

MOZAMBIQUE 149

CHOLERA INCREASING

NEW BUDGET SUPPORT DEAL SIGNED

plus corruption, hunger, Beira, Mogincual

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News reports & clippings no. 149 from Joseph Hanlon

25 March 2009 (j.hanlon@open.ac.uk)

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Next two newsletters:

Mozambique 150 - economy under stress

Mozambique Political Process Bulletin Local Election Issue 30 – will be published as soon as the Constitutional Council rules on the 11 February 2009 second round election in Nacala

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CHOLERA INCREASING; 140 DEAD THIS YEAR

The cholera outbreak has become much more serious, according to Health Minister Ivo Garrido. On Monday 23 March he said that there had been more than 13,000 cases of cholera already this year, with 140 deaths. This is a mortality rate of just 1%, which is very low, and an indication of good identification and treatment programmes. But in just 12 weeks there have been more cases than all of last year, when there were 12,000 cases and 150 deaths.

But Garrido said that progress is being made against other diseases:

MEASLES: Because of vaccination, cases down from 12,598 in 2005 to just 278 in 2008.

MALARIA: 6,336,000 cases and 3,998 deaths in 2007, down to 4,832,000 cases and 2,949 deaths last year. But still the major public health problem.

HIV/AIDS: 135,000 people are now receiving anti-retroviral drugs, and they are now available in all 128 districts.

LEPROSY: No longer a public health problem with cases below 1 per 10,000 people.

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19 BUDGET SUPPORT DONORS SIGN NEW 5-YEAR ACCORD

The 19 budget support donors signed a new five-year memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Mozambican government on 18 March. The 90-page MoU is not significantly different from the previous one signed five years ago, and the various review and planning processes remain immensely time-consuming and complex. But there are several important subtle changes – donors have increased their scope to put pressure on government and to be even more deeply involved in government planning processes, but individual donors have accepted a reduction in space for unilateral action.

The budget support donors, known as the G19 or Programme Aid Partners (PAPs), are the African Development Bank, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the European Commission, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden,

Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the World Bank. The International Monetary Fund is a non-signatory but ex-officio member. The G19 is “the largest group of donors involved in the provision of general budget support in Sub-Saharan Africa,” G19 head and Irish Ambassador Frank Sheridan told the signing ceremony. The G19 will provide \$455 million in direct budget support this year.

The G19 has largely taken over policy dialogue with the government, and two large non budget support donors, the United States and Japan, have been objecting to their marginalisation from the policy process. To try to deal with this, a new category of associate member is created for non-budget support donors; so far, the US is the only associate member.

As in the past, the G19 is governed by what it calls the “troika plus”. Three donors serve for three years, with one new member being elected each year and serving as chair in the second year. The “plus” are the European Commission and World Bank, who deserve permanent seats because, as they are described in the MoU, they are the “two most influential PAP donors”.

The new MoU is not yet posted on the PAP website <http://www.pap.org.mz/> so it is posted on mine: <http://www.tinyurl.com/mozamb>

TIGHTENING THE SCREWS ON CORRUPTION

Two changes in the MoU put new emphasis on corruption, and respond to donor complaints that each year government promises to act on governance but fails to do so.

In the 2004 MoU, in the case of serious misuse of funds or large-scale corruption, the government simply promised to try to recover the money. In the new MoU, in the event of serious misuse of state funds or “large scale corruption by members or structures” of government, donors have the right to individually or collectively withhold funds. This is a major hardening of the donor position on corruption.

In the diplomatic world, a change of a single word can carry substantial weight, and this has happened in the new MoU. Evaluation of government performance is done through a set of targets in a Performance Assessment Framework. Both MoUs stress that what counts is an improving trend in government performance. But in the 2004 MoU, donors said they would “take into account the extent to which performance difficulties are being addressed”. This time, the phrase “performance difficulties” [“dificuldades de desempenho”] is replaced by the much stronger “performance shortcomings” [“falhas do desempenho”]. In other words, excuses about “difficulties” will no longer be accepted by the donors, particularly in areas such as justice and governance.

DONORS DEEPER IN GOVERNMENT POLICY SETTING

Budget support was supposed to give recipient governments more power over how aid money is spent, but one of the most controversial aspects of budget support throughout Africa is that the opposite has happened. Donors have demanded to be deeply inside the policy formulation process.

The 2004 MoU already required that donors have access to planning documents, reports, and other information, and that government must meet donors before submitted the budget to parliament (making a joke of parliamentary approval -- how could parliament reject a budget after it has been approved by donors). But the new MoU also requires the government to show early drafts of the budget to the donors.

In his statement, G19 head Frank Sheridan stressed that “budgetary policy” is the donor priority. Sheridan said that “financial support to the national budget is the financial equivalent of adding

water to a reservoir, where it is impossible to identify individual contributions and what becomes important is how the total funds are used.” In other words, whereas project support means only watching how small amounts of money are spent, budget support means detailed donor control over all government spending.

LESS POWER TO GO IT ALONE

Although the G19 have reserved the power to cut off funding, individually or collectively, in the event of major corruption or where the “underlying principles” of the agreement are violated, they have made an important concession to stop donors acting unilaterally. The new agreement forces donors to work through the G19, even when there is disagreement within the group, before taking any unilateral action.

