

# MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

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## *China*

### **Nyusi opens his Chinese-funded airport**

President Filipe Nyusi on Monday (29 Nov) inaugurated a new airport in Chonguene, Gaza, and baptised it with his name. Nyusi stressed there would be no debt because the airport had been paid for by a Chinese grant of \$60 mn (and built by a Chinese company).

Political fingerprints were everywhere. Gaza is the Frelimo heartland in the south and this is the first sizeable airport ever built there. Nyusi wants support from Frelimo leaders at the party Congress next year. And in the four way struggle for support in Africa - between China, Russia, US and EU - the Chinese want to buy support from the Frelimo leadership. Prestige projects like the Catembe-Maputo bridge and this airport put Nyusi's and China's names to the front.

But will it be another prestige white elephant like Nacala airport? The airport is 200 km from Maputo; will enough people pay \$100-\$200 to fly?

The new airport has a relatively short runway, taking planes with up to 70 passengers - appropriate for a short hop. The airport has a capacity of 200,000 passengers a year - which would require eight flights a day. In 2018, Gaza received 114,591 tourists, of whom 47,250 were foreign tourists. Most of the South African tourists would have driven all the way. Tourists from elsewhere would have flown to Maputo, and then made their way into Gaza by road.

Limpopo Park and 100 km of beaches are the main attraction. But the latter will not last long, as nearly all Gaza beaches have been designated for heavy sands mining for titanium, including to at least two Chinese companies. Indeed one of them, DingSheng, was stopped in April from

destroying the dunes on the coast at Chonguene.

Tourism will have to grow a lot to reach 200,000 passengers a year. Nyusi admitted that the new airport could not become sustainable solely on the basis of tourism. He was optimistic that agriculture and fisheries, plus transport facilities could influence rapid economic growth in Gaza, with a string of new investments in Chonguene district, including hotels, new transport companies and other services.

So far the only airline likely to use the Chonguene airport is LAM, but no timetable has been announced.

**Mozambique has reaffirmed its determination to deepen relations with China** within the Macau Forum and the Belt and Road Initiative, Mozambican Foreign Minister Veronica Macamo pledged in Dakar on Tuesday (30 Nov) during the last day of the eighth ministerial conference of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC). (*Noticias* 1 Dec)

**China could replace West to fund gas**, including Mozambique, according to Andy Brown, President of Galp (10% owner of area 4). China needs more gas to replace its coal for electricity generation, he explained, so even if the western nations stop funding gas, China will fund the development of what it needs. Brown was speaking in Matola 24 November. (Lusa 24 Nov)

## Dugongo cement: slave labour to break cartel?

Mozambique's cement cartel was charging \$7.50 for a 50 kg sack of cement. Then Dugongo Cement opened charging \$4.60; other prices fell and several companies went out of business. Dugongo is a joint venture of Frelimo, through its holding company SPI, and West China Cement (WCC) though a subsidiary West International Holding domiciled in the tax haven of Jersey, a UK dependency in the English Channel.

Chair is Victor Timóteo. This is his second success in breaking a cartel. He is also chair of Movitel, Mozambique's third mobile telephone company, and a partnership between SPI and Viettel, owned by the Vietnam Ministry of Defence and the largest mobile phone company in Vietnam. The two others companies, Vodacom and Mcel, which concentrated on urban areas. But most Mozambicans are still rural and Movitel covered rural zones where there was a huge demand.

Dugongo has an adjoining limestone quarry, which makes it the only local company to produce its own clinker - a heated mix of limestone and clay used to make the cement.

But workers at the plant in Matutuine, 60 km south of Maputo, complain of low pay, 12-hour days, slave labour conditions, and that they are only allowed to leave the company compound once a month. An article by Tom Bowker reported that "it's difficult for workers to speak out: 15 of them were fired last year on suspicion of having spoken to journalists from *O País* about their plight."

Minister of Industry and Commerce Carlos Mesquita signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with WCC for industrial investment and development projects valued at \$800 mn, composed of another cement factory, a thermal energy generation plant and two glass factories. (Africa Great Wall is proposing a cement factory in Namacurra, Zambézia.)

