

26 November 2007 - For immediate release

President Chissano pays tribute to the people of Mozambique in accepting the Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership

Former President of Mozambique vows “to promote good governance in a continent that is changing rapidly for the better”

Alexandria, Egypt, 26th November 2007 – President Joaquim Chissano, the former President of Mozambique, has accepted the inaugural Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership from Kofi Annan, the former Secretary General of the United Nations, at a ceremony in Alexandria in Egypt tonight.

In his keynote address, President Chissano said he accepted the award “with humility and great honour” as “a tribute to the millions of women and men of Mozambique, young and old, for their untiring commitment to freedom, peace, democracy and prosperity in our country.”

While promising to continue his work to uplift his country and his continent, President Chissano said, “We need to develop and root in our societies a culture of peace. We need to promote regional integration. We need to encourage public-private partnerships and give a more robust role to our private sector. We must fight corruption and promote integrity and good governance. And we need to establish a sustained process of national dialogue and reconciliation in all the countries emerging from conflict. In short, we need to work towards building capable states in Africa.”

In his concluding remarks, the former President stated, “The Foundation’s aim to recognize and celebrate African leadership is a noble one. I look forward to using the prize to do all I can to promote good governance in a continent that is changing rapidly for the better.”

Ends. 26th November 2007

For general media enquiries about the Prize and the Foundation please contact:

- 1) **London:** Toby Orr, Portland on +44 7736 175311; toby.orr@portlandpr.co.uk
- 2) **Alexandria:** Robert Watkinson, Portland on +44 7984 433486; robert.watkinson@portlandpr.co.uk

Notes for Editors

- 1) Joaquim Chissano served as Head of State of Mozambique from November 1986 to February 2005. He was elected President in October 1994 and then again in December 1999, announcing that he would step down from office in 2004. A full biography of the winner can be found at www.moibrahimfoundation.org

- 2) The full Prize Committee citation can be found at www.moibrahimfoundation.org
- 3) The Prize Committee was chaired by former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and comprised of Martti Ahtisaari, former UN Special Representative for Namibia and former President of Finland; Aïcha Bah Diallo, former Minister of Education in Guinea and Special Adviser to the Director-General of UNESCO; Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Managing Director, World Bank (effective: 1 December 2007); Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (and board member of the Foundation); Salim Ahmed Salim, former Prime Minister of Tanzania and former Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity (and board member of the Foundation)
- 4) The Mo Ibrahim Foundation is the vision of Dr Mo Ibrahim, founder of the African telecommunications company Celtel International and one of Africa's most successful business leaders, and has been established to support the attainment of good governance in Africa. A not-for-profit organisation, the Foundation is governed by a board of trustees that includes Dr Mo Ibrahim (founder, Celtel International); Lalla Ben Barka (Deputy Executive Secretary, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa); Lord Cairns (Chairman, Charities Aid Foundation); Dr Mamphela Ramphele (former Managing Director, World Bank); Mary Robinson (former President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights); Salim Ahmed Salim (former Secretary-General, Organisation of African Unity), and Nicholas Ulanov (Managing Director, The Ulanov Partnership)
- 5) The Ibrahim Index of African Governance is an innovative new ranking of governance quality in sub-Saharan Africa. Developed under the direction of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, with the help of an advisory council of African academics, the Ibrahim Index of African Governance assesses sub-Saharan Africa's 48 nation states against a comprehensive new index of governance indicators. To find out more: www.moibrahimfoundation.org/index
- 6) Full text of Joaquim Chissano's address:

Excellencies; Distinguished Guests; Ladies and Gentlemen; I wish, at the outset, to express my sincere and profound thanks to the Prize Committee of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation for awarding me the first Mo Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership. I commend Dr. Mo Ibrahim for his vision in establishing the prize. I accept the award with humility and great honour. I accept it as a tribute to the millions of women and men of Mozambique, young and old, for their untiring commitment to freedom, peace, democracy and prosperity in our country.

When I assumed the leadership as President of Mozambique, in 1986, the country was facing a war of destabilization that had devastated the country and its people. To make matters worse, natural disasters were severely affecting the country. There was a common understanding among our people and the leadership that the single most fundamental goal to be reached was the end of the war. We committed ourselves to end the war, build peace and transform the economy.

In this regard, we introduced the Economic Rehabilitation Programme, in 1987, in an effort to stimulate economic growth and transform our society. The programme included privatization of state enterprises and the creation of enabling legal and macro-economic frameworks for private investment, both foreign and domestic.

In 1989, a nationwide debate on constitutional reforms took place. A large majority of the Mozambican people were against the opening of the country to a multiparty political

system. But, the leadership of the country felt that the new constitution should introduce multiparty democracy as well as market economy, and widen the rights of the citizens. The constitution was adopted in 1990.

Against this background, we intensified contacts and negotiated with the rebels. At the same time, we started talks with several Mozambican groups, living inside and outside the country. This included those that we knew were supporting the rebel movement of Renamo. Our aim was to bring all Mozambicans to the same track; the track that would take the country to peace, stability and development.

These efforts succeeded on October 4, 1992, when the peace agreement between the government and Renamo was signed in Rome. This agreement provided a window of opportunity and hope for the entire nation.

To give content to peace and to exploit the broad-based peace dividend, the rehabilitation, modernization and expansion of infrastructure, resettlement of refugees and displaced persons, as well as the social and economic reintegration of former combatants were carried out as a matter of priority. Democratic institutions were strengthened and gender mainstreamed. This exercise took place within a framework of national reconciliation, peace building and consolidation of political and economic reforms, and gave birth to a culture of tolerance and politics of inclusion.

In addition, priority was given to agriculture for production of food and cash crops by peasants, to boost the economy. As a result, and in spite of the severe floods in the years 2000 and 2001, the GDP grew by an average annual rate of about 8.1%. Although poverty continues to be the main challenge facing the country, we are confident that we are on track to meet most of the Millennium Development Goals.

Despite the fact that the Mozambican Constitution allowed me to run for a third term during the 2004 presidential elections, I decided not to do so. Consequently, I announced my decision not to seek for a third mandate three years before the elections. This was to allow the country to prepare itself for a peaceful transition.

My decision was largely influenced by the understanding that the country was in peace and the economy was steadily growing. Democracy was taking root. I realized the time had come and conditions were right to allow a new leadership to take over and push the country forward.

I am glad that my successor, President Armando Guebuza, has been consolidating the peace-dividends and has introduced new dynamics for social and economic transformation of the country. Indeed, progress continues to thrive in Mozambique.

Although I am no longer in the Government, I continue to give my support to the political, social and economic development of the nation, through the Joaquim Chissano Foundation, which was launched in November 2005. The three pillars of the Foundation are promotion of peace, social and economic development, as well as culture.

I continue to engage myself in domestic and African matters because I know too well how much still need to be done to uplift my country and our continent. Poverty remains a big challenge. HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis have to be eradicated. The process of nation building is yet to be completed in Africa. Peace remains elusive.

We need to develop and root in our societies a culture of peace. We need to promote regional integration. We need to encourage public-private partnerships and give a more robust role to our private sector. We must fight corruption and promote integrity and good governance. And we need to establish a sustained process of national dialogue and

reconciliation in all the countries emerging from conflict. In short, we need to work towards building capable states in Africa.

In conclusion, I am delighted to accept this award from the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, and honoured to be the first recipient of the Mo Ibrahim prize. The Foundation's aim to recognize and celebrate African leadership is a noble one. I look forward to using the prize to do all I can to promote good governance in a continent that is changing rapidly for the better. I thank the Foundation and its Prize Committee.

I thank you very much.