



Indian Council of World Affairs
Sapru House, Barakhamba Road
New Delhi

Report

on

Twelfth Sapru House Lecture

by

H.E. Oldemiro Julio Marques Baloi

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mozambique

on

‘Perspectives on Mozambican Foreign Policy’

at

Sapru House, New Delhi
28 November, 2014

Indian Council of World Affairs organised the 12th Sapru House lecture on 'Perspectives on Mozambican Foreign Policy', which was delivered by H.E Mr. Oldemiro Julio Marques Baloi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mozambique on 28 November 2014 at Sapru House, New Delhi

At the outset, Shri Nagendra Kumar Saxena, Deputy Director General, ICWA, welcomed the participants and Shri Vinay Kumar, Joint Secretary (E&SA), Ministry of External Affairs very briefly mentioned about India and Mozambique relations. He highlighted that since the last ten years, the economic relations between India and Mozambique have been expanding, with India currently being the 3rd largest investor in Mozambique.

Ambassador Shashank underlined the historical significance of Sapru House and its evolution as a think tank on foreign affairs. Highlighting India's growing relations with Africa, he said that India has contributed regularly to the African Union and is a development partner with various countries in Africa including Mozambique. He further said that both India and Mozambique share a similar colonial past and Mozambique is also a member of the Commonwealth, though it was colonized by Portugal.

H.E Mr. Oldemiro Julio Marques Baloi shared his reflections on Mozambique's foreign policy and its relations with India. He said that Mozambique and India's relations are century old and India is a country of reference for Mozambique in terms of growth and development. India should keep it up to motivate others, he added.

Describing Mozambique, he said that it is a very young country born during the difficult period of the Cold War. The motto of Mozambique's foreign policy has been to make more friends to promote partnership for development. He said that being a victim of the apartheid regime, their development was severely hampered. After the signing of the peace accord, they embarked upon a democratic path. Their political system is gradually getting consolidated, with regular elections for the president, parliament and local bodies. There is greater focus on the economy and on reducing dependency on donors. He stressed that the

main sector of economic focus remains agriculture in order to address food security issues. Quality seeds and new technology, he said, are important to empower people. Besides agriculture, medium and small scale enterprises are also top priorities for the government. New discovery of gas and coal reserves has led to huge investor focus on Mozambique. There is a great deal of optimism regarding the development potential of these resources, but they would not like it to become a curse.

With regard to Mozambique's foreign policy, he mentioned three guiding documents – the UN charter, the AU charter, and the SADC Treaty. Further, he said that Mozambique is also guided by two key policies – the Foreign policy and the International Cooperation policy. Highlighting their strategic objectives, he mentioned that their aim is to consolidate and expand bilateral cooperation and build synergies to improve the livelihoods of their people. They would like to promote multilateralism for a harmonious world, which benefits the poor. However, he raised concerns about increased marginalization in multilateral bodies like the UN, evident from situations such as that of Libya and Iraq. Some other important objectives that he spelt out were protecting the Mozambican community abroad and strengthening their links back home; resolving border issues; and promoting regional integration. In terms of priority, he highlighted that SADC is number one, followed by the Portuguese speaking Mozambican community and then the African Union.

He further underlined that Mozambique has been contributing to addressing universal challenges, such as environment, MDG goals, human rights, terrorism, which has no borders, and pandemics like HIV/AIDs and Ebola. He emphasized that Ebola needs to be treated as a security problem, rather than as a health problem.

Mozambique's strategy, he said, was to reduce dependency. As a war ravaged economy, for long, it had to submit to the will of the donors for executing emergency programmes in order to provide education and health benefits to the people. Gradually, it has been trying to reduce dependency. For instance, he said that earlier, 75 per cent of its budget was dependent on donors. Since 2010, it has been reduced to 35 per cent with the domestic component being

65 per cent. He further added that for the sake of sustainability, they are trying to diversify their economy to include agriculture, transport and communication. The hydrocarbon sector, he noted, was not much employment generating, as it is more capital intensive rather than labour intensive. And that is the reason why they have been focusing more on small and medium scale industries.

Discussion Points

- Resource nationalization is good for making it sustainable for subsequent generations.
- Investors, besides contributing to taxes, also take up social responsibilities, which allow them to create the right environment and reach out to people.
- Land issues, sometimes, are difficult to deal with. Land belongs to the state. But if people have to be relocated from a land, they are compensated with similar kind of alternative land where necessary infrastructures are in place. Still, the system is not perfect, but there are policies in place.
- The banking system in Mozambique is a challenge, which needs to be addressed.
- By reducing dependency on South Africa for various tools and equipment and creating its own small scale enterprises, Mozambique would be able to attract more investment.
- For taking skilled manpower to Mozambique for different projects, the paperwork needs to be reduced.
- Mozambique's relations with the Middle East are good, but still it has not expanded much. It has been difficult on their part to penetrate in the region. Certainly, religion is not an issue. Thirty percent of Mozambicans are Muslims.
- It's the instrumentalization of the UN, which is problematic. Undoubtedly, it's the key international body for the number of issues that it is handling.
- India and Mozambique share similar values, i.e., security, development and prestige.
