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ALTERNATIVE MODEL FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN ZAMBEZIA

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OBSERVATIONS ABOUT HISTORY

Zambezia emerged mutilated from Portugal's colonial occupation. All the stories that the province had provided a large part of the gross national product of the colonial state only form an additional argument - in the current discussion - that the success of (rural) economic development cannot be measured by the contribution to gross national product. Zambezia was and still is mutilated.

During the colonial period, plantations were established in Zambezia, unlike in any other province of Mozambique. The absolute authoritarian plantation culture that was imposed on the population still has an effect on the social consciousness of the rural communities today. Along the entire coast of lower Zambezia, the population was driven from their lands and coconut palm plantations were established, to supply Europe with coconut meat which was in great demand as a substitute for animal fats, butter, and other oils. The three large coconut companies, Madal, Boror, and the "Companhia de Zambezia", completely determined social life in the coastal regions during the twentieth century. Also in the early twentieth century, in the central part of the province, German companies established sisal plantations and exercised a regime of terror to control and dominate the workforce. In the highlands of Zambezia, the Portuguese introduced tea as an export crop. Around the Namuli Mountains in Gurué, and in Milange District, farming families were driven from their lands and – as one of the farming leaders told us – were "resettled like goats" on the steep slopes around the town of Gurué. However, perhaps most intense and brutal form of plantation development took place along the lower Zambezi River near the village of Luabo. Here, with English and Portuguese capital, the Sena Sugar Estate (SSE) established its so-called "Pearl on the Zambezia river", a 7,000-hectare sugarcane plantation with a then ultra-modern sprinkler irrigation system and a modern processing factory at that time. The plantation was managed according to an apartheid system with a clear racial division between the English-Dutch senior managers, Portuguese and Mauritian middle-managers, and large numbers of migrant workers from the "Bantustans", Ile and Namarroi from the middle Zambezi, all strictly separated with their reserved clubs, residential compounds, etc. In the "Bantustan" the elderly, women, and children were left behind in the villages, leaving the existing agricultural systems underdeveloped.

The history of the SSE sugar plantation in Luabo has been described in detail in the recent book "Bitter Sweetness" by Paul Lapperre (2020).

But the best general characterization of the Portuguese colonial system in Zambezia can be found in the book "Capitalism and Colonialism in Mozambique, A Study of Quelimane District," by Leroy Vail and Landeg White (1980). They wrote:

" ..... after the mid-nineteenth century, the district of Quelimane, the 'garden of the Empire' and the 'second São Tomé' was governed by the first slave traders who arrived there, by the disastrous Portuguese administration that provoked the only African resistance , by the plantation companies that controlled labour and collected taxes, and by the 'Estado Novo'[1], which only demanded the supply of Portugal with regular quantities of sugar, cotton, rice, tea, and vegetable oil. Throughout this entire period, two factors remained constant. First, there was the absolute subordination of the interests of the local African population to those of the various rulers, making the Quelimane district a 'locus classicus' of the way in which capitalism underdeveloped Africa. Secondly, there was resistance from the population oppressed and exploited by the systematic extraction of labour, which can be referred to as the 'peasant alternative', i.e. the production in small plots for the free market, when conditions and prices formed an incentive."

At the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, the people of Zambezia resisted colonial rule. An example is the "Matchingiri movement" from Morrumbala which attacked the opium plantations in Mopeia, but also decades later the uprisings in Maganja da Costa. This resistance was brutally suppressed, after which the population could only muster passive resistance. However, over generations, subordination was incorporated into the collective mentality in Zambezia in the sense that one had to survive in that subordinate position. The "patrão" was imposed. However, when Samora Machel – the leader of the independence movement and future first president of Mozambique – on his historic 1974-1975 journey from North to South Mozambique, described the Zambezians as 'a chicken's head', referring to their lack of revolutionary impulse, this set the tone for contempt for the people of Zambezia. A better understanding and awareness of the historical socio-economic developments that had occurred over the past 150 years could have prevented this historical misunderstanding and disregard for the people of Zambezia.

[1]Estado Novo ("New State") was the name given to the Portuguese regime following the political coup of 1929. It intensified the exploitative colonial economy.

INDEPENDENCE.

