NEO-COLONIAL ECONOMIES AND ECOLOGIES, SMALLHOLDER FARMERS AND MULTIPLE SHOCKS:

THE CASE OF CYCLONES IDAI AND KENNETH IN MOZAMBIQUE AND ZIMBABWE

DISCUSSION PAPER

DECEMBER 2020

Multiple Shocks in Africa Series

The research for the discussion papers of this series was conducted under challenging conditions created by the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdowns and travel restrictions. As such, ACB researchers were not able to travel to the case study countries for on-the-ground research. We are therefore deeply grateful to our local partners who provided the necessary support in the focus countries (but who were also limited by lockdowns and other restrictions in their own countries) and to other key informants who provided invaluable information. The discussion papers are therefore aimed at providing a broad scoping of the shocks being experienced by the people of the focus countries and an initial dive into the interconnections between the processes driving these shocks. The ACB has a long track record of producing high quality and reliable research, but any potential errors or blind spots in this research series are those of the ACB. We welcome further input as we advance our collective knowledge and change project.

The African Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) is a research and advocacy organisation working towards food sovereignty and agroecology in Africa, with a focus on biosafety, seed systems and agricultural biodiversity. The organisation is committed to dismantling inequalities and resisting corporate industrial expansion in Africa's food and agriculture systems.

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Table of contents

Acronyms and abbreviations

AFRODAD	African Forum and Network on Debt and Development
CIP	The Center for Public Integrity (Centro de Integridade Pública – Mozambique)
COVID-19	Severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)
CRW	Crisis Response Window
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
GDP	Gross domestic product
GREPOC	Mozambique's post-cyclones reconstruction office
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IDA	International Development Association
IFI	International Financial Institution
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INGC	National Institute of Disaster Management (Instituto Nacional de Gestão de Calamidades)
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
RCF	Rapid Credit Facility
LNG	Liquified natural gas
UN	United Nations
UNAC	Mozambique Farmers' Union (União Nacional de Camponeses)

About this **paper**

As the world continues to battle with the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic and we edge towards a "new normal", the ACB embarked on research to examine the nature of shocks striking the African continent.

These shocks are categorised by the climate crisis and ecological collapse, converging with economic and political crises as part and parcel of an overstretched, unravelling world. This has been magnified and made visible by the COVID-19 pandemic, which highlights the inextricable linkages between industrial agriculture, and its continuous and unchecked expansion, ecological degradation, and human health (UNEP and ILRI, 2020). The fragilities of the global economy – shaped by neoliberal globalisation – have been exposed; as have the fractures that exist between and within societies.

This research has culminated in a series of papers that explore the nature and impacts of the fatally flawed economic (il)logic driving the industrialisation agenda against the backdrop of converging and compounding shocks. In this regard, in this series we examine some of the dynamics around the interests, inequalities and deepening vulnerabilities of those already on the frontlines.

This paper critically examines the political and economic drivers of ecological degradation under the guise of development loans and aid, through rapacious natural resource extraction and social and cultural displacement – the backdrop to tropical cyclones Idai and Kenneth, which made history by respectively striking central and northern Mozambique only six weeks apart from each other in 2019 and also severely impacted parts of Zimbabwe and Malawi. Thus, with our specific focus on Mozambique, and to a lesser degree Zimbabwe, we

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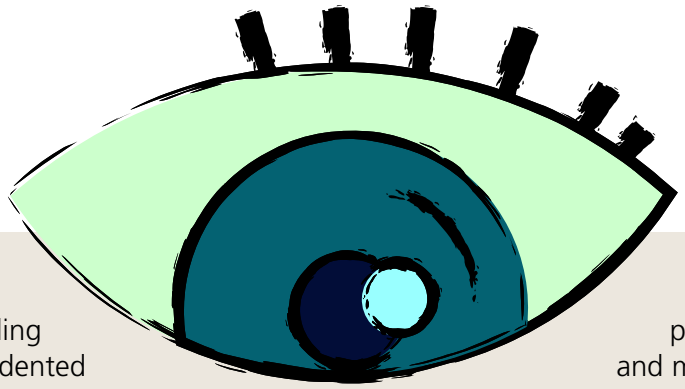


examine the underlying systemic and compounding nature of these unprecedented shocks, the national and global response, and the challenges confronting recovery at the local level in the context of continued extractivism and debt. We also examine practices related to ecological integrity and recovery that hint at components of a broader alternative in the face of compounding shocks.

We discuss the interplay between climate change, deforestation, agriculture and extractivism, and their roles in driving social and political instability and food insecurity in these countries, further fuelling the systemic, existential crises we face. On the one hand, these so-called development interventions reinforce indebtedness, inequalities and social exclusion. And on the other, they deepen dependency on destructive, short-sighted and short-lived carbon and capital-intensive projects, and global agricultural and forest value chains, which all contribute to creating conditions for extreme vulnerability to shocks such as the fall armyworm and the COVID-19 pandemic.

We also critically examine responses to shocks by international and national actors and discuss how these constitute typically neo-colonial trade and finance projects, pushing poor and marginalised farming communities over the edge. We argue that these false and discredited "solutions" can no longer be tolerated at a time when we desperately need to rethink beyond a neoliberal approach towards recovery, resilience and reconstruction.

This series is an initial attempt to scope some of the overriding dynamics and patterns. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, national lockdowns and limited mobility, research for this paper was conducted through desktop research and telephonic interviews with key informants working in the region and relevant sectors, to triangulate information and paint a picture of what is taking place on the ground. While there are abundant articles written on cyclones Idai and Kenneth, information is sorely lacking to fully grasp the institutional context, with limited accurate and reliable information on the financial and ecological in- and out-flows in these countries. This paper therefore aims to highlight these concerns, and stimulate this conversation.

