



Portugal and South Africa: Matching words with deeds

PAULO GORJÃO
Researcher, IPRIS

Portuguese Foreign Minister Luís Amado has emphasized on several occasions over the last few years, namely last February in Addis Ababa on the sidelines of the 14th African Union Summit, that Southern Africa is nowadays the most important region in the world as far as Lisbon's diplomacy is concerned. Following the same logic, Portuguese President Aníbal Cavaco Silva emphasized while visiting Luanda last July that Angola could be an access platform for Portugal regarding Southern Africa.

The rhetoric on the importance of Southern Africa to Portugal's foreign policy is not surprising, considering that one of Portuguese diplomacy's main pillars is centered on Portuguese-speaking countries, two of them – Angola and Mozambique – being located precisely in the region. Last year, Portuguese Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation João Gomes Cravinho went

as far as describing both Portuguese-speaking Southern African countries as the “spinal column of the relationship [of Portugal] with the African continent”.

Portugal's interest in Southern Africa is multilayered. Not only is there a significant community of Portuguese expatriates, but the Portuguese language itself is important in the region. Indeed, it is the official language in Angola and Mozambique, as well as one of the working languages of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU).

Moreover, while a few years ago the interest of Portuguese companies – such as Banif, BPI, Cimpor, CGD, Escom, Galp, Martifer, Mota Engil, MSF, Portugal Telecom, Sonae, Teixeira Duarte, among others – was centered mainly on Angola and Mozambique, nowadays their focus is spreading to the entire region. Indeed, diversifying exporting markets beyond European countries has become an imperative for the Portuguese economy, which is now looking not only to Portuguese-speaking countries with renewed interest, but also to the whole of Southern Africa.

Last but not the least, Portugal also has a political interest in the region. Southern Africa is a central part of Lisbon's strategy towards the African continent, as well as regarding the European Union (EU). The more relevant Portugal becomes in Southern Africa,

the more influence it will have in the African continent in general. Moreover, as it was pointed out by Foreign Minister Luís Amado last January, Portugal will become more relevant in the EU if it is able to be influent in other regions such as Southern Africa. Also, Portugal could perform the role of bridge builder between the EU and the SADC, thus reinforcing its influence in both chessboards.

The development of a bilateral relationship between Lisbon and Pretoria is crucial if indeed Portugal really wishes to match words with deeds when it says that Southern Africa is a strategic region. An increasingly important relationship with South Africa will give Portugal additional power vis-à-vis Angola and Mozambique, while at the same time working as an access platform regarding Southern Africa. The South African market is, by far, the most developed in Sub-Saharan Africa. It would not be unrealistic to explore possible business opportunities in South Africa, bearing in mind the large Portuguese community in the country – around 200 thousand – and their capacity to establish bridges between the two countries.

Until quite recently, the Portuguese foreign policy approach towards South Africa was managed mainly through the European Union. This state of affairs seems to be changing with this renewed bilateral focus, even if the process is incomplete at this stage. Last April, Graça Machel, the third



20 years on São Tomé and Príncipe has voted again for “change”

GERHARD SEIBERT
CEA/ISCTE-IUL

In December 1989, São Tomé and Príncipe was the first African one-party state to hold a National Conference and decide on a transition to multiparty democracy. On January 20th 1991, the archipelago was the second African country – after Cape Verde a week prior – to hold democratic elections. Since then, both legislative and presidential elections have been organized regularly and peacefully. All these elections – financed by foreign donors – have been considered by international observers as free, fair and transparent. However, due to financial constraints and a lack of political will, local elections – first held in December 1992 and constitutionally due every three years – did not take place again until August 2006. Local elections scheduled for August 2009 were postponed due to lack of funds and delays in voter registration. The latter problem also affected the legislative elections, which legally must imperatively be held in March 2010. In that month, President Fradique de Menezes (2001-) scheduled local elections on July 25th, and legislative elections on August 1st respectively. The four main competing parties in both elections were the Liberation Movement of São Tomé and Príncipe/Social-democratic Party (MLSTP/PSD), the Democratic Convergence Party (PCD), the Independent Democratic Action (ADI), and the Democratic Movement Force of Change (MDFM). These parties do not represent different political ideologies or programmes, but rather competing group interests. All four parties took part at one time or another in the consecutive coalition governments during the legislature from 2006 to 2010.

