

**United Nations Security Council Open Debate**  
**Peace and Security in Africa - development policies and implementation of the Silencing the Guns**  
**30 March 2023**  
**Statement for PESG Mirko Manzoni**

**Statement**

Mr. President,

1. Thank you for the opportunity to brief the Security Council on efforts to advance the 'Silencing the guns' agenda.
2. I am honoured to be able to speak to you today in my capacity as Personal Envoy of the United Nations Secretary-General for Mozambique, a position which I have held for nearly four years, and through which I have accompanied the entire implementation of the Maputo Accord for Peace and National Reconciliation between the Government of Mozambique and Renamo.
3. My involvement with this process began in 2016, as Swiss Ambassador to Mozambique, when I formed part of a small mediation team, with whom I travelled many times into the bush to talk with both parties, building trust and a relationship that continues to this day.
4. The mediation, signing and implementation of the Maputo Accord has generated hope and inspiration. I see four fundamental reasons for its success: establishing **national ownership** from the outset, building **trust, remaining flexible** and ensuring a **human-centred process** throughout.
5. Allow me to focus on these reasons, to share progress and reflections on what we can learn when considering the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts and peacebuilding efforts. I'd like to underline that there have also been many challenges to overcome together with the principals - but these are the reasons why that has been possible.

Mr. President,

6. I'll begin with national ownership. In any context, local and national actors have the best understanding of the nuances of a conflict and so they must lead, and own, their own peace processes. National ownership can act as a catalyst for progress, encouraging greater buy-in from stakeholders and producing more relevant results. The role of international actors is to support.
7. The Government of Mozambique and Renamo retained both ownership and initiative in the establishment of the national peace architecture from the beginning, and both parties gained trust from their equal commitment and respect for each other. With previous failed attempts at peace, this time Mozambique put national efforts at its core. And it is working.
8. Of course, for national actors to take on this ownership, political will must be present. In the Mozambican context, both sides have consistently shown up and taken courageous leaps of faith to prioritise peace for their people.

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9. While the core mediation team played an important facilitation role, the Government has championed national solutions to national problems – through listening and creating a culture of dialogue between the Government and Renamo.
10. And to be a truly national process, it must embrace all of the population. As we heard from numerous Member States at this table during Mozambique's signature event on how to advance the women, peace, and security agenda on 7 March, to exclude women from peace processes is to doom those processes to failure. National ownership means ensuring the full, equal, and meaningful participation of women.
11. In Mozambique, the peace process has mainstreamed women's participation in the negotiations and implementation structures. It has been guided by relevant national and international frameworks on Women, Peace, and Security, including UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and Mozambique's own National Action Plan.

Mr. President,

12. We are fully convinced that another reason for Mozambique's successful peace process has been the fostering of trust between the parties. One early indication of this was the fact that just one month after talks resumed between the two leaders, President Filipe Jacinto Nyusi and then Renamo leader Afonso Dhlakama, a cease-fire was announced.
13. Trust between the parties was further fostered by the implementation of additional partial agreements while negotiations were ongoing - notably, the Constitutional Agreement on decentralisation and the Memorandum of Understanding on Military Affairs were both signed before the peace agreement. This approach of progressive implementation, using confidence-building measures, helped increase trust and gave each Party a sense of purpose and achievement.
14. I commend the mutual trust achieved between the parties and how this has been reflected in the exemplary commitment shown by the national implementing structures to work together to realise all aspects of the agreements.

Mr. President,

15. The third reason behind the success of Mozambique's peace process is its flexibility. The process has taken a forward-thinking and adaptive approach with targeted investments to embed peace. Any hurdles faced along the way were addressed with direct and open dialogue between the parties and using agile decision-making and action.
16. For example, many activities ground to a halt due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Within one month, President Nyusi and the leader of Renamo met and held extensive consultations, ultimately facilitating the safe resumption of DDR activities in June 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic could have derailed Mozambique's journey to peace if the necessary flexibility had not been present.

