

B. AFRICA

MOZAMBIQUE: PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS TO MAPUTO RALLY ON PROPOSALS FOR CONSTITUTIONAL REFORM

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Radio Mozambique, Maputo, in Portuguese 0822 gmt 9 Jan 90

Excerpts from third part of relay of speech by President Joaquim Chissano at a mass rally in Maputo (ME/0662 B/1)

... The management of social and economic units must comply with existing labour legislation. It should not unnecessarily delay the solution to just issues presented by workers and must hold continuous dialogue with structures organising and representing workers. I am now going to deal somewhat at length with the current wave of strikes.

When we heard of the strikes, we waited for the relevant authorities to solve the labour disputes. However, when we saw the manner in which events were taking place, we urged the relevant organisations to conduct a study. We asked the OTM [Mozambique Workers' Organisation] to conduct a study amongst trade unions not solely linked to sectors affected by workers' demands. The OTM worked rapidly, and we praise it for that. We asked the Party to conduct a survey among its grass roots organisations. The Party's city committee was fast and efficient, and we praise it for that. We held a Council of Ministers session on Saturday [6th January] to assess the situation from a sectoral standpoint. It made a quick, but profound evaluation of the situation.

We have here the OTM report, which does not differ from the Party report. After assessing these reports, we concluded that there were just and honest demands by workers. However, not all of them are honest in that they are not based on good faith. Just and honest demands should deserve an early study and solution. ... One cannot be honest or act in good faith and demand the impossible. ... Therefore, when one demands the impossible and the unviable, with no previous assessment of the situation, or when solutions are advanced without even assisting government, the employer and the enterprise to find a solution, then we have a dishonest demand. We have concluded that there are honest demands, the solution to which can be within the reach of enterprises and government. All that is needed is an orderly debate by those involved. However, because this has not often been done, due to negligence and thoughtlessness on the part of some officials, we have been faced with unwanted situations.

Therefore, we have instructed the Council of Ministers to order each minister to assess whether his sector is faced with labour disputes. He should ask the management of all enterprises under his jurisdiction to make an in-depth study with workers to find concrete solutions to problems that have been raised. We have also urged the managers of enterprises to be consistent and adhere to existing legislation. The Council of Ministers will continue to study ways to control the situation efficiently. This will not always be possible. Right now, each minister needs greater co-operation from workers, and a

mutual trust ought to be established between ministries' directors and between the latter and managers of enterprise and workers. ...

Well, I might as well disclose that a study has been completed by the Council of Ministers. There were no strikes when we embarked on this study. The Council of Ministers has decided to present to the international community a provision whereby a social rehabilitation programme should be included in the Economic Rehabilitation Programme. Our PRE will be known as PRES, the Economic and Social Recovery Programme. No striking worker ordered the government to do this; it was the outcome of an assessment of PRE. This was not the first time that we wanted to make this change. However, the stubbornness of certain circles in the international community forced us not to introduce social rehabilitation into PRE. There are vulnerable sectors of the population that have been affected by the recovery programme, although the latter is designed to solve their problems on a long-term basis.

In addition to that appeal, the Council of Ministers has taken a number of concrete measures. For instance, it has drafted a decree that only needs to be signed and published. It is now awaiting the respective legislation before it is signed and published. The mistake we have often made is that laws were introduced but could not be implemented for lack of regulations. Alternatively, the law was implemented in a confused manner, resulting in incorrect and unreal situations. This decree deals with salary supplements for each family group. ... Without strikes, the Council of Ministers assessed the situation and realised that something had to be done. We had to put on a bold face and do something, so the Council of Ministers created this decree establishing a salary supplement for large families. The regulations will specify the conditions under which a family would be entitled to this sort of family allowance. ...

Another decree awaiting the respective regulations involves the food subsidy for the elderly, the money for which must be found somewhere. People might say: Enterprise directors buy cars, which means there's money. I have ordered a study to see what we would have achieved if these cars had not been bought. Some of the cars are bought as part of development projects; others are bought because we need them.

