

# Creating sustainable development

## INTERVIEW WITH HE ARMANDO GUEBUZA

PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

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### What are the main challenges facing Mozambique?

Everything we do is focused on reducing poverty and raising people's living standards. The way to do this is through attracting more investment, and the way to attract more investment is to improve our infrastructure, and also the level of training and skills of our workforce. For example, we have significant potential in our developing gas sector. But we need new infrastructure if we are going to develop a viable gas industry, and we also need to be able to train local people to run the industry and work in it. This will allow us to then begin developing a bigger industrial sector, which will generate new jobs.

### What are your expectations regarding your forthcoming visit to the United Kingdom?

I am very pleased and proud to be among the few heads of state to visit the United Kingdom this year. As a member of the Commonwealth, one of the main outcomes of this visit will be to further strengthen bilateral relations with the United Kingdom as well as to contribute to strengthening the already solid ties both at the political and economic level that our two countries enjoy. I will also be meeting with business leaders, and hope to further encourage them to invest in Mozambique. I will also be discussing the United Kingdom's important aid contribution to my country. We have an excellent relationship with the United Kingdom, and I can say that I am very happy with how things are progressing in every aspect of it.

### Are there any specific issues that you will be seeking to address with policy makers?

Mozambique needs to improve its skills base and the training of its workforce. So I will be keen to talk to British companies about helping us with their huge specialist experience in this regard. We have been working hard to bring civil society, the business community and local administrations together to move change forward more quickly. The second area that is very important to us is improving our infrastructure as this is key to our development. So we will be looking at what role British companies can play in improving transport and telecommunications in particular.

I am also looking forward to meeting business leaders in other sectors such as mining and energy to discuss the partnerships and investment which will help the development of Mozambique.

### What is the key long term objective of Mozambique's gas development programmes?

We are working on how best to implement a programme that will make the best use of these gas resources. We also intend to work with our international partners so that we can put our gas to work for the good of the population.

### Are you concerned about the potential problems associated with a dependence on natural resources, bearing in mind the experiences of other resource-rich African countries?

This is a new situation for us, but we are ready to deal with it. As leader I wish to make sure that everybody benefits from our natural resources. The best way to manage these resources is for everybody in the country to work together. We want to avoid resource development creating problems for our people, and use the revenue from gas to help communities by giving them better infrastructure and by improving education, for example. We can use this gas endowment to make Mozambique a more attractive place for the international community to invest in.



Rupert Goodman,  
Chairman and Founder  
of FIRST with President  
Armando Guebuza of the  
Republic of Mozambique

**After retiring  
I want to  
continue  
giving  
something to  
Mozambique**

HE Armando Guebuza,  
President of the  
Republic of Mozambique  
and Declan Hartnett,  
Regional Publisher, FIRST

If we handle the matter well, then this will inspire confidence and it will encourage further investment. We need to use our gas resources to create new industries, and to develop an export economy for our goods for the benefit of our people.

**What sort of partnership are you developing with the international oil and gas companies?**

We will work with them to explain to society what they are doing, and how the gas is being put to use. People have to understand what is going on, and the changes that are being implemented. We also want the electorate to know that our budgets will be used to develop infrastructure so that we can attract investment. We believe that the benefits of gas can help the entire country. It will help build more schools, and more jobs. We will be able to train people, as well as to continue with the process of rural electrification that is improving people's lives.

**Will you be following any particular model regarding your policies on using gas revenue?**

There is no off-the-shelf model. Our goal is simple: the gas must benefit everybody. We can, of course, learn much from the experience of other African countries: from Nigeria; from Angola, we will learn from what they did right, and what they did wrong. We can even learn from Britain, where North Sea oil and gas is soon to run out.

**Britain never set up a sovereign wealth fund...**

Exactly. We are looking at how best we can use a non-renewable resource, so we are looking at setting up a fund to use the revenue productivity for current and future generations. We don't want to depend on a non-renewable resource.

**What is your vision for Mozambique in two decades time as a result of the gas endowment?**

The economy will have changed beyond recognition. We will use the revenue to develop the key areas of our economy. That means agriculture. International companies are helping us with agriculture, and we hope that we can attract more British companies to modernise this sector. We also want to implement policies to help SMEs. We will invest in industry. We are not going to rely on oil revenue in itself, but as a means to further develop the economy.

**What do you see yourself doing after you stand down as President - what is your ambition?**

I still don't know. I want to continue giving something to Mozambique, not through politics, but by working in other areas. I want to stay at home, I have no interest in any international position.

**How do you want to be remembered?**

I don't see things in those terms, but after I have served my term, I hope I will have been able to help this country's development by having empowered people in rural areas to make decisions about their own lives, and their future, so that civil society grows. Examples of this are our structures of municipal government, of regional administration, that allow people to play a part in their future. This was the idea behind my open presidencies initiative, of visiting small communities in rural areas and asking people them what they think about our policies; I wanted their advice so that we could give them what they need. I hope that whoever comes after me continues to work in this way. That would be my greatest legacy.

**Mozambique and Rwanda are the only countries in the Commonwealth that were not formerly British protectorates or part of the empire. How do you see your country's role developing in the context of the Commonwealth?**

The Commonwealth is very important to Mozambique and has helped us enormously. We consider ourselves an important part of the Commonwealth, and share the goals of unity and democracy, of respecting differences, and upholding the rule of law.

**Do you have any personal messages for the international community?**

On behalf of my fellow countrymen and women, I would like to offer my congratulations to HM Queen Elizabeth II on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee. We wish her many more years on the throne in what is a doubly special year because of the Olympic and Paralympic Games that are being held in London this summer.