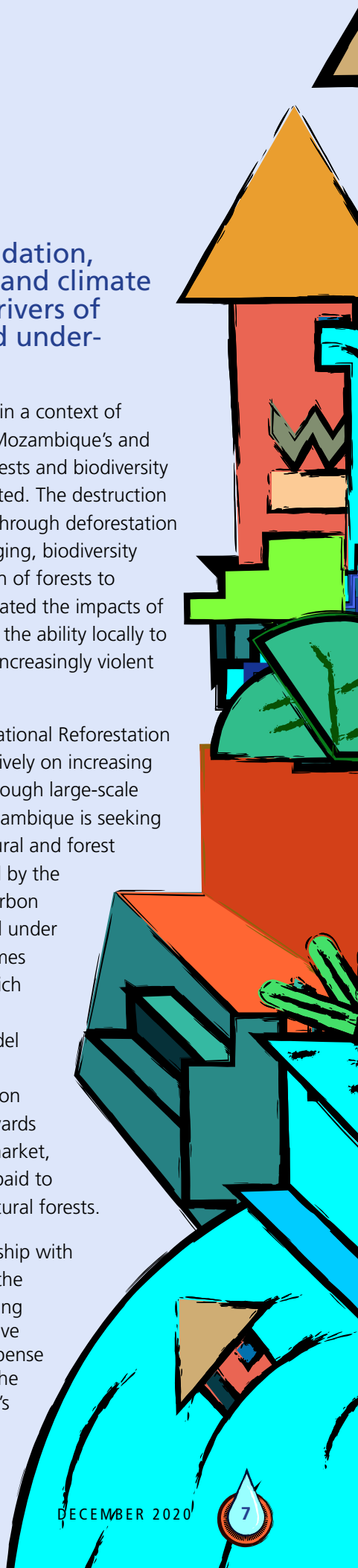
Key findings

The impact of compounding shocks on smallholders and rural peoples

- Tropical cyclones Idai and Kenneth ravaged the lives of people, especially peasant farmers, in Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe. For the global community, Idai and Kenneth have become distant memories in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, yet many of those affected by the cyclones are still struggling to rebuild their lives more than one year later, and live in fear of the approaching rainy season.
- The cyclones compounded already fragile socio-economic conditions, exacerbating pre-existing poverty, poor or no basic infrastructure and weak institutions; all of which are driven and exacerbated by climate change impacts that are increasing the frequency of severe and previously rare events.
- Cyclones Idai and Kenneth were not isolated shocks but came on the heels of existing ecological and economic crises experienced by small-scale farming communities in the impacted areas, due to extensive droughts, floods and pest infestations.
- In 2016 fall armyworm, originating from the Americas, reached Africa, wiping out large areas of maize and other staple foods across the region. This contributed further to crop failure and poor crop harvests, making poor farming communities much more susceptible to devastation when the cyclones struck.
- Many farming families had already lost all or large portions of their seed stores prior to the tropical cyclones, and what was left was decimated by the storms. Following Idai, more than 700 000 hectares of crops were destroyed.
- When COVID-19 arrived, farmers were therefore in a dire situation, many still struggling to rebuild their lives and livelihoods.

Ecological degradation, biodiversity loss and climate crisis: systemic drivers of vulnerability and under-resourced states

- These shocks occurred in a context of declining biodiversity. Mozambique's and Zimbabwe's natural forests and biodiversity are being rapidly depleted. The destruction of diverse ecosystems through deforestation due to widespread logging, biodiversity loss, and the conversion of forests to agriculture has exacerbated the impacts of the storms by reducing the ability locally to absorb and withstand increasingly violent shocks.
- Mozambique's 2009 National Reforestation Strategy focuses exclusively on increasing commercial forestry through large-scale forest plantations. Mozambique is seeking to enhance its agricultural and forest value chains, promoted by the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, and under Mozambican programmes such as SUSTENTA, which is facilitating further deforestation. This model maintains unequal and exploitative conditions on the ground geared towards a volatile commodity market, with limited attention paid to the regeneration of natural forests.
- Mozambique's relationship with investment, loans and the global economy is locking in ecologically destructive development at the expense of the social needs of the majority of the country's population.



The exposure of massive, secret loans in Mozambique caused international partners to withdraw support to the state budget and froze the general budget and sector support, which caused an economic crisis. As a result, the government imposed a series of austerity measures, including cuts to sectors such as health, education, social welfare, sanitation and hygiene, just prior to the onslaught of cyclones Idai and Kenneth.

- The hidden debt and failure of the international community to condemn the banks involved point to serious, deeply structural problems of reckless lending by commercial banks and multilateral institutions, which require urgent attention and intervention globally.

- Repayments to International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans following the cyclones and for national response to COVID-19 will be due only after liquified natural gas (LNG) production exports and fiscal revenue starts, which is expected for 2022/2023 (IMF, 2019). This effectively locks the state into fossil fuel extraction and export of raw natural materials. This contributes to undermining future generations, since future resource inflows are already earmarked for financing the ups and downs of indebtedness in the present. The government is thus locked into a cycle of indebtedness that is intricately tied to an extractive economic core. Furthermore, just before this paper went to publication, ExxonMobil announced it was delaying its investment decision in the gas fields. This indicates the shaky prospects of the Mozambican government realising the revenue from the gas fields now needed for repaying debts, and the fundamental fragility of this development path.

- Unsustainable loans and indebtedness raise concern of how Mozambique, along with other poor and already marginalised and highly indebted countries, may recover from these disasters and adequately prepare for future ones.

The international response: not up for the task

- While countries like those of Zimbabwe and Mozambique have historically contributed little to the climate crisis, they are paying dearly for its effects. However, the international community made available less than a third of Mozambique's funding needs for coping with the disaster and recovering, less than one fifth of Zimbabwe's funding needs, and less than half of Malawi's.

- As countries with low levels of state resources and limited capacity, Mozambique and Zimbabwe were both heavily dependent on external funders and actors to respond to the disaster. However, these responses were inadequate in achieving the requisite scale and in addressing the systemic drivers of the shocks as not isolated events, but part of an ongoing and cumulative series of events that are likely to continue.

- Information is sorely lacking about recovery and reconstruction efforts. Due to the lack of transparency, particularly about financial inflows and purchases, public suspicion is rife that incoming funds have been captured by systemic and endemic corruption, facilitated by an unjust global economic and financial landscape.

- The narrow disaster management approach, which responds to each shock in isolation, fails to efficiently and adequately take stock of the cumulative damage impacting on the countries and its populations. The multiple and compounding shocks hitting smallholders in the region call for a more comprehensive approach that is based on equity and justice, and is linked to the bases of the countries' economies as well as their relationships to the global economy.

- Farmers' rights, farmers' seed systems and re-establishing farmer-to-farmer linkages need urgent recognition and implementation. This urgency cannot be overestimated, in the light of compounding shocks and increasing chronic and acute disasters. It is necessary to phase out repetitive and chronic food and seed aid and prevent displacement of local food and seed systems, which form the basis for peasant farming livelihoods.

- Therefore, the focus of reconstruction efforts should be on re-establishing just local socio-ecological systems, of which farmer seed systems are a part. Local seed systems and locally adapted seed are gaining more attention, particularly as part of a response to both slow onset and rapid shocks. This must be further discussed, and if accepted, be anchored in law, as part of a discreet and robust seed regime that recognises farmers' seed systems and implements farmers' rights.

Decolonisation, socio-ecological justice and systemic regeneration

- The cases of cyclones Idai and Kenneth show that, with one shattering shock after another striking the African continent, it is urgent and imperative that we ensure adequately resourced local response efforts. It is equally urgent to address the structural causes blocking socially and ecologically just adaptation and mitigation measures, while building systemic solutions to future shocks.

- Within this context, we need to consider locally appropriate methods of restoring degraded landscapes and consider diversified agroecological and agroforestry systems that restore, repair, recover from shocks, and prepare for future

unavoidable shocks. Yet this must also occur within the broader geopolitical and geo-economic framework in which these systems operate.

- An important condition for this to happen is to break the reinforcing patterns of debt and extractivism and to pursue socially equitable futures. Underlying laws, policies, programmes, agreements and investments, which promote the wholesale destruction of forests, landscapes, oceans and the atmosphere, and which dislocate and displace peoples' land and resources, livelihoods and seed and food systems need to be squarely confronted and redressed.
- The relationship between countries of the Global North and Global South is highly unequal, where international financial institutions promote private sector-led development, skewed toward capital flows to Northern countries, with few benefits locally beyond for the national elite.
- At the global level, cooperation is required to prohibit illicit financial flows and tax evasion of companies operating in the Global South. These rapaciously promote the extraction of natural resources, where the returns are more loans and aid.
- it is expected that the large-scale projects on the horizon will fail to lead to general improvement of lives; rather they will maintain power for the political elite, prevent transformative and meaningful change on the ground, and probably plunge the country into further unsustainable debt and deepen the ecological crises.
- Freeing up resources to support a strategy of diversification, economic coordination and a broadening of the social base of development is urgently needed. This is particularly true to prevent indebted countries from being locked into debt traps in the context of multiple crises. Diversification of economies shifts the focus from current practices of neoliberal adjustment and requires the renegotiation of debt and the end of financial speculation, to generate an economy of well-being for society as a whole.