After the 2006 elections, the MDFM-PCD party alliance that won 23 seats in the 55-member National Assembly constituted a minority government headed by Tomé Vera Cruz, then leader of the MDFM, a party constituted by followers of President Menezes in 2001. In February 2008, Prime Minister Vera Cruz resigned to avoid disapproval of the 2008 budget by opposition parties. Still in the same month, Patrice Trovoada - son of ex-president Miguel Trovoada (1991-2001), born during his father's exile in Libreville in 1962 and leader of opposition party

ADI (11 seats) – became Prime Minister of a coalition government constituted by his party and the MDFM-PCD alliance. Patrice Trovoada negotiated this solution with President Menezes, who had by then lost confidence in Vera Cruz. Trovoada, a businessman who converted to Islam as a student, was expected to raise foreign funds through his supposed network of personal international connections.

In May of that same year, Trovoada lost a motion of no confidence in Parliament supported by major opposition party MLSTP/PSD (20 seats) and coalition party PCD, which accused Trovoada of lacking transparency in government affairs. Consequently, the MDFM ended its alliance with the PCD, which dated back 2002. In June 2008, leader of the MLSTP/PSD Rafael Branco was appointed Prime Minister of a coalition government formed by his party, PCD and MDFM. Reportedly, in return for supporting the motion of no confidence, the PCD had benefitted from financial assistance from the MPLA, the MLSTP/PSD's longstanding external ally. In December 2009, following fierce criticism by the MLSTP/PSD and the PCD of President Menezes' constitutionally controversial election as MDFM chairman, the MDFM abandoned the coalition. Thereafter, Branco governed with a coalition of MLSTP/PSD and PCD that was supported by a majority of 31 deputies in the National Assembly, since 11 out of 23 deputies elected for the MDFM-PCD alliance in 2006 belonged to the PCD. During the four-year period none of the consecutive governments succeeded in performing well: they were all plagued by failures in the health and energy sectors, accusations of maladministration and corruption. Due to the poor performance of his government, Prime Minister Rafael Branco became a rather unpopular figure during his two years in office, and faced increasing opposition from within his own party. Nevertheless, his election goal was to obtain an absolute majority for the MLSTP/PSD.

During the two-week campaign for the legislative elections – which was interrupted by local elections – with the exception of the legally compulsory campaign spots



in local radios and television channels where all ten competing parties appeared, only the four major parties were visible to the public, since they alone disposed of sufficient supporters and financial means to organize meetings and rallies, and could afford to distribute campaign paraphernalia like caps, t-shirts and rucksacks. Reportedly the wealthier parties even donated cell phones, motorbikes, and household appliances. Most of the campaign funds came from foreign sources, since in poor São Tomé and Príncipe political parties lack enough domestic financing to run campaigns. However, no one knows exactly who these foreign sponsors are and what political interests motivated them to provide financial support. According to local legislation on party financing, parties are obliged to declare the sources of their campaign budgets, yet parties have never complied with this law.

From the beginning it was clear that the other six parties on the ballot would not play any role in the outcome of the elections. Interestingly, despite a population increase between 2006 and 2010, the number of registered voters dropped from 79,850 to 78,800 in the same period. During the registration process underway in March, a total of about 90,000 voters had been expected to register. This loss of about 1,050 registered voters can only be explained by the new voter registration carried out after many delays by the National Electoral Commission (CEN) in the beginning of 2010. The new voter registration had become necessary as the previous database disappeared during the 2008 burglary of the CEN office. In early 2010, Secretary-General of the MDFM Raul Cravid publicly accused MLSTP/PSD and PCD of having staged the voter registration robbery to deliberately delay the elections.

On July 23rd, Raul Cravid was again involved in an incident, this time on the estate of Agostinho Neto, when he and his campaigners fought with MLSTP/PSD supporters and shots were fired into the air. A few days later, Cravid left the country unexpectedly by plane, allegedly for health reasons. In the local elections of July 25th, the MLSTP/PSD obtained most of the total votes and a majority in the four district councils of Lobata, Lembá, Cantagalo, and Caué, while the ADI became the country's second most voted party and gained the majority in the two most populated districts of Água Grande (where

the capital, São Tomé, is situated) and Mé-Zóchi, which represent almost 80% of the archipelago's population. The PCD lost the four district councils it had controlled since 2006, and only received two seats in the Cantagalo district assembly, and one seat in both Lobata e Caué. Surprisingly, the MDFM, competing alone in an election for the very first time, did not manage to secure a single seat in any of the six districts. The Union for Príncipe's Change and Progress (UMPP) headed by Tozé Cassandra repeated the victory of 2006 and won all seven seats in Príncipe's Regional Assembly. The UMPP's only competitor in Príncipe's regional elections was the MLSTP/PSD, since ADI, PCD, and MDFM supported Cassandra's grouping. Both MLSTP/PSD and ADI claimed victory in the local elections, the former because it won the major-

