

- **Chapo's first agricultural campaign begins with bold promises of transformation**
- **Turning agriculture into the driver of economic independence sparks a new cycle**

A Seed for a New Era

Masthead

Publisher

Terra Media Lda - Sociedade Unipessoal

Publisher details:



Revista Terra

Rua da Resistência n.º
1642, 3º Andar, Porta M
Telef.: +258842399758,
+258847322282 e
+258821233910

Email: redacao@
revistaterra.co.mz

Registo sob n.º

122/GABINFO/
DEPC/210/2022

Editor-in-chief

William F. Mapote

Editorial team:

William Mapote
Julio Armindo F.
Guilherme FM
Bendito Nascimento

Contributors:

Nordino Gabriel (Cabo
Delgado)
Afonso Brandão
Luca Bussotti

Linguistic Reviser:

AR&Servicos SU

Art director / Design:

Rui Baltazar
Samuel Maribate

Administration:

Narciso F. Mapote
administracao@revistaterra.
co.mz

Commercial Department:

Filimão A. Cumbane
comercial@revistaterra.
co.mz

Webdesign & Online:

Rui Baltazar

Website: www.

revistaterra.co.mz

Twitter:

@revistaterramz

Editorial

Mozambique puts farmers in charge – opportunity or risk?

Mozambique's Ministry of Agriculture, Environment and Fisheries has announced a major shift in national agrarian policy. Starting from the new farming season, the vision is clear: farmers will take the lead, and market logic will guide production. The change marks the end of a long-standing paternalistic approach in which the State and aid projects decided what farmers should plant, which inputs to use and where to sell. In our opinion, it is a bold and necessary move – but one that carries serious challenges in a country where the productive base remains fragile and heavily dependent on external factors.

The idea is to put farmers at the centre of decision-making, allowing them to act as true economic agents. When producers have the freedom and the tools to choose, they tend to act more responsibly, invest more strategically and seek better markets. The InovAgro programme, implemented in northern Mozambique with support from international partners, has demonstrated this potential. By linking smallholders to private input suppliers and buyers through clear contracts and access to market information, farmers of sesame and pigeon peas improved productivity, increased income and gained confidence. The experience showed that autonomy, when supported by structure, can turn subsistence producers into active market players.

However, this new approach also exposes the sector's weaknesses. Most Mozambican farmers still rely on rain-fed production, lack access to credit and extension services, and depend on intermediaries for price information. Without safeguards, autonomy can quickly become vulnerability. In districts of Nampula and Zambézia, for example, after input subsidies ended, many smallholders reverted to using local, low-quality seed, resulting in lower yields and falling household income.

In our view, the new vision has clear advantages. It gives dignity to farmers, stimulates entrepreneurship and encourages diversification. It can attract investment, strengthen value chains and reduce dependency on public aid. Experiences

from neighbouring Malawi and Tanzania show that market liberalisation can build stronger cooperatives and more dynamic rural economies. In Mozambique, contract farming schemes in Cabo Delgado's cotton sector illustrate how farmers, when given purchase guarantees and technical assistance, are willing to invest and achieve better results.

Yet the risks are equally real. Autonomy in a context of inequality can deepen exclusion. Farmers with less access to information, credit and land – especially women and young people – may be left behind. Pressure to focus only on high-value crops could erode agrobiodiversity and increase dependence on imported inputs, weakening food sovereignty. Without fair regulation and targeted support, freedom may turn into a burden rather than an opportunity.

We believe the answer is not to return to State control but to ensure that autonomy is backed by protection. The government's role should shift from command to guarantee – ensuring infrastructure, modern extension services, adapted research and affordable rural credit. Successful examples, such as horticulture cooperatives in Inhambane supplying hotels and supermarkets, show that autonomy and support can coexist. Likewise, index-based weather insurance pilots in Nampula are helping smallholders plan with greater confidence against climate risks.