Cyclones Idai and Kenneth: Setting a new precedent amid the climate crisis

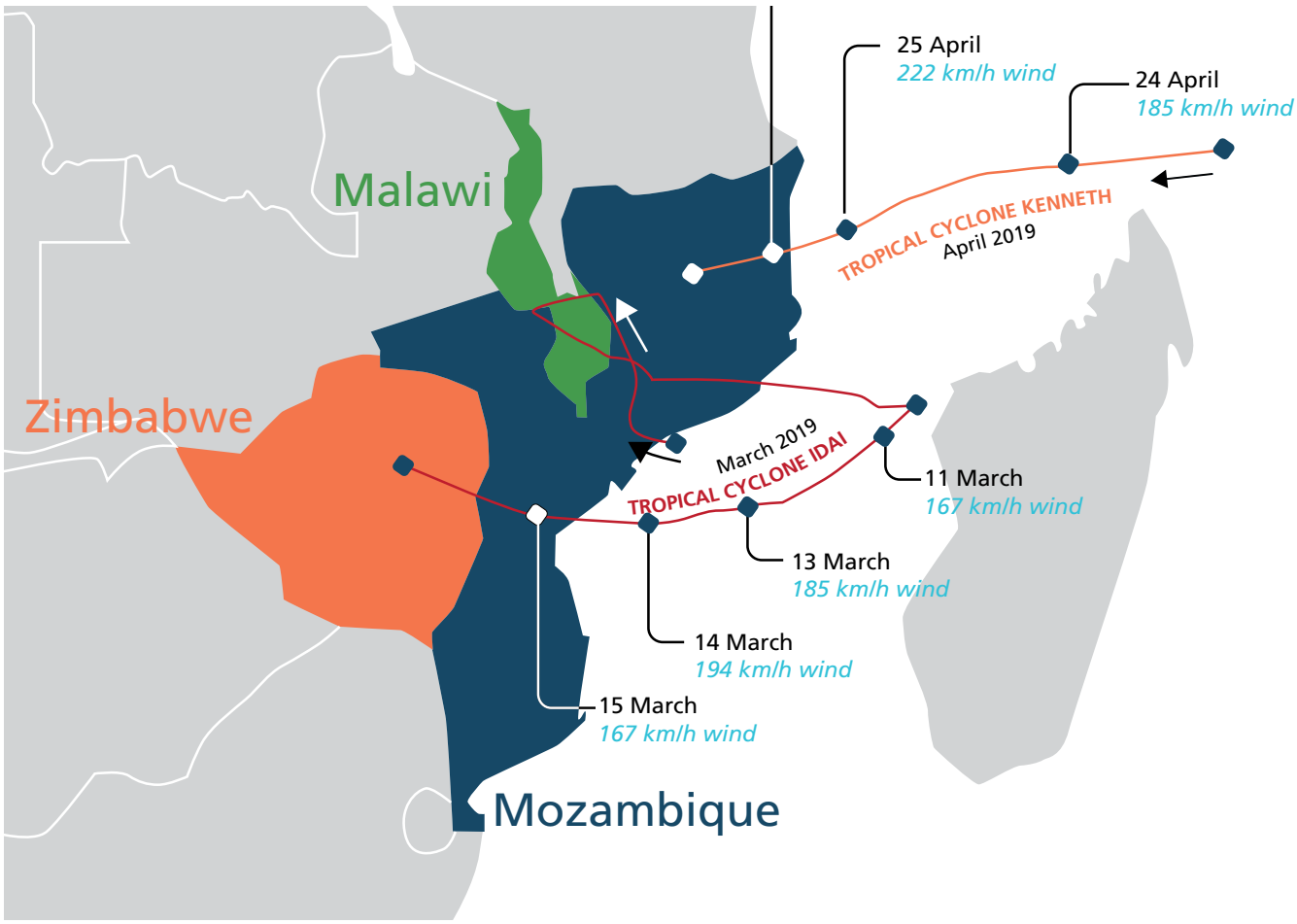
For the first time in recorded history, two successive, strong tropical cyclones struck the eastern coast of Southern Africa during the same season in 2019, causing massive devastation and destruction across four countries in south-eastern Africa – Comoros, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe (UNOCHA, 2019).

These storms point directly to increasing climate change-related disasters, illustrative of what is to come in an increasingly warming world, with declining natural barriers to absorb and withstand such shocks.

Cyclone Idai, with incredible strength and tenacity, first made landfall as a tropical depression in early March, moving across Zambezia and Tete provinces in Mozambique into Malawi, and pummelling local communities with non-stop rain and wind for five days. On 15 March 2019 it returned to the coast and surged towards the Port of Beira as a category four tropical cyclone. The cyclone wound through Sofala, Zambezia, Tete and Manica provinces in Mozambique, and was abruptly pushed upwards by the mountains bordering Zimbabwe, resulting in heavy rains. It left a trail of unprecedented destruction, causing catastrophic landslides and flash flooding in the Chimanimani and Chipinge districts in eastern Zimbabwe. It is the most devastating natural disaster Zimbabwe has ever faced and required the greatest humanitarian response in the country's modern history. (Manatsa and Chatiza, 2020; Norton et al., 2020).

Cyclone Kenneth, said to be the strongest tropical cyclone in recorded history to hit the continent, made landfall in April 2019, first passing over the Comoros' northern island of Ngazidja, and then Mozambique's northern provinces Cabo Delgado and Nampula, areas affected by severe conflict and instability, and currently experiencing the rollout of large-scale extractive projects, discussed further below.

Idai and Kenneth affected nearly 4 million people across the four countries (UNOCHA, 2019). High wind speeds and severe flooding during the two cyclones left hundreds dead, tens of thousands affected and displaced, and widespread erosion. The strong winds, torrential rainfall and resultant floods and landslides from Idai alone caused over US$2 billion in damages,



Source: Norton et al., 2020, p. 7

Figure 1: Paths of Cyclone Idai and Kenneth

destroyed 200 000 homes, and left over 1 300 people dead, with many more missing (Norton et al., 2020). The cyclones destroyed bridges, dams, homes, schools and many other key transportation, health, water, electrical and communications infrastructures, leaving many areas, including the City of Beira, inaccessible and isolating people for days following the cyclones. The destruction of lives, livelihoods, homes, infrastructure, natural resources and socio-economic networks caused widespread psychosocial trauma, borne principally by women and children (Chatiza, 2019).

The tropical cyclones both exposed and exacerbated pre-existing poverty and inequality in the region. Following the cyclones, people were resettled but over a year later many continue to live in temporary shelters and lack access to safe and secure basic services, such as water, sanitation, shelter, health, education and protection. These conditions often fail to meet basic human rights (Norton et al., 2020.; UNICEF., 2019). Additional climatic and economic shocks have hit the country, with COVID-19 restrictions further limiting mobility and economic activity. While the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic, the shock from the cyclones still resounds loudly for those who are struggling to rebuild their lives following the impact of the cyclones, and live in fear of the approaching rainy season.[1]

Idai and Kenneth were not isolated shocks but came on the heels of existing ecological and economic crises experienced by communities in the impacted areas.

1 Jacob Jenhuro, ORAM, telephonic interview, October 2020.

The impact of **compounding climatic shocks**

South-eastern Africa is no stranger to erratic climatic events, but their severity, frequency and intensity is creating an increasingly difficult and threatening environment for local populations. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2018) projects that Southern Africa is going to be hardest hit by climate change-induced disasters.