The reduction of the ministries and the appointment of new people is another feature that reminds of the first democratically elected government of the PCD in 1991. At the time, the PCD failed to implement the promised change and lost power within three years.

ity of votes, the latter because it gained control of the two most populated district councils. Although the results of local elections had apparently been influenced by the popularity of individual candidates, some observers in São Tomé believed that the legislative election results would be similar to those of the local ones. Besides, it was expected that the electorate would choose between the ADI and MDFM and the MLSTP/PSD and PCD coalitions, headed by Patrice Trovoada and Rafael Branco respectively, since nobody believed that in the context of the country's four-party constellation one party alone could achieve an absolute majority.

In the second campaign week it became increasingly clear that the ADI would considerably improve its 2006 result of 20% of the votes and 11 deputies. In the 2002 elections, the ADI competed together with four other small parties in an electoral coalition called Uê Kédadji that won only 8 seats, half of the 16 seats the ADI had achieved by itself in 1998. Patrice Trovoada improved the ADI's results in 2006, but in the presidential elections held the same year he lost clearly with 38.8% of the votes against the incumbent Menezes with 60.6%. President Menezes agreed to appoint Trovoada as Prime Minister in 2008, although the ADI disposed of only 11 seats in Parliament. Then, surprisingly, he was dismissed after three months through a motion of no confidence by the MLSTP/PSD and the PCD.

In this year's election campaign, Trovoada capitalized on this episode by saying that the two parties only removed him from office when he tried to end the practice



of cumulating government jobs: because of this, many leaders of both parties would earn thousands of dollars per month, while young trained cadres could hardly find any adequate occupation at all. He further reminded the electorate of the consecutive corruption scandals that affected previous governments and promised to seriously fight corruption. Trovoada's call for a true change in government affairs came at a time when many people were fed up with the ruling political elite and willing to give him and his party a chance. Trovoada, who speaks Portuguese with a French accent and whose source of personal wealth remains unknown in São Tomé, proved particularly attractive to the younger generations since he promised a true change in local politics. His opponents considered Trovoada to be the true "owner" of the ADI, since the party relies completely and exclusively on him, both financially and politically. Shortly before the elections, the ADI confirmed Trovoada by acclamation as party leader. The ADI has been São Tomé and Príncipe's first presidential party, whose main characteristic is to be autocratically ruled by its leader, while competitive elections for party leadership would be unthinkable. Contrary to the MLSTP/PSD and PCD, the ADI does not dispose of a working grassroots party structure either. Trovoada compensated this disadvantage successfully by using his financial means and external support, thus enabling the ADI to run an efficient election campaign throughout the entire country. As Trovoada's ADI participated only in his short-lived government, he could easily accuse the MLSTP/PSD and the PCD of maladministration and of being involved in alleged corruption scandals.

In contrast, MDFM – the other presidential party – was weakened by ongoing internal problems within its leadership which President Menezes, the party's *de facto* leader, failed to resolve. It was common knowledge that João Costa Alegre, Vice-President of the MDFM, and Raul Cravid, the Secretary-General, had a difficult relationship, although both men enjoy Menezes' confidence. Additionally, after nine years in office and a year before completing his second and last term, Menezes himself had become rather unpopular. Consequently, several prominent party members publicly declared their withdrawal from the MDFM a few months before the elections. The results of the local elections had already indicated that many voters considered the MDFM to be redundant and were rather inclined to prefer ADI.

During his campaign, Patrice Trovoada wooed PCD followers by claiming that in 2008, the party leadership had removed him from office without approval from party members. Besides, the ADI accused the PCD of having been involved in several corruption scandals and of being co-responsible for the poor performance of consecutive governments since 2006. The PCD, which apparently had not expected poor results in the local elections, blamed the practice of *banho* (literally meaning bath) – the name

given to vote buying in the country – for the party's defeat. The PCD leadership still hoped to improve its results in the legislative elections, where contrary to local elections mandates are not awarded according to majority rule, but are distributed in accordance to proportional representation.

