



**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC  
OF MOZAMBIQUE AT THE INTER-REGIONAL CONFERENCE OF  
BISHOPS FROM SOUTHERN AFRICA**

**(Extract)**

**Maputo, 18 February 1992**

The Mozambican state maintains its commitment to working for the affirmation of cooperation and solidarity, in peace, independence, justice and equality between men and nations, as the critical developmental factors for all the peoples of Southern Africa. Violence has no *raison d'être*, and dialogue must take its place.

Our efforts to find a conciliatory platform for ending the war and establishing peace and normality have not as yet achieved the desired objective. The peace talks being held in Rome, so opportunely begun, have not yet produced the hoped-for results.

The agreements reached during the peace negotiations led us to believe that the discussions on political principles would be completed relatively quickly, which would enable us to move on to the military questions and thence to the ceasefire.

However, our efforts to bring peace and tranquillity have been unsuccessful, due to positions that are nothing more than delaying tactics and that only prolong the people's suffering uselessly.

The political and socio-economic transformations that we have been implementing were enshrined in the Republic's new Constitution, which the parties to the peace talks undertook to respect.

The Constitution establishes a state of law, defends citizens' basic rights and their equality before the law, and sets out the right of every citizen to elect and be elected to the state's decision-taking bodies. It stipulates that the Assembly of the Republic is Mozambique's supreme legislative authority and is elected by universal, direct, secret and individual suffrage.

The Assembly of the Republic is therefore a sovereign body, independent of the executive and judicial powers, and constituted by freely elected citizens' representatives. The Assembly takes sovereign decisions within its sphere of jurisdiction as defined in the Constitution.

As neither the Constitution nor legislation in general are static, they can be altered so long as this is done by the bodies that have the powers to do so, and within the established organisational and legal framework.

This means, therefore, that the Assembly of the Republic that will result from Mozambique's multi-party elections will be free to make the alterations it considers necessary to legislation currently in force and to the Constitution itself, as and when it considers necessary, in the exercise of its sovereign powers within the legal framework.

We believe that the Constitution's lack of formal rigidity stems from the legislator's wish to facilitate the adjustments that the Assembly might want to make in the course of institutional and democratic development. Democracy must be developed democratically, with respect for and trust in the bodies that are freely and justly elected.