

The “Chinese connection” in Mozambique’s hosting the 2011 Maputo All-Africa Games

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This is an edited excerpt from a larger research paper. For more details, please contact the author

I. Introduction

Mozambique’s capital Maputo hosted the tenth All-Africa Games (AAG), between 3 and 18 September 2011. Although during the preparation period critics questioned the country’s capacity to host the Games, others congratulated the government “for dignifying” the country. Officially, the total cost of the Games to the Mozambican state summed up to US\$ 250 million, used in the rehabilitation of some sports facilities around Maputo, Matola (where taekwondo and chess competition were disputed) and Chidenguele (in Gaza province, where canoeing was held), logistics and other related activities. Considering the time and financial constraints in hosting the Games, the role of China and Portugal was crucial to the Games. China’s direct and indirect financial involvement is estimated at about US\$ 156 million, while the Portuguese government loan amounted to US\$ 152 million (Mabunda, 2011, “Balanço positivo dos X Jogos Africanos!”, O País Online, 23/9).

China and Portugal both contributed with more than 50% of the total amount for the Games, illustrating the importance of other countries in financing the local government’s budget. The country has been receiving a sizable contribution to its state general budget from the donors, especially after Mozambique adhered to the Breton-Woods institutions policies in 1984 and the subsequent introduction of economic and constitutional reforms in 1987 and 1990, respectively, adoption of multiparty system in 1991 and the end of the internal conflict in 1992. External financial support amounted to more than half of the total budget until 2011. Due to improved tax collection, the government estimates that the country will manage to finance 60% of the state budget in 2012 (Rádio Moçambique, 12/12/2011, “Ajuda externa regista significativo declínio – Manuel Chang”).

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This paper will explore Sino-Mozambican relations. In a first step, it will take a historical perspective of the relationship between the two states and their respective ruling parties. In a second part, it will highlight the importance of the Chinese support for the realisation of the All-Africa Games by pointing out the main Chinese financed infrastructures that directly and indirectly served Maputo during September 2011. This work is a result of a combination of critical analysis of the media reports on the official visit to Maputo and Beijing in the first years of the formal ties, the progress in building the National Stadium, the award of the Games and other related media coverage. Due to the scarcity of scholarly sources, press reports currently fill an important gap in research of some topics of the China-Africa relations in general. Scholars face serious

problems to access important data, for example, the content of the deals between the Chinese and African governments. In the case of Mozambique, this was especially pointed out in an international conference on China in Africa with focus in Mozambique held in Maputo in 2010¹.

Scholarly research devotes little importance of China in African sports. Yet, for both the 2010 African Cup of Nations and the 2010 World Cup, in Angola and South Africa respectively, China's role was enormous, especially in the construction of sports facilities (world class football stadiums). In the recently 2012 African Cup jointly hosted by Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, China once again provided its know-how in the construction of the biggest stadium in Gabon (The Sino-Gabonese Friendship Stadium in the country's capital, Libreville), i.e., exported to Africa Chinese technology which elevates China's statute across the world. In all three continental and world sport events Chinese engagement resulted in thousands of jobs for local labour and other local businesses. While the political priority for sport events can be questioned, China's participation in the sports facilities construction was positive for the host countries in terms of political, economic, cultural and social gains.

This research on the role of China in the Games of Maputo includes a very brief outline of the history of the relations between the two countries. The aim is to show the dynamics of the relations which have since early 1960s been shaped by concrete factors.

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II. Sino-Mozambican Relations: A historical overview

Sino-Mozambican ties lack a systematic research especially about the period prior to 2000, despite some more recent studies. Generally, researchers often simply cite briefly that China aided Frelimo in its armed struggle against the Portuguese colonial rule and continued to supply aid in the post-independence period as their background to emphasise a linear continuity of this relationship. Notable exceptions to this scarcity of sources are the works of Steven Jackson (1995), Ian Taylor (2006) and Sergio Chichava (2008). A historical analysis, mostly relying on primary sources, can provide the specificities of this relationship, which had witnessed upheavals, as the Chinese President recently reminded his Mozambican counterpart: “Over the past half a century, China-Mozambique friendship has experienced many trials and tribulations” (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of People's Republic of China (MFAPRC), 2011, “Hu Jintao Holds Talks with Mozambican President Guebuza”, 08/10).

1. Earlier Ties

Historically, China-Mozambique ties predate the official diplomatic engagement symbolically occurred on 25 June 1975, the day Mozambique's independence was formally declared by the leader of Mozambique Liberation Front (Frelimo, in Portuguese abbreviation), Samora Machel. This was the recognition by Frelimo for the role the People's Republic of China (PRC) played for the country to defeat the Portuguese colonial regime. In fact, China and some other socialist and few western countries (especially Nordic countries offered non-military aid), provided Frelimo with vital material and diplomatic assistance in its liberation struggle between 1964 and 1974.