Mozambique is already one of the most vulnerable countries to natural disasters and climate change (Irish Aid, 2018).[1] These extreme weather events compound existing socio-economic challenges, displace local communities, and contribute to food and livelihood insecurity and a range of other knock-on impacts, which severely deepen and perpetuate poverty and inequality (Sayer and Campbell, 2004). Idai and Kenneth were not isolated shocks but came on the heels of existing ecological and economic crises experienced by communities in the impacted areas (See Figure 2).

Agriculture is the main economic activity in the region. In Mozambique, most farmers are from the smallholder, family sector, with about 3.2 million smallholders accounting for 95% of the country's agricultural production (FAO, n.d.). The remaining 5% comes from around 400 large-scale commercial farmers. Smallholders across all three countries rely heavily on rainfed agriculture.

Over the past decade the Southern African region has experienced consecutive, intense droughts – in 2011, 2016–2017 and an ongoing drought in 2018–2020,[2] as part of the cyclical El Nino events, and intensified by climate change (Norton et al., 2020). In March 2020, South Africa declared a national state of emergency due to ongoing drought effecting the region (De Wet, 2020). Climate change is manifesting in an increased frequency of these severe, previously rare events.

In 2016 fall armyworm, originating from the Americas, reached Africa and wiped out large areas of maize and other staple foods across the region (see series paper on fall armyworm). This contributed further to crop failure and poor crop harvests, and to existing food insecurity in the region, with damage to 12 countries in Africa estimated as US$2.5–6.3 billion (Hendery, 2020). The emergence of red locusts and African migratory locusts along the border of Mozambique and south-eastern Zimbabwe further threatens food security in the region.[3]

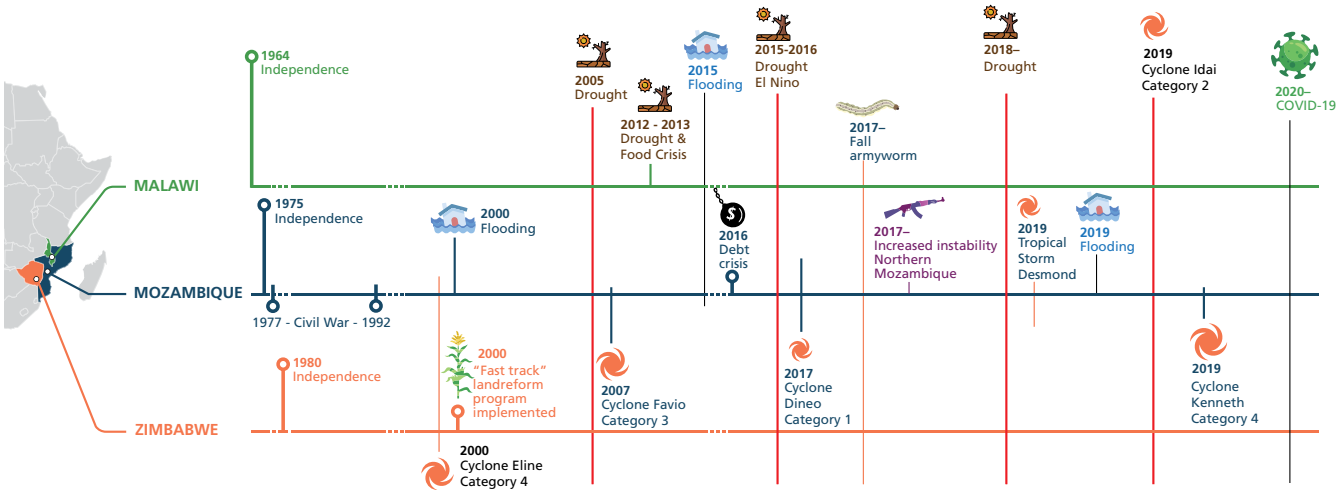
Against this backdrop, Idai made landfall at a critical time of harvest in 2019 (Manatsa and Chatiza, 2020). Farming families had already lost all or large portions of their seed stores prior to the tropical cyclones, and what was left was decimated by the storm (FAO, 2019; INGC, 2019). In Chimanimani, Idai reduced grazing areas; created deep and dangerous gullies, compacting, denuding and leaching soils; and washed away cropping lands, especially niche crops planted close to river banks and wetlands, reducing crop diversity and exposing farmers to further food and seed insecurity. The cyclone led to land degradation, water pollution, loss of vegetation cover, and completely altered landscapes.[4] Following Idai, more than 700 000 hectares of crops, including maize, beans and rice were destroyed between Sofala, Zambezia,

1 See also: https://clubofmozambique.com/news/mozambique-ranks-second-among-countries-with-highest-number-of-ecological-threats-171112/

2 https://reliefweb.int/disaster/dr-2018-000429-zwe

3 https://www.unocha.org/southern-and-eastern-africa-rosea/zimbabwe

4 Julious Piti, PORET, telephonic interview, August 2020.



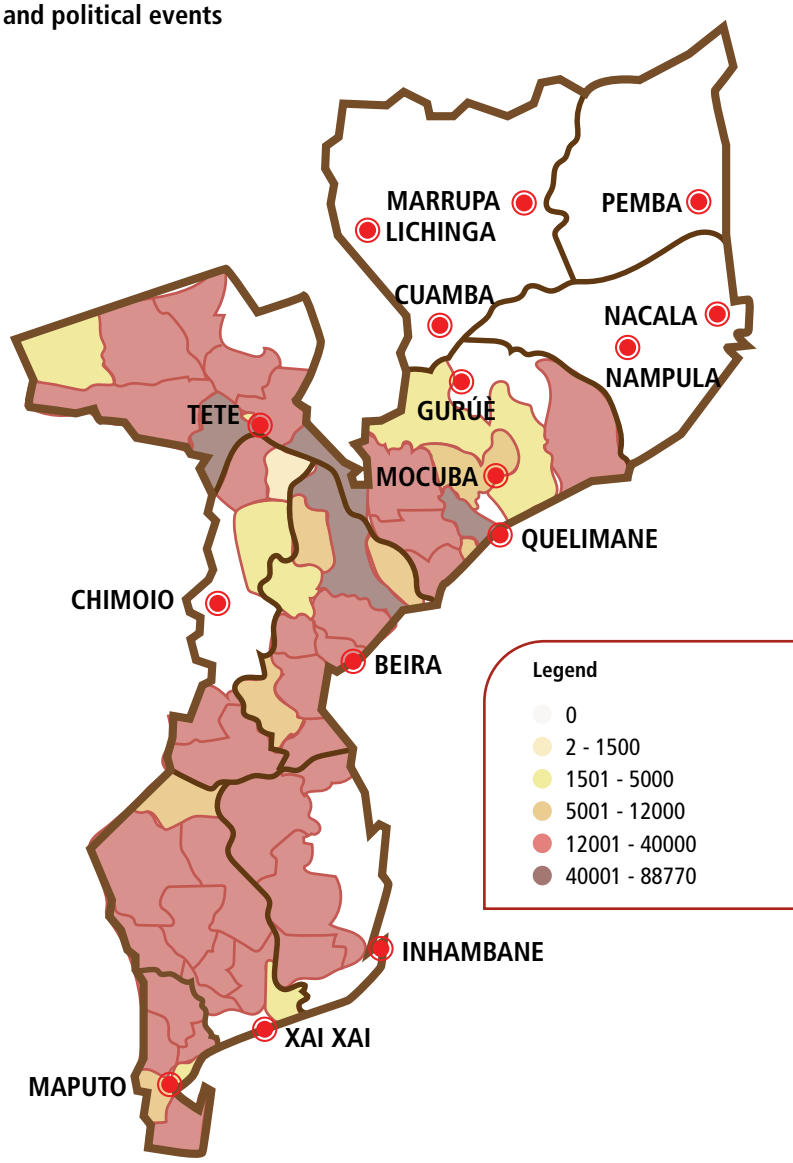
Source: Adapted from Norton et al., 2020, p.7

Figure 2: Timeline of major natural hazards and economic and political events

Tete and Manica provinces in Mozambique (Save the Children, 2020).

