



Has the Government “shelved” the Northern Resilience and Development Strategy?

- The Northern Resilience and Integrated Development Strategy (ERDIN) was concluded in October 2021 and in November it was submitted to the Council of Ministers for approval. To date there is no official and public information on the status of the ERDIN, for which the implementation period is five years. The strategy involves major partners: the African Development Bank, the World Bank, the European Union and the United Nations.



- It is the only official document that recognizes that the conflict in Cabo Delgado has internal causes: generalized poverty, exclusion, marginalization, land expropriation and frustration of social expectations in relation to the exploitation of natural resources. It also recognizes the closure of civic space in Cabo Delgado: “Civic space has suffered a strong contraction, as a result of restrictions to access to information, barriers to freedom of expression and press and the increased level of risk for human rights defenders”.
- ERDIN has identified priority activities with the potential to contribute immediately and concretely to peace building and conflict prevention in the northern provinces; to eliminate/resolve the underlying causes of conflict and reduce the exclusion and marginalization of different groups and social strata; strengthen and legitimize the presence of the State and institutions and to broaden the space for citizen civic participation.
- Weakness of the ERDIN: it has a centralized management structure and does not foresee the participation of civil society in its support structures - strategic supervision and coordination, technical supervision and coordination, operational coordination. It makes a reference to popular participation in the development of the annual action plans and in monitoring their implementation, but this cannot be understood as openness to the participation of civil society organizations working with the communities of northern Mozambique.

At the end of October 2021, the Northern Integrated Development Agency (ADIN) announced that it would submit the final version of the ERDIN for approval by the Council of Ministers¹ in mid-November. The announcement was made in Pemba after its validation meetings which, apart from the capital of Cabo Delgado, took place in Nampula and Lichinga.

Six months later, there is no public information on the current situation of the Strategy, an Government of Mozambique initiative supported by the African Development Bank (ADB), the World Bank, the European Union and the United Nations. From ADIN’s perspective, the ERDIN would be implemented in parallel with the Cabo Delgado Reconstruction Plan, approved in September 2021, with a budget of USD 300 million.

Unlike the Cabo Delgado Reconstruction Plan which focuses more on public infrastructure, the ERDIN is intended to promote “peace building, the reconstruction of the social contract between the State and the citizen and economic recovery, based on community participation,

with the inclusion of women, youth and vulnerable groups, in a sustainable and resilient way, with respect for human rights.”

The provinces of Niassa, Cabo Delgado and Nampula, which together constitute the region where the Strategy will be implemented, have a population of over 13 million people, equivalent to 43% of the population of Mozambique. These provinces have a higher level of poverty when compared to the central and southern region of the country. Niassa and Nampula have poverty prevalence rates of 67% and 65%, respectively, and Cabo Delgado 50%, according to data from the 2014/2015 Household Budget Survey. The Multidimensional Poverty Index, available at district level, also shows that the poverty rate is particularly prevalent in the coastal districts of Nampula and Cabo Delgado. Like the entire northern region of Mozambique, Cabo Delgado contrasts with the south of the country by a higher incidence of illiteracy. The existence of widespread poverty in Niassa, Cabo Delgado and Nampula provinces is common to all ethnolin-

¹ <https://www.jornalnoticias.co.mz/economia/adin-apresenta-plano-para-relancar-regiao-norte/>

guistic groups, “despite the fact that in the urban centres and the ‘Planalto Maconde’, slightly better housing conditions and even certain consumer goods are recorded”.

The ERDIN aims to address the roots of poverty, exclusion, inequality, poor human capital and lack of development gains in the north, as well as the causes of violent extremism in Cabo Delgado. It is in fact the only official document that recognizes that the ongoing conflict in Cabo Delgado has internal causes related to socio-economic asymmetries, marginalization and frustration of social expectations regard to the exploitation of natural resources, which translates into the consolidation of an extractive economy with a weak relationship with the local economic tissue and little generation of employment.

Added to this are factors of political and economic exclusion, worsened by slow progress in decentralization and ineffective mechanisms for participation, as well as perceptions of marginalization and exclusion. “Youth, in particular, feel they are in a constant state of expectation. There is a pattern of their exclusion in consultation and decision-making at different levels. Young people are often excluded from decision-making functions, apart from having limited space to engage and participate at community, district and provincial levels. There is a perception among them that they lack the opportunity to express their views in a meaningful and safe way”.

The northern provinces of Mozambique (Nampula, Niassa and Cabo Delgado) have huge reserves of natural resources, especially forest, mineral and hydrocarbon resources. Since 2010, Cabo Delgado has become an important stage for investments in the tourism, forestry and extractive industry sectors. The Northern Resilience and Integrated Development Strategy recognizes that the investments have generated wealth and employment, but have also had undesirable consequences, particularly for the rural population who have been deprived of their livelihoods due to land expropriation.

The investments in natural gas from the Ro-

vuma Basin and in precious stones (Montepuez rubies) have attracted thousands of immigrants from various African countries and have created in local communities the perception of external threat among local youth, who claim that the opportunities mainly benefit people from the south or from Maputo, including foreigners. “Despite increased investment in the region, in the coastal areas the belief that little has been done for the local, mostly Muslim population. Perceptions of injustice in the sharing of benefits and opportunities arising from extractive activities, combined with a lack of clarity on the local use of such benefits, and the population displacement generated by such activities - further add to this picture.