The challenge is to make sure this new phase of Mozambique's agriculture becomes a story of inclusion, not exclusion. Farmers should be free to decide, but not left alone. In our opinion, the end of paternalism is a civilising step, but it must be accompanied by a new form of rural solidarity. Freedom is essential – yet only becomes progress when coupled with fairness and protection. Mozambican farmers do not need instructions; they need opportunities. That is where the country's new agrarian vision should take root: autonomy with security, markets with equity, and business with dignity.



William Mapote

E-mail: editor@revistaterra.co.mz

Mozambique Opens New Cycle with Ambitious Production Targets

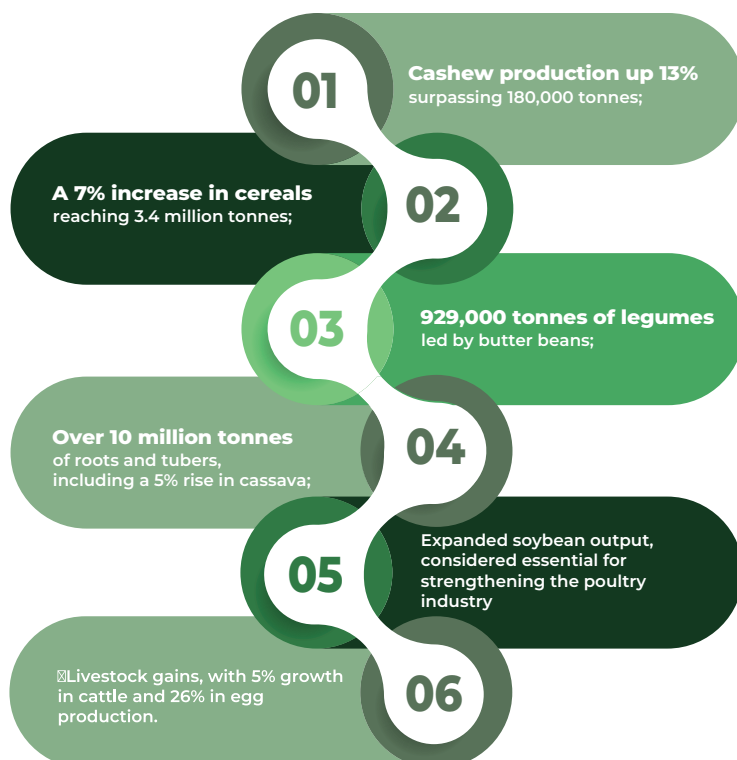
On September 13th, the Government officially launched the 2025-2026 Agricultural Campaign. With a transformative vision and reforms at all levels, the goal is to transform agriculture into an engine for combating hunger and an instrument for economic transformation.



Under the slogan “Working the Land is Creating Wealth for Mozambique”, the launch in Mafambisse, Dondo district, Sofala province, marked the start of the first agricultural cycle under President Daniel Chapo’s administration. The government has placed agriculture at the centre of its agenda, aiming to reposition the sector as the foundation of economic independence, social inclusion and food security.

In a symbolic gesture, Chapo sowed rice seeds and planted seedlings in a field cultivated jointly by a private company and associated smallholder farmers, marking the beginning of the planting season and reinforcing calls for stronger collaboration between the public and private sectors and rural communities.

One of the ceremony’s key moments included traditional blessings and prayers, invoking prosperity for a season the government views as strategic for advancing national food self-sufficiency and strengthening an economic model grounded in domestic production.



Officials say these targets align with the Strategic Plan for Agricultural Sector Development (PEDSA 2030) and the National Develop-

ment Strategy, both of which position agriculture as a central pillar of economic diversification.

Inclusion, Reform and Competitiveness

Presenting the new cycle's objectives, the government reaffirmed its commitment to building a more inclusive, sustainable and competitive agricultural sector, capable of generating rural employment and income.

Ongoing structural reforms include the revision of the Land Law to ensure more equitable and productive access to land—particularly for youth and rural women—and the strengthening of agricultural research and extension institutions to increase productivity and climate resilience.