Sheridan also noted that donors had made a number of commitments to government, about trying to give more predictable commitments of funds and about relying on government institutions to administer funds.

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HUNGER IN TIME OF MAIZE SURPLUS

Mozambique has a maize surplus of 75,000 tonnes, according to the Ministry of Agriculture national director of agrarian services, Boaventura Nuvunga.

Yet this comes at a time when starving people are fleeing Mogincual, and the district director of health says the return of konzo (neuropathia tropical) is “inevitable” because hungry people are eating bitter cassava without processing it to remove the cyanide that causes paralysis (Noticias 27 February). Savana (13 March) reports that the price of maize has increased four fold in Niassa and that “hunger is imminent”. Nuvunga accepts that there are “pockets of hunger”, and the problem is due to lack of marketing and transport.

Production of maize rose from 1.57 million tonnes in the 2007 harvest to 1.68 mn t last year, with a forecast of a further increase 1.86 mn t this year. Nuvunga attributed the increase to improved seeds and inputs, but particularly to the increase in the number of agricultural extension workers, which increased from 590 in 2007 to 644 now and is planned to rise to 828.

Five years ago Mozambique had planned to increase the number of extension workers to 1000, but this was blocked by the World Bank.

OVERCROWDED CELLS

The European Union presidency in Mozambique issued a statement saying it “deplored” the deaths of between 13 and 15 prisoners in a jail cell in Mogincual, and was “profoundly preoccupied” with the situation. Sweden is acting president of the EU in Maputo, because the current president, the Czech Republic, does not have an embassy in Mozambique.

Meanwhile, MediaFax warned of overcrowding in police cells in Angoche, where the survivors of the Mogincual cell have been moved. It says that 154 prisoners are now crammed into cells that can only hold 60 people -- and that there are poor sanitary conditions at a time of a serious cholera epidemic. MediaFax also reports that two prisoners died of tuberculosis at the weekend in Machava high security prison, known as the BO, because they were not given adequate medical attention. (MediaFax 24 and 25 March)

CORRUPTION & CULTURE OF IMPUNITY

Corruption is a “social cancer” which is surviving all attempts to eradicate it, warns the Mozambique self-evaluation submitted on 12 February to the African Peer Review Mechanism. Most people interviewed in the provinces, including civil servants, were pre-occupied with corruption, the report says. (Noticias 19 March 2009)

People interviewed tended to divide the problem into petty and grand corruption. Petty corruption is linked to poverty and low salaries; when income is too low to meet the cost of living, petty corruption increases.

But grand corruption is seen as illegal enrichment practiced by influential people in senior positions. People interviewed saw a “culture of impunity”. They believe grand corruption is institutionalised both in the public and private sectors and is never investigated.

BULHA SUSPENDED FOR INDISCIPLINE, NOT LOSING, SAYS FRELIMO

Frelimo suspended Lourenco Bulha, its first party secretary in Sofala, not because he failed to win the election for mayor of Beira in November, but for repeated indiscipline, according to the Frelimo Central Committee Secretary for Mobilisation and Propaganda, Edson Macuacua. The entire provincial party secretariat has been removed.

No details have been given, but Savana (13 March) cites two reasons for the suspension. First, Frelimo hard liners objected to the decision by Bulha to form an alliance within the city assembly with the independent citizens list GDB (Grupo para a Democracia da Beira; Group for Democracy in Beira). The alliance gives Frelimo a majority in the assembly, but it was done without first obtaining permission of the central party leadership. Savana says he is also criticised for registering as voters former military men who lived outside the city -- this received substantial publicity when they were caught by local television.

Also cited by sources close to Frelimo are allegations about Bulha’s relations with local business people, and his own financial dealings. During the election campaign the weekly *Zambeze* alleged that Bulha was involved in the illegal sale of urban land. When the newspaper arrived, Bulha supporters tried to buy and burn all 1000 copies sent to Beira. Many went into circulation, however.

Macuacua said the Frelimo has also suspended the Gurue, Zambezia, district secretariat. In Gúruè, Frelimo candidate José Aniceto avoided a second round against Renamo candidate Latino Ligonha by just 6 votes. Thus, it was the city where Frelimo had its third worst result, after Beira and Nacala.

AND RENAMO MAKES CHANGES

Meanwhile, Renamo has sacked its parliamentary leadership because of its obvious sympathy to the re-elected mayor of Beira, Daviz Simango, and his new MDM party. Removed from their posts are head, deputy head and spokesperson of the parliamentary group -- Maria Moreno, Luis Trinta and Eduardo Namburete.

Moreno is replaced as head of the parliamentary group by Viana Magalhaes. His present post of Second Deputy President of parliament will be taken by Vicente Ululu, who held that post in the first multi-party parliament, 1994-1999. Trinta is replaced as deputy head by Jose Mazuana, formerly the Renamo rapporteur. The post of rapporteur was given to Francisco Machambisse, who had been out of favour since being Dhlakama’s election agent in the disastrous 2004 election. Namburete is replaced as spokesperson by veteran Renamo parliamentarian Jose Manteigas.

BEWARE OF LIONS

Lions, hyenas and crocodiles attacked and killed 25 people in Magoe district, Tete, last year. Another 16 were seriously injured, according to Noticias (23 March).

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