(Vice World News 24 Aug, 'We're Being Treated Like Slaves': Factory Workers Stuck in Yearlong Lockdown, by Tom Bowker, <https://www.vice.com/en/article/wx5kmw/were-being-treated-like-slaves-factory-workers-stuck-in-year-long-lockdown>; *O País* 18 Aug 2020, <https://www.opais.co.mz/trabalhadores-em-cativeiro-em-maputo/>)

## China in Portugal as a backdoor to Mozambique

Portugal has the largest per capita Chinese investment in Europe. Chinese investment accelerated a decade ago after Portugal faced a severe financial crisis and Lisbon had to rush through privatisations as part of a bailout deal with the EU. This resulted in Chinese groups becoming the biggest single shareholders in Portugal's leading power and national grid utilities (EDP and REN). Other Chinese investors control Portugal's largest insurer, Fidelidade, and a private hospital group,

China Communications Construction Company (CCCC) last year bought 30% of Mota Engil, Portugal's top construction company, which has major contracts in Mozambique, including in coal and gas. Fosun is the biggest individual shareholder in Portugal's largest listed bank, Millennium bcp, which owns Millennium bim in Mozambique.

China Three Gorges is the main shareholder of EDP, which is increasingly involved in renewables in Portugal, Spain and Brazil, and now Mozambique.

### Renamo

## 3270 Renamo combatants demobilised, but payment problems continue

Out of an estimated 5200 Renamo combatants, 3270 (63%) have been demobilised, reported Mirko Manzonei, UN representative and head of the Contact Group overseeing DDR (Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration). Eleven Renamo bases have been closed since June 2020. The most recent one was in Namita, Murrupula, Nampula, which had 560 guerrillas. (*MediaFax* 12 Nov)

But DDR has not been smooth. Frelimo uses bureaucratic means to block Renamo integration into the police and military. For example, Renamo thought it had agreement that places would be found in the police and VIP protection units for a list of named people. Only later government refused, saying these people were too old or could not pass the exams.

Momade also accuses police and army of harassing and persecuting Renamo members, in particular demobilised fighters.

And the demobilised are not receiving their promised subsidy. When these combatants were demobilised during the second half of last year, a monthly subsidy, supported by the United Nations (UN), was fixed according to their rank, which they would receive for one year while the government dealt with the pension process. At the end of the one-year period, they would automatically start to receive lifelong state pensions. But they only received six months' worth of grants, and payments stopped at the end of last year when the UN ran out of money.

Renamo leader Ossufo Momade accused the ruling party, Frelimo, of bad faith and of showing a lack of political will to solve problems, undermining peace and reconciliation. "A nation must belong to everyone and not to a small group of people. No one should be excluded from its collective construction. Social exclusion is one of the major enemies of peace," he said. Opposition parties, especially Renamo, he added, are always hampered by local authorities from carrying out their political activities, and are not even allowed to hoist their own flags at their offices. (*AIM* 6 Oct)

Finally in mid-November the UN and government agreed the subsidies would be paid and demobilised will be included in the pension system and be paid lifetime pensions from January 2020. (*O Pais* 30 Nov).

## **Killing Nhongo ends Renamo Military Junta**

Opposition to the election of Renamo President Ossufo Momade in 2018 and his peace agreement with President Filipe Nyusi in 2019 which seemed to bring no gain to Renamo after 40 years of fighting led a breakaway militant group based in Manica and Sofala south of the old Gorongosa base. It called itself the Renamo Military Junta and was led by Mariano Nhongo. There were sporadic attacks on the EN1 main north-south road and on villages. It was a curious small war, with the government being careful to not kill or capture Junta guerrillas or Nhonho, and there were attempts to negotiate.

Finally on 7 October Nyusi publicly ended the soft approach. Speaking at the closing of a special police course in Maluana, Maputo province, Nyusi said "As for the Renamo military junta, I have already given Nhongo the opportunity to surrender voluntarily. I am not going to talk much about it. I demand that you close this dossier." Nhongo was killed "in combat" on 11 October in Cheringoma, Sofala.

Over 85 Junta members "have surrendered their weapons and joined the DDR process" reported Mirko Manzoni on 1 December.