At the time of independence in 1975, Zambezia had an estimated population of 1.7 million inhabitants, the majority of whom were illiterate, and had inherited an export-oriented agriculture and a rural economy damaged by the brutal extraction of labour. The new regime attempted to pull the economy out of the colonial "trailway", through nationalizations and so-called proletarianizations of the peasants. These were carried out with political party fanaticism, but failed, due to an absolute lack of insight into the social and political relations in the post-plantation society. The one-party system provoked resistance among the population, which – fuelled by the apartheid regime from South Africa – later culminated in a civil war that lasted from 1976 to 1992. The rural population of Upper (Alta) Zambezia was forced to move *en masse* to Malawi. During the conflict, much of the rural infrastructure was destroyed, and economically, the province literally came to a standstill.

An era of hope began with the General Peace Accords on October 4, 1992. However, the accords brought a negative peace and multi-party democracy which did not work, while the one-party system as well as the centralization of political and economic decisions continued. In the decades that followed the province has suffered from a chronic lack of investment in productive areas. The political destabilization from 2013 onwards with the blockades of the only North-South road did not help the situation in Zambezia. This whole range of factors means that the poverty rate in Zambezia only declined slightly over the period 1996 - 2022, according to official government statistics (IOF). Thus, we continue to face continued poverty with no horizon for improvement. Even if poverty rates decrease slightly, . number of people living in poverty continues to increase due to population growth. The total number of people living in Zambezia was 1.7 million in 1975, 3.3 million in 2000, and the estimates for 2023 are 5.9 million inhabitants.

Over the past ten years, a new phenomenon has manifested itself in Zambezia, namely uncontrolled mining. There are dozens of artisanal mines spread across the province where anarchy reigns, local communities are excluded, and wealth accumulates in the hands of others. However, the worst is happening along the beautiful coast of Zambezia, where Chinese and Russian companies - authorized at the national level - are exploiting heavy sands and extracting the high-value elements for industries abroad. The local populations are completely marginalized and even terrorized, while the natural coastal topography and ecology are fundamentally damaged.

Before moving on to discuss the alternatives for agriculture development, it is useful to discuss two more issues that have occurred in Zambezia in recent decades.

LAND AND FOREST

First and foremost, is the land issue. After independence, the government (based on the one-party system) introduced the Land Law of 1979 with the principle that: *"The land cannot be a means of exploitation of man by man"*. The law was inspired by the socialist legal system in the then Soviet Union. *"The State belongs to the people, the land belongs to the State and therefore the land belongs to the people"* according to the existing ideology at that time. However, the law was only regulated in 1987 and the regulations promulgated at that time were based on the ideology of the free market and opened the possibility for private individuals and companies to apply for land use rights for a period of 50 years. In the following eight years (1987-1995), 2,249 applications were submitted to the provincial land registry covering 3.7 million hectares (37% of the total area of the Province), while 66 applications covered an area of 3.2 million hectares (32% of the total provincial area). The average area of such a requested concession was 47,794 hectares; often several times larger than the area of a local community or "regulado". All this happened in the period just before and after the peace agreements of 1992. After October 1992, refugees from Malawi began to return and, according to the 1979 law and the 1987 regulation, they found their community land given away to private companies. This led to numerous land conflicts in the province. One of the most documented conflicts is that at Nante along the lower Licungo River, where a foreign company requested the entire rice acreage from the local communities. They would probably have been authorized if farmers, with the support of non-governmental organizations, had not successfully resisted. The land conflict in Nante was important for the formulation of the new land law, with regulations and technical instructions at that time. This legal framework was a real breath of fresh air for the rural population after all the land conflicts because the law recognized and defined the peasant communities as a social unit recognized by law. It also defined the right of those communities to use the land according to local customary rights.

As a result of parliamentary approval of the farmer-friendly land law, confidence grew that the forestry law would also prioritize the interests of farming communities. However, this trust was broken. The government opted to resume the colonial system for the exploitation and management of the forests by granting long-term (50 years) forest concessions large enough to ensure sustainable yields, controlled through annual felling licences. But for such a system to be sustainable, adherence to an annual allowable cut, based on accurate inventory of commercial species was required, and the harvest administered and controlled by an honest, disciplined, and accountable forest authority. An inventory had been conducted in and allowable cuts for different species established, but by the end of the nineties the Chinese had entered the market, seeking Mozambique's dark heavy hardwoods as substitutes for the Asian species, now exhausted, that had traditionally been used to produce prestige furniture and carvings for the booming Chinese market. In the face of this demand, and with the collusion of corrupt provincial forest authorities, concessions were issued without adequate survey

and management planning, licences totalling far above annual cut were issued, and then uncontrolled harvesting was allowed which greatly exceeded the volumes that had been licensed and expanded beyond the commercial forest estate into wildlife reserves and other protected areas.

