

Chissano backs Thatcher on S A

INDEP 8/5/87

By Richard Dowden

PRESIDENT Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique is taking a conciliatory line on British policy towards South Africa and said yesterday that he had told Mrs Thatcher she should "continue to do what she believes to be the correct thing, which is persuade the government of South Africa to enter into dialogue with the African National Congress ... and bring them to a negotiated solution".

He did not raise the issue of sanctions during his meeting with the Prime Minister, although he said Mozambique believed sanctions would work under certain conditions — music to Mrs Thatcher's ears.

Speaking at a press conference in London, President Chissano said he was willing to discuss the idea of another peace mission to southern Africa but before it could take place, "some kind of

pressure" would have to be put on South Africa.

Asked what he thought of the election in South Africa, Mr Chissano replied: "What election?" He said he understood Mr Botha had only won 52 per cent of the vote, adding: "Mr Botha doesn't seem to have sound support even among the whites."

Both British and Mozambican sources said the President and Mrs Thatcher had got on very well, and the President said there had only been small differences between them in their views on southern Africa.

At the meeting Britain announced a £15m increase in aid to Mozambique, on condition that it reached agreement with the International Monetary Fund. The President said recent talks with

the IMF had gone well and he expected good news in a few days.

He described the situation in Mozambique as bad, but said the army had achieved some recent success against the South African-backed rebels, the National Resistance Movement (MNR), in Zambezia province, which had been worst hit by war and famine.

He said he was satisfied that Malawi was now helping the Maputo government to suppress the rebels but could not say whether the guerrillas were still using Malawi as a base. Malawi has been accused of allowing the MNR to operate from its territory. At the end of last year Malawi and Mozambique signed an agreement which the President said was still being implemented, and meanwhile Malawi troops had joined Zimbabwean and Tanzanian forces in fighting the rebels.