Authorities also underscored the



Economic independence is built through work, innovation, determination and courage

role of the private sector as a driver of innovation and efficiency, encouraging greater investment in agriculture, agro-industry and value-chain partnerships to accelerate rural development.

“Economic independence is built through work, innovation, determination and courage,” Chapo said, setting the tone for the campaign. A Shift Toward Economic Independence

Beyond technical production goals, the 2025–2026 campaign was fra-

med as a symbolic step in Mozambique's path toward economic independence, emphasising the value of agricultural labour and the need for structural transformation rooted in the land.

With youth and rural women positioned as central actors, the government reiterates that agriculture remains the backbone of the country's development, social inclusion and economic future.



Potato boom reshapes Gorongosa district's identity

For decades, Gorongosa district in central Mozambique's Sofala province was synonymous with conflict — a landscape marked by gunfire, makeshift trenches and the uneasy silence left behind by war. Today, the same soil is telling a different story: one of rising agricultural output, with the reno potato emerging as an unlikely emblem of renewal.

Text: William Mapote

Photos: Courtesy of SDAE/Gorongosa

The scenery has not changed — mountains still guard the valley — but families across the district are rewriting their livelihoods through crops that are once again thriving in abundance. Among Gorongosa's growing staple products, the reno potato has quietly gained ground in family farms, becoming one of the district's standout crops.

Vicente Siticanaco, a producer in Nhabirira village, Nhamaze locality, is among those leading the shift. He farms 10 hectares and says the potato's resilience and profitability drew him in.

"I switched to potatoes because of the income and their ability to be stored for longer periods," he told

this reporter.

Previously focused on tomatoes and cabbage, Siticanaco says potatoes offer higher yields and fewer post-harvest losses.

"You can store potatoes long enough to sell them without pressure," he said.

Working 2.5 hectares, Siticanaco proudly recalls last season's harvest: more than 70 tonnes per hectare — well above the district average. Encouraged by the results, he plans to expand production in the 2025–2026 agricultural season.



A crop that mobilises

The district's push toward what farmers now call the “new queen of the soil” began in 2022. Within a short time, even the most traditional growers had embraced the crop. According to Diolinda Alberto, head of the Rural Extension Network in Gorongosa, the district now has about 3,200 potato growers — a number that continues to rise.

“There is a lot of interest, especially in acquiring land with natural irrigation, because that’s where potato yields are highest,” she said. “It’s also a crop with strong demand in Sofala province.”

With average yields of 40 tonnes per hectare, Gorongosa now produces more than half of all potatoes grown in Sofala. Provincial output is estimated at 82,000 tonnes per season.

The reno potato’s reputation is also fuelled by curiosity: in villages like Nhamanguguo, Muera and Nhambirra, farmers routinely report tubers weighing up to 1.5 kilograms — now part of local folklore.

“Once farmers see the production costs and returns, many others become curious and join in,” Alberto said.



Vicente Siticanaco and Diolinda Alberto on a potatoes field

The boom has been supported by rural extension services focusing on technical assistance, technology transfer, partnerships and market linkages for improved seed.

What began as a modest, Goron-

gosa-bound crop is now expanding into neighbouring districts including Chibabava, Nhamatanda, Búzi and Dondo — driven by stories of fast harvest cycles, fertile soil and families regaining stability.

Growth and challenges

Provincial authorities say Sofala is making significant progress in reducing its dependence on imported potatoes for much of the year.

Driven by hundreds of active growers, the province is self-sufficient from May to November, according to officials.

“At the peak of the harvest, the potatoes consumed are entirely local,” said Sofala’s provincial agriculture director, António Sacamalua.

Still, the sector faces hurdles. Access to certified seed remains the most pressing challenge, Sacamalua said.

“Seed supply continues to be the biggest obstacle. Farmers rely heavily on imports from South Africa. The lack of certified seed limits expansion and keeps costs high compared to some imported potatoes,” he said.

Many growers resort to saving part of their own harvest for seed in the following season.

The absence of a processing industry also weakens the value chain, contributing to seasonal losses — even though local potatoes are considered more resilient than South African varieties.