The PRC publicly condemned imperialism and colonialism in the “Third World”, including in Africa. Thus, it encouraged African liberation movements to fight colonialism and supported them with weapons and trained some guerrillas both in China and in Africa (particularly in Tanzania, where Frelimo was based and was the main beneficiary of the Chinese military expertise).

At least until 1971, China also provided military aid to smaller Frelimo split-movements in Mozambique. This gesture developed due to the ideological rivalry between China and the Soviet Union (USSR). During different phases of the armed struggle, the Soviets were the main sponsors of “the authentic” liberation movements in Mozambique, Guinea Bissau, South Africa, Angola, Namibia, The Comoros and Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Nonetheless, apart from the “unauthentic” movements in these countries, the Chinese aid also found its way towards some of these Soviet-aided movements, Frelimo is a paradigmatic example (Christie, 1988:71-72). In fact, skillfully Frelimo managed to balance the two opponents and militarily benefited from both the PRC and USSR.

2. “Difficult Times” and Normalisation

The post-1975 Sino-Mozambican relations had a very promising prospect but prematurely experienced rocky moments that lasted until 1981 when the two ruling parties established formal ties. Ideological and international issues politically “separated” the two countries.

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Chronologically, China’s support to FNLA (The National Front for the Liberation of Angola)/UNITA (The National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) on their fight against the preeminent MPLA (People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola) in Angola shortly after independence was declared in 1975. China was thus perceived to be siding with the United States and Apartheid South Africa (Shubin and Traikova, 2008:1015). Mozambique adopted the Soviet’s Marxism-Leninism in early 1977 at the III Congress of Frelimo, attended by many socialist invitees, but not the Chinese, who refused to attend on ideological grounds. Subsequently, Mozambique sided with Vietnam when it invaded Cambodia in late 1978, condemned China when it launched a war against Vietnam in the beginning 1979, and supported the Soviet Union’s invasion of Afghanistan in late 1979. Considering the 1978-79 events, in early 1980, the Chinese government recalled its ambassador in Maputo and the medical team (Jackson, 1995:415; Chichava, 2008:7). The first top Chinese diplomat in Mozambique had already unexpectedly returned to Beijing in late 1976, leaving the post vacant for about a year, after it became clear that Mozambique would follow the Soviet model. However, the links between the two countries were not completely severed. In fact, a certain kind of compromise was sustained by three formal economic and technical cooperation agreements signed in July 1975 in Mozambique’s capital, September 1977 and May 1978, both in Beijing. Practically, since 1975, Mozambique continued to benefit from Chinese aid and technical assistance in the sectors of education, agriculture, health, trade, among others. Also, symbolically, the role of China in the liberation of Mozambique, from the Frelimo government’s perspective, was the reason

to continue to maintain ties with this “natural ally” (Jornal Notícias, 1975, “Reafirmada amizade China-Moçambique”, 03/07; 1977, “Assinado protocolo de acordo de cooperação económica e técnica”, 24/09; 1978. “Moçambique e China assinam acordo de cooperação no domínio económico e técnico”, 29/05). Considering the economic hardship that Mozambique was experiencing since the late 1970s, Maputo was economically tied to Beijing, especially from 1980, when President Machel told the Chinese Foreign Affairs Minister, Huang Hua that the relationship between the two countries would focus on economic and trade areas, during Hua’s short visit to Maputo after attending Zimbabwe’s independence ceremony (Notícias da Beira, 1980, “Cooperação entre Moçambique e China será ao nível económico e comercial”, 24/04).

In 1981 relations began a process of normalisation, as the Chinese Communist Party and Frelimo established formal ties; a PRC delegation attended the Fourth Congress of Frelimo in 1983. After 15-month, a new ambassador return to Maputo, and by 1984 Mozambique had opened its embassy in Beijing. The general characteristics of the relations between Mozambique and China during the reminder of the decade were cooperation agreements in various areas (trade, technical, agricultural and cultural cooperation) as well as official visits and China’s diplomatic support against South Africa as sponsor of the rebel movement in Mozambique. Beijing encouraged Maputo’s economic reform from the second half of the 1980s, inter alia also supplying low-interest loans to build the National Assembly. Foreign relations policy changes in both states motivated a pragmatic approach towards each other. Mozambique’s economic crisis and security issues in the mid-1980s forced Mozambique to lean to the West and try to engage South African Apartheid’s regime through the non-aggression pact in 1984. China did not speak out against this pact. Since the late 1970s the PRC had begun to adopt new economic and party diplomacy policy (1982)², relations with the US had been established in 1979, during this period other Western countries also establish political ties with China and party-to-party links were extended to all non-communist ruling parties and to other political parties. This represented an abandonment of ideology in the search of cooperation with other political parties and to sustain friendly state-to-state ties (Taylor, 2006:100-103; Li 2009).

