

Mozambique News Agency

AIM Reports

Report no.484, 28th April 2014



President inaugurates Nampula water system

President Armando Guebuza on 15 April inaugurated the rehabilitated water supply system for the northern city of Nampula. This was one of the major projects financed by the United States through the Millennium Challenge Account (MCC), which granted Mozambique a “compact” of US\$507 million to be spent between 2008 and 2013, mostly in the northern provinces.

According to Pedro Paulino, general director of the government’s Water Supply Assets and Investment Fund (FIPAG), the project restored the nominal capacity of 20,000 cubic metres a day to the existing water treatment station, and built a second station with the same capacity.

A new water main, 500 millimetres in diameter, and running for 352 metres was built, as was a new reservoir able to hold 1,500 metres and a new pumping station to serve both treatment stations.

The system can now supply Nampula with 40,000 cubic metres of water a day.

President Guebuza also inaugurated the rebuilt stretch of the main north-south highway between Nampula city and the Ligonha River, on the border between Nampula and Zambezia provinces.

The road is 103 kilometres long, and has been widened from six to 10.5 metres. The bridges and drainage systems along the road have been strengthened.

According to the National Road Administration (ANE) the rehabilitation cost about five billion meticaís (US\$164 million). The work took place between August 2011 and November 2013, and about 1,500 workers were employed on the construction.

On 16 April, President Guebuza inaugurated the new premises of the Nampula campus of the Pedagogic University (UP), which is now the largest university in the country. The new premises, containing 20 classrooms, two lecture theatres, and extensive computer units, cost 105 million meticaís.

According to the UP Vice-Chancellor, Rogerio Utui, there are already over 7,000 students and around 200 teachers at the Nampula UP branch. He said that the UP is currently investing about a billion meticaís in its branches across the country.

US\$530 million invested in rural electrification

Over the last five years the Mozambican government has invested US\$530 million in rural electrification, Energy Minister Salvador Namburete told reporters on 22 April.

Speaking after a meeting of the Cabinet which discussed a report on electrification, Namburete said the number of district capitals with electricity had risen from 51 in 2004 to 121 today (out of a total of 128).

In the last five years, he added, 7,500 kilometres of electricity transmission lines were built – 1,471 kilometres in high voltage, 5,375 in medium voltage and about 1,000 in low voltage.

In 2004, only seven per cent of the Mozambican population had access to energy. That figure has now risen to 40 per cent.

“In 2004, we had 1.3 million people with electricity in their homes, and today 10.2 million people have electricity”, said Namburete. “6.5 million people obtain electricity from the national grid, while 3.7 million receive power from solar panels”.

Mozambique now has the third highest electrification rate in the SADC (Southern African Development Community) region, surpassed only by South Africa and Mauritius.

Namburete stressed that Mozambique needs to invest a further US\$2.4 billion in electrification so that power reaches the other 60 per cent of the population.

He said that so far solar panels have been used to electrify 700 schools, 600 health centres and 800 other public buildings in rural areas, at a total cost of US\$51 million. A further US\$400,000 was spent on small scale water systems powered by solar panels, while three small solar power stations were built in the northern province of Niassa costing US\$35 million.

Assembly passes conservation bill

The Mozambican parliament, the Assembly of the Republic, on 24 April passed the second and final reading of a government bill on conservation areas, which dramatically increases the penalties for poaching, particularly of endangered species, such as rhinoceros or elephants.

The bill proposes prison sentences of between eight and 12 years for people who kill, without a licence, any protected species, or who use banned fishing gear, such as explosives or toxic substances. The same penalty will apply to people who set forests or woodlands on fire (poachers often use fire to drive animals into the open).

Anybody using illegal firearms or snares, even if they do not catch protected species, can be sentenced to two years imprisonment.

In addition, those found guilty of the illegal exploitation, storage, transport or sale of protected species will be fined between 50 and 1,000 times the minimum monthly national wage in force in the public administration (at current exchange rates, that would be a fine of between US\$4,425 and US\$88,500).

Violation of the provisions of the Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) could also result in a fine of up to a thousand times the national minimum wage. So ivory or rhino poachers, if caught, are looking at a prison term of 12 years and a fine of almost US\$90,000.

Those who degrade ecosystems through deforestation, fire “or any other voluntary act” will be obliged to restore the area to its previous condition. If they cause the decline of any wildlife species, they will have to pay for restocking, in addition to any other penalties imposed by the courts.

