

Samora, Botha sign pact

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From Hamidu Bisanga

Nkomati, Friday.
MOZAMBIKAN President Samora Machel and South African prime minister Pieter Botha, today signed a non-aggression and good neighbourliness agreement between their two countries here.

Both leaders hailed the Nkomati Accord, signed at the banks of Nkomati River on the common border, as a breakthrough in the quest for peaceful co-existence between Mozambique and racist South Africa.

Ndugu Samora said after the colourful ceremony that the Nkomati Accord had an important role to play for the development of his country, which could not be achieved without peace and tranquility.

He said peaceful co-good neighbourliness were the only rational alternative for "our future to be free of the spectre of violence and destruction."

He stressed, however, that his country would continue to reject relations with other countries, especially in the economic field, which would make it dependent on others.

"In the economic sphere, let us find ways of developing resources, infrastructures and circumstances which, being part of the experience of our relations, are likely to bring reciprocal advantages and benefits on the basis of equality," he said.

Ndugu Machel paid tribute to Presidents Nyerere, Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia and the general role played by Heads of State of the Frontline States in the quest for peace, progress, Justice and equality in southern Africa.

Botha said by signing the non-aggression pact with Mozambique, South Africa had opted for peace, harmony and the need to work together in the pursuit of common interests.

He said the two neighbours had chosen means which "may point in opposite directions", of freeing the peoples of both countries from

poverty, ignorance and disease, "but we cannot allow our divergent outlooks on life to distract us from the urgent need to create better opportunities for our people."

Botha said the Nkomati Accord was "an act of faith". Given a climate of stability and mutual co-existence, "we will be able to focus our energies on the problems which really matter in our region, and get to work on the fundamental requirements of our people," he said.

The two countries also agreed to form a joint commission comprising high ranking officials to supervise and monitor implementation of the agreement.