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SPOTLIGHT

MOZAMBIQUE: "Legalists" challenge

President **Joaquim Chissano**'s announcement of a unanimous vote by the FRELIMO politburo on July 31, for the introduction of a multi-party system into the future Constitution of Mozambique marks a victory for the party's "Legalists". In the past three months, the debate on the Constitution brought to light this current. Responsible for party ideology, **José Rebelo**, and Mayor of Beira, **Teixeira Manjama** for example, openly proclaimed their support for political pluralism. But other party officials, such as the Director of the Central Division of Mozambican Railways, **Gabriel Mabunda**, were in favour of maintaining the one-party system.

From the point of view of the "Legalists", who do not believe that the RENAMO will be beaten by military victory, the last resort for preventing a future general election from degenerating into a dangerous (for the FRELIMO) duel, would be to rapidly install a multi-party system. Moreover, in his July 31 speech, President Chissano was explicit in saying that the RENAMO was "only one of the groups" interested in this reform, and that there were others. He did not rule out the possibility that the FRELIMO could, in the future, make a "political alliance" with other groups. For months now, he has been encouraging opponents which do not identify with the RENAMO, to formalise their stance. Accordingly, Maputo was less negative than the RENAMO about the initiatives taken by the "Cologne Group", which, on several occasions, gathered Mozambican opposition movements and opponents in this West German city (ION N°433). The President has also encouraged independent contributions to the Constitutional debate. He asked exiled Mozambican lawyer, **Domingos Arouca**, to send him his ideas. He sent the President a Constitution project envisaging explicit recognition of multi-party politics, decentralisation of State bodies, reinforced powers for the Parliament and assurance of legal independence. Mr Chissano is said to have received his suggestions favourably and Mr Arouca is expected in Maputo soon to meet the President.

Via a spokesman in Lisbon, **Cesar Frank**, the RENAMO reacted to the decision of the FRELIMO's politburo on August 1 with a reminder that political opening should result from "an accord in the presence of both parties," and not from a unilateral decision. "Any global accord including pluralism, constitutional revision and the calling of elections must first be discussed by both parties in Rome during the second round of talks scheduled for the end of this week or the beginning of next," he added.

Relinquishing the one-party system will still have to be legally ratified before it can become reality. The FRELIMO's Central Committee has to come to a decision in the next two months. Then, the National Assembly will have to debate the question, probably towards the end of the year. However, it is only in 1991 that pluralistic presidential and general elections can feasibly be held. But, before the two belligerents have to come to a conclusive cease-fire agreement.