As a result of Idai and Kenneth, smallholder farmers lost crops, productive land and access to savings groups (Nortan et al., 2020). Staple food crops were destroyed and cashew and coconut trees uprooted, with instant loss of livelihoods, including fishing and aquaculture (UNOCHA, 2019). The intense rainfall associated with the cyclones caused extreme landslides across the affected areas, with a representative of The Mozambique Farmers Union (União Nacional de Camponeses – UNAC), explaining that this "reduced the soil fertility of many of the farms".[5] Beyond this, heavy rains and flooding in December 2019 hampered relief efforts (UNOCHA, 2020).

The cyclones compounded already fragile conditions driven and exacerbated by climate change intensification, exacerbating pre-existing poverty, a lack of adequate basic infrastructure and weak institutions (Manatsa and Chatiza, 2020). The strong winds, heavy rainfall, intense cyclones, extended droughts and widespread pest infestations in the region are indicative of increasing climate change-related disasters. The disastrous impacts reveal the complex interplay between fragile socio-ecosystems, political economies, geopolitics and neo-colonial realities, evident in and perpetuated by the responses by the national and international community, as discussed further below.



Source: INGC, 2020[6]

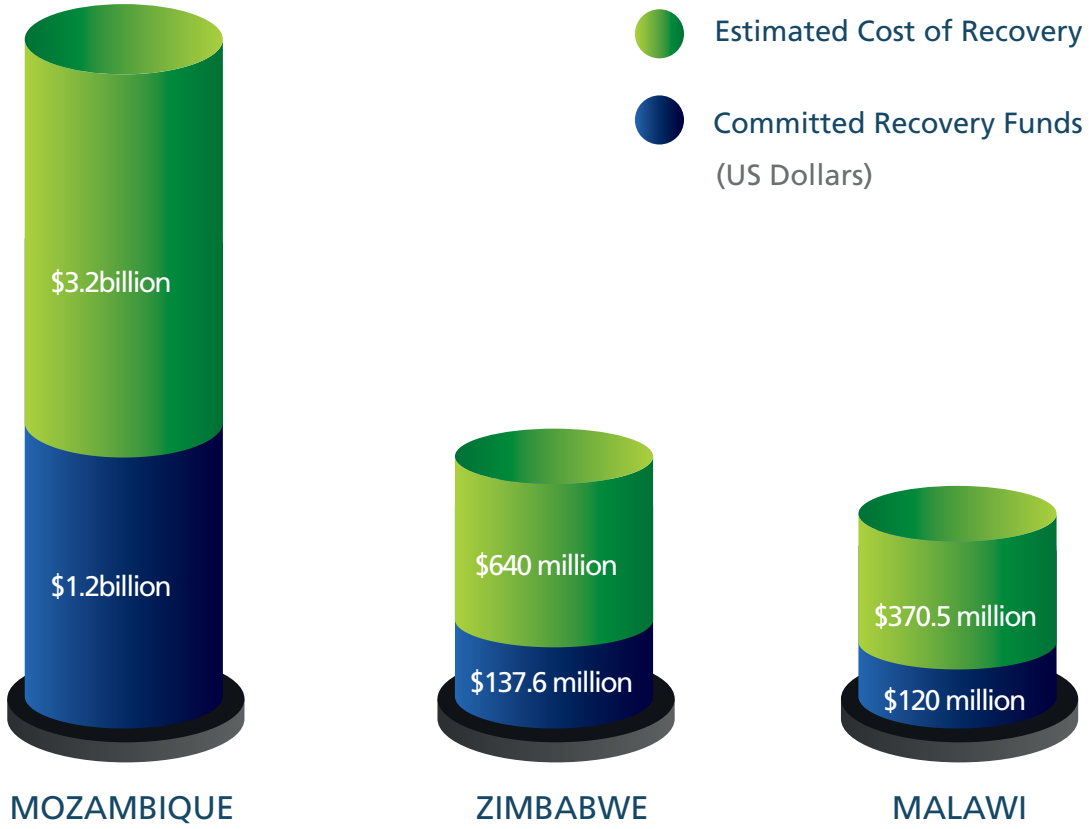
Figure 3: Most affected areas of the ongoing drought in Mozambique

5 Isidro Macaringue, advocacy officer UNAC, telephonic interview, July 2020.

6 See: http://www.ingc.gov.mz/por/Centro-Virtual-de-Resposta-a-Seca

Response to these **disasters**

As countries with low levels of state resources and poor institutional capacity, Mozambique and Zimbabwe are both heavily dependent on external funders and actors to respond to disasters such as the cyclones.



Source: Norton et al., 2020, p. 26

Figure 4: Estimated cost of recovery versus funds committed

However, these responses are inadequate in achieving the requisite scale and in addressing the systemic drivers of climatic shocks, which are not isolated but part of an ongoing and cumulative series of events that are expected to continue. The government of Mozambique estimated emergency assistance and reconstruction costs of Cyclone Idai to be around US$1.5 billion, which was then 10% of the national gross domestic product (GDP), and to which Cyclone Kenneth added to in April 2019 (IMF, 2019). The estimated cost of recovery is US$3.2 billion for Mozambique, US$630 million for Zimbabwe and US$370.5 million for Malawi (Norton et al., 2020) (See Figure 4). Currently, however, of those funding needs, less than a third has been provided for Mozambique (UNDP, 2019), less than one-fifth for Zimbabwe (World Bank, 2019a), and less than a half for Malawi (Malawi Government, 2019). Countries of the South are paying severely for the historical contribution of the Global North to the

climate crisis (Hickel, 2020), with international response paling in comparison to the continued investment into sectors driving climate change as will be discussed further below.

The humanitarian response in Mozambique was led and coordinated by the government through the National Institute of Disaster Management (Instituto Nacional de Gestão de Calamidades – INGC), and supported by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) composed of United Nations agencies, International non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the Red Cross and donors. The Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) to provide for urgent and longer-term resilience and recovery was a response to the cyclones as well as to the drought that preceded them (UNOCHA, 2019). The revised HRP was being developed at the same time as the five-year Disaster Recovery Framework for the cyclone affected regions. While response and recovery plans were still being implemented, COVID-19 arrived and delayed response efforts (Republic of Mozambique, 2020; UNDP, 2020a; UNDP, 2020b).

Response to such disasters has three phases along a continuum of disaster risk management and reduction: responding to immediate humanitarian needs under an acute crisis; early recovery; and managing the recovery and reconstruction in mid to longer term (Chatiza, 2019). The immense scale of the events caused massive, urgent needs, including immediate access to food and shelter, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). The Mozambican government's response was slow, despite the early warnings, with independent South African responders being first on the scene.[1] According to Manatsa and Chatiza (2020), "societal collectivisation" took place, which was particularly effective. This response leaned on

PHOTO CREDIT: BAYNHAM GOREDEMA

Countries of the South are paying severely for the historical contribution of the Global North to the climate crisis (Hickel, 2020), with international response paling in comparison to the continued investment into sectors driving climate change.

1 Anabela Lemos, JA!, telephonic interview, October 2020.

traditional knowledge-based farming systems and resulted in local residents being the first responder units to aid the recovery of people, homes and infrastructure. These mutual aid and solidarity networks point to practices that could be further supported in the context of a more comprehensive, localised approach to climate change adaptation and disaster preparedness and response.

