Delgado, to Mozambique, and to our local communities for whom additional jobs and economic development are of pivotal importance".

He added, "I extend my deep gratitude to all of our stakeholders, including our hard-working team and our partners at Mwiriti Limitada and in the Government of Mozambique for their ongoing support and encouragement in making MRM a leading contributor in Cabo Delgado".

Gemfields holds 75 per cent of the shares in Montepuez Ruby Mining Ltd. The other 25 per cent is owned by the Mozambican company Mwiriti.

Gemfields describes itself as "a world-leading responsible miner and marketer of coloured gemstones". It calls the Montepuez mine "one of the most significant recently discovered ruby deposits in the world".

MRM has held 19 ruby auctions since June 2014, generating US\$978.5 million in total revenue. The proceeds were fully repatriated to MRM in Mozambique with all royalties due to the government paid on the full price achieved at auction.

Reference price for minerals takes effect

The Mozambican government is imposing reference prices for minerals to close a loophole where mining companies declare less than their real production in order to reduce their tax burden.

As of this month, the value of minerals must be declared according to the reference prices published in the monthly bulletin issued by the Ministry of Finance. August sees the first monthly bulletin published by the government seeking to fight against the under-invoicing of minerals, which has been harming the State to the tune of millions of dollars per year.

According to a Ministerial Diploma, "regarding the export of rubies, for example, the companies that cannot sell its rubies by auction must apply US\$265.99 per carat, taking into account the highest price in the auctions held from 1 January to 30 June."

As for titanium-bearing heavy sands, the Diploma says their price will be determined by their mineral content. Heavy sands contain ilmenite, rutile and zircon. The reference price for ilmenite, the diploma says, will be US\$425.25 a tonne; for zircon, it will be US\$2,205.18 a tonne; while the reference price for rutile will be US\$1,706.28 a tonne.

The reference price for gold will be set by the Bank of Mozambique.

Under current legislation, the reference prices are determined by a commission that includes representatives of the Ministry of Finance, the Tax Authority, the National Institute of Mines, the Mineral Resources General Inspectorate, and the Kimberley Process Management Unit.

Striking doctors seek injunction

The Mozambican Medical Association (AMM) has asked the Administrative Tribunal to issue an injunction that would annul the effect of administrative measures taken by the Health Ministry against striking doctors.

These measures are essentially the declaration that doctors who do not show up for work are absent, and therefore suffer the penalties for absenteeism (essentially the loss of wages for the days not worked).

AMM spokesperson Napoleao Viola, cited by the television station, STV, declared "We believe that the government is threatening us and so, to contain this situation, we have decided to apply for an injunction so that all these illegal actions taken by the executive will have no impact on the doctors who are exercising a constitutional right".

The government has decided to recruit 60 Mozambican doctors, who are currently not employed by the National Health Service, to replace the strikers.

Viola declared that the AMM supports this measure – he added that "it would be good if the government were to hire all the other doctors who are currently unemployed".

The health service had not recruited these doctors previously for budgetary reasons. The constraints on the Mozambican state budget mean that not every doctor who completes a medical training course will be able to walk into a job in a public health unit. Some, however, may be in private practice.

The recruits will initially replace the strikers on a temporary basis, but the government has warned that the placements could become permanent if the strikers do not return to work.

Neither the AMM nor the Health Ministry have issued reliable statistics about the strike. It is thus not clear how many doctors are on strike, and how many health units are affected.

Government support for artisanal fishermen

The Mozambican government has invested about 90 million meticais (US\$1.4 million) supporting artisanal fishermen in the northern province of Nampula.

This figure was revealed on 4 August by the Minister of the Sea, Inland Waters, and Fisheries, Lidia Cardoso, during the delivery of fishery equipment to 317 fishermen under the More Sustainable Fisheries Programme financed by the Fund for Blue Economy Development (ProAzul).

“The government will continuously implement measures and actions to boost the fisheries sector through the simplification of financing processes and assistance”, said the Minister after delivering equipment consisting of cold stores, motorcycles, bicycles, outboard motors, fridges, scales, and electricity generators. In total, the kits have benefited 1,070 artisanal fishermen in Nampula Province.

In Nampula, the More Sustainable Fisheries Programme benefits 35 fishermen in Nacala-a-Velha, 70 in Nacala-Port, 24 in Memba, 141 in Mossuril, 74 in Ilha de Mocambique, 77 in Larde, 87 in Liupo, 317 in Angoche, and 145 in Mogincual. Among the 1,070 beneficiaries, 333 are women.

The Programme, which covers the central and northern regions of the country, is focused on financing artisanal fishing and aquaculture.

Chinese company takes over Cimentos de Mocambique

The Chinese group Huaxin Cement has taken control of Mozambique’s largest cement company, Cimentos de Mocambique (CM).