**"We killed Mariano Nhongo, but if the injustices continue, new Nhongos will emerge** from all over the place, in myriad ways, and will cause the country to explode," declared Severino Ngoenha, Rector of Universidade Técnica de Moçambique (UDM). Injustice in Mozambique "has become more acute, as no 'real' integration has been taking place, yet this was promised to the Renamo guerrillas". The level of injustice is increasing. This makes those "wronged" turn to weapons as means to make their voices heard. "That brought Mariano Nhongo into existence, and many more of them may still exist. ... We have to ask ourselves the reasons why we always fall into wars." (*O Pais* 13 Oct)

**"What lies behind Mozambique's failure to find lasting peace and true democracy",** by Luca Bussotti, Universidade Federal de Pernambuco and formerly Universidade Técnica de Moçambique (UDM), *The Conversation* (29 Nov <https://bit.ly/31bk10o>) Bussotti writes: "The General Peace Agreement failed to bring peace to Mozambique. Instead, it created a climate of negative peace in which the conditions that gave rise to old conflicts continued to fester. That's because international mediators were simply interested in getting the warring parties to quickly agree to end hostilities, instead of supporting deep peace-building processes that take longer but lead to a climate of positive peace."

"The Mozambique peace process has never been the success international actors have claimed. Its democracy remains weak and based on an ambiguity: Frelimo has to find a way to manage the country, regardless of what the elections results said. Thus, elections simply became a mechanism to confirm the hegemony of Frelimo as an incumbent party. It cannot lose power in favour of Renamo, which international donors consider unreliable."

"The lack of transparency in electoral processes is a decisive factor in the failure of Mozambique's democracy. Renamo has no option but to armed conflict. Besides the conflict with Renamo, another insurgency has been raging in the Cabo Delgado Province since 2017. ... Research shows that it, too, has its in economic, social and ethnic exclusion."

## **Cabo Delgado & Niassa**

**Insurgents are close to the district town of Mecula, Niassa**, reports *MediaFax* (2 Dec). A security force Mahindra car was ambushed and burned in Macananje, just 15 km from Mecula town, on Tuesday. (30 Nov) *MediaFax* says the attack caused some panic, and some Mecula town residents fled to sleep in the bush. "By 7pm, Mecula town was empty, with people scrambling for cover to ensure their safety," reports *Carta de Moçambique* (2 Dec).

Insurgents are setting up bases in the very dense forest of the Niassa Special Reserve, just as they previously had bases in the dense forest of the south of Mocimboa da Praia. The forests provide cover against aerial surveillance. *MediaFax* also reports that Rwandan, SADC and government troops are moving into northern Niassa and that helicopters were seen in Mecula Tuesday.

**No fishing in gas zone.** Apparently fishing is now banned in the gas zone offshore Palma district. Cabo Delgado governor Valige Tauabo told he provincial assembly (30 Nov) that a fishing boat flying the Seychelles flag which was in the zone has been captured and taken to Pemba for investigation. (RM, TVM)

**Electricity was restored to Muidumbe** on 22 November. This was the last Cabo Delgado district with electricity cut off by insurgent attacks on the Awasse transformer and linked lines.

**Police commander Bernardino Rafael had his term extended** for another four years. He was appointed in October 2017. (*O Pais*)

**Correction:** *Carta de Moçambique* (29 Nov) published an article which we cited in the previous issue which said a vehicle carrying salaries for the staff of the Niassa National Reserve was attacked and four police officers accompanying the money were killed. *Carta* withdrew the article on 30 November but made no public statement [which we consider poor practice - it is important to report mistakes too. *jh*] but told us that "although our local sources have good reputations, other good sources with connections in Mecula have denied the deaths." It seems a confusion with an attack in Gomba. Wars and poor communications inevitably lead to exaggeration. The posted version of the previous issue has been corrected and the new link is <https://bit.ly/Moz-581-cor>

## **Agriculture: Can we learn from others in Africa**

**A new state-of-the-art fertiliser terminal has been opened**, but in Malawi rather than Mozambique. It was opened last month by Meridian Group, a subsidiary of the Saudi Arabian Mining Company (Ma'aden). The Liwonde Terminal is on the rail line to Nacala and has 40,000 metric tonne (MT) storage capacity and a 2,400 MT per day blending capacity. The opening was seen as so important that it was attended by Malawi President Lazarus Chakwera and minister of finance and agriculture. By contrast, Mozambique had a terminal by the Norwegian fertiliser giant Yara, but without interest or support from government Yara closed it and left Mozambique. Mozambique has very low fertiliser use and very low farm productivity because it does not support fertiliser. Malawi has a fertiliser subsidy that more than pays for itself in exports and reduction of imports.

