

## Mozambique: Rationale for Sending Unemployed to Countryside

Maputo in English for southern Africa 1100 gmt 21 Jul 83

Text of station commentary:

A major campaign has been under way in Mozambique for the last month, with the aim of taking the unemployed out of the cities and providing them with productive jobs in the countryside. Mozambique is not the first undeveloped country to make such a move. The same thing has been tried in many nations of Africa, Asia, and Latin America. More often than not the experiment has failed to produce the desired results: People simply drifted back to the towns.

It can reasonably be asked, therefore, whether Mozambique has any chance of succeeding where the others failed. To answer that question, it is necessary to look at the fundamental reason for the influx into the towns, and this is that people believe that life is better in the towns than it is in the countryside. People who are forcibly removed from the towns and sent back to the countryside will only stay there if they have a good reason for doing so.

One such reason could be fear. This is what happens, for example, in South Africa: People who are removed from the urban areas in South Africa are dumped in bantustans, where it is difficult, if not impossible, to grow enough food for themselves. But the majority are afraid to go back to the towns because they know they will be arrested. It is easy for the police to identify them: They are black. This is the uncivilized and brutal way of controlling urban influx.

The alternative is shown by Mozambique. It is not by chance that the present campaign to get the unemployed back into production is accompanied by a large-scale decentralization at the top and middle levels of government and the Frelimo party. Three members of the Frelimo Political Bureau have been sent to run provinces far from Maputo. A few days ago 100 highly qualified Mozambican officials were given key jobs in the provinces. Until now they have been sitting behind desks in Maputo.

This is an effort to take skills into the countryside and to improve the standard of living there for the broad masses, and, alongside this effort, financial resources are being redirected to the rural areas. There is now much more to buy there in terms of consumer goods, farm tools, and seeds. So, the removal of the unemployed from the cities should not be seen in isolation. The countryside they are moving into is not a wasteland forgotten by the government. This countryside is a priority for the government's human and material investment. Life there will improve, and that is why the people will stay.