

British Foreign Secretary Interviewed on British aid to Mozambique

(Text) Maputo, 21st October: British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd has said that his country will use its influence with other European and African countries to accelerate the Mozambican peace process. Hurd was speaking to newsmen in Maputo on Saturday [19th October] on the second day of a 48-hour trip to Mozambique.

"These influences are very important and that is why I and President Chissano centred a major part of our discussions exactly on the form in which Great Britain could be useful to help bring peace to Mozambique", the British minister stated.

He said he discussed with Chissano the way in which to transform the agreement on principles (signed Friday [18th October] between Mozambican and Renamo [MNR] delegations in Rome) into a total agreement and into a cease-fire.

Citing the announcement made by British Prime Minister John Major at the Commonwealth summit, Hurd said that his country was ready to forgive the debt of the poorest countries in the world, including Mozambique.

On future cooperation between Great Britain and Mozambique, in the light of changes in southern Africa, Hurd said: "We would do everything to make the new South Africa a good neighbour with Mozambique and the rest of the region."

He mentioned British aid in the rehabilitation of the Limpopo Corridor, which is a crucial link to Maputo port for the landlocked neighbouring countries, adding that Britain was also supporting the rehabilitation and modernisation of Maputo port. "We're equipping the new Mozambique, Mozambique at peace, with professional qualifications", he said.

Regarding British military aid to Mozambique, which involves the training [of] officers and special troops for the protection of the Limpopo line in Nyanga, Zimbabwe, Hurd said the programme is going along well.

Hurd left Maputo Sunday [20th October] for Zimbabwe where the Commonwealth meeting continues till Tuesday.
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