

The new Mozambiquean ambassador to Zimbabwe, His Excellency, Sr Lopes Ndelana, is no newcomer to this country.

Born on 20th March 1937, he left Mozambique with his family at the age of two for Johannesburg, where he grew up and went to school. He received further training at Kivukoni College in Dar es Salaam and other institutions in other countries.

His family returned to Mozambique in 1956. Upon return to the country of his birth, Sr Ndelana took up a job with an English firm. He was soon transferred to Zimbabwe, then Rhodesia, as a travelling salesman for the company in 1957.

From 1957 to 1960 he travelled throughout the country, serving shops in the rural areas. He took part in political activities in Zimbabwe.

During his stay in Zimbabwe he joined other Mozambiqueans, who also came to work here, to form the National Democratic Union of Mozambique (UDENAMO) in 1960.

"It was not possible at the time to have a political movement inside Mozambique, but in exile. However, it also became dangerous for us to operate in Rhodesia because the Rhodesians were co-operating with the Portuguese in Mozambique," said Sr Ndelana in an interview.

The Founders of UN-DENAMO then moved to Tanzania, and split into two groups - those who went to Dar es Salaam to set up the external headquarters and those who returned to Mozambique to launch the underground to mobilise Mozambiqueans.

Sr Ndelana was in the group that returned to Mozambique.

"In 1961 we left Mozambique with a larger group who had joined the

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liberation movement," he said.

In 1970 he was posted to Tete province, where he was responsible for production and commerce in the fight against the Portuguese colonialists.

When the transitional government was formed in Mozambique in 1974, Sr Ndelana worked in the office of the Prime Minister until 1975, when the country became independent.

Immediately after independence he became chief of protocol and served in this post from 1975 to 1978. In 1978 he was appointed Deputy National Director for Rural Development in the office of the President.

From 1983 Sr Ndelana served as Mozambique's ambassador to Peoples' Republic of China, Japan, North Korea, Pakistan and other countries in South East Asia.

He was appointed ambassador to Zimbabwe this year.

Sr Ndelana is married with five children. The eldest, Honana (16), and the second born, Ntilene (14), both girls, were born in Tanzania during the struggle. His only son, Malengane (12), was born in Mozambique and the two youngest daughters, Lindiwe (2) and Malisande (17 months), were both born in China.

Asked about economic co-operation between Zimbabwe and Mozambique, Sr Ndelana said that his government was rehabilitating the railway lines from Machipanda to Beira and the Limpopo



railway line to facilitate Zimbabwean trade.

However, he stressed that Mozambique, in fact, did not have any railway lines which crossed the country from north to south.

"When the Portuguese colonialists invaded Mozambique, all the railway lines which were built were meant for the neighbouring countries."

"Now the situation which we have today is that since South Africa wants to dominate the independent African states, there is all this war and destabilisation of the region by using Renamo to destroy the railway lines in Mozambique to force the countries of the region - Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana - to divert traffic from Mozambique to South Africa," he said.

He emphasised that the railway lines were being rehabilitated with the help of many friendly countries that sympathised with the people of southern Africa.

"The work is being done and the joint military operations of Mozambique and Zimbabwe have shown that it is possible even with South African sabotage and blackmail."

"We should encourage the users of the railway lines and ports of Beira and Maputo to be courageous and use these facilities as the cheapest means and natural outlets to the sea," said Sr Ndelana.

He said it was even expensive for South Africa to send goods from the Transvaal via Cape Town

and Durban ports because Maputo was the nearest port for the Transvaal, from where Johannesburg was only 13 hours by goods train to Maputo.

"So why should the African states travel all these thousands of kilometres from Zimbabwe, Zambia and Botswana to Cape Town and Durban?" he asked.

The new ambassador called on all the countries of the region to join hands to see that the ports of Beira and Maputo are used to their fullest capacity.

"This will help the people of our region," he stressed.

Sr Ndelana also pointed out that the Mozambiquean government has released an investment code, which was quite favourable to potential investors.

He said that during his stay in the Far East, his embassy mobilised many companies which were willing to invest in Mozambique.

The new ambassador stated that Mozambique was open to any company that wanted to do business.

His government was also considering a project, in conjunction with other world bodies, to make Beira a free duty port. "This is expected to materialise in the near future," he said.

"Mozambique is part of one of the richest regions in Africa with vast natural resources, including fertile land and mineral wealth that still needed to be tapped.

Mozambique was inviting entrepreneurs to take up the challenge, because the Portuguese did not develop much of the country during colonial rule.

"The struggle must continue, because what we want now is economic independence."