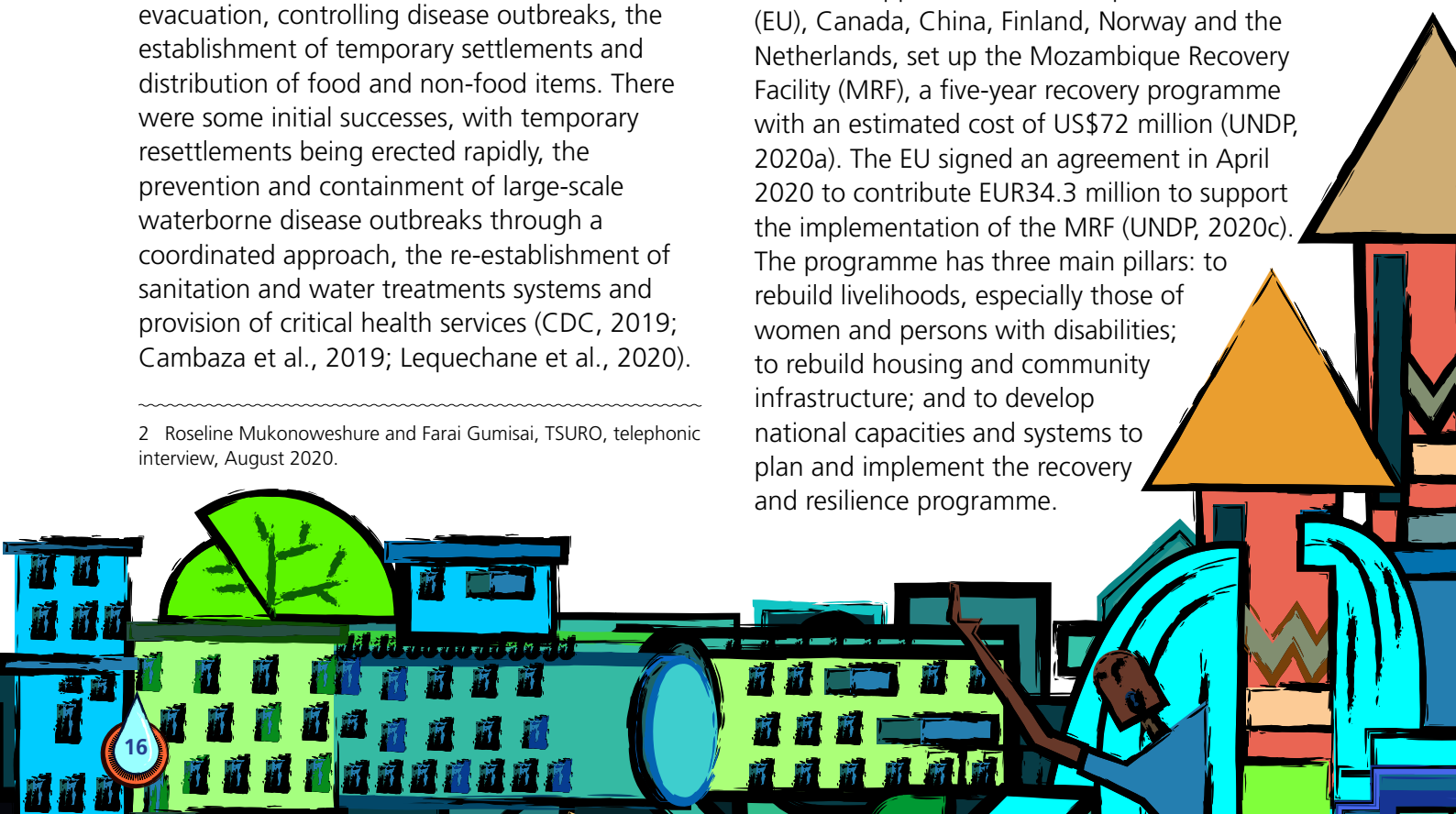
The first step taken by local NGOs in response to the disaster was information dissemination, followed by getting food and supplies to survivors, and offering counselling. As stated by representatives from Towards Sustainable Use of Resources Organisation (TSURO), "Mobility was a big problem, and the response teams had to walk long distances to connect to survivors".[2] But they did it.

Rapid response measures taken by national and international actors focused primarily on evacuation, controlling disease outbreaks, the establishment of temporary settlements and distribution of food and non-food items. There were some initial successes, with temporary resettlements being erected rapidly, the prevention and containment of large-scale waterborne disease outbreaks through a coordinated approach, the re-establishment of sanitation and water treatments systems and provision of critical health services (CDC, 2019; Cambaza et al., 2019; Lequechane et al., 2020).

2 Roseline Mukonoweshure and Farai Gumisai, TSURO, telephonic interview, August 2020.

International donors pledged US$1.2 billion towards reconstruction in early 2020 (Norton et al., 2020). Following Cyclone Idai, the Mozambican government established the Post-Cyclones Reconstruction Office (GREPOC) to coordinate reconstruction and donor relations. The World Bank approved US$130 million from its International Development Association for Emergency Recovery and Resilience project, with another US$60 million from the Netherlands Government, with co-funding requirements having to be met by the government of Mozambique. The project focused on recovery and reconstruction – housing (US$42 million); public infrastructure (US$16 million); private sector recovery (US$22 million) and building climate resilience including coastal resilience (US$30 million, plus US$30 million co-financing); drainage rehabilitation (US$30 million, plus US$30 million co-financing); project implementation, monitoring and valuation (US$7 million); including a Contingent Emergency Response Component (CERC) (World Bank, 2019e). In 2020, to cover emergency response to COVID-19, the Mozambique government requested activation of the Immediate Response Mechanism (IRM) under the CERC, to enable the withdrawal of US$73.5 million from the public purse (Republic of Mozambique, 2020).

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in partnership with GREPOC and with financial support from the European Union (EU), Canada, China, Finland, Norway and the Netherlands, set up the Mozambique Recovery Facility (MRF), a five-year recovery programme with an estimated cost of US$72 million (UNDP, 2020a). The EU signed an agreement in April 2020 to contribute EUR34.3 million to support the implementation of the MRF (UNDP, 2020c). The programme has three main pillars: to rebuild livelihoods, especially those of women and persons with disabilities; to rebuild housing and community infrastructure; and to develop national capacities and systems to plan and implement the recovery and resilience programme.



The interventions currently underway are focusing on 15 640 families affected and displaced by Cyclone Kenneth (and ongoing insurgencies) in Cabo Delgado Province and 37 503 families in Sofala Province, with plans to extend to Inhambane, Manica, Nampula, Tete and Zambezia (UNDP, 2020b). The UN Central Emergency Response Fund allocated UN agencies and partners US$21.4 million for Cyclone Idai and US$12.9 million for Cyclone Kenneth within days following their landfall. Of this, US$14 million was to Mozambique, US$4 million to Zimbabwe, and US$3.3 million to Malawi for Cyclone Idai, and US$10 million to Mozambique and US$3million to Comoros for Cyclone Kenneth (UN, 2020). This was used by the HCTs in each country to deal with urgent needs across clusters.

However, the international aid mobilised in a wave of international solidarity was unable to meet the relief and recovery efforts. This may partly be attributed to the narrow disaster management approach, which largely responds to each shock in isolation and insufficiently considers the impact of cumulative damage on the countries and its populations, and its intersection with existing inequalities and deprivations. Hence, poor appreciation of the systemic drivers of these shocks feeds into the failure to achieve sustainable recovery and reconstruction outcomes.

