

:mission:

Maputo, oct 25, reuter -- The south african government pushed ahead with its diplomatic offensive in Africa on *Tuesday* with two unprecedented ceremonies in neighbouring mozambique.

A south african delegation led by foreign minister pik botha flew into maputo in the morning and went directly to a monument, erected in the city in colonial times, commemorating an afrikaaner pioneer, louis trinchardt.

The ceremony marked the 150th anniversary of the death of trinchardt, one of the leaders of the great trek in the 1830s. Trinchardt ended up in Delagoa bay, now Maputo, and died here of malaria in 1838.

Botha, accompanied by manpower minister piet du plessis and deputy foreign minister kobus meiring, laid a wreath in the memorial garden which was built in 1968 above trinchardt's grave.

In an apparent message to afrikaaner voters in tomorrow's municipal elections in South Africa, where the right wing conservative party is mounting a strong challenge, Botha said that trinchardt's group had got as far as the mozambican coast because "they achieved unity among themselves".

This was the first time since mozambique won independence from portugal in 1975 that a top-level south african government delegation had staged a ceremony at the memorial. The proceedings took place before about two dozen reporters, photographers and tv personnel who flew in from south africa with the official delegation.

The second ceremony of the day took place at the offices of the south african trade mission. Under an agreement reached in 1984, south africa knocked down its old building and put up new offices, prefabricated in durban, on the same site.

*Today* was inauguration day and the ceremony was attended by foreign diplomats, invited guests, Botha's press entourage and three mozambican cabinet ministers.

Until now the mission has been low-key, and there has been nothing remotely resembling a diplomatic reception. But on Tuesday a south african flag was hoisted aloft in the garden and the ambassadors of the united states and other western countries rubbed shoulders with the one hundred or so south africans flown in for the event.

In a speech, pik botha said: "I expect people will criticise me for being here today but they will also criticise the mozambican government. But in Africa they will support us for normalising relations".

He said the old boer republic of transvaal had established a representation in this city in 1862 and, with some interruptions, this presence had continued throughout the years.

"Anybody who says that what is happening here today is new is a liar", said Botha.

The senior mozambican official present, Cooperation minister jacinto veloso, said in a prepared speech: "I would like to express my desire to see the activity which goes on in this building increase significantly in the near future."

In an apparent reference to alleged continued support from some quarters in south africa for mozambican rebels, veloso said: "unfortunately forces and organisations with aims contrary to the interests of the peoples and the countries of the zone continue to support and foment violent and terrorist actions of social and economic destabilisation which impede the normalisation of the life of the people and a normal relationship between states. These forces will have to be neutralised for the sake of peace, cooperation and development of our people and our countries."