

It was undoubtedly our deep love for the fatherland and total support for our people. We always felt strong and confident because we were clear about our cause. It was because our people were equipped with strength and reason.

It is with great emotion that we are able to meet again today. This is another gathering of comrades belonging to a common cause. It is a meeting for a new beginning and a new march toward a future of certainty. We are all instilled with the same vigor and enthusiasm of the past, the same determination, happiness, and pride of having been and continuing to be our people's fighters. How many other comrades we would like to see here in our midst—comrades who were hit by the enemy's murderous bullet or died of a natural cause! How many other comrades charged with other duties would have loved to be here! You who have come here represent all of them, including those who in different forms in past centuries broke the chains of oppression and resisted foreign invaders who occupied our country. Over these centuries, thousands of Mozambicans died fighting against colonialism, and for their right to liberty, dignity, and culture.

The seed that sprung up on 25 June 1962 was born of that heritage. This seed that grew and became strong on 25 June 1962 was born of that heritage. This seed grew and became strong on 25 September 1964, and multiplied on 25 June 1975. It was from that heritage that we gained the inspiration that led us to the inevitable and natural need for unity. Following this heritage's experience and critical examination, we realized with certainty that nothing could separate us, except the line that defines the material and ideological zone of the enemy.

From the heroic resistance of our ancestors against colonialism and our liberation struggle, we forged our ideology and our political line which quickly and firmly, found our path and showed us the right decisions at the right time. Thus, because of our close liaison with the people, our methods of action and thought, our blood, our efforts in constant victories, we were able to gain the independence of our beautiful country. Today we represent the generation which took upon itself the responsibility to free the fatherland, forgetting all our individual interests, and assuming the collective sentiment of the heroes that were forged by our generation.

Let us honor those who defeated apprehension and fear, hunger and sleep, cold and weariness, those who missed their families and being at home. With this spirit and sentiment, their contribution and determination as Mozambican patriots, they made a gift of love to our people. Let us honor this generation of the era of the struggle for the national liberation, and unparalleled period in the history of the Mozambican people. They are the beloved children of our people. Their actions and their names echo in our melodies, our songs, and inspire the smiles of our children as they remember them with respect and pride.

Chissano Addresses War Veterans Association

*MB0209153388 Maputo Domestic Service in Portuguese
1100 GMT 2 Sep 88*

[Speech by President Joaquim Chissano at a conference establishing the War Veterans Association in Maputo on 2 September—recorded]

[Text] Comrade delegates, esteemed guests, on behalf of the Frelimo Party and our state leadership, as well as on my own behalf, I want to enthusiastically salute this conference's participants. I would also like to welcome all those who were chosen to attend this conference from different parts of our beloved fatherland—from the Rovuma River to the Maputo River. You are welcome to this capital of our state, freed by you and established as a free zone for mankind through your efforts. [applause]

Our objective just seemed a far-away dream and a distant goal when we began our long march toward an independent future for our fatherland 25 years ago, when, during our vigorous youth, we joined long marches to battlefields, health centers, schools, and production units. What made us so firmly determined in the face of all the difficulties? What was it that made us wage our most difficult battles with courage, without flinching?

These thousands are represented at Heroes Square, where our flowers of homage never wither. Surrounded by some of the best children of this fatherland, our best representatives are laid to rest there, side by side with Mondlane and Samora—they are heroes of our people, our struggle, men with whom we have always identified ourselves and in whom we find inspiration and wisdom.

On their behalf and on behalf of all the heroes who fell in the struggle for the liberation of the fatherland, may I ask you to observe one minute of silence. [pause; followed by singing and slogans]

Comrades, present here are representatives of men and women who have assumed the great task of freeing our country. They are the founders of the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique, which they forged and transformed into a powerful instrument for the liberation of the fatherland. They are the builders of the People's Forces for the Liberation of Mozambique. They are the militants who took up the weapons of liberty and defeated the colonial army. They are the men and women who, in the midst of the enemy, organized the clandestine struggle. They suffered imprisonment and torture at the criminal hands of the colonial International Police for the Defense of the State. They are Mozambican men and Mozambican women who by fighting, organizing, and mobilizing our people, instilled in the struggle our society's highest values. They are the builders, the producers, and exports of the experience of organization in Bagamoyo and Kongwa [Frelimo training camp during liberation struggle in Tanzania]—the experience to create a new life in our great laboratory of Nachingwea [Frelimo training camp in Tanzania] and in liberated zones.