CM was set up under the Portuguese colonial regime in 1924. After Mozambican independence, in 1975, it became a state-owned enterprise. In the wave of privatisations of the late 1980s, CM was purchased by the Portuguese cement giant, Cimpor.

Cimpor is now part of InterCement Trading, and Huaxin has acquired 100 per cent of the shares held by InterCement in the Nepal Portland Cement Company (NPC).

According to an announcement from the Mozambican Competition Regulatory Authority (ARC), the main player in this transaction is Huaxin Hong Kong, a wholly owned subsidiary of Huaxin, registered in Hong Kong but incorporated in mainland China.

It has 300 branches in ten Chinese provinces and cities and in nine other countries, namely Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Cambodia, Nepal, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi and Oman, where it operates in the cement manufacturing and sales markets.

For its part, NPC holds stakes in South African and Mozambican companies, namely InterCement South Africa Proprietary Limited (in South Africa) and Cimentos de Mocambique (in Mozambique).

Established in South Africa, NPC is owned by a holding company (InterCement Trading Inversions) incorporated under the laws of Spain.

Over 600 public servants involved in corruption schemes

The Minister of State Administration, Ana Comoane, revealed on 3 August that over 600 public servants have been caught out in corruption schemes this year alone.

Speaking in Maputo at the opening of a meeting of her Ministry’s Coordinating Council, Comoane said that seven cases are now being dealt with by the Central Office for the Fight Against Corruption (GCCC).

For her part, the inspector of public administration, Laura Nhancale, pointed to the health and education sectors as those with the highest record of acts of corruption. According to Nhancale, most of the cases culminated in disciplinary proceedings and, in the most serious situations, were referred to the GCCC, taking into account that, in addition to disciplinary sanctions, there is room for criminal liability. “This is a result of the work that the public administration is doing to hold those involved in corruption schemes accountable. Corruption occurs throughout the country and a little in all sectors, but we have the most critical ones”, she said.

Nhancale pledged that the state will be persistent in the fight against corruption, to restore dignity to the administration, at a time when citizens are complaining about the quality of services provided.

Mozambique sets up its first Maritime Court

The President of the Supreme Court, Adelino Muchanga, inaugurated on 2 August the country’s first maritime court in Maputo, to strengthen the protection of maritime resources.

According to Muchanga, the implementation of maritime courts will contribute to the affirmation of the territorial sovereignty of the Mozambican State, including the maritime region. “Maritime courts are an instrument of capital importance for making viable the sustainable and responsible exploitation of the resources that our biodiversity makes available”, he said.

Muchanga explained that maritime courts respond to the need for protection against maritime pollution, illegal fishing, maritime trafficking of drugs and people, piracy, and other security threats.

For the Minister of the Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries, Lidia Cardoso, the installation of the maritime court will reinforce the capacity of the State to defend national sovereignty. She said that her ministry is at the forefront of training judges, prosecutors Criminal Investigation agents for the maritime courts.

For his part, the president of the Higher Court of Appeal, Manuel Bucuane, said that the maritime court marks a new path in response to problems concerned with jurisdiction over the country’s coastal and inland waters. He challenged the presiding judge of the new court (Joao Guilherme) to carry out his activities taking into account the nature of maritime crimes. “Create, under your leadership, an environment in which everyone feels free to express themselves frankly”, he urged. “You must build bridges of dialogue, remove obstacles and allow your subordinates to do their work”

GET.Invest injects US\$1.8 billion into renewable energy

The European Programme for Clean Energy Investments (GET.Invest) has approved 144 projects on renewable energy, budgeted at around US\$1.8 billion, drawn up by private companies in Mozambique, during the period 2016-2023. The approved projects are part of a universe of nearly 1,400 submitted over the period, of which 380 were supported and 70 are in the financial closing phase, at a cost of €442 million.

According to a GET.Invest document sent to AIM, the European multi-donor programme points to a high success rate and a wide reach in the market, despite persistent challenges of various kinds.

“As a pioneering initiative, GET.Invest delivers solid and tangible results. Development of a pipeline, with more than 200 projects supported with a high success rate, great reach in the market, with more than 16,000 participants”, reads the note.

GET.Invest justifies the investment in the sector as clean energy solutions are becoming increasingly commercially viable and represent the most cost-effective option to provide clean and affordable energy to millions of people by linking project and business development to financing.

“GET.Invest believes that by 2030, €41 billion per year will be needed to accelerate electrification projects in Africa within the framework of universal access”, the document says.

According to the data, solar energy is the most abundant renewable source in Mozambique, with a potential for the production of 23,000 Gigawatts, but hydropower remains the source that presents the most priority projects in the order of 5.6 Gigawatts.

It should be noted that the authorities have identified a vast range of medium-sized projects, with very competitive costs, on Mozambican rivers, including the Revue, Buzi, Pungue, Luenha, Revubue, Licungo, Lurio, Lugenda, Messalo, and Lucheringo.

