

Chissano, Dhlakama resolve row

MAPUTO. NEGOTIATIONS on Mozambique's first multi-party elections were back on track yesterday, following agreement between the government and its main rival on the vexed issue of expatriate votes.

President Joaquim Chissano and the leader of Renamo, Mr Afonso Dhlakama, agreed on

Thursday to allow a multi-party National Elections Commission to decide whether Mozambicans working or studying abroad should have the right to vote.

The Maputo meeting between Cde Chissano and Mr Dhlakama ended a two-week wrangle over the issue between high-ranking government and Renamo delegations.

The government had argued that Mozambicans abroad had a constitutional right to vote at their nearest embassy, while Renamo said embassy staff could manipulate the ballot in the government's favour.

Renamo also argued that Mozambique migrant miners in South Africa were unduly influenced by the ruling Frelimo party.

The row had threatened to scupper the government's plan to have its Electoral Bill approved by a special session of parliament this month, giving time to organise multi-party elections for next October. — Ziana-Reuter.