During the campaign, Trovoada's adversaries tried to undermine his credibility by stressing that he lacked adequate governance experience and did not know his country sufficiently well since he had spent a major part of his life abroad. They even went so far as to point out that not only was Trovoada's wife Malian – allegedly the daughter of a wealthy businessman – but his domestic servants and his dog were also foreigners. In the end, none of these arguments could prevent a majority from voting for the ADI. Possibly his position as a relative stranger worked in his advantage, since it dissociated him from the local political class and their unpopular practices. Whatever the reason, the ADI clearly won the election by obtaining 26 seats, two short of an absolute majority. It was already the fourth time since 1991, 1994, and 2006 that an opposition party won the elections in the archipelago. The MLSTP/PSD secured 21 seats, one more than in 2006, but considerably less than the much sought after absolute majority. The PCD received only seven deputies, one each in Príncipe and São Tomé's six districts. While the PCD lost four seats in relation to the eleven seats occupied in the alliance with the MDFM, results were similar to those in 1998, when the party competed alone. The MDFM suffered worse results, as it was awarded only one seat. This debacle also left the ADI without a coalition partner. In fact, the ADI had primarily won its majority at the expense of MDFM and PCD, while the MLSTP/PSD slightly increased its votes. Like in previous elections, vote buying was again an integral part of the process. It was rumored that parties had paid amounts in local currency worth €6 or more for one vote. However, it remains unclear if and to which extent the *banho* influenced results, since several parties apparently had applied this strategy, and there is no guarantee that voters actually cast their ballots in favor of the party that paid them. On the other hand, it cannot be excluded that the *banho* contributed to the high turnout of 89% of registered voters. While electoral observers from the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) stressed the civism of the electorate, those from the African Union declared the elections to be free, transparent and democratic. The observer mission from the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) was the only one that reported – with the "greatest apprehension" – evidence of vote buying.

With the exception of vote buying, these elections featured many similarities with the first multiparty elections of 1991 when opposition party PCD won by a landslide victory. The successful voter mobilization brought

about by Trovoada's promises and hope of real change, together with the high voter turnout, are only comparable to the first democratic elections. The difference is that in 1991, the people vested their hopes for change in a group of new politicians, while now they seem to gather around a single personality. Immediately after election results were known, Trovoada confirmed that he would not negotiate any agreement with the current leadership of the MLSTP/PSD and the PCD, who were responsible for removing him from office in 2008. He did not consider ruling without a parliamentary majority to be a problem, since Vera Cruz also managed to rule with the support of only 23 deputies.

On August 14th, Patrice Trovoada was sworn in as Prime Minister of the country's 16th government since 1991. His executive is composed of one Secretary of State and ten Ministers, four of whom do not belong to the ADI but are considered independents. One of them is Afonso Varela, who was appointed Minister Secretary-General with the task of coordinating between ministries. He is the only minister with previous government experience, though only for three months in 1999 when he was Minister of Planning and Finance for the MLSTP/PSD. Another independent, Manuel Salvador dos Ramos, was appointed the new Minister of Foreign Affairs after being an ambassador for São Tomé and Príncipe in Luanda and Libreville. While most new ministers come from the public administration sector, several of them are only in their

thirties and are largely unknown. Interestingly, neither agriculture nor tourism appear explicitly in the designations of any of the ministries, although both have been considered key sectors of the country's economy. Both are integrated in the Ministry of Planning and Development run by Agostinho Fernandes, a young lawyer. On the other side, the Ministry of Public Works and Natural Resources is headed by Carlos Vila Nova, employee of a local travel agency. In oil affairs, he may be advised by Minister Afonso Varela, a French-trained lawyer who has participated in several of the country's oil negotiations and a former director of the National Oil Agency (ANP). Given his position and his background, Varela must be considered the strong man of this new government. The reduction of ministries and the appointment of new people is another feature that brings back memories of the first democratically elected PCD government, in 1991. At the time, the PCD failed to implement the promised change and lost power within three years. It remains to be seen if Trovoada and his government will be able to keep their promise of change and good governance. The appointment of office-holders dissociated from the old political elite is not enough, since transforming the country's governance requires a different political and bureaucratic culture, one that may only be achieved by significant shifts on all levels of the corruption infested state apparatus and the sluggish bureaucracy.

