

MAPUTO by Christmas — that is the good news for holiday-hungry South Africans after the latest rounds of talks between South Africa and Mozambique.

But indications are that a holiday in Mozambique will, initially, be nothing like the pre-independence Lourenço Marques holidays fondly remembered by thousands of South Africans.

The biggest stumbling-block to the ambitious promotion of tourism is the security problem caused by the Renamo rebels and the lack of a tourism infrastructure.

But three days of talks on the sub-tropical island of Inhaca off the Maputo coast between a South African Tourism Board delegation led by chairman Mr Danie Hough and a Mozambican delegation led by the Secretary of State for Tourism, Mr Antonio

Mozambique holidays by Christmas!

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By STEPHAN TERBLANCHE

Materula, could have cleared the way for the re-introduction of South African tourism.

Although Mozambique has been reduced to pressing poverty in the 10 years since independence, the tremendous post-Nkomati Accord spirit of goodwill towards South Africa and Mozambique's overwhelming beauty and natural potential for tourists will dramatically facilitate the task of the joint tourism developers.

Also in Inhaca during the three days was a delegation of Trans-

vaal Lowveld businessmen led by Mr Johanne Henn, mayor of Komatipoort, who signed a declaration of intent with the Mozambicans signalling the establishment of Repmosa, the joint Mozambican and South African development company, and an immediate start with several joint commercial projects.

"This is the first concrete result since we started negotiating after the Nkomati Accord," said Mr Materula at the signing, which took place in true Nkomati fashion under a large tree on the lawns of the Inhaca Hotel overlooking the Indian Ocean and nearby Portuguese islands.

Whereas almost all Mozambi-

cans readily concede that Mozambique is going through extremely hard times, with shop shelves bare except for the most basic foods, tourism at a standstill, agricultural development blocked by Renamo and hardly any foreign investment being generated, there is evidence of a tremendous enthusiasm to uplift the country and welcome back South African traders and tourists.

Because of security and infrastructure problems, initial tourist developments will concentrate on the numerous scenic islands off the coast.

Hotels in Maputo itself are either in a state of neglect or are

filled with foreign diplomats, technicians and advisers.

Existing facilities on the islands such as Inhaca will be upgraded, South African travel agencies will be invited to join in the development of tourism, the South African Tourism Board will promote package deals abroad for travel to Southern Africa, which will include Mozambique, and supplies will have to be brought from South Africa.

Mozambicans are also anxious not to disturb the ecology, and members of the two delegations say the reported efforts of the South African hotel group, Sun International, to build a new hotel

in Inhaca or on other islands will probably not be allowed.

After tourism on a small scale gets off the ground the two delegations see further development of coastal resorts and Maputo itself as the next phase.

It also emerged from the talks that the South African Parks Board will assist Mozambique in a joint venture in the area adjoining the Kruger National Park.

Whereas the South African Tourism Board is engaged in marketing tourism to Mozambique, the first active steps to implement the new project will follow the declaration of intent signed by the Lowveld liaison

committee and the Mozambicans.

One of the first projects involves the bringing of South African farmers to Mozambique to develop a 1000ha agricultural project.

The Lowveld liaison committee will also be bringing limited numbers of South African tourists for short island holiday packages to Mozambique and will initiate the opening and supply of marine sports shops.

Companies and projects will be run on a basis of 50 percent shareholding by the Mozambican Government and 50 percent to be held by South African companies.

The commercial agreement reached between the South Africans and Mozambique will be valid for 12 years, after which it can be extended for a further six years.