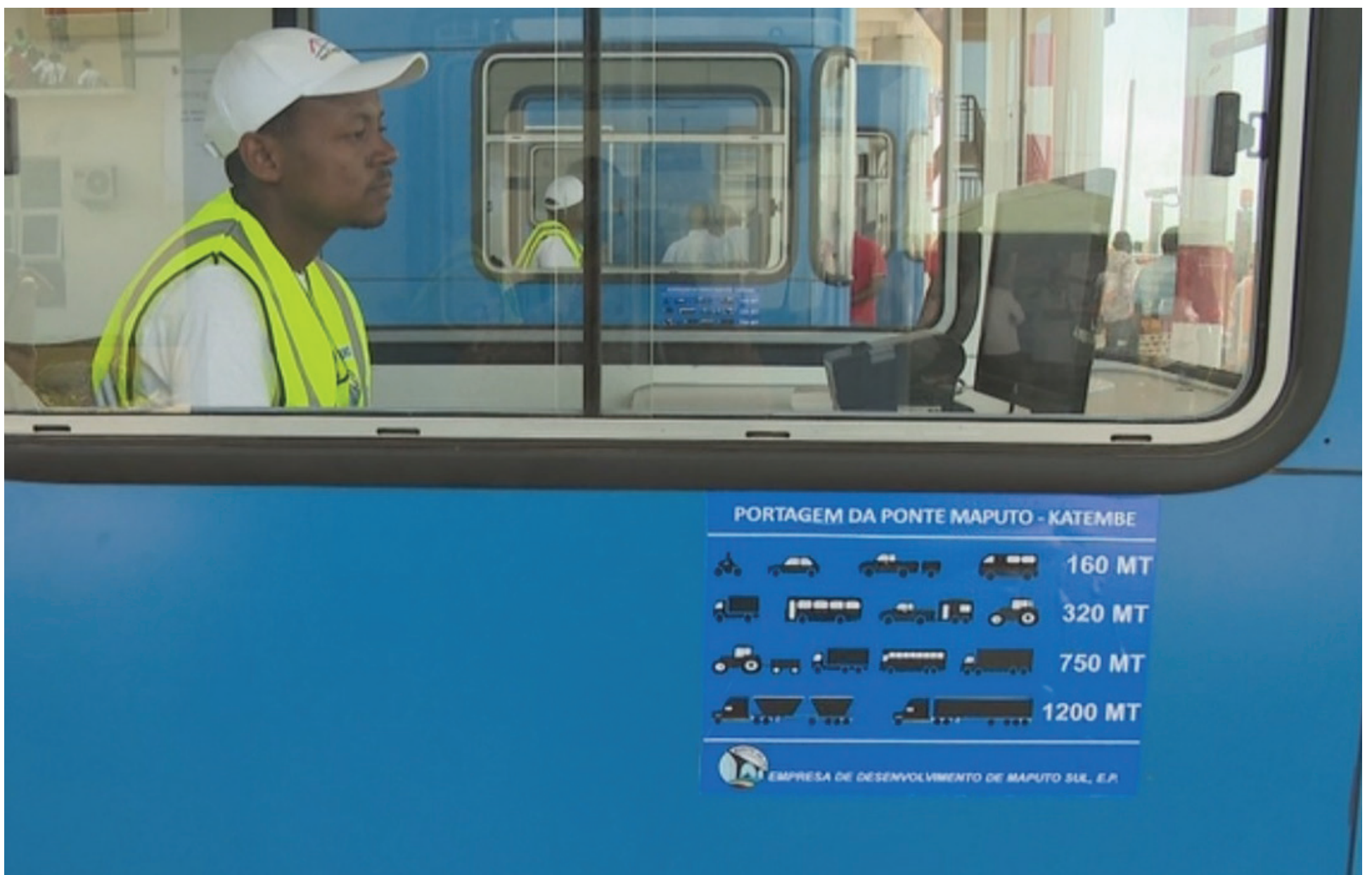


GOVERNMENT AND REVIMO MUST LOWER TOLL FEES

High toll fees turn the Maputo-KaTembe Bridge into a factor of exclusion and impoverishment for families

- Far from being a solution for mobility and urban expansion to the south of the capital, the Maputo-KaTembe bridge is impoverishing many families. In just one week, excluding Saturday and Sunday, each user who uses a light vehicle needs 1,600 meticaís to make two trips a day. Assuming that the month has an average of 20 working days, the user who uses an individual light vehicle spends 6.400 meticaís monthly, which is much higher than the national minimum wage.



- The 1,600 meticaís that the user of the Maputo - KaTembe Bridge spends per week (two daily trips over five working days) is the same amount that the user of the Ring Road spends per month (two daily trips over 20 working days). What crimes have KaTembe residents committed to be subjected to such undignified treatment by the government?
- The high fees charged on the bridge toll plaza are holding back the development of KaTembe. Three (3) years after the bridge was inaugurated, KaTembe remains a district with rural features, sparsely populated, without economic and social infrastructure. Therefore, the reduction of the toll fee from 160 to 40 meticaís is the only solution to return hope to the residents of KaTembe, end social and economic exclusion, do justice, attract investment and consequently guarantee people the right to development.