GET.Invest Mozambique is funded by the Delegation of the European Union in Mozambique within the scope of the Promote Energy programme and by the German Ministry for Development Cooperation.

Mozambique expects to earn US\$100 million from natural gas exports this year

The Mozambican State expects to earn US\$100 million this year in taxes on the exploitation of natural gas in the Rovuma Basin, off the coast of the northern province of Cabo Delgado, according to the Minister of Economy and Finance, Max Tonela.

Tonela, who on 2 August was addressing the Plan and Budget Commission of the Mozambican parliament, the Assembly of the Republic, said that so far this year US\$40 million has been collected in taxes, and a further US\$60 million is expected by the end of the year.

In the first three years of the 25-year concession, the government expects revenue of US\$100 million a year, rising to US\$300 million a year from the fifth year. By

the tenth year of implementation, revenue could reach a billion dollars a year.

Tonela estimated that, during the 25 years of the concession contract, the Mozambican state will receive an average of US\$750 million a year.

“To manage the revenues well, it is necessary to approve the law which creates the Sovereign Wealth Fund”, Tonela told the deputies. He said that many aspects that had previously been in dispute were now consensual, which should make it easier for the Assembly to pass the bill on the Sovereign Wealth Fund.

He also explained that the State Budget, in the future, will have a specific section focused on managing gas revenues. The Law on the Sovereign Wealth Fund, he added, will publicly report the amounts that the State earns over the years.

The Fund, Tonela said, will take the form of a dossier of financial assets, managed in accordance with internationally established rules and principles, with the purpose of generating savings for future generations.

He added that the Bank of Mozambique will be the operational manager of the Fund, under an agreement signed between the central bank and Tonela’s Ministry.

The bill on the Fund, submitted to the Assembly, envisages that, in the initial years, 60 per cent of revenue from gas will go towards financing the state budget, while the other 40 per cent will be invested in the Wealth Fund. Later, these figures will be reversed, with 40 per cent for the state budget and 60 per cent for the Fund.

Gold production grows 53 per cent

Mozambique recorded an increase of 53 per cent in gold production, corresponding to 346.3 kilos, in the first quarter of the current year.

According to a report unveiled on the Economic and Social Balance of implementation of the State Budget in the first three months of the year, this production represents 26 per cent of the total amount of gold expected to be mined by the end of the year.

“This figure is higher when compared to the 226 kilos of gold produced in the first quarter of 2022. This performance is the result of good development of the companies in the sector, as well as the continuous exploration of hard deposits of rock, the launch of a new processing plant and the resumption of exploration activities in the central province of Manica”, reads the document.

The note also points out that, in the same period, among metals, tantalite production also recorded a growth of 53 per cent corresponding to 64,5 tonnes, while ilmenite production grew 48 per cent corresponding to 747,734 tonnes and zircon recorded a growth of 11 per cent, corresponding to 33,345 tonnes.

“However, rutile production fell by 14 per cent corresponding to 1,682 tonnes”, says the document, explaining that “among non-metallic minerals, the highlight goes to graphite, production of which fell by 11 per cent corresponding to 28,608 tonnes. This represents a fall of 39 per cent when compared to the same period of 2022.”

Three new toll gates approved

The Mozambican government has approved the installation of three new toll gates and their respective fees, under the Sustainable Road Maintenance Programme.

According to the government spokesperson, Deputy Justice Minister Filimao Suaze, during a press briefing on 1 August after the weekly meeting of the Council of Ministers (Cabinet), one toll gate will be installed on the 118-kilometre Marracuene-Macia stretch of the main north-south highway (EN1), in Manhica district, about 90 kilometres north of Maputo city.

The second will be set up at the Gwara-Gwara administrative post on the 74-kilometre stretch of road between Tica and Buzi, in the central province of Sofala.

The third gate will be in the district of Namialo, in the northern province of Nampula, on the 87-kilometre stretch of road between Nampula City and Namialo.

“The new tolls will allow the reduction of operating costs, with the application of socially oriented rates”, claimed Suaze.

“Mitigation measures will be taken into account, through the application of discounts for frequent users of the toll gates, local residents, and passenger transport”, Suaze added. These discounts have been applied at all previous toll gates.

Children die of severe acute malnutrition in Manica

At least 16 children under 15 years of age have died in the central province of Manica as a result of severe acute malnutrition in the first quarter of the current year.

The figure, which represents a reduction of 19 cases when compared to the same period in 2022, was revealed on 1 August by the wife of the Secretary of State for Manica, Celsa Dick, during the launch of the international week of infant breastfeeding.

In the same period, the health authorities diagnosed 2,789 children suffering from acute malnutrition, compared to 3,819 last year, which is a decline of 27 per cent.