Election turnout & results of the major parties (seats in Parliament, percentage of votes)

Legislative elections	20 January 1991	2 October 1994	8 November 1998	3 March 2002	26 March 2006	1 August 2010
Reg. Voters	51,610	55,862	49,639	60,961	79,849	78,798
Turnout	76.7%	52.1%	64.7%	66.3%	64.0%	89%
MLSTP/PSD (founded 1972)	21 (30.6%)	27 (37.1%)	31 (46.1%)	24 (39.6%)	20 (29.5%)	21 (32.1%)
PCD (1990)	33 (54.4%)	14 (21.4%)	8 (14.5%)			7 (13.6%)
ADI (1992)		14 (22.9%)	16 (25.6%)	8 (16.2%) Uê Kédadji	11 (20.0%)	26 (42.2%)
MDFM (2001)				23 (39.4%) MDFM-PCD	23 (36.8%) MDFM-PCD	1 (7.1%)

**30 August (Budapest):**

Secretary of State for European Affairs Pedro Lourtie met with his Hungarian counterpart Eniko Gyori to discuss current EU affairs.

31 August (Skopje):

Secretary of State for European Affairs Pedro Lourtie met with the Deputy Prime Minister for European Affairs of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Vasko Naumovski to discuss the country's possible EU adhesion and Portugal's support for the ongoing reforms needed to reach this goal.

São Tomé and Príncipe

1 August (São Tomé):

Legislative elections took place and the Independent Democratic Action (ADI) won with 26 out of a possible 55 seats. The Movement for the Liberation of São Tomé and Príncipe/Social Democratic Party (MLSTP/PSD), headed by Prime Minister Rafael Branco, came second with 21 seats. The Party of Democratic Convergence (PCD) came in third place with seven seats, while President Fradique de Menezes's Force for Democratic Change Movement/Liberal Party (MDFM/PL) won just one seat. ADI did not achieve an absolute majority.

8 August (São Tomé):

Elections were repeated in the Belém and Ribamato districts due to irregularities, but the final outcome did not change.

13 August (São Tomé):

President Fradique de Menezes nominated Patrice Trovoada as Prime Minister.

14 August (São Tomé):

The new ADI minority government was sworn in.

17 August (Libreville):

President Fradique de Menezes attended celebrations for Gabon's 50th independence anniversary, alongside dozens of other African Heads of State.

17 August (São Tomé):

Following a meeting with the new Prime Minister, Patrice Trovoada, Russian ambassador Sergei Nenachev announced that his country plans to provide economic support to the country in the oil, hydroelectric power and fishing sectors.

Timor Leste

1 August (Manila):

According to the latest edition of the Asian Development Bank's (ADB) Pacific Economic Monitor, Timor Leste is expected to experience high economic growth – due to continued increases in government expenditure and improved agricultural production – which will in turn result in an upgrade of projected economic growth in the Pacific region overall.

9 August (Suva):

Foreign Minister Zacarias Albano da Costa met with Minister for Fiji's Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Civil Aviation Ratu Inoke Kubuabola. Costa expressed Timor Leste's interest in joining the Pacific's Melanesian Spearhead Group (MSG).

17-19 August (Díli):

Singapore's Foreign Minister George Yeo visited Timor and took the opportunity to meet with his counterpart Zacarias Albano da Costa, President José Ramos-Horta, opposition leader Marí Alkatiri, Acting Prime Minister José Luís Guterres, President of the National Parliament Fernando de Araújo and Special Representative for the UN Secretary-General in Timor Leste Ameerah Haq. Strengthening ties between the two nations – including technical assistance to Timor Leste under the Singapore Cooperation Program (SCP) – and Timor Leste's adhesion to ASEAN were high on the agenda.

20-21 August (Díli):

Myanmar's Foreign Minister U Nyan Win paid a controversial visit to Timor Leste, marred by public protests over human rights abuses by the military junta. U Nyan Win met with President Ramos-Horta. Despite his past criticism of Myanmar's rulers, President Ramos-Horta professed his wish for better relations between the two countries, including commercial ties.

24 August (Díli):

Prime Minister Xanana Gusmão called for closer military ties with China in a speech delivered at the ceremony marking the start of construction work on new joint headquarters for the Timorese military and defense department, wholly funded by the Chinese government.

25 August (Díli):

President Ramos-Horta pardoned those involved in the 2008 attacks during which he was shot and nearly died.

EDITOR | Paulo Gorjão

ASSISTANT EDITORS | Kai Thaler • Laura Tereno • Pedro Seabra

DESIGN | Atelier Teresa Cardoso Bastos PRINTING | Europress

Portuguese Institute of International Relations and Security (IPRIS)
Rua Vitorino Nemésio, 5 - 1750-306 Lisboa
PORTUGAL

<http://www.ipris.org>
email: ipris@ipris.org

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