

# A luta economica <sup>80</sup>

**P**RESIDENT Mandela's choice of Mozambique for his first state visit was more than appropriate. Apart from the support he acknowledged that Mozambique had given during the apartheid years, South and southern Africa's interests are best served by rapid economic integration.

Conventional cross-border wars are unlikely in our subcontinent — our main threat is from trade wars that beggar the entire region on the specious grounds of protecting national interests. Clauses in international agreements that govern "illegal" immigration and quotas for Mozambicans seeking work here are as inappropriate as those governing military co-operation.

Separately, southern Africa's

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economies are too small or immature to compete effectively in world markets, and they are likely to remain so if economic self-interest is narrowly defined. South Africa, for example, will not easily solve its unemployment problem by erecting barriers to workers from Mozambique, Lesotho or Zimbabwe. We stand a better chance of creating jobs if we have an open trading bloc which permits a free flow of skills and capital and has a sufficiently large economic base to attract foreign investors and employers.

Mandela's government does not "owe" Mozambique anything for its support in the struggle against apartheid. It does, however, owe all the peoples of this region free-trade structures that promise rising living standards.