We used to complain about the excess number of guest workers in the country; we still complain about it. We have trained our technicians and experts. Fortunately, some of them have become available, but they work for a while and then are lured by foreign enterprises that offer conditions we cannot offer. Some of them even work in neighbouring countries and other foreign countries. ... Yet, we don't want foreign workers. To replace foreign workers, we must have national technicians to whom we must offer attractive working conditions. I am not going to elaborate on it; it's perhaps part of sociology and psychology. In the study we have made, we became aware of the main demands. We found serious irregularities in implementing Decree No 5 of 30th January 1987 on the salary

system introduced in the country as part of PRE. Such irregularities include the deficient integration of workers into company structures. Accordingly, work must be carried out with immediate effect in this field. The Council of Ministers would like to have a report so that we can know exactly what are the existing difficulties. If there are real and objective difficulties, they must be explained to workers. That is what we have decided, and I am transmitting this decision to workers, employers and directors. Please, carry out this study and then tell us. Tell us what are the difficulties in providing workers with cadre personnel and professional career opportunities. There may be financial difficulties. However, we would like to have a well-documented and convincing study so that workers can understand and determine what is possible and what is not.

We would like to have explained to us what are the reasons for the inefficient implementation of salary scales, the failure to provide bonuses as established by labour law and as stipulated in Decree 5/87, the non-implementation of legislation that provides measures to reduce the effect of the PRE on the most vulnerable people, particularly in the provision of medical assistance; the non-payment of the managerial subsidy; and the non-provision of the house rent subsidy for different categories of workers. Here, evidently, we must be aware that it is not possible to give every kind of benefit to all workers. You may say that these issues were discussed during the congress and during the preparations for the congress. It is true that these and many more problems were discussed. We asked the people to air their views and were able to hear as many opinions as possible. We then made decisions. These congress decisions must be applied, and it is not only the duty of company directors and managers to apply them. It is the duty of us all. We took part in providing ideas, and decisions were made on the basis of these ideas. Now it is the duty of us all to participate in their implementation. It is the duty of us all to once again apply our thinking and to find the best forms of applying our decisions - the fifth congress decisions.

At the highest level of the party, at the level of the government, and at the level of the People's Assembly Standing Commission, we have begun to carry out work, and here we are today to present to you a report on how we are applying the fifth congress decisions. It was necessary to carry out work in the field of the constitution - an important foundation - to enable us to move forward with security, laws and instruments that will force our people to carry out the defined tasks. That is the task we are carrying out. There are decisions which to be carried out will require regulations and legislation that must be drafted from time to time. However, there are other decisions with which, if we had made efforts to study and apply them, particularly at the workplace, we would have made far more progress.

The role of trade unions: some people are trade union members just because deductions are taken from their salary for this purpose. They are not members because they participate in discussions with the trade union to come up with measures to defend workers' interests. However, the congress adopted a decision on this. The Organisation of Trade Unions is no longer the baby of the party, whereby it must always

receive instructions on what to do. The organisation now enjoys maturity and autonomy. Workers must be able to operate within this framework as decided upon by the congress.

Many decisions were made in the fields of agriculture, industry, fisheries and so on. Activities must begin at the level of one's workplace, and then efforts must be made to co-ordinate matters with other sectors because nothing is done in isolation. There must be co-ordination between the fields of education, health, labour, housing and so on because everything is interlinked. The state apparatus organisation and the laws are interlinked. . .

However, we must begin our efforts at our workplace and then seek to co-ordinate with other fields. This is what has been lacking. It is not being applied. The implementation of the fifth congress decisions implies all this. However, as we rightly pointed out at the end of the congress - study is carried out through practice. Of course, the congress could not have provided every detail. However, it is important to find out what was said even prior to the congress and to try to implement this. We cannot just fold our arms and say: But this was discussed before the congress. What was discussed before the holding of the fifth congress is equally valid. As a matter of fact, it was on the basis of those discussions that the congress was able to adopt general decisions and guidelines. Now, it is necessary to apply these guidelines to specific cases that are different in nature. Problems are different in different fields: problems faced by schools are different from those faced by the railways; those faced by the hospitals are different from those faced by universities; those faced by dockyards are different from those faced by fisheries; and those faced by sawmills are different from those faced by co-operatives. Decisions have been adopted on all these fields. There is the party programme and economic and social directives. We must therefore carry out a study. Accordingly, we would like to call on all workers to be more co-operative. Their demands must not be stuck in a pocket or locked away in a drawer. Their demands must continue to be looked into.

