

MOZAMBIQUE News reports & clippings

621 18 March 2023 Editor: Joseph Hanlon (j.hanlon@open.ac.uk)

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Do 90% eat 3 meals day? Yes just after harvest. But 7 months post-harvest 90% won't eat 3 meals.

In Mozambique, "90% of the population is food secure, that is, they already manage to have three meals a day", Agriculture Minister Celso Correia told the Director-General of FAO in Rome on 1 March. Correia added: "This is a great success for Mozambicans." (*O Pais* 2 March)

The statement caused such an outcry in Maputo that Correia was forced into a very public 15 March launch of the "2022 Post-harvest food security report" by the Food and Nutritional Security Technical Secretariat (SETSAN - Secretariado Técnico de Segurança Alimentar e Nutricional), which raises serious questions about the claim. <https://bit.ly/Moz-Food-Sec-2022>

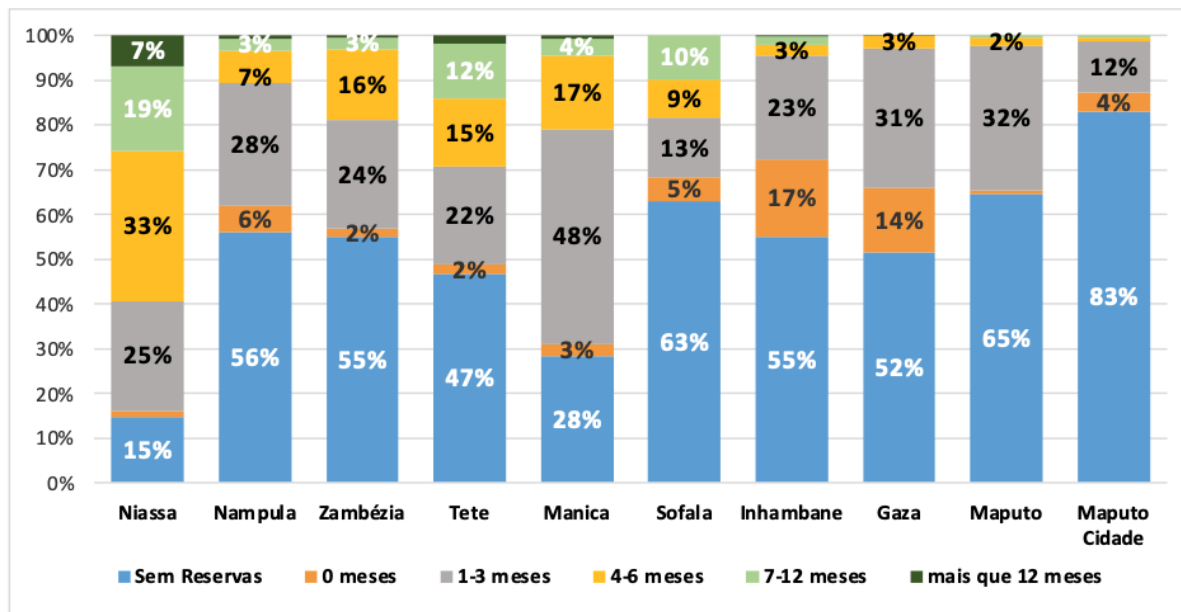
The new report says "about 90% of the Mozambican population had an acceptable diet to meet their daily energy requirements in the post-harvest period," and gave this data:

IPC Levels		Mozambicans		definition
Integrated Food Security Phase Classification		million	%	
4	Emergency	1.0	3%	Experience long periods of lack of food consumption demonstrated by very high acute malnutrition and excess mortality.
3	Crisis	2.2	7%	Food consumption shortages demonstrated by high or above-normal acute malnutrition or cannot meet minimal food needs.
2	Stress	13.0	40%	Adequate minimum food consumption but do not have the means to meet some essential non-food expenses.
1	Security	16.0	50%	Meet essential food and non-food needs.

Is "adequate minimum food consumption" equivalent to three meals a day *in the post-harvest period*?

But the SETSAN study also includes an equally important chart of maize reserves after harvest:

Reservas de Milho Agregados Familiares



The chart shows what portion of those surveyed in each province had maize reserves. For Nampula, it shows (in blue) 56% with no reserves, 6% (orange) less than one month, 28% (grey) 1-3 months, etc. The big blue bottom section of "no reserves" dominates the chart, and is so dramatic it says something different than three meals a day. (For black and white readers the full chart in colour is in <https://bit.ly/Moz-Food-Sec-2022>)

Excluding Maputo city, where an urban population is more dependent on the market, and Niassa which has good food stocks, half of Mozambicans have no maize reserves and 80% of the population will have no maize stock after three months.

So, yes, it might be argued that post-harvest 90% of people eat three meals a day. But the data also show that after 7 months, 90% will not have enough food to eat three meals a day.

Personal view

Ground truthing and Potemkin villages

For those of us who use data regularly, "ground truthing" becomes essential. Do we interpret the numbers correctly to represent what is actually happening on the ground? The concept was first used by the military to ensure that what they thought they "saw" in aerial photographs was actually what was on the ground. It becomes equally important with surveys and other data.