“Our challenge now is not producing, but conserving and processing so we can guarantee supply year-round,” Sacamalua said, urging the private sector to see the crop as a business opportunity.

Without proper storage, the province loses up to half of its seasonal output, he added — a pattern also seen with onions and other vegetables.



António Sacamalua explaining about potatoes harvest on Gorongosa)

Sesame Processing Plant Strengthens Agribusiness in Central Mozambique



The new sesame processing factory officially began operations on 13 September, marking a significant step forward for the agribusiness value chain in central Mozambique. Inaugurated in Nhamayábuè, Dondo district, Sofala province, the facility is expected to bring greater market stability and predictability to smallholder producers of the oilseed.

The modern plant, operated by Robust International — a company with capital based in Singapore — represents an investment of 35 million USD and currently employs around one thousand workers directly. For more than 35,000 small-scale farmers, the establishment of the factory provides a reliable buyer, reducing the market volatility that has long characterised sesame trade in the region.

Narayan Raagavan, leader of Robust International, describes the project as part of a broader vision of inclusive industrialisation. “Our journey here has been driven by a simple belief: Africa’s agricultural wealth must be matched by local value addition, creating prosperity not only for businesses but also for communities,” he said.

The factory, inaugurated by Presi-

dent Daniel Chapo, has the capacity to hull and process up to 50,000 tonnes of sesame per year. This puts an end to the long-standing practice of exporting raw sesame — a system that historically deprived farmers of the benefits of added value.

“The greatest value of this project is not in the machinery, but in the lives it transforms,” President Chapo stated during the ceremony. “What once left the country as raw material will now return to the world as a processed product, Made in Mozambique.”

Since operations began, the surrounding villages of Nhamayábuè have witnessed increased commercial activity, the rise of small services and new opportunities in local transport — a multiplier effect that extends well beyond the agricultural sector.

The factory’s proximity to the Beira

Corridor and Port of Beira strengthens its logistical advantage, enabling processed products to reach regional and international markets more efficiently.

The Government continues to encourage young people and farmers to expand sesame production, noting that the factory’s processing capacity currently exceeds the supply available. “The factory needs more raw material. Young people are encouraged to produce sesame because the market is already guaranteed,” President Chapo reiterated.

With the agricultural season underway, the coming months will be decisive in measuring how quickly this new industrial investment consolidates sesame as one of the most valuable crops for rural families in central Mozambique.

Interest Groups Tighten Grip on Mozambique's Fisheries Sector

A new study has sounded the alarm over what it describes as a “structural chokehold” on Mozambique’s fisheries sector, blaming influential interest groups for blocking investment, distorting licensing processes and undermining the country’s blue-economy ambitions.

The report — “Challenges for the Development of the Fisheries Sector in Mozambique: the case of Cabo Delgado province”, recently submitted to the Advisory Council of the Bank of Mozambique — argues that the sector’s stagnation is driven less by lack of resources and more by institutional capture. Despite 2,700 km of coastline, rich biodiversity and an estimated annual potential of 5 million tonnes of fish, Mozambique exploits only about 10% of what it could.

Licensing Under Influence

According to the study, key administrative processes such as the issuing of licences, renewals and export authorisations have long been affected by informal pressures. Researchers cite practices including demands for equity participation in private companies, requests for advance dividends, deliberate withholding of paperwork and politically driven interpretations of fisheries legislation. “These interferences have severe

economic consequences,” the study notes. “Industrial and semi-industrial operators have shut down not because the resources are depleted, but because the business environment has become unworkable.” The impact has rippled outward: declining private investment, falling public revenue and the collapse of aquaculture projects stalled by manipulated bureaucratic details — including incorrect or intentionally flawed sanitary licences.

A Province Left Behind

Cabo Delgado — the northern province at the centre of the study — reflects the fallout most starkly. Despite its 430-km coastline and valuable marine resources, the region has seen its share of national fish production fall from 12.5% in 2012 to 6.2% in 2024. The fisheries workforce has shrunk by 35%, and dozens of community fishing centres have closed.