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3. Post-Cold War Period: Business and Aid

The post-cold war and its aftermath gave an impetus to Sino-Mozambican relations in the 1990s and beyond. Mozambique had adopted the multi-party system in the new constitution framework. In late 1992, Maputo secured a peace agreement with the Mozambican National Resistance (Renamo, the Portuguese acronym) which ended the 16 years of internal armed conflict that killed at least one million people. In 1994, a new democratically government was elected; since then, Frelimo has been able to win all general elections and has dominated the national assembly. In its external relations, Mozambique has sought to expand diplomatic ties and has welcomed private investment and reconstruction aid (Roque, 2009:3). Chinese policy towards Africa aimed mainly to combat Taiwan’s diplomatic success in the continent; consequently, the PRC also welcomed the democratic transition across Africa, hoping for socio-political stability for

Chinese investment in the course of Beijing's deepening of the globalisation process and establishing multi-polarity. In 1992 and 1997 Beijing's inter-party ties were extended to all parties in power and as well in the opposition, as long they wished to do so (Dai, 2001).

China applauded Mozambique's constitutional reform and congratulated the government for signing the peace agreement with the former rebel movement. Chinese commitment to peace in Mozambique can be proven by its practical gestures: It urged the international community to aid Mozambique's post conflict rebuilding, donated money for relief purposes, contributed with military observers to the United Nations Mission in Mozambique (ONUMOZ) and provided a number of observers to supervise the first multi-party elections in October 1994. According Taylor, prior to the polls a Chinese official had secretly maintained a meeting with the Renamo's leader, Afonso Dhlakama, whom he asked to engage in peace negotiations. The PRC's then Vice-Premier, Zhu Rongji, during his visit to Mozambique in mid-1995 highlighted the importance of peaceful environment in Mozambique for the expansion of economic and trade cooperation between the two countries (Taylor, 2006:107; Choedon, 2005:42-43).

Chinese interest in Mozambique's economic potential has been a constant feature, and began to grow at a very fast pace after the peace agreement. In fact, since the mid-1990s there has been developing a vertical and horizontal expansion of the Chinese presence in the country's economic sectors: retail, infrastructure construction, mining, agricultural processing, manufactory, telecommunication, banking, etc³. The beginning of the 21st century witnessed the expansion of cooperation between the two countries in the field of health, education, public security and defense, culture, professional training, sports, inter-party relations, parliament, relations at municipal and provincial level, etc.



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Some observers of Mozambique's relations with China hint that Frelimo-Chinese Communist Party (CCP) ties in some form catalyse state-to-state relations. In 2008 a 4-year memorandum on cadre training and experience exchange was signed in Maputo between the two parties (Jornal Notícias, 2011, "China-Moçambique: Trocas comerciais com recorde histórico", 8/8). Under this agreement, Frelimo's members (some of whom are part of the cabinet) from time to time go to China to learn a set of issues related to party organizations and government functioning. It is not a secret that the Chinese "economic growth miracle" interests the ruling party in Mozambique, as it may also be to other governments around Africa and beyond. The Chinese counterpart's visits to Mozambique among other activities also include lecturing at the Frelimo's Central School. The Chinese government and Party senior members have always praised Frelimo for adhering to "One China" policy and for publicly defending China's human rights record. In different interparty meetings Frelimo members continue to assure the Chinese counterparts of their stance on regard to these issues.

Under education cooperation, presently there are about 200 Mozambicans studying in China for bachelors, masters and doctoral degrees in different specialties including engineering and science and technology. After the opening of the Confucius Institute in 2012 in Maputo, a certain number of Mozambicans will go to China to further their Chinese language and culture studies under the Confucius Scholarship. In the medium and long term this will contribute a great deal, especially in the field of labour, as language continues to be an important barrier for many Chinese businessmen and common



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workers to deal with daily issues with the local relevant stakeholders. Culturally, the Mozambican long presence in China also represents an important asset for better understanding and engagement (Centre for Chinese Studies, 2010:87-90). Cultural difference is perceived to be a factor behind reported physical violence by Chinese towards co-workers, according to the PRC's ambassador to Mozambique (Jornal Notícias, 2011, "China-Moçambique....", 8/8).

