



The Russian made twin-jet Tupolev TU134 aircraft of President Samora Machel which crashed yesterday.

PW expresses 'deep ^{lit.} regret and shock'

THE State President, Mr P W Botha, has expressed his "deep regret and profound shock at the death of President Samora Machel," a spokesman said in Pretoria.

In the first official confirmation of Pres Machel's death from South African authorities, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Pik Botha, also expressed his "sincere condolences" and said he was leaving Pretoria immediately for the crash site.

"I am at the disposal of the Mozambique Government to assist in any arrangements which have to be made."

Personal messages of condolences have also been sent to Mrs Graca Machel by the wife of the State President, Mrs Elize Botha, and the wife of Mr Pik Botha, Helena.

Spokesmen said the Minister of Transport, Mr Hendrik Schoeman, had set up a Commission of Inquiry to conduct an immediate full investigation into the accident.

Mr Pik Botha said the State President had indicated experts from the International Civil Aviation Association were welcome to participate in the investigation.

The Foreign Minister is to be assisted at the site of the air crash by the Minister of Defence, General Magnus Malan, and the Chief of the SA Air Force, Lt-Gen Denis Earp.

A spokesman for Mr P W Botha said from the President's Office the South African Head of State "has expressed his deep regret and profound shock at the death of Pres Samora Machel and members of his entourage in an air disaster near the border between South Africa, Swaziland, and Mozambique."

"South Africa has lost an influential ally in its efforts to develop the econ-

omies of Southern Africa since the signing of the Nkomati Accord."

Mr Botha had "come to know and respect President Machel," and they had last had "cordial discussions" at the coronation of Swaziland's new King earlier this year.

The spokesman pointed out that as recently as last week (in Potgietersrus) Mr Botha had expressed the hope the Nkomati Accord could still be of great assistance to efforts in the region directed at the establishment of sound economic relations between the states of the region.

"The State President expressed on behalf of himself, Mrs Botha, the Government and the people of South Africa, deep regret at the tragedy and offered his condolences to the families of the victims and to the people of Mozambique."

In his message, Mr Pik Botha said: "I personally came to know President Machel as one of the great leaders of Africa for whom I had the highest respect and regard as a leader and a man.

"He was someone with whom I could discuss the many problems confronting our two countries, our region and our continent.

"Despite the differences between our two governments, our problems became easier to handle after discussion of them with President Machel."

Pres Machel was "a statesman of stature" whose courage had contributed to the peace of the Southern African region, the leader of the Progressive Federal Party, Mr Colin Eglin, said yesterday.

A statement released by Mr Eglin's office said he had sent a message to the government of Mozambique expressing his "sincere condolences with you and the people of Mozambique on the tragic death of your president." — Sapa.

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