

# Suddenly, there's life <sup>Star</sup> 9/3/93

**T**WO major events in the past four months have brought hope to a Mozambican nation that had known little but dependency for more than a decade.

One was the signing of the peace accord in Rome last October and the other was the coming of the rain.

The signing of the Rome Accord ostensibly ended 16 years civil war and will be remembered by all as a turning-point in the country's war-torn history.

But to millions of people living in Mozambique's drought-stricken areas the rains brought a far more tangible end to an equally devastating situation.

At the end of 1991, nearly 2 million people needed food just to avert starvation and as late as September last year, this number had nearly doubled.

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Many Mozambicans have for years known only misery. Now, their lives have been transformed by the twin blessings of peace and rain. MARCO GRANELLI of the Star Africa Service reports from Maputo.

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Famine relief workers launched an urgent appeal for all-out assistance to stave off a massive famine threat facing an estimated 3 million people.

In the worst cases, some isolated rural communities had been reduced to living off roots and berries and wearing clothes made from tree bark.

And then the rains came. They started in late October, coinciding roughly with the signing the Rome Accord, and relief workers held their breath that the rains would stay.

They did and with the end of hostilities peasants were able once again to go out and culti-

vate their fields — something that many had not dared to do during the war. Relief workers are now hoping that aid to the ravaged country can stop once the crops are harvested in March.

Robert Monin, joint chief of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), is optimistic.

"The real rains started in December once we had had time to distribute seeds to the worst areas. The peace agreement came just in time," he said.

Monin said there was hope for the first time that the famine had been averted. □