

4 October 2002

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Jan Kavan,
President of the 57th Session of the General Assembly,
at the ECOSOC meeting on Commemoration of the Tenth
Anniversary of the Signing of the General Peace Agreement in
Mozambique**

Your Excellency Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Madam Deputy Secretary-General
President of the Security Council
President of ECOSOC
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentleman

It is an honour and a privilege for me to participate in today's meeting of the Economic and Social Council, dedicated to the commemoration of 10th anniversary of the signing of the General Peace Agreement, ending one of Africa's protracted conflicts in Mozambique.

Ten years ago on this day, after 16 years of civil war, the warring parties, with the help of international mediators and observers, including the United Nations representatives, arrived at an Agreement establishing a basis for a ceasefire and peace. The United Nations undertook a major role in facilitating and monitoring the implementation of the Agreement. Its task was to perform a variety of specific functions, most importantly providing humanitarian assistance and organizing free and fair elections. The implementation of the Agreement was to be supervised by a Supervisory and Monitoring Commission chaired by the United Nations.

In December 1992, the Secretary-General submitted a report to the Security Council in which he presented a plan for creation of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) to facilitate the implementation of the Peace Agreement. The peace-keeping mission was given an extensive and ambitious mandate, consisting of political, military, electoral and humanitarian elements. Specifically, its tasks included monitoring and supporting of a ceasefire, holding of national elections, the demobilization of forces, monitoring the withdrawal of foreign forces and providing security in the transport corridors.

The presence of ONUMOZ and its work led to the gradual stabilization of the situation in the country. First multi-party elections were held in October 1994 under the aegis of the United Nations, thus laying one of the essential foundations for peace and democracy. In a challenging process of disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, approximately 155,000 arms were recovered and 76,000 soldiers demobilized. ONUMOZ also worked closely with UNHCR in the return of 1.3 million refugees, the largest repatriation mission on the African continent. It

provided the returnees with humanitarian relief and helped towards their resettlement and reintegration.

The mandate of ONUMOZ was officially terminated in December 1994, almost exactly two years after its creation. To-date, the United Nations Operation in Mozambique remains one of the most successful peace-keeping operations undertaken by the Organization. An additional positive aspect, given the complexity and wide range of its mandate, was ONUMOZ's contribution of many useful lessons learned for the future United Nations peace-building activities in various regions of the world.

The example of the United Nations involvement in Mozambique illustrates the value of timely deployment of a United Nations mission with a comprehensive mandate for consolidating peace in a post-conflict environment. The United Nations helped Mozambique to overcome the most difficult period of its history. Support of the United Nations in the peace-making, peace-keeping, de-mining, humanitarian and electoral assistance, and the repatriation of refugees were a prime example of a correct policy involvement of the United Nations in post-conflict situations. But there is another essential element of successful peace-building that has been witnessed in Mozambique - the political willingness and determination of the Government and people of Mozambique to secure peace and rebuild the country. The experience of Mozambique, thus, could and should serve as a good example for other African countries experiencing protracted conflicts and instability such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, or Guinea-Bissau.

The course of political, economic and social reforms have led to the creation of an environment attractive to the foreign investors in Africa. Renewed commitment to a multi-party system and full participation of the population must be maintained to foster the democratic foundation that has been initiated through the electoral process. Capacity building within the institutions of the Government of Mozambique and the private sector, to plan, manage and implement development strategies will need to be strengthened. This will require, inter-alia, enhancement of capacities of Government structures, inter and intra-sectoral collaboration and coordination to maximize benefits for all Mozambicans, regardless of geographic or regional isolation or gender.

United Nations is still present in Mozambique today. Through United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) many UN agencies are participating in helping the country to overcome the years of conflict and economic underdevelopment. Together with the Government of Mozambique, the donor community, NGO's and civil society partners, the UN system aims to mobilize over 300 million dollars for 2002 to 2006 period. Recently expressed support of the United Nations to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), in which Mozambique is participating, is another example of the continuous involvement of the Organization in Africa's desire in stability and economic prosperity.

Despite notable economic recovery, Mozambique still remains one of the least developed countries that still faces many problems, ranging from high external debt, high rate of extreme poverty, disrupted infrastructure, high rates of illiteracy, to inadequate access to potable water

and sanitation. The fight against extreme poverty, affecting more than 70 per cent of the population as of 1997, is, and should be one of the priority tasks of the leadership of the country. HIV/AIDS pandemic constitutes a serious threat to the stability and advancement of the country. According to the latest reports, up to 16 per cent of the adult population in Mozambique is infected by the disease and a ten percent loss in the population is expected by the year 2010. Life expectancy would have declined from 50 to 36 years. It is another area which requires special attention and dedication.

Since the first historic multi party elections in Mozambique in 1994, the country made significant achievements in consolidating its democracy and implementing a comprehensive economic reform program. There are visible signs of structural economic transformation and a sound political climate is starting to emerge as democratic institutions and civil society gain strength.

I would like to wish the Government and people of Mozambique further successes in their difficult task of maintaining stability and capacity building in their country and I want to assure you that the United Nations will remain actively involved in securing the achievements and support for further development.

Thank you.