**Chapa tractor:** In Ghana, as in Mozambique, farmers are far away from the few tractor centres, and individual tractor owners cannot find clients for ploughing services. "Trotros" are the ubiquitous minibuses in Ghana, what Mozambicans call "chapas". And the idea is to make it as easy to get a tractor as a chapa. Trotro Tractor is a platform that connects farmers to nearby tractor operators. Using mobile phones and GPS, it enables farmers to request, schedule and pre-pay for tractor services, giving them greater access to mechanized farming equipment, when they need it. It runs on just seven employees but has 30,000 farmers signed up to the service.

<https://www.trotrotractor.com/> and <https://www.kosmosinnovationcenter.com/ghana/case-studies/trotro-ghana-case-study/>

## **Other news**

**Two cases of Omicron variant have been found**, one in Maputo and one in Inhambane, and neither person had been outside Mozambique, Health Minister Armindo Tiago said Tuesday. (Reuters, *@Verdade* 30 Nov) Covid-19 cases numbers are beginning to rise in Mozambique.



**Business association complains of visa chaos.** The Confederation of Business Associations of Mozambique (CTA) two weeks ago met the National Migration Services (SENAMI) to present the concern of businesspeople around the approving of visas, especially business visas and short-term work visas, whose delay has resulted in loss in production and various inconveniences, such as the absence of investors in important company meetings, lack of fulfilment of contracts in cases where the company has to wait for a specialised technician to carry out repair or equipment maintenance work, and others. (CTA 23 Nov)

**Kidnapping is now cross border.** The South African police on 26 November rescued Jahyr Abdula, the son of prominent Mozambican businessman Salimo Abdula, 42 days after he was abducted. Police found Abdula in Heidelberg, Gauteng province, in what they describe as a malnourished and traumatised state. Abdula was kidnapped on 15 October while travelling in a convoy of three cars from Mozambique to a wedding in Johannesburg. The cars were pulled over by a BMW car with flashing lights and a siren and Abdula was taken hostage. (AIM 29 Nov) Salimo Abdula is chair of Intelec Holdings, closely linked to former President Armando Guebuza, and owns a number of other companies.

**Million dollar fines for banks failing to block money laundering.** The Bank of Mozambique (BdM) on 29 November announced that between February 2020 and June 2021 it had fined 11 financial institutions and nine individuals. Two banks - African Banking Corporation (BancABC headquartered in Botswana) fined \$1 mn, and Mozambique's second largest bank, the BCI (Commercial and Investment Bank) fined \$860,000 - for not preventing money laundering. Standard Bank, First Capital Bank, and Socremo were fined smaller amounts for failing to report suspicious transactions. Nine individuals were fined for acting illegally as banks.

<https://bancomoc.mz/Noticias.aspx>

**Flags are still really important to donors.** "I would like to complain about the fact that you don't have the Japanese flag here. We have worked so hard with you guys, and I don't see a Japanese flag here, I'm very upset. It's a lack of respect to your partner. So, I register this dissatisfaction here in my speech", said the Japanese ambassador Hajime Kimura at the launch with President Filipe Nyusi of the Japanese-funded Professional Training Centre in Nacala last week. (*Evidências* 1 Dec)

**Private Security companies cheat workers.** More than 80% of private security companies in Mozambique do not respect their obligations to workers, have months of wage arrears and do not contribute to the Social Security System (INSS), secretary general of the Private Security Companies Union, Boaventura Sibinde said 19 November. There are 240 national private security companies and 60,000 workers in the sector. Many companies below to military men or people senior in Frelimo, so complaints are not investigated.