Under the terms of the bill, each conservation area will be run by a Management Council, chaired by the government-appointed administrator of the area, and including representatives of local communities, private businesses and local state bodies.

The bill adds that the state “may establish partnerships with the private sector, local communities, national and foreign civil society organisations, through contracts, and with the private partner financing in whole or in part the administration of the conservation areas, thus creating synergies in favour of the preservation of biological diversity”.

Any public or private body authorised to exploit natural resources in a conservation area or its buffer zone, must compensate for its impacts “and ensure that there is no net loss of biodiversity”.

Current conservation areas cover about 25 per cent of Mozambique’s surface area. The bill divides them into “areas of total conservation”, and “conservation areas of sustainable use”.

The former term covers nature reserves and national parks. In these areas no hunting, agriculture, logging, mining or other acts that may damage biodiversity are permitted. The introduction of exotic species is also banned.

Cultural or natural monuments are also fully protected, and the bill guarantees the preservation of any rare, endemic or endangered species found there.

The “conservation areas of sustainable use” include special reserves, environmental protection areas, official hunting areas, community conservation areas, wildlife sanctuaries and private wild life farms.

Each of these has its own set of rules, but they are less stringent than for national parks. In some of them hunting is allowed under licence, and communities are allowed to exploit their resources for their own subsistence, and in a sustainable manner.

Any tourist or other activities authorised in conservation areas must pay fees to the state, fixed by the government, and a percentage of those fees, to be fixed by the government (but never less than 20 per cent) will be channelled to the local communities.

A new article, included at the suggestion of the parliamentary commission on agriculture, economic matters and the environment, promises state protection of any whistle-blowers who denounce poaching or other threats to the conservation areas.

The bill was passed unanimously and will become law after it has been promulgated by President Armando Guebuza and published in the official gazette, the “Boletim da Republica”.

Mozambique and South Africa sign anti-poaching agreement

The Mozambican and South African governments have signed an agreement on the management and conservation of biodiversity, which is aimed at stopping poaching, particularly the poaching of rhinos, in the Greater Limpopo Cross-Border Park.

The agreement was signed by Mozambican Tourism Minister Carvalho Muaria and the South African Minister of Water and the Environment, Edna Molewa. The Greater Limpopo Cross-Border Park is a fusion of the Limpopo National Park of Mozambique, the Kruger Park in South Africa, and Gonarezhou in Zimbabwe.

As repeated confiscation of rhino horn, often from Vietnamese citizens, at Mozambican airports shows, Mozambique is a transit route for rhino horn trafficked from southern Africa to Asia where it is consumed for its completely fictional medicinal qualities.

Those running the trafficking rings hire a significant number of Mozambicans to kill the rhinos and cut off their horns. In the first three months of this year 25 Mozambican poachers were shot dead by South African game wardens, mostly in the Kruger Park.

Despite the deployment of South African troops to the Kruger Park, the slaughter of rhinos is continuing. So far this year poachers have killed 293 rhinos in South Africa. In 2007, only 13 rhinos were reported poached in South Africa, but the number has risen dramatically in each succeeding year.

Molewa told reporters that the new agreement “entails us working together with Mozambique to eradicate rhino poaching and so that Mozambique is not used as a transit country”.

The two countries agreed to share intelligence and jointly develop anti-poaching technology and education programmes.

Portuguese company must rebuild botched road

A Portuguese company which botched the reconstruction of one of the major avenues in Maputo has agreed to tear up the damaged stretch of road and do the repairs from scratch.

The road in question, Julius Nyerere Avenue, is 3.5 kilometres long. It was severely damaged in the floods of 2000 which opened a massive crater at the northern end of the avenue. Rehabilitating the avenue was budgeted at US\$12.5 million, provided by the World Bank and by Maputo Municipal council's own funds.

The Portuguese company Construtora Britalar won the contract and should have delivered the rebuilt road to the City Council in February. But the work ran months behind schedule. Worse still cracks began to appear in the newly laid asphalt, and even to untrained eyes it was clear that Britalar's work had been shoddy.

Samples of the materials used by Britalar were collected and sent to three laboratories, two in Mozambique and one in Portugal. All the laboratories agreed that the road had started to crumble away because of the poor quality of the materials.

Speaking at a Maputo press conference, the City Councillor for infrastructures, Victor Fonseca, said that Britalar has accepted responsibility for the botched work. It has agreed to tear up the asphalt from the 1.6 kilometres of road where the problems occurred, and relay both the base and the tarred surface of the road. This will cost Britalar about US\$1.2 million.