Civil society was undermined. Anyone who could obtain a licence and had a truck at his or her disposal went into the extensive forests to get logs. In the villages, local leaders were bribed, and farmers were co-opted as cheap labour to do the dangerous heavy lifting. Rural roads were destroyed by the heavy loads. In the port, bulk carriers arrived and loaded up unprocessed logs, effectively exporting all the potential "added- value" to China and other Asian countries, where the end products sold for vast sums. All this was further exacerbated when these Chinese, including their State-owned enterprises and traders began financing local license holders (often members of the political-economic elite) to increase their logging.

In February 2007, the town of Quelimane was full of logs representing a volume that exceeded the sustainable and permitted annual allowable cut. A local activist alerted NGOs engaged on issues of environment and development and a series of strategic studies of forest governance in Zambezia was supported (Mackenzie 2006, 2008, 2009). These presented detailed evidence of the illegal and unsustainable logging and corruption and stimulated debate at provincial, national and international level. Big, international NGOs, like Global Witness, Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) and IIED began to get involved, and the focus of the studies expanded to other countries in Africa. International donors sponsored multi-million dollar projects to improve forest governance. While the Mozambique's government officials shook their heads and took the money, only minor cosmetic changes to practice were made, and illegal logging and direct export to China continues to this day.

The Land Law of 1997 was, however, an important step in the emancipation struggle of the rural population because they could obtain formal rights to use their land. In the province of Zambezia, there are 368 communities covering 99 % of the total land area of the province. In other words, there is no "free" land. If the large private companies wanted land, they, and the government, in their wake, had to consult first with the communities about their proposed use of the land. However, this led to resistance from a part of the government, and in 2006, there was an investigation by the Ministry of Agriculture to know whether there was "free" land in Zambezia – and where. The committee came to the conclusion that 13% of the surface area had no customary user rights, and much it was in the delta. However, it was clear that communities also lived on and claimed that 13%. This provoked further frustration within the Ministry, and the research was repeated in 2012. This time, the result was that 6% was now declared free. However, this conclusion also ignored the actual situation in the field.

As a result of all this and other studies, in 2017, the President of Mozambique proposed revising the Land Law to enhance investors´ access to land. In 2022, after a short and

inadequate national discussion - a revised national land policy was approved by parliament, and on that basis, the ongoing revision of the Land Law began. Almost immediately, the government presented a first draft. While this recognizes the local communities and their right to use their common land, there is a provision which allows the government to deprive them of their land, by establishing so-called "State land reserves" on it. This is not so different from what happened in late colonial times. The draft also provides that land use rights can be contracted to third parties and can serve as collateral for loans, despite the latter being contrary to the constitution. It is not clear what all this will mean in practice. The farmers' and civil society organizations have recommended to the government that all proposals regarding the new Land Law should be opened to a broad social discussion.

AGRICULTURAL MARKETS AND PRICING

A second issue to be discussed in this context is that of the market for agricultural products and the prices offered to farmers.

After the 1997 legal framework for land was completed, civil society organizations started facilitating the "delimitation" of community land. The government took a passive stance in this regard, but, contrary to the principles of the land law, the Portuguese company Portucel was authorized to start a mega forest plantation in central Zambezia. Anyone traveling through central Zambezia in 2025 will see farmers who literally try to produce their food in the shade of the company's eucalyptus forests.

In total, the land of 67 communities had been delimited, with a total area of 1.8 million hectares (17% of Zambezia's land area). A major flaw in land registration was the failure to draw up land use plans and mobilize capital for their implementation. So, after the community had formalized their land rights, the question was, "...and, what now?" The market for their products then became the next important topic.

To this end, a strategy document was formulated in 2001 with the aim of establishing the cooperative bank and a network of commercialization cooperatives. By 2008, Banco Terra had been established as a cooperative bank, and a network of 11 cooperatives had been established in the most important value chains (maize, rice, beans, and peanuts) in the central provinces of Manica, Sofala, and Zambezia. The process of the founding and subsequent demise of the cooperative bank must be the subject of an independent evaluation. With regard to the commercialization cooperatives, the communities were consulted about their role in the different value chains, the cooperatives were helped to legalize themselves, and their members were trained in the principles of cooperativism. It was clear that the motivators of cooperativism spoke the language of the farmers here, and that this was experienced as another breath of fresh air by the farmers.