In September 2019, two projects were launched in Zimbabwe. The UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) with US$72 million funding from the World Bank established the four-year Zimbabwe Idai Recovery Project, a major multi-sectoral recovery project, implemented by Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Organisation for Migration (IOM), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Food Programme (WFP).[3] The second project, the Post Cyclone Idai Emergency Recovery and Resilience Project, focuses on rebuilding key infrastructure across Zimbabwe, with US$24.5 million funding coming from the African Development Bank.[4] Zimbabwe, which has been unable to access finance since it defaulted on its debt repayments in 2000, has external debt close to US$10

3 https://zimbabwe.un.org/index.php/en/50659-cylone-idai-recovery-programme-may-lend-lesson-recovering-better-covid-19

4 https://www.unops.org/news-and-stories/news/cyclone-idai-recovery-projects-launched-in-zimbabwe

PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN WILSON - CHIMANIMANI, ZIMBABWE

billion in arrears, and simply had no capacity to finance recovery efforts.[5] Time will tell how these projects play out, but it seems that rural citizens of much of Zimbabwe and Mozambique are unable to rely on their respective under-resourced and incapacitated states.

In Mozambique, there is public suspicion about the use of funds coming into the country, due to lack of transparency and clarity on financial inflows and purchases, especially by the INGC. Questions have been raised about hidden debts and increasing levels of corruption in the country (CIP, 2020). The Centre for Public Integrity (CIP) reported misuse of donated food and non-food materials, limited ability to monitor the use of financial and material donations, and a general increase in levels of distrust between the public and the INGC. At the time of writing, no report had been released publicly to indicate how aid was used, nor what the outcomes of the first phase of the response are (CIP, 2020; Carta de Moçambique, 2020).

In the affected countries of Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, socio-economic fragility owing to a stressed and underperforming political economy has made them even more vulnerable to disasters, as climatic hazards quickly turn into humanitarian emergencies (Chatiza, 2019). Those affected by the extensive damage caused by the cyclones continue to live in precarious conditions, with the governments being slow to implement expeditious and adequate reconstruction and recovery efforts (Save the Children, 2020).

5 Adrian Chokwe, AFRODAD, telephonic interview, October 2020.

Seed relief efforts and restoring farmer seed systems

In a context where much of the rural population is dependent on land and agriculture for survival, access to diverse seed in sufficient quantities is indispensable for the cultivation of healthy and nutritious food as a first, essential response to post-disaster relief and recovery efforts. In this case, where entire fields, seed and food stock under the control of smallholder farmers were destroyed, and in the absence of secure farmer-led and controlled seed houses/banks for emergencies, the standard response is to import food and seed aid into the country. The Food Security Cluster coordinated the implementation of the UN agencies, NGOs (both national and international), civil society more broadly, as well as the provincial level INGC and public agricultural services, as part of this forum. José Mantishe, FAO programme officer in Mozambique, said initially open-pollinated maize and cowpea seed were distributed, and later corporate vegetable seed was included, under the Food Security Cluster in Beira, Sofala Province.[1] It is unclear whether this seed is coming from private or public breeding institutions. The FAO in Mozambique distributed 14 700 agricultural kits, targeting 73 000 people, including seed and basic agricultural implements.[2] This said, Macaringue of UNAC suggested that corporate hybrid seed was distributed as part of rapid response and early recovery, due to the complete loss of local seed as a result of the cyclones, and the lack of availability of alternatives in the country.[3] Mutsaka et al. (2019) suggest that, while agricultural livelihoods received emergency funding, these interventions did not correspond to the season or local geography, and did not include measures to deal with the fall armyworm infestation. As noted earlier, this suggests a unidimensional tendency/orientation of relief efforts, while there is a need for a multipronged and contextualised approach, especially in light of multiple and compounding shocks hitting smallholder farmers in the region.

While direct seed distribution in emergencies is complex, and often geared towards large imports of seed that exclusively benefit seed companies, the FAO is explicit in saying that it is committed to local seed procurement as a priority in emergency situations, but that this requires sufficient knowledge of local seed producers, local markets, and procuring locally adapted seed from local sources that will not undermine the local and national seed system and food security in the region (FAO, 2010). Yet despite these statements, this fails to transpire in rapid response efforts, particularly due to procurement processes, which has implications on the relevance, effectiveness and quality of the response.[4]

In-depth training manuals for development practitioners have been produced to improve seed-based interventions in acute and chronic crises (McGuire and Sperling, 2016; Sperling and McGuire, 2020; Sperling et al., 2006). The training manuals note that what is often missing includes adequate or correct diagnosis of seed insecurity, which often assumes lack of seed availability and creates an over-reliance on the commercial seed sector to provide seed. This undermines and displaces local seed systems, which are integral to sustaining and rebuilding farmers' lives and livelihoods. The FAO conducted a seed assessment to inform their response to the ongoing drought prior to Idai and Kenneth (detailed below), but in the rapid response effort after the cyclones this was not used, and the main narrative is that seed was completely wiped out due to the storms, leaving farmers with destroyed social and physical infrastructure, and in complete shock and trauma. Therefore, this raises important questions about the respect for and implementation of farmers' rights and support of farmers seed systems within the context of compounding shocks and increasing chronic and acute disasters, and about how to re-establish farmer-to-farmer linkages. Ongoing field research is required to gain a better picture and inform response efforts. This said, seed laws are oriented towards the commercial or formal seed sector, in the form of improved and certified corporate varieties, even in times of crises, and even in cases – such as in Mozambique – where the formal seed sector is virtually non-existent. The provision of such commercial seed, which is not adapted to local conditions, has long-term implications for smallholder farming systems. The need to end repetitive and chronic seed aid and support farmers' efforts towards rebuilding their seed systems, including lost and displaced locally adapted seed, needs extremely urgent attention.

There are some interesting efforts focusing on local seed systems and farmers' seed, such as an initiative supported by the German government in collaboration with FAO and local gene banks working to revive and return lost varieties to smallholder farmers through a project entitled "Foundations for rebuilding seed systems post Cyclone Idai: Zimbabwe, Mozambique and Malawi", operating under the umbrella of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture.[5] More detailed field research is needed to confirm what has taken place to date, and how this approach can feed into future recovery efforts and the discussions on the scope of farmers' rights, particularly in the time of shocks.

1 José Mantishe, FAO Programme Officer Mozambique, telephonic interview, 14 September 2020.

2 http://www.fao.org/emergencies/resources/maps/detail/en/c/1189050/ ; https://reliefweb.int/report/mozambique/fao-starts-distribution-much-needed-seeds-and-tools-cyclone-ravaged-mozambique

3 Isidro Macaringue, advocacy officer UNAC, telephonic interview, July 2020.

4 José Mantishe, FAO Programme Officer Mozambique, telephonic interview, 14 September 2020.

5 http://www.fao.org/emergencies/fao-in-action/stories/stories-detail/en/c/1301895/

Postcolonial states, **fragile economies** and **disaster preparedness**

Cyclone Idai hit already fragile economies in a context of state support for the systematic expropriation of natural and human resources through foreign investments, making it difficult to distinguish "corruption" from this extractivist logic (Castel-Branco and Massarongo, 2016).