Chinese medical aid is also of great importance to the common Mozambican citizens, especially if considering the national low ratio of doctors per patients and the long distance that many rural inhabitants have to walk to find the nearest health facility. According to the Chinese embassy in Maputo, between 1976 and 2011 eighteen medical teams cured 1.3 million patients and trained more than 2,000 local medical staff. Additionally, Mozambique annually receives medicine to fight malaria (Jornal Notícias, 2011, "China-Moçambique....", 8/8), one of the main causes of death in the country.

Chinese aid is provided to the country under a wide range of bilateral agreements and the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC): by 2007 China had cancelled US\$ 52 million of Mozambique's debt and had funded a Centre for Research and Transfer of Agricultural Technology, which was handed over to the government of Mozambique in 2011 (at the cost of at least US\$ 6 million). Since 2007, under the Gaza-Hubei provincial cooperation, Chinese experts help the local farmers to learn skills and techniques to increase their rice productivity. And the army and police regularly receive donations of non-combat equipment (Centre for Chinese Studies, 2010:73-75, 86-87, 92-93; Jornal @Verdade, 2011, "Centro de investigação agrária vai garantir auto-suficiência alimentar", 5/8).

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In terms of trade between the two countries, the volume has skyrocketed to US\$ 697 million in 2010 from US\$ 13 million in 1998. Mozambique exports mainly wood/timber, mineral resources, agricultural products, cotton and textiles and fisheries. In order to attract more Mozambican products, since 2010 the Chinese government has extended the number of tariff-free goods, this corresponds 60% of all exports to China. Mozambique's principal imports from China consist of construction material and related machinery, motorcycles, motor vehicles and manufactured goods (Centre for Chinese Studies, 2010:78-80, Jornal Notícias, 2011, "China- Moçambique ...", 8/8).

Aiming to expand the ties even further, in 2011 important technical, social and cultural bilateral agreements were signed between the two governments (Jornal Notícias, 2011, "Moçambique e China juntos em novas áreas", 22/4; 2011, "China- Moçambique ...", 8/8). As result of these, to foster cultural cooperation, from April 2012 a Confucius Institute began teaching Chinese language and culture to 210 students at the Eduardo Mondlane University in Maputo (The Embassy of the People's Republic of China in Mozambique, 2012, "zhù mǒsāngbǐkè dàshǐ huáng sōngfū cānguān mò kǒngzǐ xuéyuàn" [Ambassador to Mozambique Huang Songfu visits Mozambique's Confucius Institute], 12/5), the first in the Portuguese-speaking African countries. Furthermore, China Radio International is expected to start broadcasting in Portuguese in Mozambique.

4. Concerns, Impact and Prospective Developments

In some aspects, namely, wood/timber, fisheries exploration and labour standard violation, the growing impact of the relations between China and Mozambique have been contested by part of the civil society, and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The Ministry of Labour has so far obliged a good number of Chinese businesses to pay fines and has revoked work permits of some Chinese workers, thereby expelling them from the country. Chinese and their local associates are accused of plundering and illegally exporting forest and fisheries resources across the country, not least by bribing officials. Violence perpetrated by some Chinese workers is a reportedly common trend in some construction companies. And not least the presence of a considerable number of Chinese workers is subject to criticism amongst civil society, particularly in the construction industry, as the country has a very large number of unemployed adults.

Nonetheless, improvements can be noted. Mozambique's government was internationally praised for translating the local labour code into Mandarin, and Chinese companies contribute to local communities by building schools or helping farmers to improve their activities. Corporate Social Responsibility is an important debate: In 2011 a prospect mining company in Mozambique (Kingho Group) provided 100 scholarships for a 5-year study in China (Jornal Notícias, 2011, "China- Moçambique ...", 8/8).

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The recent discovery of mineral and energy sources, especially natural gas and coking coal, attract other global players (Australia, Brazil, the UK, Portugal, the US, India, Italy, Japan, Russia, and South Africa, among others). Their engagement in Mozambique might constitute a competition for Sino-Mozambican economic ties. Yet, the Mozambican government continues to need major investments in infrastructures, which is likely to sustain the China link. Further inter-party links are expected to teach Frelimo “the secrets” behind the “miracle” of the Chinese rapid economic growth. But if the government fails to make all foreign investors to comply with rules and standards, local criticism not only to the Chinese presence in Mozambique may grow. Also, the ruling political elite will need to address conflicts of interest, as some Frelimo top members and government officials team up with foreign businessmen to exploit the country's natural resources without benefiting the country and the directly affected local people. This may generate into wide-spread popular contestation, similar to recent events in the coal-rich western province of Tete. In Tete, local people went into strike, blocking the roads and railway which are used to transport the coal to the Port of Beira, demanding a foreign business that explores coking coal to improve settlement conditions in the new area that they were relocated to in 2009 by this same multinational. The protestors complained that their houses were poorly built, and that they had not received agriculture assistance. They also pointed to a lack of social infrastructures: drinking water, schools and hospitals (Mozambique News Reports & Clippings, 193, 2012, “Protests against Vale coal mine relocations”, 1-2). This episode caused an uproar across the country, especially from the local NGOs, as the government was accused of siding with the company at the expense of the local community.