In the struggle for liberty, our fighters, who were closely linked to our people, consolidated the meaning of our independence. New forms of production and collective work were launched, as well as the popular concept of right to education and health. We were able to forge ahead with the exercise of people's democracy. This is a conference of the forgers of national unity. It is a conference of men and women, who came from different parts of our vast country, from different tribes, different races, different ethnic and language groups, and different religious beliefs, to unite to fight a common enemy—Portuguese colonialism. It is a conference of men and women who in the process of our struggle, truly forged the Mozambican nation and built this country, united today under one flag; this people who today are united by one common patriotic ideal.

Likewise today, the fighters in the struggle for national liberation are an example of commitment, dynamism, and dedication to our people's cause and our fatherland's noble objectives. In the political and ideological work, in the work to build the Mozambique Armed Forces, in

direct confrontation with armed banditry, in rehabilitating our national economy, in the fields of health, education, culture, as well as in many other fields, the fighters in the struggle for national liberation continue to be in the vanguard. They continue to be a living example for the new generation.

Comrades, the creation of the War Veterans Association will foster the involvement of our fighters in all spheres of national activity, from the defense of the fatherland to national reconstruction, so the experience they gained in the struggle and their experience in life may continue to contribute toward peace and progress. Our association will enable us to create conditions to correctly integrate our fighters in Mozambican society. It will enable us to defend the social rights of our fighters and their families, within the spirit of social justice and as a sign of gratitude, justifying their social benefits within our law and norms. In this context, the association must guarantee the implementation of the principles defined by the party and stipulated in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Mozambique with regard to the validation of our fighters' technical, scientific, social, cultural and professional qualifications.

It is only fair that those who sacrificed the best years of their youth, fighting for the liberation of the fatherland, should be able to increase their knowledge in order to improve their contribution at the present phase. These rights are already stipulated in the revised constitution now under discussion. The fighters in the struggle for the national liberation, jointly and individually, have invaluable and irreplaceable historical knowledge. They are trustees and above all, protagonists. It is, therefore, urgent that this heritage should be transmitted to new generations. It will be the task of the association to take part in the patriotic education of our youth, with their experience, their glorious traditions of combat, study, and production, thus eternalizing the memory of Mozambicans who fell in the fight against colonialism eternal.

Thus, the War Veterans Association will guarantee the security and validation of the cultural and historical heritage of the struggle for liberation by organizing the publication of the biography of our heroes and preserving our historical places. The historical mission of our fighters for the national liberation is far from being over. I would go as far to say that it will never end. It will be a permanent source of inspiration for the future generation.

The association will contribute in an important manner to strengthening the party and state apparatus, as well as to strengthening other vital sectors of national activity by making available its most active and devoted members to the cause of revolution. Our country's social, economic, political, and cultural activities have tried to reflect the deep respect, admiration, and gratitude of our nation for the liberators of our fatherland. An example of this is seen already in our artistic and literary activity, in

our cities, and in the names of important institutions. With the creation of our association, this relationship between our fighters and the society in general is enriched.

Comrade, preparatory work for this conference was carried out throughout the country, with study meetings and discussions on the nature and the objectives of the War Veterans Association. During the period of the armed struggle for the national liberation, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique assumed full responsibility for the material welfare of its members engaged in the tasks of our revolution, in order to enable their total engagement in the tasks of the struggle.

Likewise, within the framework of a spirit of equality and in view of the situation of the militants of our liberation front, there were no defined salaries and benefits which they had a right to claim in return for the responsibilities they exercised. Over many years, this was the kind of life experienced by most of our fighters.

National independence completed a phase in the struggle of our people and brought about major transformations throughout the country. During the first years of the building of the Mozambican state, it was not always possible for us to give our fighters necessary support so they could all find, under new conditions, their rightful place in the society and in national tasks. Thus, many times the fighters did not receive the assistance and support to which they had a right. Most of them, having abandoned their education or professions when still very young, suddenly found themselves faced with problems of integration in the new economic reality with which they were unfamiliar. These fighters who had totally devoted themselves to the cause of revolution now found themselves in the company of their wives and children, without a home and without means of subsistence. In the new national context characterized by a different kind of economy and life-style, we were not always able to act to protect the interests, ensure the future, and guarantee the resolution of our fighters' individual and family problems. As a matter of fact, this situation is made worse by the fact that for most of our fighters, their only point of reference is their contribution to the struggle for the national liberation. As time goes on, our problems will increase further. These problems have had grave consequences for our economy, as a result of Rhodesian aggression and destructions caused by the apartheid regime through the armed bandits.

During the preparatory discussions for this conference, we identified problems whose solutions should be found within the state, particularly through the state secretariat for war veterans. We must carefully examine these discussions to differentiate the general measures that can be carried out by our states, so the association on its own initiative may deal with problems for which they can find solutions.

This examination, and the consequent proposals, are deeply rooted in our reality. Today, we experience a critical period in our history, caused principally by prolonged foreign aggression which uses the most criminal methods and whose aim it is to weaken our state and destroy our independence. The aim is to make the existence of any organized society in our country unviable, no matter what political path our state follows.