“The preference for foreign labourers, says ERDIN, is noted in various areas of activity, from large oil and gas related projects, to small businesses related to grinding mills and containers selling products. Artisanal mining is an important activity for income generation for local communities. Artisanal miners, who often work informally, face constant uncertainty about the possibility of carrying out this activity, and are often and repeatedly expelled from their areas of activity. “The increasing immigration of workers from other provinces and neighbouring countries (Tanzania), who often have better professional qualifications and therefore occupy the better paid positions/activities, has also contributed to the increase in local conflicts, particularly between marginalized youth and immigrants.”

Another reality that the Northern Resilience and Integrated Development Strategy recognizes is the closing of civic space in Cabo Delgado: “Civic space has suffered a strong contraction, as a result of restrictions on access to information, obstacles to expression and press freedom and the increased level of risk for human rights defenders. The conflict has also affected social cohesion. “The number of undocumented people has increased, which decreases the ability to access services and exacerbates perceptions of exclusion.”

The priority is to address the root causes of the conflict and strengthen the presence and legitimacy of the state

To address the needs of the northern region of the country, the Northern Resilience and Integrated Development Strategy has identified priority activities with the potential to contribute immediately and specifically to peace building and conflict prevention in the northern provinces; eliminate/resolve the underlying causes of conflict and reduce the exclusion and marginalization of different groups and social strata; and strengthen and legitimize the presence of the State and institutions and broaden the space for citizen civic participation.

In the first pillar - "Support for peace building, security and social cohesion", the strategy makes the point that the lack of security and social cohesion, as well as poor access to justice and to mechanisms for dialogue and spaces for demonstration, are underlying factors of the conflict and constitute a threat to the socio-economic recovery of Northern Mozambique. "It is important to consider that there is no dedicated peace architecture to effectively address grievances before resorting to armed violence. Thus, the priority actions developed in this pillar are related to the need to build capacity for peace, access to justice, community security and cross-border cooperation for peace and development."

The focus of the pillar on support for peace building, security and social cohesion is on strengthening the resilience of communities affected by conflict, especially the most vulnerable populations of displaced and host communities. "This requires a focus on building capacity for peace, promoting reconciliation and social cohesion, ensuring access to justice, respect for human rights, strengthening community security and resilience, and developing cross-border communities."

The second pillar deals with "Reconstruction of the social contract between the State and the population". Basically, this pillar aims to rebuild the social contract by promoting inclusive governance and access to basic services, while providing support to housing development and land as well as natural resource management, in recognition of the impact that inefficient public service provision has on state legitimacy and perceptions of exclusion and marginalization, which are underlying drivers of conflict. "Activities under this pillar will contribute to strengthening government capacity and legitimacy at central and local levels, strengthening governance structures and mechanisms, transparency, accountability and citizen participation, as well as contribute to more equitable service delivery and improved housing planning."

The third and last pillar - "Economic recovery and resilience" - intends to enhance economic activity and productive capacity, especially of the most excluded and conflict-affected populations, as a recovery and growth engine, recognizing that economic growth is essential for development and that economic exclusion is one of the underlying factors of conflict.

This pillar also recognizes the importance of the extractive sector, as a resilience factor and as one of those that contributed to the conflict. Socio-economic recovery in conflict-affected communities is strongly linked to livelihood creation and economic restoration. "Economic recovery requires the private sector, trade and financial activities to be restored and interventions in both the formal and informal sectors to support value chain development, youth entrepreneurship, employment promotion schemes with a focus on women and youth."

Centralized structure and civil society ignored at all stages of ERDIN implementation

Like the Cabo Delgado Reconstruction Plan, the Northern Resilience and Integrated Development Strategy has a centralized management structure and marginalizes civil society. The “strategic supervision and coordination” will be done centrally, between the Council of Ministers and the coordination platform established with the cooperation and development partners, through annual joint meetings.

“Technical supervision and coordination” will be done by ADIN, through a supervision committee that will invite representatives of cooperation and development partners to attend its meetings at least twice a year to ensure coordination. “The cooperation and development partners will be represented by the African Development Bank, World Bank, United Nations, European Union and two additional representatives to be nominated by the partners themselves.

Operational coordination” will be done through two platforms: (i) at the level of each province, through a platform established and co-lead by the Secretaries of State and Governors of each province, and which will include the participation of municipalities, cooperation, development and humanitarian partners and security actors present in the province. This platform will be responsible for developing the annual action plans for the province, as well as monitoring activities in that province, submitting annual implementation reports to the ADIN oversight committee.

At the regional level, operational coordination

will be through a Northern Regional Forum that brings together the Governors, Secretaries of State and municipalities of the three provinces. This forum should ensure coherence and coordination between provincial plans, as well as identify and explore synergies between interventions across provinces.

The document states that popular participation in the development of annual action plans and in monitoring the implementation of such plans will take place through public hearings and the use of community audits. “The provincial platforms will be responsible for such instruments, and shall ensure that they take place once a year and that they facilitate the effective participation of the population, which will imply the organization of meetings at district level, in order to allow the population to travel to such meetings. These platforms will also be responsible for ensuring that the population receives in advance the information necessary for their participation in such meetings”.


As can be noted, the Northern Resilience and Integrated Development Strategy does not foresee the participation of civil society in any support structure - strategic supervision and coordination, technical supervision and coordination, operational coordination. The reference to popular participation in the development of the annual action plans and in monitoring the implementation of such plans cannot be understood as openness for the participation of civil society organizations working with the communities of Northern Mozambique.



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