III. Cooperation in the preparation for the All-Africa Games in 2011

As explored above, the All-Africa Games of September 2011 were prepared under tight budgetary conditions in Mozambique. International cooperation, far from least so with China, was thus a key necessity. The realization of this event was possible thanks to the willingness of the Mozambican government but also because of the role played by some of its most important key partners: China and Portugal that provided low-interest loans to build the National Stadium, the Olympic village and the Olympic swimming-pool and to rehabilitate and modernize the international airport.

1. The Award to Host the 2011 All-Africa Games

Although there is no formal agreement between the governments of China and Mozambique for the sole purpose to host the AAG in regard to the construction of the football stadium and enlargement and modernization of the international airport, the timing is, however, important. In December 2008, the Zambian government evoked economic reasons to cancel the organization of the 10th edition of “African Olympiads” in 2011. Mozambique stepped in and was awarded the bid in April 2009 (Lusaka Times, 2009, “Zambia Spared All-Africa Games Ban”, 12/4). The government’s decision to replace Zambia is directly linked with the work that was then underway, the government knew that the stadium would be finished before September 2011 and the airport would be completed even earlier. Preparation was thus under immense time pressure, but had started before the bid⁴.

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The designation of the country to host the 2011 All-Africa Games came three years after Mozambique lost its bid to host 2010 African Cup of Nations in football. At the time, the Mozambican government denounced preference of the CAF for the oil-rich countries (which are in general richer, according to the Mozambican officials). Notably Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Libya and Nigeria passed to the second phase, while bids of Mozambique, Namibia, Senegal and Zimbabwe were excluded early in the process (Jornal Notícias, 2006, “CAN-2010: Moçambique, Namíbia e Zimbabwe recorrem da decisao da CAF”, 16/5; 2006, “CAN-2010: Não houve “fair-play” - Altenor Pereira”, 16/5). Eventually, Angola won the 2010 edition while Gabon and Equatorial Guinea jointly were awarded the 2012 tournament.

For the Mozambican leaders, the opportunity to host the AAG in 2011 represented “a consolation” with regard to economic gains and prestige, to elevate the name of the country not only within Africa but beyond. This was envisaged to be carried out with the support of a crucial country: The People’s Republic of China.

2. Example of the “Chinese Role” in The 2011 AAG: The National Football Stadium

Located in one of Maputo’s suburbs, Zimpeto, the modern 42,000-seats Zimpeto National Stadium was the main venue of the AAG. It hosted the opening and the closing ceremonies of the Games and was the site for important football matches and athletics.

By the time Mozambique was officially awarded the organization of the 2011 All-Africa Games, the construction of the National Stadium was underway, exactly a year had passed since the work had begun⁵. When the first agreement was signed in November 2006, between the Mozambican government and the Chinese technical team regarding

the elaboration of the National Stadium project, the construction was set to begin in the second half of 2007 and to be complete by the end of 2009 (Portal do Governo de Moçambique, 2006, “Estádio nacional pronto até 2009”, 18/11). But bureaucratic and technical proceedings permitted the work only to start in April 2008 and the new deadline was set to be July 2010. At the time, the Minister of Youth and Sports wished that the new stadium be used by some national teams qualified for the 2010 Football World Cup in the neighboring South Africa for warm up (Jornal Notícias, 2008, “Estádio Nacional estará pronto até Julho de 2010”, 23/4).

By 2008 the government of Mozambique was engaged in improving sports and tourism infrastructures around the country to what it termed “gain dividends of the 2010 World Cup” in South Africa. An inter-ministerial department was created to coordinate the strategic commitments so that the country could benefit from this sport mega-event in South Africa and ensure that economic, cultural, sporting and social opportunities were identified and developed as a lasting legacy⁶. However, during and after the World Cup, part of the local press denounced the strategy of the government as a fiasco⁷. The main reason for some World Cup qualified national squads for not touring Mozambique was that the sport facilities, namely the National Stadium, were not yet ready.