STEPS TOWARDS AN ALTERNATIVE AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR ZAMBEZIA (FARMERS STRATEGY)

Despite various government strategies for agricultural development and numerous non-governmental interventions over the past three decades, poverty has increased in Zambezia Province. There is a clear need – from the perspective of the rural population – to develop a solid, consensus-based rural and agricultural development strategy.

Poverty will continue and is likely to increase if peasants remain in a position where they cannot exercise power and pressure. As they are seen, to quote a famous saying, "*like a bag of potatoes*". Therefore, this paper adopts an empowerment strategy to facilitate peasants to exercise power through organizational and institutional development.

MAIN AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

There are two objectives:

1. To break away from the stagnation in agriculture in Zambezia, the first objective is to develop a socio-economic empowerment strategy to facilitate peasants to exercise influence and power through organizational and institutional development.

    - Specific Objective: Promote access to and control of natural and financial resources to strengthen the resilience of women and girls.

2. The second objective is to identify specific interventions for the different agroecological zones of the Province that aim to improve the productivity and sustainability of the production of small and medium farmers.

The objective (1) to create peasant influence and power

In addition to the numerous difficulties that farmers face, three points are essential, namely:

1. Certainty regarding land use.
2. Certainty of selling agricultural products at good prices.
3. Financial resources to increase production.

The alternative development strategy therefore has three elements:

1. Delimitation and formal registration of community lands, developing plans for community use of land and natural resources such as water, forests, and minerals.

2. From "clusters" of communities, given their geographic location and shared interests in the various value chains, the formation of marketing cooperatives.
3. Based on marketing cooperatives and local savings initiatives, create a savings and loan bank for farmers and entrepreneurs at the provincial level.

This process must be supported and led by the farmers themselves. In this regard, it is important to introduce the "iron triangle" model, namely:

1. An organization of interest to farmers that defends farmers' rights. In the context of Zambezia this organization exists in the form of the Provincial Union of Peasants of Zambezia (UPCZ).
2. A network of agricultural cooperatives.
3. Farmers' cooperative loan and savings bank.

The peasants will have to establish and manage these three elements of the triangle on their own. Every peasant man and woman can be a member of these three organizations. It will become clear that this process of socioeconomic emancipation is a long-term process and that it must be tolerated by the government and supported by social organizations in the short and medium term. As far as the issue of sustainability is concerned, farmers will have to secure the costs of the interest group by (1) increasing their income with the help of their cooperatives (2), and the cooperative bank (3).

Objective (2) to create sustainable and more productive agriculture in agro-ecological zones

Zambezia is a province rich in resources namely land, water, and experienced farmers. Furthermore, its geographical position allows for a wide range of products. In Lower Zambezia, rice can be produced, while in Upper Zambezia, potatoes can be produced. The large difference in altitudes also causes erosion. Here are some interventions for agro-ecological zones.

Lower Zambezia. Here, rice production is essential for food security, in addition to coconut, beans and sweet potatoes. It is the only area where the country can produce rice to replace imports and to export this cereal. The interventions are focused on the introduction of water control measures (irrigation and drainage). It is essential that infrastructures are resilient to climate change.

Middle and Upper Zambezia: Agricultural production conditions are very diverse in Middle and Upper Zambezia in terms of altitude, soil type, and rainfall, but common problems are linked to water erosion and soil impoverishment. Therefore, the objective here is the massive introduction of Agro-Forestry Food Systems (SAFA).

URGENT MATTERS

1. Secure land for communities

The province of Zambezia has 10,112,060 ha occupied by 368 local communities or "regulados". As was mentioned, there is no "*free land*". The 1997 Land Law promoted the delimitation of community lands. In the following years, several NGOs facilitated communities to obtain the formal right to use and benefit from their land. But, as was reported, this movement was weakened due to several factors, namely: 1) The weakness and lack of definition in the Government's actions in the delimitation processes; and 2) After the delimitation, the communities asked: "And what next?" demanding plans for the use and exploitation of resources and investments that were not made. To secure land for peasants it will be necessary to:

- Investigate with the provincial cadastre services which communities have been duly registered as delimited.
- Investigate with the provincial cadastre services, NGOs and service providers which communities are in the process of delimitation.
- Organize a course to train community members in delimitation technology.
- Design a program to finalize ongoing processes.
- Organize a program to delimitate the rest of the communities in the province.
- Organize a course to train people to produce community land use and exploitation plans (UAT) together with communities.
- Organize a program to produce land use plans including use and exploitation of forest and mineral resources for communities in the province.
- Setting up a program to recover the community land occupied by the Portuguese company Portucel.