However, I am not sure whether it is necessary to go to the extent that we are now seeing whereby ill persons are forgotten and abandoned and where efforts are made to prevent people from caring for the sick [Chissano referring to strike by Maputo Central Hospital workers]. That is too much, and there is nothing that justifies this. We especially have observed that the workers refuse to present themselves in an organised manner with valid spokesmen who can represent their views. This was incorrect behaviour, for just demands can be wrongly viewed and misinterpreted when they are presented in this way.

As you may have seen, it is not that we are against strikes. We are not. We are on the side of the workers and can only be on the side of the workers. You must remove from your head the idea that the government is there to oppose the workers. It is possible that a strong impasse can force workers to demand our attention. It is therefore for this reason that the constitution gives workers the right to strike when necessary and when they do so in an orderly manner and within the framework of correct professional ethics. . . To summarise what I have said about the congress and strikes: measures must be taken in collaboration with the workers as soon as possible.

In conclusion, I would like to briefly speak about the problem of peace. Why does the struggle continue? Why does the struggle continue? The struggle continues because President Arap Moi of Kenya and President Mugabe of Zimbabwe and religious leaders who are trying to create conditions for direct contacts between the government of the People's Republic of Mozambique and the leaders of the so-called Renamo obtained a reply - I spoke about this in Beira and here in Maputo, and you are already aware of it because you read newspapers - from the leaders of the so-called Renamo in which the latter said they are not ready to hold a dialogue with the government of the People's Republic of Mozambique because first, they do not recognise the existence of the People's Republic of Mozambique as a sovereign state. They do not recognise it.

Second, they do not recognise the constitution that makes the People's Republic of Mozambique what it is today, let alone the laws originating therefrom. They do not recognise the existing institutions. They do not recognise the People's Assembly, local assemblies, courts etc. In other words, for them it is as if the People's Republic of Mozambique were still a colony. They say that it is necessary to return to the period before independence in 1974 and discuss creating a transitional government, what they call a government of national unity, a government that will elect an assembly and organise elections for a constituent assembly, an assembly that will draft a constitution. This constitution would then create a new government. Accordingly, we must start from scratch.

However, we said that sovereignty lies in the people. Let us ask the people if they will allow us to talk with the armed bandits as individuals or purely and simply as Frelimo and not as a government and representatives of the People's Republic of Mozambique. Let us ask the people if they will allow us to go to Nairobi and discuss with the so-called Renamo changing everything and then signing agreements to change the constitution, and therefore accept beforehand that Renamo is another party in the country and that we should carry Renamo on our back, on a tray, or on a stretcher to implant their party here. If the people authorise us or give us a mandate to do this, we shall not need to go to Nairobi. We shall just tell them: Come. You are a party recognised by the people. Let us organise a government of national unity, and Frelimo and Renamo will contest elections. We shall have a multi-party system without the people objecting.

As for the constitution, we said we are debating the constitution. We began the debate some time back and interrupted it because of the congress. Now, we shall continue the debate. We say that individuals who are in Renamo can come and join us to debate this constitution. They may even be right around here. However, we want them to be free. Let them come and discuss all these issues we have presented here and tell us if there is a need for more corrections. If we do not come to an agreement, we shall vote. However, they say no. They say: We want Chissano to guarantee us that we are a party. We shall not hold discussions on any other basis. Well, as a result of this, there is a problem. Now, I ask you once again: Will you allow me to go and collect Mr Dhlakama and bring him here as President of Renamo so that he can also make a speech like the one I am now making, to enable you to

decide who is better and who should be President? If that is what you want I can go and collect him. Is that what you want? That is why this war is continuing. That is why the war is continuing.