In 2009, Carlos de Sousa, Mozambique’s Vice-Minister of Youth and Sports, in an interview with the BBC, had mentioned the case of this stadium project to show that Mozambique 29 months later would be ready to hold the AAG:

“We have a sports complex in place, and in November next year the new National Stadium will be ready, for football and athletics. So we only have major refurbishment to do to the infrastructure at the sports complex. We have lodging capacity for the athletes.” (BBC, 2009, “Maputo to host 2011 All Africa Games”, 10/4/).

¶ *In April 2009 about 700 local workers went on strike due to wage issues, while their 260 Chinese counterparts continued to work.* ¶

Yet, this was too late for the World Cup in South Africa. In September 2009, José Pereira, the deputy director of the construction of the National Stadium, confessed that it could only be ready in December 2010, i.e., after the World Cup. Pereira gave some reasons for the delay; he claimed that the construction work had begun late and that the site excavation had surpassed the planned budget (Jornal Desportivo de Moçambique, 2009, “Conclusão do Estádio Nacional só depois do Mundial”, 24/9). Additionally, a series of strikes by Mozambican workers should be taken into account, too. For example, in April 2009 about 700 local workers went on strike due to wage issues, while their 260 Chinese counterparts continued to work (O País Online, 2009, “Obras do estádio nacional paralisadas”, 29/4). Consequently, the work schedule was seriously affected.

Officially, the enormous Zimpeto National Stadium, valued at US\$ 65 million, was inaugurated on 23 April 2011⁸. The symbolic importance of the new sport facility was highlighted by the Mozambican President, Armando Guebuza: “With this infrastructure, a new site of development in the city of Maputo was created. Maputo is registering changes. Mozambique is growing. The Mozambican people, [...], are defeating poverty, in the countryside and in the city.” (O País Online, 2011, “Festa multicolor!”, 25/4).

The new stadium to a certain extent contributed to the development of the neighbourhood in which it is located. For the future, it may provide a location for other important continental and worldwide sport events in football or athletics, possibly also in partnership with a neighbouring country. Since independence, Maputo has had a 45,000-seats stadium in good conditions.

3. Other Chinese Support to the 2011 AAG

Another important Chinese-funded infrastructure is the country's biggest international airport located in Maputo, valued at US\$ 80 million. The same Chinese construction company in charge of the Zimpeto National Stadium, Anhui Foreign Economic Construction Corporation (AFECC), carried out the work at the airport. Its expansion and modernisation began in 2008 and it was officially inaugurated in November 2010 (Jornal Notícias, 2010, "Aeroporto de Maputo: Terminal moderna para melhor servir", 13/11; Centre for Chinese Studies, 2010:81.).

Although the modernisation of the airport was in part planned to facilitate tourism linked to the 2010 World Cup in South Africa⁹, it greatly served during the 2011 Maputo AAG; it is one of the most modern airports on the continent.

In November 2010, the Municipal Council of Maputo received from the Chinese government 150 newly built houses close to the Zimpeto National Stadium, as a donation for its staff in the context of the China-Mozambique cooperation, at the cost of about US\$ 6 million. Before using the new houses, the Municipal Council handed them to the local Organizing Committee for the All-Africa Games (COJA, the Portuguese acronym) for the purposes of the AAG. From that time until the end of the Games in September 2011, COJA and its sub-commissions used the houses as their headquarters (Portal do Governo de Moçambique, 2010, "Município de Maputo inaugural 150 casas", 3/11).

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About two months prior to the opening of the Games, the government of China provided a free of charge aid of 72 yutong new public buses to the Maputo Public Bus Company estimated at US\$ 4.6 million (Diário de Moçambique, 2011, "China oferece ao país 72 autocarros avaliados em 4, 6 milhões de dólares", 15/7). This gesture of China minimised the chronic problem of public transportation in Maputo and in the neighbouring city of Matola. During the AAG a number of these buses were used to carry delegations from the hostels to different sports venues. During the opening and closing ceremonies these and other buses were especially important as they were used to transport thousands of spectators to and from the Zimpeto National Stadium.

The Chinese experience in hosting international mega-events also interested the organisers of the AAG. In March 2011, the Minister of Youth and Sports led a delegation that included the director-general of the Organising Committee for the All-Africa Games to China. In Beijing, the Mozambican delegation wanted to learn from the Chinese counterpart, the General Administration of Sport of China, about the organisation of the opening and closing ceremonies and about recruiting of volunteers (The Chinese Olympic Committee, 2011, "Liu Peng meets Mozambique sports minister P. Caetano", 16/3).