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17. We strongly believe that adopting a flexible and agile approach to timelines and activities has also been essential to help ensure that the process continues to reflect the evolving needs of the parties. And from donors and the international community, flexibility has been indispensable. Peace processes are political processes. In any political process there are many moving parts, and there must be space given for setbacks, altered timelines, and changing directions.

Mr. President,

18. It is important to remind ourselves often that peace processes are for people. Maintaining a human-centred approach throughout is not only the right thing to do, but it guarantees the best chance of success. People were placed at the heart of the DDR process in Mozambique by sensitising DDR beneficiaries at all stages, ensuring gender-sensitive disarmament and demobilisation, and prioritising conflict-sensitive reintegration opportunities.

19. This has directly impacted the advancement of the process as those involved have felt listened to and their needs prioritised. By involving everyone, we are giving peace a better chance of success.

20. Putting people first pays off in peace dividends. As a key element of the peace initiative, the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) process has seen more than 4,800 DDR beneficiaries settle in communities of their choice to begin their reintegration journey with community members welcoming home these women and men.

21. Progress in inclusive local development has been crucial to embedding peace in communities. For that, DDR programmes must also take a longer-term view, rather than being seen as a technical and time-limited process. The Mozambican process tackles long-standing issues such as pensions for the demobilised and introduces innovative strategies to spur the involvement of a broad range of actors, including the private sector, to embed the long-term sustainability of peace.

22. I would like to take the opportunity to applaud the courage and wisdom of the Government in pursuing a pragmatic solution to pensions. The recent passing of a decree extending pensions to those demobilised is a historic moment, solving not only outstanding issues from the past but also investing in the sustainability of the current peace process and setting an example of reconciliation for the rest of the world.

23. Including demobilised combatants in the national pensions system is crucial for the sustainability of the peace process. It is also an important step for national reconciliation, providing the DDR beneficiaries with a sense of dignity and recognition for their service following their demobilisation.

24. Additionally, the reconciliation process has taken a long-term comprehensive approach and seeks to integrate peace education into the fabric of Mozambican society. Every individual has a role to play in consolidating and sustaining peace.

Mr. President,

25. Combined, national ownership, trust, flexibility and a human-centered approach, have created a commitment to continuity, patience and follow-through, resulting in sustained implementation from

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the parties, implementers, DDR beneficiaries, Mozambican society and the international community at large.

26. I believe this has been possible due to Mozambique's unique case where the same people who were involved in the negotiations are the ones involved in implementation. This provides continuity to the process and builds on years of hard work building trust with the parties by encouraging and facilitating discreet dialogue. Silencing the guns and embracing dialogue is becoming a Mozambican way of doing things, and this is essential for lasting peace.
  27. Almost four years into its implementation, the Maputo Accord for Peace and National Reconciliation is setting down ever deeper roots. The peace process demonstrates the commitment of the country's leaders to dialogue as the only sustainable path to peace.
  28. In the Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique is also applying a model of building peace and security through dynamic regional and local solutions, seeking to make use of inter-African interventions to resolve challenges on the continent.
  29. By tapping into the enormous potential offered by regional organisations and partners, Mozambique has built a framework for concerted action, where coordination among actors involved in conflict prevention and peacebuilding has been essential. Not only do these actors know the conflict dynamics well, but they are often also directly impacted as threats become increasingly transnational.
- Mr. President,
30. In closing, **let me stress that the success of a peace process should not be measured by the difficulties it encounters; rather, it should be judged on the basis of how those involved choose to overcome such difficulties.** While there is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all approach to building peace, I think collectively we have identified some basic building blocks that will be relevant and applicable to other contexts.
  31. I commend the President of Mozambique, Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, the former leader of Renamo Afonso Dhlakama and current leader Ossufo Momade, for believing in peace and for listening to the voices of millions of Mozambicans who have wanted peace for so long.
  32. I remain deeply grateful for the continuous support I receive from both parties, from the United Nations Secretary-General and the international community. Such support has been critical.
  33. I look forward to continued partnership to support Mozambicans in their endeavor to build a better future and a lasting peace.

Thank you very much, Mr. President.