**Social Security Institute (INSS) paid \$350,000 welcome to new administrators.** INSS chair, Kabir Ibrahim received \$95,000, while Director General Joaquim Siúta banked \$60,000. (*Carta de Moçambique* 25 Nov)

**Macuse port to be built, but without coal railway.** To cut the cost of shipping coal from Tete, Thai Mozambique Logistica (TML) has for some years been trying to raise \$2.4 bn to construct a 639 km railway from Tete and \$800 mn for a new deep water port at Macuse, north of Quelimane. The distance for coal is about two-thirds the length of the lines to Beira and Nacala. The US company Ethos Asset Management on 19 November announced that it will invest \$400 mn in the port, in partnership with TML. But it said nothing about coal and only said the railway would be "a later development". Instead, cargo, presumably including coal, would go to the port by road - which would require a new road.

**Four activists were arrested during a community meeting in Tete** on 20 November, accused of cheating the community, but then released by a court on 23 November when no evidence of wrongdoing was presented. The communities adjoin the Vale coal mine in Moatize and

are protesting about mining activity causing cracks in their houses. The organisers are from Justiça Ambiental. (DW 24 Nov)

**HIV/AIDS deaths in Mozambique fell by 42% in a decade**, from 65,000 in 2010 to 38,000 in 2020. New infections during the same period had fallen by 35% from 150,000 to 98,000, of whom 28,000 are adolescent girls and women. The number of people living with HIV stands at 2.1 million, of whom 130,000 are children under the age of 15. More than 1.6 million Mozambicans are receiving antiretroviral medication. (AIM 2 Dec)

## **Other reading**

**"What lies behind uprisings in Eswatini: the unfinished business of democratic reform"**, by Hlengiwe Portia Dlamini, University of Eswatini, *The Conversation* (24 Nov). "The uprising is essentially against royal absolutism, which is seen as undemocratic. With a critical mass of thousands of educated graduates and rising unemployment, amid the wide exposure to the ideas of liberal democracy, it is becoming an uphill task to maintain absolute monarchism." A National Dialogue Forum was supposed to start last month, but has not. <https://theconversation.com/what-lies-behind-uprisings-in-eswatini-the-unfinished-business-of-democratic-reform-171844> Also, "Eswatini national dialogue forum could strengthen foundation for success amid the country's deep political crisis", by Craig Moffat, *Mail & Guardian*, 15 Nov, <https://mg.co.za/africa/2021-11-15-eswatini-national-dialogue-forum-could-strengthen-foundation-for-success-amid-the-countrys-deep-political-crisis/>

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**\$2bn secret debt trial: Daily press clippings in English (and a few in Portuguese) on** <https://bit.ly/Moz-secret-debt>. The trial is being broadcast live on STV <https://play.stv.co.mz/>

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## **Important external links**

**\$2bn secret debt trial** (Aug-Oct 2021) press reports <https://bit.ly/Moz-secret-debt>

**Exchange rates 2006-21 & minimum wages 1996-2021** <https://bit.ly/Moz-Exch-wage-2021>

**Covid-19** daily updated data <https://www.facebook.com/miguel.de.brito1> and <https://covid19.ins.gov.mz/documentos-em-pdf/boletins-diarios/>

**Daily flood and monthly dry season reports** - <http://bit.ly/Moz-flood21>

**Cyclone trackers**, <https://www.cyclocane.com/> and <https://www.metoc.navy.mil/jtwc/jtwc.html>

**Cabo Ligado** weekly report on civil war <https://www.caboligado.com/>

Previous editions of this newsletter: <http://bit.ly/MozNews2021> and <http://bit.ly/MozNews2020>

**Downloadable books**: <http://bit.ly/Hanlon-books> Election data: <http://bit.ly/MozEIData>

My Mozambique archive: <http://bit.ly/Mozamb>

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## **Cabo Delgado**

Archive with reports, detailed maps, and census data <https://bit.ly/Moz-CDg>

### **Special reports on the war**

Evolution of the war: global vs local. 27 Feb 2020 <http://bit.ly/CDelgadoOrigins>

Religion is shaping Cabo Delgado civil war. 30 April 2020 <https://bit.ly/CDelgadoReligion>

Intensifying argument over roots of war. 28 June 2020 <https://bit.ly/Moz-492>

Are the drums of war silencing any hope of peace? 26 July 2020 <http://bit.ly/Moz-496>