Our economy is basically rural and agricultural. The armed banditry concentrates its action in rural areas against agrarian production, its commercialization, and transportation. The armed banditry prevents peasant families, cooperatives, state enterprises, and private farmers from producing. They burn and steal what is produced. They prevent the movement of goods to factories and to export channels. They prevent the distribution of products required by our peasants, paralyzing our economic base, dramatically affecting our lives. Armed banditry activity affects and taints our country's moral and social fiber.

As our government had the opportunity to announce, today over 3 million Mozambicans in our country are seriously affected by the consequences of the war and natural disasters. Of this number, over 1 million are displaced people. Serious food shortages already affect about 6 million citizens in the countryside and our cities. Millions of Mozambicans are facing famine and misery—extreme misery—and have been made to depend on foreign aid. Hundreds of thousands of children and young men are socially, and in terms of family links, disintegrated. Most of our school, sanitary, and trade network in the countryside has been destroyed.

Our party defined at the internal level two major fronts of action to overcome this situation: the fight for the elimination of armed banditry and the rehabilitation of our economy. These two fronts are interlinked, and constitute two sides of the same struggle for the defense of our fatherland and our independence. The determination, the struggle experience, the courage, our mobilizing capacity, patriotism, the moral and political values of the fighters of the struggle for the national liberation are essential in this fight.

The War Veterans Association must be an instrument that will reactivate the involvement of our fighters in our people's current major tasks—in military planning or in the economic effort. The battle for the defense of the fatherland and the elimination of armed banditry must involve all the people. An essential task of this phase is the organization of all our citizens for self-defense in villages, cooperatives, towns, and enterprises. During the struggle for the national liberation, our people in the liberated zones were organized for self-defense. The enemy was not able to carry out surprise attacks on villages. We were organized for vigilance and to detect infiltration under war conditions. Facing a powerful and well-equipped enemy, our people were still able to produce in liberated zones. Production was distributed and

even exported without roads, bridges, trucks, and trains. This was made possible by the organization of our popular masses toward production under war conditions. It was our fighters who were able to organize the people in liberated zones. This experience must today become a powerful weapon in the struggle against armed banditry and rehabilitate our economy, particularly in rural areas.

Comrades, in our previous meetings and during our preparatory work for this conference, common problems and difficulties facing many of our fighters in the struggle for the national liberation, were raised. They include economic and social problems. They are problems of adaptation in life and in the tasks of our nation, problems of technical, scientific, and professional training.

We are dealing with problems made worse by our country's grave economic and social situation caused by foreign aggression through armed banditry. And a serious problem developed because of the dispersal of the fighters themselves. The association now born will enable us to systematically assess and examine the nature and causes of these problems. It will enable us to find and reactivate solutions, as well as propose measures that will lead to the resolutions, as well as propose measures that will lead to the resolution of our problems in an organized and realistic manner. It will help the state learn about the problems and the relevant solutions.

However, some problems cannot be resolved by the state, because it lacks the resources. What is more, we should not view the state as a substitute for our own capacity of creativity, organization, and realization. The fact we fought for national liberation does not negate our responsibility to fight to create living conditions for ourselves and our families. Likewise, it does not limit us in our participation in the creation of the welfare of our entire society. There should be no time when our life would simply depend on our compensation for our past deeds. When we took up arms, the only compensation we expected was the independence of our country, the liberty that now allows us to participate in creating the progress of our people. The War Veterans Association is not a government organ. It is an association which brings together the fighters in the struggle for the national liberation and which has as one of its principal objectives solutions based on the fighters own capacity.

The essential solution of our problems depends on production. By engaging ourselves in production we shall find the means for a better life, so our children may study and have the basics to grow up healthy. At the same time, it is by engaging ourselves in production that we contribute toward economic development and our country's progress. The creation of the War Veterans Association will activate its members to engage themselves in production without losing the spirit that always guided us in the struggle for the national liberation—a spirit of battle against exploitation in the concrete conditions prevailing at the moment.

Our engagement in production can be carried out in various sectors and in various ways. The establishment of production or service cooperatives, particularly in agriculture, livestock, fisheries, and in other fields of industry, in the countryside and the cities, is an important way to organize members of the War Veterans Association for production. There will be fighters who will want to carry out their activities in the fields of agriculture, livestock, transport, handicrafts, small industries, trade or services, within the private sector. This is a legitimate option which, when carried out with hard work and honesty, is not contrary to our party's principles. What is important is never to lose the understanding of the objective of our struggle in the past and the present—to defend the interests of our people.