The districts of Barue, Chimoio, Mossurize and Gondola have the highest number of cases of severe acute malnutrition in children under 15 years of age.

To mark infant breastfeeding week, several awareness-raising activities will be held during the week on the importance of exclusive breast milk feeding for children up to six months of age. “The week also serves to reflect on the participation of women and society in general in the care to be observed so that children grow up healthy”, she said.

Airport fuel: BP to sell its shares to Petromoc

British Petroleum (BP) subsidiary in Mozambique intends to sell 50 per cent of the shares it holds in the Maputo International Airport Fuelling Services (MIAFS) to the publicly owned fuel company, Petromoc.

According to a note from the Competition Regulatory Authority (ARC), the notification of the sale “was submitted on 24 July and is subject to public evaluation in the next 15 days.”

This is the confirmation of BP's exit from the Mozambican market after it sold its retail business to the French company TotalEnergies in 2021.

Earlier this year, ARC announced that BP Mozambique had agreed to sell to Puma Energy Mozambique the assets of the aviation product business, including operations at seven Mozambican airports. “This deal would also involve a 50 per cent stake in MIAFS, a joint venture with Petromoc, for the design and construction of an aviation fuel depot, management of a fuel handling depot and aircraft fuelling equipment, including a network of hydrants at Maputo International Airport”, reads the document.

The document stresses that British Petroleum-Mozambique has, in recent years, embarked on the sale of its assets in Mozambique as a strategic measure to gradually move out of the country's fuel supply market.

“To implement this strategy, during 2021 and 2022, BP Mozambique invited several entities to submit proposals to purchase the assets of the aviation fuel business in the country and its stake in MIAFS, and Puma was then chosen as the best positioned to acquire the target business”, says the document.

Over 2,500 cases of measles recorded in five provinces

Mozambique has recorded 2,565 positive cases of measles in five provinces over the last 23 years, according to the National Director of Public Health, Quinhas Fernandes. “The figure was recorded between 2000 and the first quarter of the current year. In order to combat the problem, the vaccination campaign will immunise children between five and nine years of age”, Fernandes said on 1 August, during the launch of the vaccination campaign in the central province of Tete.

The vaccination campaign will take place in the central provinces of Tete, Manica, Sofala, and Zambezia and the northern province of Niassa.

“The vaccination campaign also intends to protect children against German measles, a worrying disease in the health sector. We want to vaccinate to prevent and interrupt the transmission of this disease”, he said, adding that “about 4.8 million children are covered in the mentioned provinces”.

The best way of combating diseases of this nature, the director said, is to vaccinate children to stop transmission. “This is the only way to protect our children”, he declared.

For her part, Carla Mosse, the director of the Tete Provincial Health Services, said the province recorded, during the first quarter of the current year, 59 cases of measles against 54 recorded in the same period of 2022.

She also said that the province expects to vaccinate 905,960 children, as well as administering vitamin “A” supplements to 168,000 and de-worming 131,000 children.

Niassa special reserve raises 58 million meticaís from tourism

The Niassa Especial Reserve (REN), in northern Mozambique, earned about 58 million meticaís (US\$900,000) through tourism over the last year.

The figure, according to Terencio Tamel, the REN administrator, cited in the Maputo daily “Noticias” on 31 July, constitutes a recovery after the international impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

He explained that a significant part of the money is the result of professional hunting licences.

“Safari tourism and ecotourism were the main activities that contributed to the economic balance in this conservation area. Tourists from America, South Africa and Russia were more active in the areas provided for tourist activities”, Tamel said.

REN covers 42,000 square kilometres in the districts of Sanga, Mavago, Mecula, Marrupa, Majane, and Muembe, in Niassa; and Montepuez and Mueda, in Cabo Delgado Province. 17 concessions have been granted in the reserve, but only 15 are properly occupied.

“The tourist operations employ 1,362 people, but most of them are seasonal workers”, Tamel added. “The reserve set up 47 scholarships for different learning subsystems”. He added that the government has been making available 20 per cent of tourism fees per year for the community.

\$100 million available to support biodiversity

The Foundation for the Conservation of Biodiversity (BIOFUND), a Mozambican non-governmental organisation, has US\$100 million available over the next seven years to support biodiversity conservation initiatives.

The figure was announced on 27 July in Maputo by the Coordinator of BIOFUND's Biodiversity Offset Programme, Denise Nicolau, at the opening of a Conference on Marine Biodiversity.

According to Nicolau, this will be used to strengthen marine, terrestrial, coastal and aquatic conservation. “In this process, the government has a legal framework in the marine conservation sector and marine policies for companies that develop activities in the maritime zone”, Nicolau said, adding that the country has been struggling with the over-exploitation of marine resources by artisanal and industrial fishermen.