Fonseca said that Britalar has presented a programme of work to rebuild the road again, starting in May, and lasting for 70 days. The rebuilding will be done in phases to avoid excessive disruption to traffic.

Fonseca guaranteed that supervisors will follow Britalar's work closely to ensure that all the technical recommendations are complied with, in line with the new contract that Britalar has signed with the Council.

The other 1.9 kilometres of the avenue does not suffer from the same problems. "In this section the drainage has been concluded, and the embankments are being built. It is forecast that the road will be delivered in October this year", said Fonseca.

Outbreak of dengue fever

There have been 30 confirmed cases of dengue fever in the northern province of Cabo Delgado since the current outbreak began in late March, according to the National Director of Health, Francisco Mbofana.

There have been no deaths from the disease so far, and the health authorities regard the situation as under control. They are, however, recommending preventive measures against the mosquito that carries the disease.

Unlike malaria which is transmitted by a single-celled animal known as a plasmodium, injected into humans through the bite of an infected anopheles mosquito, dengue is a viral disease carried by several species of the aedes genus of mosquito.

On 17 April, the Cabo Delgado provincial governor, Abdul Razak Noormohamed, met with community and religious leaders in the provincial capital, Pemba, to alert them to the threat of the disease and the need for preventive measures.

He warned that, unlike the anopheles mosquito which breeds in stagnant, dirty pools, the aedes mosquito species reproduce in clean water. In visits to several Pemba

neighbourhoods, health brigades have detected the dengue virus in containers of otherwise clean water.

The Mozambican authorities are also strengthening precautionary measures against ebola following an outbreak in Guinea-Conakry in which at least 61 people have died since January. The disease has also spread into Liberia, and there are suspected cases in Sierra Leone. Ebola is a haemorrhagic fever for which there is no cure. The fatality rate is around 90 per cent.

Although Mozambique is a long way from Guinea and Liberia, the authorities have decided to tighten up controls at airports, ports and terrestrial borders in efforts to ensure that the disease does not enter Mozambique.

Mbofana said that the Health Ministry is also strengthening bio-security measures in all Mozambican health units.

Almost four million cases of malaria in 2013

Health Minister Alexandre Manguela declared in Maputo on 25 April that malaria remains one of the greatest public health problems in the country, despite the advances made in preventing the disease.

Speaking at the commemorations of World Malaria Day, Manguela said that in 2013 Mozambican health units diagnosed a total of 3,924,832 cases of malaria, and recorded 2,091 deaths from the disease.

He believed that to defeat malaria in Mozambique, greater cohesion and coordination of activities is required, and a greater involvement of all citizens in the battle against the disease.

He regretted that one of the main methods of combatting the mosquitoes that spread malaria, namely spraying homes with insecticide, is not having the desired effect because a large number of people are refusing to allow the spraying teams to enter their property.

"We are also making efforts to guarantee universal access to mosquito nets treated with long lasting insecticide for all Mozambicans, particularly those who have not benefitted from the spraying programme, and particularly in rural areas where poverty and malaria are strongly linked in a vicious cycle", said Manguela.

Over the last three years, he added, over nine million insecticide treated mosquito nets have been distributed.

At the ceremony, held under the slogan "Invest in the Future: Beat Malaria", the publicly owned cell phone company M-Cel offered the health ministry 5,000 mosquito nets.

The representative of the World Health Organisation (WHO) in Mozambique, Daniel Kertesz, stressed the serious socio-economic impact malaria has throughout Africa. It was Africa that bore the brunt of the disease: Kertesz said that "in 2012, 80 per cent of the around 207 million cases of malaria throughout the world occurred in Africa. In the same year, 90 per cent of the 627,000 deaths from malaria were in Africa".

In the Mozambican case, stressed Kertesz, communities must be guaranteed adequate access to cost effective interventions against malaria, including access to good quality anti-malarial drugs.

This is a condensed version of the AIM daily news service – for details contact pfauev@live.com

ENI interested in floating gas plant

The Italian energy company, ENI, is considering building a floating liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant off the coast of the northern Mozambican province of Cabo Delgado.

ENI is the operator of the Rovuma Basin offshore area four, where huge deposits of natural gas have been discovered.

The adjacent block, offshore area one, is operated by the US oil and gas company, Anadarko, which has also discovered vast quantities of gas, presumably all part of the same field. The total known reserves in the Rovuma Basin are 180 trillion cubic feet of gas.