In all sectors of activity, the fighters must develop their initiative and the association must reactivate process among its members. Fighters in the struggle for the national liberation already receive preferential credit treatment. The same is true about the allocation of land title deeds. The association will have to validate these mechanisms in relation to the fighters and propose other forms of assistance for their engagement in production. The association must also study concrete ways of developing technical, scientific, academic, and professional training of our fighters, by establishing their own training structures, using official institutions, and mobilizing international cooperation, with counterpart associations of other countries. Important steps have already been made to ensure the social security of our fighters. Thus, the effort devoted to the struggle for the national liberation has already been redoubled in the effort for reform. [applause]

In the same way, in the field of medical care, the law already provides benefits. In the field of education, the faculty of war veterans and vanguard workers has been established. However, there are still problems of social nature, of providing supplies and assistance to our fighters, their families, and to our fighters in difficult conditions. We must immediately find adequate solutions.

What is more, during the preparatory work for this conference, a number of views were brought up about social benefits. These proposals, as well as others, must be taken into account. The association must study how to use these views and how to put them into practice with or without the party's or state's assistance.

Comrade, the association of the fighters in the struggle for the national liberation bring together defenders of a unique experience which constitutes the foundation of the Mozambican fatherland. Associated with it are founders of political, social, cultural, and moral values, who contribute to defining the nature and the objectives of the society we are building—men and women who forged the principles of national unity and made the ideal of socialism spring up and flourish.

Accordingly, the War Veterans Association has a fundamental role to play in our society, as does every member. In our party, the fighters must be our backbone. They are the people who transmit and maintain the traditions of the struggle which made Frelimo's ideology, concept, and methods at all levels, from top to bottom. Their experience, knowledge, political awareness, action, and example are essential for the formation and development of our militants and cadres.

Likewise, our fighters play an important role in our armed and security forces, people's police, and formation of the militia force. Our soldiers, noncommissioned officers, and officers must possess patriotic values of respect for our people, and the courage, determination, and spirit of sacrifice which the fighters for the national liberation were able to establish in our country. In our mass democratic organizations, trade unions, Mozambican Women's Organization, Mozambican Youth Organization, our fighters have an important role to play as the transmitters of the rich experience gained in the struggle and work to organize our people in liberated zones.

Of particular importance is the role of our fighters in educating our new generation of youth and followers of the revolution. This is one of the most noble tasks that the association can organize and activate. More than half of our population is below 20 years of age. It is composed of young men who did not have a direct experience of life under colonial domination, nor of the struggle against colonialism. They did not experience the struggle for the building of unity of all Mozambicans and its importance as a fundamental weapon of the fight for independence.

We cannot allow a gap in the development of our society between the experience the Mozambican people gained during the struggle for national liberation and the process of building our country's future. If we do that, we shall not be able to defend the deep significance of the historic gains of our revolution, as well as strengthen and develop them. Our children and our youth must know our history, they should be able to recognize in our every revolutionary gain the blood and the sacrifice it represents, and they should recognize the values of the struggle of liberation and should be proud and engage themselves as followers of this fight and values.

Comrades, in the struggle for the liberation of our fatherland, we always count on the militant support and active solidarity of many men and women, organizations and institutions, parties and governments. By doing so, they gave our struggle international recognition of its just cause. Our battles attracted the voices and the friendly applause of people from other countries, other races, other continents, people with whom we shared the same ideals of liberty, dignity, and peace. During difficult and happy and victorious times, they always stood at our side, treating our seriously injured fighters, sending us drugs, school material, clothes and foodstuffs, granting us scholarships and many other forms of assistance as an expression of friendship and solidarity with us. We shall always be grateful to them. As a matter of fact, it is with deep emotion that I am able to recognize most of them who are present or represented here. I salute them all with emotion for this. Their presence here today, during this conference establishing our War Veterans Association is yet another gesture of solidarity. You are most welcome! [applause] Long live international solidarity! [audience shouts "Long live"] Long live peace! [audience shouts "Long live"]

Comrades, the Mozambican people are following with emotion the establishment of the War Veterans Association. This is an event of the highest significance for our fighters and for the whole Mozambican nation. In their relationship with our people, the fighters in the struggle for national liberation created a new culture, a culture deeply rooted in respect for the dignity of mankind, in the defense and promotion of human rights, in the validation of equality of men, work, social justice, and legality. The Mozambican nation views our fighters as founders of our state and builders of the basic values of the new society. To honor the fighters in the struggle for the national liberation is a duty of our entire nation and it will always be.

During this historic period, I would like on behalf of the Frelimo Party and the Mozambican state, on behalf of our entire people, to salute with emotion the fighters of the struggle for the national liberation and wish the delegates to this conference the best of success in their proceedings. I officially declare open the conference establishing the War Veterans Association. The struggle continues! [applause]