Therefore, she said, the country must advance with robust laws and legal instruments that oblige the sector to comply with national biodiversity targets. “The government must continuously engage in the preservation and conservation of biodiversity through legislation”, she said.

For his part, the general director of the Solo Graphic Institute of Mozambique, Antonio Hogueane, who is also the Chair of Marine Sciences at Maputo's Eduardo Mondlane University, said that in 2020 the government started an intensive program to restore the country's mangrove forests.

“As a result of this initiative, 6,000 hectares of mangroves have been restored, exceeding the target of 5,000 hectares by 2024,” he said, adding that “the advances in restoration are due to the inspection service carried out by the National Maritime Institute, which has carried out inspection activities on a national scale.”

Hogueane stressed that the recovery of ecosystems has improved the lives of communities in several domains. “In areas that were once affected by the intrusion of seawater, which did not allow the development of agriculture, farming is now possible, as the mangroves prevent the expansion of seawater into cultivated areas”, he said.

The two-day event was held with the collaboration of the Ministry of the Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries, and the Peace Parks Foundation, among other partners.

Mozambique loses around 267,000 hectares of forests per year

Mozambique loses around 267,000 hectares of forest per year, according to the National Director of Forests, Claudio Afonso.

The Director, who was speaking in Maputo on the sidelines of the First Meeting of the Technical Committee for the Implementation of the Maputo Declaration on the Sustainable and Integrated Management of the Miombo Forests, explained that with the forest areas that are lost, Mozambique could have taken advantage of non-timber forest products such as medicinal plants that could provide income.

The two-day meeting, which was opened by President Filipe Nyusi, also discussed the regulations governing the functioning of the technical and ministerial committees and the biennial action plan of the eleven countries in the Southern African region that adopted the Miombo declaration.

For the implementation of these actions, Mozambique has already raised around US\$17 million, out of a total of around US\$30 million needed for the implementation of the plan of action which should be in force for two years.

The Miombo forest in Mozambique occurs in the northern part of Inhambane province in the south of the country and across all of the central and northern provinces.

The pressure on the resources of the Miombo forest, according to Afonso, is at its most intense in the provinces of Zambezia, Nampula, and Niassa, despite the low population density of Niassa.

Participating in the event included national directors of forests from the eleven countries that adopted the Miombo Declaration, members of the SADC secretariat, staff from related ministries, cooperation partners and members of the “Miombo Network”.

The Miombo Declaration was adopted in August 2022 and establishes the need for the countries of Southern Africa to join efforts to increase options for the protection and conservation of the Miombo forest and the development of the Greater Zambezi region.

President Nyusi acknowledges Anglican Church's contribution to peace

President Filipe Nyusi on 31 July acknowledged the role played by the Anglican Church in achieving definitive peace, taking into account the closure of the last military base of the former rebel movement Renamo in June.

The base was closed under the DDR (Demobilisation, Disarmament and Reintegration) programme between the Mozambican government and Renamo, now the main opposition party. Since 2019, a total of 16 Renamo bases have been dismantled.

The recognition was expressed in Maputo during an audience granted to the Council of Anglican Provinces in Africa (KAPA) which brings together several bishops from the continent with the mission of promoting peace and social harmony.

“The DDR process is long and will require the contribution of everyone, including the church, for its role in building and moralising society,” President Nyusi said, stressing that the religious mission has been helping in the fight against terrorism in the northern province of Cabo Delgado.

“Together with the church, we spread messages appealing to young people not to take part in terrorism. We promote initiatives aimed at empowering youth in the affected areas. Progress is being made through solidarity in the region”, he added.

During the courtesy meeting, which lasted just over half an hour, the President highlighted the contribution of the Anglican Church, in the person of Bishop Dinis Sengulane, in the negotiations that culminated in the signing of the General Peace Agreement, in October 1992, in Rome, which ended the 16-year war of destabilisation

He noted that Anglican bishop Carlos Matsinhe has accepted the challenge of leading the National Elections Commission (CNE) in organising this year’s municipal elections and the general elections scheduled for 2024.

For his part, Matsinhe praised how the government has been able to deal with religious denominations in Mozambique, to guarantee a harmonious and fruitful relationship. He noted that the preparations for the municipal elections, scheduled for 11 October are making good progress, and are now at the stage of registering candidates. “The relationship between our State and the Church is healthy and has allowed the Church to play its role”, said Matsinhe. “With regard to the preparation of the elections, we are on a good path and we hope that everything goes well.”

European Union to support State Budget

The European Union will disburse €430 million (US\$472 million) to support the Mozambican State Budget in 2024. This was guaranteed by Jose Fernandes, a member of the European Parliament (MEP), after a meeting in Maputo on 27 July with the Mozambican Minister of Economy and Finance, Max Tonela.

“Even with this support, we think that there are still a lot of mechanisms that can be used to help the

development of Mozambique. It can be through the European Fund for Development, which provides loans made available by European Union funds”, said Fernandes.

