

MOZAMBIQUE: Direct talks to open in February ? ION 23/12/69

Intense political and diplomatic activity has been going on in the last few days over the possibility of direct negotiations for peace in Mozambique. In Maputo, it is believed that the discussions may begin in February. But before then, there are many points to be settled.

Negotiations with the RENAMO are obviously at the centre of the six-hour visit paid by South African President **Frederik De Klerk** to Maputo on December 15 (ION N°410). Mr De Klerk informed President **Joaquim Chissano** of the outcome of the secret discussions on holding direct talks which took place in November between representatives of South Africa, Kenya and the RENAMO. These talks culminated in a proposal for negotiations to be held without public acceptance by RENAMO of the principles for peace as laid down by the Mozambican government. Meanwhile, the dispute over South African aid to the guerilla force seems to have been settled for once and for all. Mr De Klerk and Mr Chissano agreed on the necessity for a united front to stop RENAMO receiving supplies from South African territory, the South African leader having acknowledged the fact that he could do nothing to control "private aid" to the guerillas.

On his way to the Summit of the five African Luso-speaking countries in Cape Verde, President Chissano made a brief stopover on December 17 in Zaire where he had a tête-à-tête with Zaire's President **Mobutu**. At the end of this meeting, President Mobutu repeated his willingness to do all that was in his power to put an end to the fighting in Mozambique. Back in June, following the Gbadolite agreements with Angola, Mr Chissano had asked Mr Mobutu to play an active role in re-establishing peace in his country. During the Praia Summit, Cape Verde's Minister of Foreign Affairs confirmed that Mr **Robert Mugabe** of Zimbabwe and Mr **Daniel arap Moi** of Kenya suggested to President Chissano that representatives of his government and the RENAMO meet and talk face to face. It was emphasised that at this meeting, the government of Mozambique and not its party, the *FRELIMO*, would be represented. The four Heads of State attending the Summit supported this project while President Chissano said that he could accept this plan only on condition that the legitimacy of the country and its institutions are respected.

I.O.N.- In Maputo, it is thought there is a chance that negotiations will begin in February, if the RENAMO gives up its demand for free elections. A confidential report from the Politburo presented this month to the Central Committee, confirms that discussions may begin once the project for the new Constitution has been completed. The Constitution provides for a multi-party system in which members of the RENAMO may participate on an individual basis. For his part, President Chissano announced that elections will take place in 1991, and every Mozambican citizen can stand for election, without being a member of FRELIMO.