2. Ensure mineral resources for communities

Poverty within the rural population - consisting largely of young people - and the existence of manually exploitable mineral resources form ingredients for socially unstable situations and a degradation of the social fabric. The main problem was identified as: *Mining destabilizes rural areas and does not bring benefits to local communities*. Five reasons for the existence of the main problem were also identified, namely:

1. Authorization of exploration licenses from the national level without taking into account the local context.
2. Public hearings carried out without the participation of local communities.
3. Local communities are not prepared to enter into the processes of exploitation of natural resources.

4. Natural resource value chains dominated by anarchy and organized crime.
5. Lack of a political framework to meet the need for inclusion.

The general objective proposed is: *Local communities (and their individual members) benefit substantially in a peaceful environment from the environmentally sustainable exploitation of mineral resources located within their territory,* and as specific objectives, an attempt was made to "invert" the reasons for the main problem with the following prioritization:

1. Local governments (provincial and district) with participation of local communities with powers to authorize concessions and licenses for the exploration of mineral resources located in their territory.
2. Involvement of local communities guaranteed throughout the exploration process.
3. Community lands - where natural resources are deposited - are delimited and conditions are created for communities to obtain a substantial part of the benefits from exploitation.
4. A partnership model between communities and the private sector has been created, securing a substantial share of the added value of minerals for local communities.
5. The legal framework (national policy, laws, and regulations) with guarantees for local communities to benefit substantially from the exploitation of natural resources.

The main activities can be formulated as follows:

1. Inventorize the authorizations, licenses, concessions, and certifications in the mining areas of Zambezia and report the history and current state of exploration.
2. Describe and report on current conflicts in the mining area in Zambezia Province.
3. Organize the involvement and legal position of local communities in the mining process.
4. Stop the exploration of heavy sands by Russian and Chinese companies along the coast.
5. Investigate and organize the value chains of different mineral resources to be explored in Zambezia Province.
6. Identify and describe the legal framework for inclusive exploration of mineral resources.

HOW WILL WOMEN INCREASE THEIR INFLUENCE AND POWER?

Diversity in terms of habits, customs and also linguistics is one of the main characteristics of the province of Zambezia. There are three main cultural domains, namely:

- Lomwé in the districts of Alto-Molocué, Gurué, Ile, Namarroi, Pebane and Gilé.

- Chuabo in the districts of Quelimane, Namacurra, Inhassunge, Nicoadala and Mocuba.
- Sena in the districts of Morrumbala, Mopeia and Luabo.

The habits and customs in these three geographical areas are predominant in relations between women and men. To answer the question in the epigraph it will be necessary to comply with the single specific objective mentioned above: *Promote access to and control of natural and financial resources to strengthen the resilience of women and girls.* The results and indicators of this objective are found in the following table:

RESULT	INDICATOR
Increased access to and control of land and benefits from natural resources by women and girls	# of women's associations, who benefit from land rights and control
	# of women in leadership positions on natural resource management committees that manage the benefits arising from Natural Resources in a participatory manner;
Improve food, nutritional and income security for women and girls	% of women and female-headed households eating 2 to 3 meals a day
	% women who eat at least 5 of the 8 food groups per day (MDD-Women index)
Increasing access, control and management of income for women and girls	# of entrepreneurship initiatives targeting women and girls
	# women and girls involved in entrepreneurship initiatives
	# of women and girls benefiting from revolving savings and credit initiatives.
	# of women involved in agricultural marketing

The activities are linked to the training:

- Organize gender training for both men and women.
- Organize training on gender transformative masculinity for men.
- Training on gender transformative leadership for women.

PARTNERSHIP WITH THE LOCAL PRIVATE SECTOR

Although private commercial companies and peasants have completely opposite objectives in the value chains in terms of price determination, it will be necessary to find a way of cooperation to cultivate synergies for the benefit of the rural development process in Zambezia. The key in this is the organization of peasants into cooperatives. The cooperative can form a joint venture with a private company where each will have shares and in which the private company manages the business. The key is creating trust in the value chain. Implementing the cooperative principle of pre- and post-payment to ensure that a portion of the added value goes back to the farmer will build trust. The two activities here are:

- Together with cooperatives and local private companies that operate or intend to operate in the value chains of agricultural, forestry and mineral products, design the cooperation model. Compare the article: *Elements of an inclusive strategy for the exploitation of natural resources in Zambezia Province. March 2022 Advocacy Group for Rural Development in Zambezia.*
- Urgently implement pilot projects of this partnership in the agriculture, forestry, and mining sectors.

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