

MOZAMBIQUE

UK aid to strengthen links

President Chissano left London on 9 May after a four-day visit in which closer relations with the UK were underlined by pledges of an additional £15 million (\$25 million) in aid and further consolidation of military co-operation (AED 8:5:87). Another sign of stronger links was Chissano's confirmation that Mozambique will attend the October Commonwealth conference in Vancouver, Canada, as an observer.

The aid will be made available in fast-disbursing balance of payments support, but only when agreement is reached on an IMF economic reform programme (AED 14:3:87). The official Agencia de Informacao de Mocambique (AIM) says talks with the fund and World Bank have been concluded and formal approval of positions will be made in the coming weeks. This will lead to meetings with London and Paris Club donors prior to a consultative group meeting in July.

Mozambique is seeking UK backing in rescheduling negotiations with commercial and official creditors. Italy — the first stopover on Chissano's trip — has already pledged support.

Closer military co-operation was underlined by the decision to appoint a defence attache to the UK's Maputo embassy. However, a possible UK military mission to the country — widely discussed before the visit — was not agreed, although the UK has said it will increase the number of its military instructors at Nyanga, Zimbabwe, from 12 to 14 (AED 7:2:87).

The presence in Chissano's party of Secretary of State for Defence Tomas Salomao, who is responsible for logistics, also suggested Mozambique may look to London for more equipment. Maputo reportedly wants 10-12 troop-carrying helicopters, possibly the Italian **Bell Augusta** BA205 or the Lynx-7 from the UK's financially troubled **Westland Helicopters**.

Further military co-operation with Mozambique might act as a valuable counterweight to charges that the UK is "pro-South African," blocking sanctions against the republic. But it could also cause conflict with the US, where right-wingers are lobbying to gain support for the rebel Mozambique National Resistance (MNR) against the "Marxist" government. Although Washington is working to help Maputo's economic reform, opponents are trying to block rapprochement — most recently with the campaign against the ambassadorial nomination of career diplomat Melissa Foelsch Wells.

Chissano returns to a country still deeply affected by the MNR's destabilisation campaign. On 8 May the MNR claimed to have killed 57 Mozambican troops, 15

Tanzanians, 11 Zimbabweans and a Cuban in the first six days of May. On 3 May it was reported government forces and their allies had dislodged the MNR from Morrumbala, its main base within the country.