According to Fernandes, the economy has been recovering through updates and improvements in the financial system. “We notice that the Mozambican government is modernising the economy. We think that the creation of the sovereign wealth fund will allow the country to save the revenues from the export of natural gas and strengthen the economy”, the MEP said.

Fernandes also mentioned that the European Union intends to continuously support Mozambique to face humanitarian crises caused by natural disasters, in addition to disbursing €90 million to strengthen peace through its military force in the northern province of Cabo Delgado, which has been plagued by Islamist terrorism since 2017.

“We are available to support Mozambique in the modernisation of its financial system”, he added.

Fire rips through Quelimane central market

A devastating fire on 1 August destroyed at least 700 stalls in the main market of Quelimane, capital of the central province of Zambezia.

Eyewitnesses told AIM that the first flames were seen inside the market at around 04.30 and quickly spread from stall to stall. “Early in the morning, me and my other taxi driver friends saw smoke in that area of the market but at first we assumed it was just burning of garbage”, said Bonito Alferes.

At around 05:40, AIM witnessed the spread of the flames, which caused some stall owners to put in place preventive measures against the fire while they waited for the fire brigade. A crowd, including owners and their friends, swarmed into the burning market, trying to put out the fire and recover their belongings to minimise the damage. However, the intensity of the flames was such that the destruction of many of the stalls could not be avoided.

The victims of the fire, visibly upset, lamented the slowness and ineffectiveness of the fire brigade (SENSAP). “We called the fire department, which is right here next to the market, but they came to the fire two hours after the event, without the logistical capacity to douse the flames”, said Liano Angel, one of the traders.

The Zambezia commander of SENSAP, Andre Cazangua, said it was premature to provide details about the cause of the fire, but he suggested it was caused by a short circuit. “There are several scenarios, among them problems where meals are prepared, the quality of the electrical installations, and the charging of cell phone batteries through rudimentary means”, said Cazangua.

Reacting to the alleged ineffectiveness of his staff, the commander recognised that this resulted from the lack of material and the obsolete state of the three fire engines in operation in the province.

Before the fire, there were 5,036 stalls in the Quelimane central market.

Documentary highlights history of surfing in Mozambique

By John Hughes

A new documentary “Chasing the Unicorn” traces the history of surfing in Mozambique since the end of the war of destabilisation in 1992 and the rise of the sport amongst young Mozambicans.

Before the 1992 General Peace Accord ended the conflict between the government and the rebel movement Renamo, the country was anything but a tourist destination, although a South African exile that I knew did drive from Harare to Beira in the late 1980s, ostensibly to “go surfing”.

Almost before the ink was dry on the peace agreement South African surfers began travelling up the Mozambique coast, beginning in Ponta Do Ouro, then to the island of Inhaca, before reaching Tofinho in Inhambane province.

This is the story of their pioneering exploration of the coast for world-class surfing waves and includes footage of the international surfing competition Gotcha Experience that took place in Ponta do Ouro in 1998.

One of those pioneers was the famous free surfer Frankie Oberholzer who sailed a yacht north from Richard’s Bay in South Africa. In the documentary, he explains “We just heard there’s waves in Mozambique and went for a look”. A storm almost cut his adventure tragically short but he survived and the boat sought shelter in Inhaca where he found “the best waves that I have ever seen”.

The documentary also highlights the development of the sport amongst Mozambicans through interviews with the country’s leading surfers, Julia Fernando and Sung Min Cho. It shows how youngsters are being given the opportunity to take up the sport through clubs such as the Tofo Surf Club.

The film, directed by Will Bendix and released on 25 July, contains wonderful footage of Mozambique’s coast and surf and should boost international tourism. It can be viewed on YouTube at tinyurl.com/ywkdjs6t

Fisheries production reaches over 200,000 tonnes in first quarter

The Minister of the Sea, Inland Waters and Fisheries, Lidia Cardoso, announced on 31 July that fisheries production in the country reached 218,000 tonnes during the first half of 2023.

The minister highlighted the role of artisanal fishing which contributed 95 per cent of the total. Industrial and semi-industrial fishing contributed to four per cent of the total and aquaculture just one per cent.

The minister was opening the First Session of the National Fisheries Administration Commission in Maputo. This is a Government advisory body for the administration and management of fisheries resources.

In the same period, said the minister, 618 aquaculture fishermen were trained and 155 fishponds were built. “We made available the stocking of 595 tanks, financed

197 beneficiaries in goods and equipment and signed 11 contracts with suppliers worth 80 million meticaais (US\$1.25 million), to benefit 689 people”, she said.

In the last two years, warned the minister, average fishing yields have shown a downward trend in some fisheries, caused by overfishing, persistence of harmful practices, reduction of potential fishing areas by other industries, marine pollution, the degradation of marine environments, as well as the effect of climate change.