President Mugabe and President Arap Moi finally decided to write a letter to Dhlakama and me. In this letter they say: It is now time for Renamo and the government - they don't say Frelimo - of the People's Republic of Mozambique to meet and hold direct talks. However, Dhlakama says: No, I don't want to hold talks with any government but Frelimo. I have a cassette of his interview with a journalist. If you want to listen to what he said, I can play it for you. . . Dhlakama says: I want to discuss matters with Frelimo and not any government. However, President Arap Moi and President Mugabe said that they recognise - and this is written in their letter - that the People's Republic of Mozambique exists as a sovereign state and that there exist a constitutional government and constitutional institutions and constitutional laws that must be respected. They went even further: they say that during the dialogue, we should base ourselves on and should consider the political experience of African countries. They say that the objectives of the talks must be peace and national unity. However, Dhlakama says: Well, this letter is very good, because the two Presidents are saying that I must hold talks with Frelimo without preconditions. However, conditions exist. The understanding of the mediators is that talks must be held with a Frelimo government, a legitimate state, which is recognised worldwide.

There isn't a single country that does not recognise the People's Republic of Mozambique, its government and its institutions. All Western and Eastern countries, all socialist, communist and capitalist countries recognise this government. It is only Dhlakama who does [not] recognise it. However, the problem is not that he does not recognise it. The problem lies in the fact that he is trying through the barrel of a gun to force the entire population to do this also. We say: Come. The people are here to hear your views. I don't know whether he is afraid of the people. I don't know. What do you think? I don't think you would eat him, would you? However, he says no. Accordingly, this is how far we have gone. The People's Republic of Mozambique has replied saying that we accept direct dialogue because we have always wanted direct dialogue but on the basis of principles. It must be a dialogue with the People's Republic of Mozambique.

As for changes to the constitution, we are the first to do this. Haven't you heard what I have just presented here? Aren't they changes? Aren't they far-reaching? However, he says that you always answer yes, yes, because I have soldiers around you. That is what he said. He said: Chissano is nuts. He asks the people whether they want Renamo. What would the people say? The people will say no, we don't want Renamo, we want Frelimo - because they are afraid. If it is true that you are afraid, I tell you now that you can freely say: President, get out of here; we don't want you anymore. I shall be very grateful. I shall be grateful and leave. . . Did I ask for this job? No, I did not ask for it; I did not ask for it. When I say I, I am also speaking on behalf of all my colleagues here. None of them here are power-hungry. . .

We have responded positively but within the framework of principles. We would like Mr Dhlakama to examine his conscience and convince himself that there is a need for peace, unity and progress in our country. All our country's laws can be changed but in an orderly manner and not through the barrel of a gun or through the decision of a small group, particularly when it comes to the constitution of the People's Republic of Mozambique. Now, I don't know whether we can continue to say the struggle continues. Perhaps you can say that I can still go and meet Dhlakama. Now, tell me, what is your decision? Tell me if I should go and meet Dhlakama. Do you have any questions?...

The nation belongs to everyone and everyone has the right to decide on the national problems. It's normal for the people of a society not to think in the same way. Problems have become even more complex. The economic situation is difficult, not just for us but for all countries in this part of the world. The way out is to create conditions so everyone can participate in solving problems, and this means democracy, namely political democracy and economic democracy. In other words, Mozambicans have the right and the duty to participate in economic initiatives for the country's progress. Progress means initiative.

An organised society means respect for the rights of others and that individual rights are respected by the state and other citizens. Progress means organisation and mutual respect. Any revision to our constitution will be valid in terms of what we respect and the content we will give to the constitution. It will, therefore, be necessary that we all study the constitution by participating in debates during the forthcoming months. The debates should be held everywhere, and everybody should air their views freely and frankly. The People's Assembly will meet after the debate to decide on a final document that will include the expressed ideas. It will, therefore, be necessary to convey the proposed changes you note. This process could gradually lead to solving the problems we face that have made our lives so difficult. Moreover, this process could also lead to normalising life in the country.

We are the ones who ought to find solutions for our country. This is a step we should take in line with national interests, by realistically searching for solutions serving our sovereign interests. This is a step that we ought to be proud to take because what we are doing now is the result of other steps that we took in the past. We wish to mark this as the beginning of a new era for democracy in our country...
