

Mozambique: President Chissano optimistic about Rome conference

Source. [AIM](#)

Posted. 4 May 2000

President Joaquim Chissano has expressed hopes for "good participation and a positive response, not just promises" from the donors who are to take part in the international conference on 3 and 4 May in Rome, on Mozambique's reconstruction efforts following the catastrophic flooding that hit the southern and central regions of the country in February and March.

The Mozambican government is to request about \$450 million for the reconstruction work. "We have set up working groups that will explain how we intend to use the aid, not only in reconstruction, but also to prevent future disasters", said President Chissano in an interview with the Portuguese News Agency, Lusa.

As for Mozambique's foreign debt, President Chissano once again said it should be entirely written off. "Cancelling part of the debt or the debt service does not correspond to the needs, but merely postpones the problem", he stressed.

"Economic growth is not felt much among our people because much of the income produced is later spent in paying off the debt. With total cancellation, we would use the money saved in poverty relief, in education, health, and water supply programmes", said President Chissano.

On globalisation, President Chissano argued "In a world that intends to be globalised, there cannot be a part that is neglected. The developed countries need markets, but this can't just work in one direction".

"The sustainability of the development of the North depends on their support for the underdeveloped countries", President Chissano argued. "We Africans should take all measures to ensure that all corrections to be made are not only to benefit the interests of the industrialised countries, but that they also serve our interests".

Mozambique News Agency

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