

Mozambican peace talks positive, say delegates

Herald 30/1/92



ROME.

THE peace talks between the Mozambican government and the MNR yesterday centred on disagreements over the minimum age for citizens to be elected to a new parliament.

Two plenary sessions were held at the Rome headquarters of the Catholic charity, the Santo Egidio Community. The two sides are now discussing, point by point, the documents they have prepared concerning the country's future electoral law.

Sources close to the talks told AIM that the talks' meetings examined closely that, while the age for voting should be 18, only those citizens older than 25 would be eligible for election.

The government points out that the

Mozambican population is overwhelmingly young, with a relatively short life expectancy. These factors make the MNR proposal "unrealistic".

The MNR argues that while 18-year-olds have sufficient responsibility to vote, they may not possess the "maturity" required of a member of parliament.

MNR reasoning is far from clear, and one may speculate that it is trying to reconcile democracy with traditional power. The two delegations have serious disagreements on a long list of matters that are fundamental for the country's future electoral system. Debates on these questions are likely to last at least for the rest of this week.

However, the two sides say that the atmosphere at the negotiating table is "positive" and "open". — Ziana-AIM.