

## Tête-à-tête raises Mozambique hopes

**MOZAMBIQUE** President Joaquim Chissano and rebel leader Afonso Dhlakama met face to face for the first time on Tuesday night, raising hopes for a swift resolution to the country's civil war.

The two men talked into the early hours in a five-star Rome hotel, ahead of the formal negotiations which started several hours later on Wednesday. Also present were President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and Tiny Rowland, senior executive of the British conglomerate Lonrho,

both of whom have an interest in the future of Mozambique.

The negotiations, held under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church and the Italian government, are being hosted by Italian Foreign Minister Emilio Colombo.

Chissano and Dhlakama, leader of the rebel movement Renamo, commented that they were looking for a quick peace settlement from the current negotiations. But after two years of talks in Rome, during which agreements on elections and the formation

of political parties have been signed, there is still a wide gap to be bridged between the two sides. Military leaders are still at odds over the size and composition of the future army and the role of the secret services.

The negotiations have been given a sense of urgency by the worsening drought. As Chissano said: "There are 3.1-million people who need to be rescued and six million more in the cities who need outside help to eat. Of course, the war is making this more difficult." — Sapa-Reuter