On the morning of September 20, 2012, a Thursday, the former President of the Republic, Armando Guebuza, laid the first stone for the construction of the Maputo-KaTembe Bridge, one of the largest infrastructures raised after national Independence. This construction, including its connecting roads, has always been seen as a solution to the chronic problem of crossing the Maputo bay. Besides constant break-downs and lack of safety, the small boats and ferries that operated in the Maputo bay had many limitations, especially on bad weather days.

The construction of the bridge was also intended to enable the urban expansion to the south of the capital, thus responding to the

challenges imposed by demographic pressure. With the exception of Kanyaca Island, KaTembe is the only municipal district in Maputo that still has extensive uninhabited areas. With the announcement of the construction of the bridge, thousands of young people rushed to buy a plot of land in KaTembe and set up their residences.

On the eve of the bridge's inauguration, the government approved the toll fees, which vary between 160 and 1200 meticaís. In other words, light vehicles pay 160 meticaís for each trip, four (4) times more than the fees charged by the same concessionary company (REVIMO) on the Maputo ring road tolls. At the time, the Government justified that the amount to be paid on the

Maputo - KaTembe Bridge toll was calculated taking into account the high maintenance costs of the infrastructure, given its complexity.

More than a facility for mobility and urban expansion, the bridge has become a factor of exclusion, social discrimination and impoverishment of families who live in KaTembe. The high taxes exclude the majority of people who cannot afford to pay 320 meticaís per day and are forced to leave their cars on the other side of the bay; the high taxes impoverish families because they have caused a generalized rise in the prices of goods and services and, consequently, in the living costs. Most residents of KaTembe are not taking advantage of the advertised discounts be-

cause the system adopted requires the user to make dozens of trips per month paying 160 meticaís each time they cross the bridge.

In a single week, excluding the weekend (Saturday and Sunday), each user who uses an individual light vehicle needs to have 1,600 meticaís to make two trips per day. Assuming that the month has an average of 20 working days, the user who uses an automobile spends 6,400 meticaís per month, much higher than the national minimum wage. The 1,600 meticaís that the user of the Maputo - KaTembe Bridge spends per week (two daily trips over five working days) is the same amount that the user of the Ring Road spends per month (two daily trips over 20 working days).

What crimes have the residents of KaTembe committed to be subjected to such undignified treatment? Do the residents of KaTembe not enjoy the same rights, guarantees and freedoms provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique? Just like the ring road, the Maputo - KaTembe bridge was

also built using public debt, and Mozambicans are already paying the debt.

It makes no sense for the Government, through REVIMO, to pass all the maintenance costs of that imposing infrastructure on to the pockets of the poor citizens. It makes no sense for the government, through REVIMO, to charge the equivalent of 2.5 dollars for each car that crosses the bridge in a country where millions of Mozambicans (over)live on less than a dollar a day.

The CDD supports the struggle of KaTembe residents to reduce the toll fees charged on the Maputo - KaTembe Bridge. The fee payable for each light vehicle that crosses the bridge should be set at 40 meticaís. In doing so, the government will not only be standardizing the toll fees charged in the Maputo metropolitan area, but will also be doing justice to the residents of KaTembe. By lowering the toll fee from 160 to 40 meticaís, the government will benefit not only the residents of KaTembe, but also REVIMO itself, which will see an increase in the flow of vehicles on the

Maputo - KaTembe Bridge toll road.

Due to the high toll fees, many KaTembe residents who cross the bridge daily avoid taking their cars to the job. The traffic circle immediately after the toll has become a parking area for cars whose owners cannot afford to pay 320 meticaís per day. The high toll fees are also holding back development in KaTembe. Young people are giving up on building in KaTembe, and business people are avoiding investing in an area where it is practically forbidden to live.

As a result: Three (3) years after the inauguration of the bridge that was seen as the solution for the development of the southern area of Maputo City, KaTembe remains a district with rural features, sparsely populated, without economic and social infrastructure. Therefore, the reduction of the toll fee from 160 to 40 meticaís is the only solution to give hope back to the residents of KaTembe, end social and economic exclusion, do justice, attract investment, and consequently guarantee the right to development.



EDITORIAL INFORMATION

Property: CDD – Centro para Democracia e Desenvolvimento
Director: Prof. Adriano Nuvunga
Editor: Emídio Beula
Author: Emídio Beula
Team: Emídio Beula, Dimas Sinoa, Américo Maluana
Layout: CDD

Address:
 Rua de Dar-Es-Salaam Nº 279, Bairro da Sommerschild, Cidade de Maputo.
 Telefone: +258 21 085 797

CDD_moz
E-mail: info@cddmoz.org
Website: http://www.cddmoz.org

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