

'We want peace' says Maputo's top banker

By BENJAMIN POGRUND
MOZAMBIQUE wants to improve economic and commercial relations with South Africa, says Mr Prakash Ratilal, the Governor of the Bank of Mozambique.

Mr Ratilal, who is a leading member of the Frelimo government, said this during an interview in Maputo. He repeatedly stressed: "We want to develop cooperation. We want peace."

In an apparent effort to halt the decline in relations between the two countries, he urged the start of discussions about "everything that can give profit to each other".

Mr Ratilal's comments took in two key issues:

● He repeated denials made

by other Mozambique Government spokesmen that the African National Congress has any military bases in Mozambique.

"All Western ambassadors can confirm this," he said.

● Referring to the Mozambique National Resistance movement, which is waging an insurgent war, he said "there is no doubt the MNR is South African".

The MNR had destroyed about 1 000 shops in rural areas, he said, plus bridges, crops, houses, oil tanks, railways and roads.

Mr Ratilal noted that South Africa and Mozambique share a 500km border and already have relations: the port of Maputo serves

South African imports and exports, Mozambique miners work in South Africa, and energy from the Cabora Bassa hydro-electric scheme is available to South Africa.

"Why not value what is positive, instead of going around and causing us trouble?"

Mozambique wants to see "everything that is feasible — wherever there are mutual advantages we are interested.

"But this is not possible with the attacks on us. Why don't we rather speak?"

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