

KENYA: Peace maker ION 29/7/89

The efforts towards a peaceful settlements in Mozambique and Ethiopia have thrust Kenyan diplomacy into the lead mediation role. This role of peace maker in Africa has eluded President **Daniel arap Moi** in spite of previous and enormous efforts he has made. The outcome of initiatives in Uganda, the Horn of Africa and Sudan have left Kenyan leadership, with its aspiration to be seen as an African statesman, regretful and frustrated.

These sensibilities account for the zeal with which President Moi has now embarked upon mediating between RENAMO and Mozambique's President **Joaquim Chissano**. Moi's fear of failure is such that he flew to Maputo last week to ensure the initial setback for talks in Nairobi (the non-appearance of RENAMO representatives (ION N'392)) will not mar developments.

Accompanied by Kenyan Minister of Energy, **Nicholas Biwott** and Minister of Tourism **Katana Ngala**, two major confidants, Moi received assurances from Maputo that Kenya's mediation (scorned by radical elements in FRELIMO for its moderate outlook) would go ahead.

In Nairobi, the Kenyan President appealed to Kenyans to pray for peace in Mozambique. The Christian sentiment is deep-rooted in Kenya and President Moi knows his call will satisfy the Vatican which is supporting the peace initiatives. Moreover, Moi made sure the three FRELIMO delegates received maximum publicity.

As for the conflict in Ethiopia, EPLF (*Ethiopian People's Liberation Front*) Secretary General, **Issayas Aferwerki** was treated to a similar shower of publicity by Kenya's President Daniel arap Moi shortly before the latter went to Addis-Ababa to meet with Ethiopian President **Mengistu Haile Mariam** to make his position, in favour of immediate talks with the EPLF rebels, clear to him. Moi's meeting with Aferwerki and the subsequent summit with Mengistu are remarkable on two levels.

An EPLF official described Moi's action as "*courageous*", "*realistic*" and "*unprecedented*" since most African countries want to ignore the Eritrean conflict. On another level, it clearly shows Moi's disaffection with Mengistu's policies, especially following the coup attempt. And this despite the military pact Kenya has with Ethiopia which used to be considered as its regional ally. Whereas Moi's involvement in the peace settlement in Mozambique could only bring him esteem and respect as Kenya's national interests are not threatened, the concern for the Ethiopian problem reflects genuine anxieties about the increasing militarisation in the region which has implications for Kenya's stability.