At the heart of the problem, the study argues, lies a long-standing and unresolved gap: Pemba still has no dedicated fishing port.

As a result, commercial vessels must operate through the city’s general cargo port, where high tariffs sharply increase operational costs and drive fleets to other regions. “This absence reflects both institutional fragility and the State’s inability to prioritise strategic public investment in an environment dominated by private interests,” the report states.

A Question of Sovereignty

The consequences extend beyond economics. With surveillance mechanisms weakened — and in some cases influenced by the same actors they are meant to regulate — illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing has worsened.

Mozambique lacks its own offshore patrol vessels, and inspections are sometimes carried out with boats provided by the very operators being monitored, creating what the study calls an “extreme conflict of interest.”

Annual losses from IUU fishing are estimated at more than USD 70 million, much of it linked to foreign fleets operating in restricted waters. In Cabo Delgado, smuggling of octopus into Tanzania has surged, feeding a parallel market that bypasses Mozambican authorities entirely.

Conflict Adds New Pressures

The ongoing insurgency in Cabo Delgado has further disrupted the sector. Entire communities have been displaced, concentrating fishers in a handful of safe zones and accelerating overfishing and ecological degradation.



“With the State’s presence reduced and monitoring systems weakened, local and external actors have increasingly taken informal control of the maritime space,” the report warns.

Declining Contribution to the Economy

The combined impact of conflict, poor governance and institutional capture has pushed the sector’s GDP contribution from above 3% in the 1990s to just 1.3% in 2024.

Licensing revenues have also dropped from 263 million meticaís in 2020 to 222 million in 2024.

The study links the decline to inconsistent policies and a production model still heavily dependent on low-value artisanal fishing.

Reform or Decline

To reverse the decline, the report calls for sweeping reforms: fully digitised and transparent licensing

procedures, forensic audits of licences and revenues, construction of a fishing port in Cabo Delgado, and a strengthened maritime-surveillance system using drones, satellites and dedicated patrol vessels.

It also urges greater integration of artisanal fishers into the industrial value chain — a shift the authors say is essential if Mozambique intends to unlock the true potential of its maritime economy.



Mozambique Raises Climate Ambition and Eyes Green Investment

Mozambique presented the preliminary version of its NDC 3.0 at COP30, setting a target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 15% to 25% by 2035. With this new approach, the country signals to the global carbon market that it is ready to attract green investment.

The NDC 3.0 — the set of measures Mozambique commits to implementing as part of its environmental agenda — represents a significant step forward in the country's climate strategy. Based on the 2020 national emissions inventory and aligned with the low-emission development strategy through 2050, the plan will be further refined through technical modeling. Even in its preliminary form, it already sets a more ambitious trajectory consistent with

the Paris Agreement.

One of the key highlights of the document, reviewed by our newsroom, is the commitment to explore mechanisms such as tradable carbon credits.

This move opens doors for private financing in mitigation projects, stimulating sectors such as renewable energy, reforestation, regenerative agriculture, biogas, and industrial efficiency.

According to the preliminary document, beyond mitigation, the NDC also identifies business opportunities in critical areas for sustainable development:

Mitigation and Adaptation

Despite having a historically minimal responsibility for global emis-

sions — with net negative contributions until 2003 when forests are considered — Mozambique reinforces its role in climate mitigation, contingent on the availability of finance, technology, and capacity building.

The country continues to prioritize adaptation due to frequent climate extremes, while viewing mitigation as an opportunity to create jobs, generate revenue, and open new markets.

The final version of NDC 3.0 will be defined after consultations and technical adjustments, but the preliminary version already positions Mozambique as an emerging hub for green investment in Africa.



NDC 3.0

EMISSIONS REDUCTION PLAN



Revista Terra

Rua da Resistência n.º 1642, 3º Andar, Porta M
Telef.: +258842399758 e +258821233910

Email: redacao@revistaterra.co.mz