However, Cardoso stated that despite the adversities affecting the sector, overall fisheries production is tending to increase. “This improvement in production resulted in a contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 1.6 per cent and a global value of US\$551 million”, she said.

Regarding the challenges that the sector faces, Cardoso highlighted the fight against illegal fishing and marine pollution (in particular plastic waste); the regulation of fishing and aquaculture activities; and the management of conflicts arising from fishing activities. “These are situations that draw our collective attention to the combination of efforts, with a view to dealing with these problems”, she said, adding that “for the second half of this year, the fisheries sector expects, in addition to training fishermen and aquaculture farmers, the mass construction and provision of tanks and pens”

“We also hope to intensify inspection actions in inland waters, to reduce illegal fishing and the use of non-recommended fishing gear”, she added.

Sasol commissions Mozambique gas facility

The South African petrochemical giant Sasol on 25 July announced that the construction and commissioning of its initial gas facility for its Production Sharing Agreement (PSA) project in the southern Mozambican province of Inhambane has been safely completed within cost and on schedule.

Sasol pointed out in its report for the first half of 2023 that this had been achieved despite the impact of tropical cyclone Freddy which hit Inhambane in February. It added that it will begin processing the natural gas once Mozambique’s regulator has issued an operating license.

Sasol has been operating in Mozambique since 2004 and operates the Pande and Temane onshore gas fields in Inhambane. It has a gas processing plant at Temane from which gas is transported by pipeline to South Africa. Some of the gas is taken from the pipeline for industrial use in southern Mozambique, including the production of electricity.

Eventually, gas will be used to power the Temane thermal power station (CTT) which, when operational, will produce 450 megawatts of electricity. This will be an increase of 16 per cent in Mozambique’s installed electricity generation capacity.

The main purpose of the CTT is to meet domestic demand under the programme for universal access to electricity by 2030. It will also help drive industrialisation and consolidate Mozambique’s position as a regional electricity pole.

Transport Ministry proposes change in working hours

The Transport Ministry is proposing to change working hours in the Greater Maputo Metropolitan Area to stagger the rush hour and improve mobility.

According to a report on 1 August in the daily newspaper "O Pais", the main proposal is that working hours for most of the public administration should run from 08.30 to 16.30, rather than the current hours of 07.30 to 15.30.

The private sector in Maputo currently works from 07.30 to 12.00, has a two-hour break, and then works from 14.00 to 17.00. The new proposal seeks to scrap the two-hour break. The working day would run from 08.00 to 17.00.

Under the Transport Ministry proposal, health units would work from 06.30 to 17.00, instead of from 07.30 to 15.30. Banks and insurance companies which currently work from 08.00 to 15.30 would instead operate from 09.00 to 17.00.

The other sectors covered by the Government's proposal are large supermarkets, wholesale trade, retail trade, municipal markets, schools and universities.

According to the proposal, the change in working hours could lead to a decline in passengers of 55,000 in the morning rush hour, which could make a significant difference to Maputo's congested roads.

At this stage, the proposal is that the new schedule be tested only in the Greater Maputo Metropolitan Area.

"The objectives of this measure are to reduce the peak period, especially the morning peak; reduce overcrowding of vehicles, and increase speed on the roads, which will have an impact on the reduction of operating costs; reducing congestion, stress and accidents. It will reduce waiting time for transport at peak hours", says the Ministry document.

The proposal for the new working hours was supposed to be discussed on 31 July by the Consultative Labour Commission (CCT), a consultative body that brings together the Government, the trade unions and the employers. However, the discussion has been postponed.

India invested US\$316 million over last decade in Mozambique

India has invested around US\$316.4 million over the last ten years in Mozambique, particularly in the sectors of agriculture, agro-processing, hydrocarbons, agricultural marketing, energy, logistics, the pharmaceutical industry, and medical services.

This amount, according to the Minister of Industry and Trade, Silvino Moreno, speaking at the Mozambique-India Business Forum held in Maputo, places India in sixth position on the list of the ten biggest investors in the Mozambican market.

"The growing presence of large companies from India in the areas of mineral resources, pharmaceuticals and hospitals in Mozambique highlights the strategic

dimension of the bilateral relations between the governments of India and Mozambique, which has been translated into joint actions within the framework of the development process focused on priority sectors with an impact on improving the living conditions of our peoples", Moreno said.

According to the Minister, "the competitive, entrepreneurial and diversified capacity that India has in terms of capital, technology, experience and partnership, makes it a privileged partner of Mozambique."

Moreno also said that India is a strategic trading partner, being responsible for 15 per cent of national exports.

"Over the last five years, our trade balance has seen India as a strategic partner for Mozambique, the third largest partner in terms of exports with a total of over US\$5.8 billion, which is 15 per cent of the total volume of exports", he noted.