It had been thought that ENI and Anadarko would join forces to set up a single liquefaction plant onshore in the district of Palma. An area for the plant has been identified, and meetings held with villagers who would have to be resettled.

But on 15 April ENI published in the Mozambican press a "Public Announcement for Expression of Interest" in a floating gas liquefaction facility. The announcement asks companies that could build such a plant to express their interest, after which they would receive "a potential Invitation to Tender package" from ENI.

ENI is interested in "Front End Engineering Design for a floating LNG facility, and possible future phases of detailed engineering, procurement, construction, installation, commissioning, and of operation and maintenance services".

The proposed floating factory would be moored off the coast of Palma district. In the ENI proposal it would "receive, process up to liquefaction and store liquefied natural gas produced from sub-sea wells, and subsequently offload it onto LNG carriers for export". The plant would be "a turret moored double-hulled floating facility type".

ENI stresses that as yet there is no tender, but only an expression of interest. Companies wishing to participate are told to submit all the relevant documentation to ENI by 5 May.

Currently there are no floating LNG facilities anywhere in the world, although the Malaysian oil and gas company, Petronas, expects to have one completed off the shore of the Malaysian province of Sarawak in 2015.

In 2011 Royal Dutch Shell announced that it would build such a floating factory 200 kilometres off the shore of Western Australia, which it hoped would be in operation by 2017.

A floating LNG platform might have both economic and environmental advantages. It could prove cheaper to pump the gas to a floating facility than to an on-shore factory. With no pipelines onshore, and no need for dredging, and new port facilities, the environmental impact of gas liquefaction might be reduced.

On the other hand, there are enormous technical challenges involved in building huge structures at sea which can withstand major storms – the northern Mozambique Channel is frequently hit by cyclones.

First stone laid for new apartment block

Minister of Public Works, Cadmiel Muthemba, on 23 April laid the first stone for the construction of a 27 storey apartment block to be known as the Maputo City Tower.

The building will have 135 apartments, offices and shops, leisure facilities, a swimming pool and a car park.

Budgeted at US\$45 million, the building should be completed within 30 months. It is the result of a partnership between the government's Housing Promotion Fund (FFH), and the Dubai based Signature Group.

Muthemba said that Maputo City Tower is part of the government's efforts to create better housing conditions for Mozambicans and to comply with the housing commitments made in its five year programme.

He said that the FFH had begun negotiations with the Signature Group a year ago, which resulted in drawing up two projects. One is Maputo City Tower, while the second, called "Chiuba Village", envisages the construction of 1,200 houses in the northern city of Pemba. The first stone for the Pemba project was laid on 21 April.

"The Mozambican government", he continued, "is aware of the role of the private sector in the development of the country, and will continue to make efforts to attract investment in the various areas of social and economic activity".

FFH chairperson, Rui Costa, said that the partnership with the Signature Group's sub-Saharan Africa subsidiary, Signature Africa Ventures Limited, will be known by the acronym FFH-SAVL, and will own Maputo City Tower.

"FFH provided the land and the facilities, and our partner has mobilised the funds to build the tower", said Costa.

Road in Cabo Delgado partially reopened

The road from Pemba, capital of the northern province of Cabo Delgado, to the five districts in the north of the province has been partially reopened.

Flooding on the Messalo River in late March cut off the five districts (Mueda, Muidumbe, Nangade, Mocimboa da Praia and Palma) from the rest of the country. On 27 March, the waters of the swollen Messalo swept away two bridges carrying National Highway 423 to northern Cabo Delgado.

This was the only reliable road along which supplies could reach these northern districts. The collapse of the bridge led to an immediate fuel shortage in those districts. The alternative was to bring fuel and other goods in by sea, to the small port of Mocimboa da Praia.

According to Cabo Delgado provincial governor, Abdul Razak Noormahomed, metallic bridges brought in from Maputo are now being installed to replace the bridges that were destroyed.

While this work continues, the contractors have been able to make diversions allowing some vehicles to cross the river. This temporary fix can only be used by vehicles weighting no more than 2.5 tones and with a maximum of three axles.

Mozambique News Agency, c/o 26 Withdean Crescent, Brighton BN1 6WH, UK. Tel: +44 (0) 7941890630 - mozambique-news@geo2.poptel.org.uk

Subscription Rates (24 issues)	Individuals	Institutions
UK	£15.00	£25.00
Europe	£25.00	£40.00
Rest of the World	£30.00	£50.00

Overseas subscribers are requested to pay in sterling. If payment is made in another currency, add the equivalent of £6.00 to cover bank charges.