A history of violence presages the insurgency. 13 August 2020 <http://bit.ly/Moz-498>

Military & economic intervention. 3 Sept 2020 <https://bit.ly/CDelgadoIntervene>

### **Mozambique heroin transit trade**

English - LSE - 2018 - <http://bit.ly/Moz-heroin>

Portuguese - CIP- 2018 - <http://bit.ly/HeroinaPT>

2001 first article- *Metical* - English and Portuguese <https://bit.ly/MozHeroin2001>

### **Gas for development?**

Gas\_for\_development\_or\_just\_for\_money?\_2015 <http://bit.ly/MozGasEng>

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## Background reading

### Special reports

Social protection report - 2017 Mozambique - <http://bit.ly/MozSocPro>

Special report on four poverty surveys: [bit.ly/MozPoverty](http://bit.ly/MozPoverty)

### \$2bn secret debt - in English

Secret debt trial (Aug-Oct 2021) press reports <https://bit.ly/Moz-secret-debt>

Kroll - Full report on \$2bn debt - <http://bit.ly/Kroll-Moz>

Kroll report summary - <http://bit.ly/Kroll-sum>

Key points of Mozambique parliament report - Nov 2016 - <http://bit.ly/MozAR-debt-En>

Following the donor-designed path to Mozambique's \$2.2 bn debt - <http://bit.ly/3WQ-hanlon>

### In Portuguese:

Parliamentary Report on the Secret Debt (complete) [bit.ly/MozAR-debt](http://bit.ly/MozAR-debt)

**2018 Constitution** - <http://bit.ly/2KF588T>

**Election study collaboration:** We have detailed election data from 1999 through 2014 and are inviting scholars to use this data collaboratively. <http://bit.ly/MozEIData>

Election newsletters are on <http://bit.ly/2H066Kg>

**Nine books by Joseph Hanlon can be downloaded, free:** <http://bit.ly/Hanlon-books>

Bangladesh confronts climate change (2016)

Chickens and beer: A recipe for agricultural growth in Mozambique (2014) is on <https://bit.ly/Chickens-Beer>

Há Mais Bicicletas – mas há desenvolvimento? (2008)

Moçambique e as grandes cheias de 2000 (2001)

Mozambique and the Great Flood of 2000 (2001)

Paz Sem Benefício: Como o FMI Bloqueia a Reconstrução (1997)

Peace Without Profit: How the IMF Blocks Rebuilding (1996)

Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots (1991)

Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire (1984)

Apartheid's 2nd Front (1986) <available shortly>

### These are still available for sale:

Galinhas e cerveja: uma receita para o crescimento (2014) (free in English)

Zimbabwe takes back its land (2013)

Just Give Money to the Poor: The Development Revolution from the Global South (2010)

Do bicycles equal development in Mozambique? (2008) (free in Portuguese)

Beggar Your Neighbours: Apartheid Power in Southern Africa (1986)

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### Mozambique media websites, English:

Club of Mozambique (free): <http://clubofmozambique.com/>

Zitamar (paywall): <http://zitamar.com/>

### Mozambique media websites, Portuguese (all with partial paywall):

Notícias: [www.jornalnoticias.co.mz](http://www.jornalnoticias.co.mz)

O País: [www.opais.co.mz](http://www.opais.co.mz)

@Verdade: <http://www.verdade.co.mz>

Carta de Moçambique <https://cartamz.com>

### Mozambique think tanks and pressure groups, Portuguese:

Centro de Integridade Pública: CIP <https://cipmoz.org/>

Observatório do Meio Rural: OMR <https://omrmz.org/>

Instituto de Estudos Sociais e Económicos: IESE <https://www.iese.ac.mz/>

Centro Para Democracia e Desenvolvimento CDD <https://cddmoz.org/> (some CDD in English)

Also CDD now controls Fórum de Monitoria do Orçamento - FMO (main debt group) <http://www.fmo.org.mz> and RMDDH - Rede Moçambicana dos Defensores dos Direitos Humanos (a human rights group).

To subscribe to all CDD publications: <http://eepurl.com/gO9l6v> (English or Portuguese).

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