In summary, we can say that the direct and indirect role of China in the 2011 Maputo All-Africa Games contributed to the political ties between Mozambique and China. Notably, most of the modern public infrastructures built in post-independent Mozambique in and around the capital had a Chinese hand in them: The National Parliament building, the Joaquim Chissano International Conference building (where the II African Union Summit was held in July 2003), the Foreign Affairs and Cooperation Ministry building, the Attorney General's Offices, the Offices of the anti-corruption watchdog, and the Office of Criminal Investigation, among others.

The case of a financial package of about US\$ 500 million to build the 4km Maputo-Catembe bridge and a 120km-road from Catembe into the touristic area of Ponta de Ouro is an example that shows that the Mozambican government relies on the support of China. Originally, the former Portuguese government had promised to finance these constructions but the subsequent new Portuguese government cancelled them due to the financial constraints that Portugal faces at the present time. President Armando Guebuza sought aid from China to carry out these socio-economic infrastructures, while he visited China in August 2011. Negotiations, however, take time. As of late December 2011, the negotiations on this issue were still underway between the Mozambican government and the relevant Chinese partners (Instituto de Promoção do Comércio e do Investimento de Macau, 2011, "Moçambique negocia financiamento para ponte Maputo-Catembe com banco chinês", 23/12). However, another Chinese financed infrastructure is due to begin in June 2012. In fact, the 74km-highway linking Maputo to Matola when it is concluded in 2014 will greatly alleviate the suffocating heavy traffic in the country's capital city. In this project China contributes with US\$ 300 million while Mozambique participates with US\$ 15 million. The work will be carried out by China Road and Bridge Corporation (Jornal Notícias, 2012, "Saída para o intenso tráfego do Maputo: Estrada circular pronta em 2014", 8/3.). It is believed that more than 2,000 posts of employment for the locals will be generated. It is so far the biggest single loan that Mozambique benefits from China's Exim Bank.

¶¶ *While China was not the sole partner that contributed to the realisation of the Games, this article aimed at highlighting the special importance of China to the Games.* ¶¶

IV. Final Remarks

This article argues that the Chinese role in the organisation of the 2011 All-Africa Games in Maputo was crucial; without it, the government of Mozambique would probably not have been able to host the Games. The cooperation built on a long tradition of the relationship that both countries enjoy since the early 1960s, long before Mozambique's independence in 1975.

The financing of the National Stadium permitted the Mozambican government to look into sports in general, as a mean of modernising sports facilities around the capital as well revitalizing the practice of sports in the country, not least in the hope for economic gains. While China was not the sole partner that contributed to the realisation of the Games, this article aimed at highlighting the special importance of China to the Games. Other countries also provided support in different ways, both in the preparation and by providing technical and medical aid.

Symbolically, Mozambique may have gained in reputation around the continent and

China may also have gained “face” by displaying its hi-tech in infrastructure construction to the whole continent from Maputo. Mozambique was a step in China’s “stadium diplomacy”. Economically, however, the wisdom of hosting the Maputo Games was questionable. It should be emphasized that the Zambian government preferred to invest in social infrastructures rather than to go for a big sports event a year of general elections in Zambia. Either the government of Mozambique lacked advice from experts about the gains and losses of such kind of events, or blindly assumed that this mega-event would generate huge profits. The private sector should have played a more important role from the start, when the country was attributed the organization of the Games.

End Notes

¹ In his opening speech, the Director of the Institute for Social and Economic Research, Carlos Nuno Castel-Branco, stressed this problem (secrecy of the government of Mozambique) which negatively impacts on the non-government actors (researchers, analysts, pressure groups and the common citizen). See: Castel-Branco, C.N. (2010). “Notas de abertura da Conferência do IESE e SAIIA”. (International Conference “China in Africa”, Maputo, 09/09/2010). Maputo: IESE, 4.

² In the scope of the economic opening-up, the 12th Congress of the Chinese Communist Party, held in 1982, established that inter-party relations were to be based on Independence; Equality; Mutual respect; and Non-interference in others’ internal affairs. See: International Department of the Communist Party of China (IDCPC) (2007), “The Principles of the Party-to-Party Relations of the CPC.” Available at <<http://www.idcpc.org.cn/english/inlrelations/principles.htm>>, accessed 17/10/2011.