On the same occasion, the Indian High Commissioner in Mozambique, Shri Ankan Banerjee, said that Mozambique constitutes a great source of agricultural resources for that Asian country.

"Mozambique is an important source of critical resources for India's agriculture. Mozambique has exported US\$1.2 billion of agricultural products in recent times. Mozambique is also an important destination for pharmaceutical products from India", he concluded.

The "Mozambique and India Fair and Exhibition" was a two-day event to promote business opportunities, investments and partnerships between businessmen from both countries.

FIDA disburses US\$4.2 million for food security

The International Fund for Agricultural Development (FIDA) has disbursed about US\$4.2 million to support food security and increase incomes for households located in the remote regions of Mozambique.

The support, according to the Maputo daily "Noticias", was formalised through a memorandum of understanding signed between FIDA and the Mozambican Government during the visit to Mozambique of the Norwegian Minister of Integrated Development, Anne Tvinnerein.

According to Tvinnerein, who visited 129 farmers in Moamba district, in Maputo Province, there is a need to support smallholder farmers and invest in the value chain to boost food security in African countries and provide more income for households.

For her part, the FIDA director for East and Southern Africa, Sara Mbagobhunu, said that "the agency is actively promoting food production and diversity, as well as promoting the increase in incomes and jobs."

The United Nations has recently revealed that about 700 million people are suffering from hunger in the world, and this undermines the goals and efforts designed to end hunger by 2030, under the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Foreign prisoners to be repatriated

Mozambique will repatriate over 30 foreigners who are currently serving prison sentences in the country, according to a report in the Maputo daily “Noticias” on 24 July.

Among the prisoners are citizens from Nigeria, Tanzania, Malawi, South Africa and Bolivia, jailed for international drug trafficking.

“15 prisoners, between 20 and 60 years of age, are detained at Machava Maximum Security Prison and others are locked up in the Ndlavela Female Penitentiary”, said Bertha Zitha, a judge on the Maputo Provincial Court.

According to Zitha, the Maputo Provincial Court has already repatriated two Venezuelan nationals, using Mozambican funds. “However, many prisoners do not wait for our procedures, and they end up paying for the journey with their own money. After being returned to their country of origin, the individuals can only enter Mozambique again after 10 years”, the judge said.

She added that repatriation only happens after the prisoners have served at least half of their sentences.

US\$120 million needed to rehabilitate roads hit by natural disasters

The Mozambican government needs about eight billion meticais (US\$125 million) to finance road rehabilitation projects, in the context of improving access in the sections affected by natural disasters.

According to Helio Banze, the permanent secretary in the Ministry of Public Works, cited by the Maputo daily “Noticias”, the amount will be used to rehabilitate 8,784 kilometres of road, 23 bridges and 14 embankments.

“From last year to the first quarter of the current year, work was undertaken on 529 kilometres of roads that provide access to production zones out of the 635 kilometres that were planned”, he said.

The roads were rehabilitated in the districts of Erati, Mussoril, Mogincual, Memba, and Monapo, in the northern province of Nampula.

“The work also included the districts of Maganja da Costa, Mocubela, Pebane, Morrumbala, Luabo and

Chinde, in the central province of Zambezia. The rehabilitation was carried out in the context of the Integrated Rural Development Project (IFRDP)”, he added.

Road fund raises over US\$15 million

The Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Mozambique’s Road Fund, Angelo Macuacua, has revealed that the tolls installed just over a year ago on national roads, mainly on the main north-south highway (EN1), have already earned one billion Meticaais (US\$15.7 million).

“The objective was to generate resources to maintain the roads and this is being achieved”, Macuacua told the press recently, on the sidelines of the Annual Joint Evaluation Meeting of the Integrated Road Sector Program, 2022.

According to Macuacua, the amount is already being used for road rehabilitation and maintenance, and this means that the objectives of the tolls are being achieved.

The toll gates, seven in total, installed under the Sustainable Road Maintenance Program (PROASME), raised controversy when they were installed on various national roads.

They have been operational since June 2022, and the tolls paid range from 50 Meticaais to 1,000 Meticaais, depending on the nature of the vehicle, with the largest tolls being paid by the heaviest trucks.

These fees are applied at the tolls of Chidenguele on the Xai-Xai -Zandamela section of EN1; Nhacundela which covers the Zandamela - Lindela section; Malova, on the Lindela - Nhachengue section and Mapinhane, which is between Nhachengue and Pambara, all located in the south of the country.

There is also the Camuaza - Chenga toll gate, located on the EN7 highway between Catandica and Changara, in the central province of Manica. These fees are also applied at the Congerenge toll gate, between Lichinga and Mandimba; and at the Utukulo toll gate, between Mandimba and Cuamba, both on the EN13 road, in the Northern Province of Niassa.