Before I report on numbers, I always wait to see the actual data, and I delayed reporting on the Celso Correia statement until the SETSAN report was available. My first two questions always are, what does the data say about what is happening on the ground, and does it "feel" right? "Feel" right depends on ground truthing, which can be very hard for ministers, ambassadors and visiting dignitaries.

It is impossible for senior people to see the ground truth as they are whisked around pre-planned tours. When writing *Do bicycles equal development in Mozambique?* (2008) we were sent by the Ribaué district administrator to the model association Associação de Ehiquite-lapala which had become a donor tourist attraction because of fish farming promoted by the NGO CARE. Members made a standard presentation, with a flip chart, about how onions and fish were helping them to "overcome absolute poverty". At this point, donors and ministers normally left, but we stayed and talked, and a different reality emerged. One woman said that the donors and government officials kept coming, but "we are still poor; there is no improvement." They produced onions but no one

bought them. Finally, after more than an hour of chat, they admitted they had not sold any fish. They had no net to catch the fish, there was no market, and in central Nampula province there was no experience of eating fresh fish. We went on to talk to CARE in Nampula city and were told bluntly: CARE gives fish, but "we are not in the business of providing nets". Eight years later, when writing *Chickens and Beer* (2014), we went back. The association had realised that performing for visiting government officials, NGOs, and donors, had brought them only empty promises. But on their own they were selling fish and onions. Ground truthing and going back is all too rare.

The problem of shows for visiting dignitaries is not new. The term "Potemkin villages" comes from story of Grigory Potemkin, former lover of Empress Catherine II, who impressed the Empress in 1787 during her trip up the Dnieper River (now in Ukraine) with a fake portable village. As soon as the barge carrying the Empress and ambassadors passed, the village was disassembled, then rebuilt upstream overnight. Ministerial and ambassadorial trips in Mozambique too often see a local version of Potemkin villages, as in Ribaué.

The final problem is that Mozambicans have been made increasingly fearful of speaking truth to power, so during an official visit they parrot the line given them by local officials who are often there to police the meeting. And the visitors rarely have time to analyse the data themselves or spend hours talking to local people. So they accept the Potemkin villages of brief power points explaining the data, rehearsed local presentations, and local officials painting a glowing picture of what they are supposed to be seeing. Jh

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Elections

CIP Mozambique Elections Bulletin is published by Centro de Integridade Pública (CIP) <https://www.cipmoz.org>; <https://cipeleicoes.org/eng/cip@cipmoz.org>.

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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 data: <http://bit.ly/MozEIData>

Important external links

Books by Joseph Hanlon can be downloaded, free: <https://bit.ly/HanlonBooks>

Flood, cyclone and weather: weather <https://www.inam.gov.mz/>

rainfall https://www.inam.gov.mz/images/DAPT_Previsoes/Manha/Previsao_Manha.pdf

Daily flood and monthly dry season reports - <https://bit.ly/Moz-Flood-2023>

Cyclone trackers, <https://bit.ly/Reunion-cyclone>, <https://www.metoc.navy.mil/jtwc/jtwc.html>

(which uses z time which is UCT - Coordinated Universal Time) and <https://www.cyclocane.com/>

Two LSE working papers - **World Bank questions its Mozambique 'success'** where oligarchs brought high inequality, poverty and corruption - <https://bit.ly/Moz-LSE-208c> and **How the IMF and World Bank caused a resource curse and civil war in Mozambique** - <https://bit.ly/Moz-LSE-209>

Minimum wage & exchange rate charts, tables 1996-2022 <https://bit.ly/MozMinWage2022>

Previous editions of this newsletter: <https://bit.ly/MozNews2023> and <https://bit.ly/MozNews2022>

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

TSU_Tabela-Salarial-Unica - law, decrees, points system (2 Mb) <https://bit.ly/Moz-TSU>

Cabo Delgado

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

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>
Cabo-Delgado-Free-for-all. 20 Apr 2022. <https://bit.ly/Moz-593>

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 bit.ly/MozGasEng
Gás_para_desenvolvimento_ou_apenas_dinheiro?_2015 bit.ly/MozGasPt

Background reading

Special reports

Social protection report - 2017 Mozambique - <http://bit.ly/MozSocPro>
Special report on four poverty surveys: 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
2018 Constitution - <http://bit.ly/2KF588T>

Eleven books by Joseph Hanlon can be downloaded, free: <https://bit.ly/HanlonBooks>

Zimbabwe takes back its land (2013) <https://bit.ly/Zim-takes-land>
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)
Civil War Civil Peace (2006): <https://bit.ly/Civil-War-Civil-Peace>
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) <https://bit.ly/Peace-wo-Profit>
Mozambique: Who Calls the Shots (1991) <https://bit.ly/Shots-Moz>
Mozambique: The Revolution Under Fire (1984)

These are still available for sale:

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

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
O País: 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/qO9l6v> (English or Portuguese).

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