³ In recent years state and private Chinese investors have become very active in Mozambique. For example, since 2007, China has been part of the top 10 in the ranking of foreign direct investment (FDI) in the country. In 2010 with about US\$ 35 million China became the 5th foreign investor; in 2008 it had been the 2nd largest investor (US\$ 76.8 million), behind South Africa (US\$ 136 million). From 1990 (when China began investing in Mozambique) to 2008, about 11 412 jobs were created and by that year the total Chinese investments reached US\$ 148 million. See: Centre for Chinese Studies (2010). *Evaluating China’s FOCAC commitments to Africa and mapping the way ahead*. Cape Town: University of Stellenbosch, pp. 70-83; Ilhéu, F. (2011), “The role of China in the Portuguese speaking African countries: The case of Mozambique (Part II).” *Economia Global e Gestão*, 16,1, pp. 50-53; *Jornal Notícias*, 8/8/2011, “China-Moçambique: Trocas comerciais com recorde histórico.” Available at <<http://www.jornalnoticias.co.mz/pls/notimz2/getxml/pt/contentx/1265372/20110808>>, accessed 15/10/2011.

⁴ Especially, from 2010 after the new Minister of Youth and Sports (Pedrito Caetano) was appointed, various government officials and members of the national organizing committee constantly visited the site to inspect the process of the construction and also to encourage the workers.

⁵ According to the Finance Minister (Manuel Chang) of Mozambique, present at the official ceremony of the contract for the construction of the national stadium between the representatives of the two countries in March 2008, the process of the building of the national stadium dates back to September 2005 when the presidents of Mozambique and China, Armando Guebuza and Hu Jintao respectively, met in New York on the

sideline of the United Nations World Summit celebrating the 50th anniversary of this global organization and also in line with the new policy of the Mozambican government to revitalize sports in the country (by then the government had passed the Sports Strategy and Mozambique's bid to hold the 2010 African Cup of Nations was underway). It was agreed that China would provide a loan to set-up a new stadium in Maputo. The proper work was officially launched by the local country's Minister of Youth and Sports (David Simango) in April 2008. See: *Jornal Notícias*, 29/3/2008, "Estádio Nacional: Obras iniciam próximo mês." Available at <<http://www.jornalnoticias.co.mz/pls/notimz2/getxml/pt/contentx/145867/20080329>>, accessed 15/9/2011; *Jornal Notícias*, 23/4/2008, "Estádio Nacional estará pronto até Julho de 2010." Available at <<http://www.jornalnoticias.co.mz/pls/notimz2/getxml/pt/contentx/159692/20080423>>, accessed 15/9/2011.

⁶ The Technical Bureau for the World Cup 2010 was under the Ministries of Youth and Sports and of Tourism, created in March 2008. See: *Jornal @Verdade*, 16/2/2009. "Mundial de Futebol 2010, uma oportunidade para o turismo nacional." Available at <http://www.verdade.co.mz/index.php?view=article&id=614%3Amundial-de-futebol-2010-uma-oportunidade-para-o-turismo-nacional&option=com_content&Itemid=61>, accessed 15/10/2011.

⁷ See: *O País Online*, 11/6/2010, "Moçambique não fez nada para aproveitar o Mundial 2010." Available at <<http://www.opais.co.mz/index.php/analise/38-economia/6888-mocambique-nao-fez-nada-para-aproveitar-o-mundial-2010.html>>, accessed 15/10/2011; *Jornal @Verdade*, 22/7/2010, "A falácia desmascarada do "nosso" Mundial 2010." Available at <<http://www.charas.co.mz/arquivo/12858-a-falacia-desmascarada-do-nosso-mundial-2010>>, accessed 15/10/2011.

⁸ This was a culmination of a saga. First the Mozambican government had previously announced that the stadium inauguration would take place in early December 2010, but as work was not yet finished it was postponed to be on December 27th 2010, but the date was inexplicably changed again, at the site there were some ministers and many journalists to witness the symbolic ceremony handover to the government of Mozambique, however, no one from the Chinese side (both the constructor and the ambassador), after the handover on January 17th, 2011 speculations were dissipated. The stadium was considered ready after the corrections, regarding security and parking issues and football pitch dimensions, detected by the inspectors of International Federation of Association Football (commonly known as FIFA, the French acronym), were undertaken. See: *Jornal @Verdade*, 27/1/2011, "Estádio Nacional do Zimpeto chumba em Inspeção da FIFA." Available at <<http://www.verdade.co.mz/arquivo/17045-estadio-nacional-do-zimpeto-chumba-em-inspecao-da-fifa>>, accessed 15/10/2011.

⁹ The rehabilitation of this airport is in the scope of a broader government plan to modernize the main airports around the country. See: Ministério dos Transportes e Comunicações (2009?), "Principais realizações do sector dos Transportes e Comunicações (2005 – 2008)." Maputo: Ministério dos Transportes e Comunicações, pp. 24-27; *Revista Leme*, 1 (2008), "Aerportos de Moçambique: Aposta na Segurança e na Modernização nas Suas Infra-estrutura." Maputo: Ministério dos Transportes e Comunicações, pp. 4-5.



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