Zimbabwe's multiple layers of policies, laws and local and national organisations have created institutional weaknesses as these are under-resourced and ultimately unable to respond to slow onset or rapid shocks (Chatiza, 2019; Manatsa and Chatiza, 2020). Further, decision-making is highly politicised, resulting in inadequate and unclear planning and haphazard implementation. Years of economic decline has left most state agencies without operational resources, with Cyclone Idai exposing capacity and policy gaps in Zimbabwe's disaster risk management system and overall governance (Manatsa and Chatiza, 2020). In addition, early-warning systems were very weak and disjointed, resulting in local communities being critically unprepared, unsurprisingly overwhelmed, and massively under-resourced for the task at hand (Manatsa and Chatiza, 2020; World Bank, 2019c). In Zimbabwe, the response exposed both policy, institutional and capacity frailties. Many local officials initially felt abandoned, and then later overwhelmed, and deeply traumatised by the enormity of the events and the destruction it caused in its wake (Manatsa and Chatiza, 2020).

Idai and Kenneth "swept across Mozambique and encountered a state weakened by an extractivist development model and captured by global capital" (Castel-Branco, 2019, no page number). While economic indicators suggest the Mozambican economy has expanded steadily and significantly, it remains an extractive, porous and narrowly-based economy (Castel-Branco, 2014) in which half the population live in absolute poverty[1] and

1 https://www.iied.org/mozambique-case-study-shows-poverty-about-much-more-income

growing inequality.[2] It has hinged its development to commodities and extractive industries and tends to be focused on large-scale projects, which, as in many African countries, often fail to meet expectations in transforming the economy (Castel-Branco, 2014). The common results are failed projects, loading countries with further unsustainable debt and with future generations paying the cost.[3] Importantly, many of the areas hit by the cyclones are opposition party RENAMO strongholds, which have been severely under-resourced due to patronage structures of the FRELIMO government. This politicisation of support and response is important when analysing the extent of the damage and slow response efforts.

The mega-projects in Mozambique – such as the LNG project – are indicative of an alliance between the state and domestic and multinational financial capital (Castel-Branco, 2014) the kind of which even the World Bank (2019d) admits have limited linkages to the local economy. While few countries would be able to respond to a disaster of such magnitude, the government of Mozambique, with its boom/bust economic cycle,[4] a limited GDP, amidst a debt crisis, and over-reliance on the extractive sector, has made a country vulnerable to fluctuating commodity prices reliant on public borrowing for large-scale infrastructure projects, and extensive fiscal incentives for foreign investment (Castel-Branco, 2019). This has resulted in an authoritarian, corporativist clientelism, skewed towards the interests of national oligarchies associated with multinational capital, who control land, contracts, the illegal trade in heroin and timber, and shares in international loans (Castel-Branco and Massarongo, 2016; Hanlon, 2020a). As such, a political and class elite has coalesced around extraction and debt, perpetuating vulnerability amongst the rural population as a result of rising inequality, lack of state investment, ecological degradation and the effects of subsequent austerity.

2 https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/mozambique/publication/mozambique-economic-update-less-poverty-but-more-inequality

3 Tirivangani Mutazu, AFRODAD, telephonic interview, October 2020.

4 Tim Jones, Jubilee Debt Campaign, telephonic interview, August 2020.

Mozambique's debt, reforms and climate-debt trap

Mozambican public debt is estimated at 85% of its GDP, with an economy exposed and vulnerable to external shocks owing to its dependence on few export commodities for foreign exchange earnings (World Bank, 2019a). The Mozambican economy is faced with significant challenges, with falling commodity prices, combative climatic shocks, fiscal tightening and a slowdown in foreign direct investments aggravated by the hidden debt crisis of 2016.

The hidden debt scandal in Mozambique included borrowing by two state-owned enterprises, Proindicus and MAM, for about US$1.4 billion. The government-guaranteed US$850 million Eurobond from a third state-owned enterprise, Ematum. This ocurred at an early stage in 2014 but was only disclosed in April 2016. The loans were provided by Credit Suisse and Russian lender VTB Bank and channelled through a United Arab Emirates-based shipbuilding company, Privinvest. The US$2 billion (€1.76 billion) loans were made for the purchase of naval equipment and a fishing fleet, which failed to begin operations, and with much of the money still unaccounted for.[5] This extra US$2 billion in debt was added to the government accounts in 2016 and raised Mozambique's debt ratio to unsustainable levels. In 2017, the country announced it would not be able to make its debt repayments, triggering a debt crisis that is still being felt in Mozambique today.[6]

These secret loans caused international partners to withdraw support to the Mozambican state budget and froze the general budget and sector support, which caused economic and social crises. As a result, the government imposed a series of austerity measures, including cuts to sectors such as health, education, social welfare, sanitation and hygiene, just prior to the onslaught of Idai and Kenneth. While it takes a local elite to contract such loans, it also takes a lender to provide such loans based on

5 https://www.dw.com/en/mozambiques-debt-crisis-who-will-pay-the-bill/a-45105639

6 https://www.dw.com/en/africas-new-sovereign-debt-crisis/a-38024607

PHOTO CREDIT: DENIS ONYODI - IFRC, DRK, CLIMATE CENTRE

commercial interest and little else (Ndikumana and Boyce, 2011). The hidden debt and failure of the international community to condemn the London-based banks, point to serious, deeply structural problems of reckless lending by commercial banks and multilateral institutions, which require urgent attention and intervention globally.[7] Currently, the three Mozambican state-owned companies that were beneficiaries of the illegal lending from London-based banks are being called on to dissolve and the loans to be declared illegal (Frey, 2020). In 2019, debt campaigners accused the IMF of encouraging reckless lending of loans to financially troubled countries, without first putting in place a debt restructuring programme.[8] Based on this same report, the Jubilee Debt Campaign indicates a major breach by the IMF of its own policies, because it incentivises reckless lending where lenders create unsustainable debt, knowing full well that these lenders will be let off the hook while citizens of indebted countries carry the debt burden.

Following cyclones Idai and Kenneth, the IMF's executive board approved US$118 million in emergency assistance to Mozambique under the RCF, which was based on the government being "committed to macroeconomic stability while fostering inclusive growth and addressing governance challenges" (IMF, 2019). In other words, this meant the reallocation of lower priority spending from emergency assistance and reconstruction to seven "macro-critical" structural reforms focused primarily on a continued neoliberal orientation favouring the private sector and capital.[9] In 2020, the IMF approved a further US$309 million for the COVID-19 pandemic, again from the RCF (Mbewa, 2020) – to maintain macroeconomic and financial stability. This is, therefore, the second consecutive year that Mozambique has received support from the IMF's RCF. The IMF has said that the RCF payments will be made only after LNG production exports and fiscal revenue starts, which is expected for 2022/2023 (IMF, 2019).

7 Tim Jones, Jubliee Debt Campaign, telephonic interview, August 2020.

8 https://jubileedebt.org.uk/press-release/the-imf-is-spending-93-billion-bailing-out-reckless-lenders

9 These include: debt management and investment planning; public financial management; tax administration; social safety nets; natural resource wealth; investment climate; and financial sector stability and development.

This effectively locks the state into fossil fuel extraction and export of raw natural materials.

Furthermore, just before this paper went to publication, ExxonMobil announced it was delaying its investment decision in the gas fields (Hanlon, 2020b). This further indicates the shaky prospects of the Mozambican government realising the revenue from the gas fields now needed for repaying these debts, and the fundamental fragility of this development path.

Despite public relations efforts to the contrary (Bello, 2020), austerity measures are intrinsic to IMF loans and have historically resulted in cuts in public spending, including to the military. In the Mozambican case, this has resulted in the privatising of security in the country (Prashad, 2020). Despite widespread criticism of structural adjustment and austerity measures over the last two decades, further cuts to public spending were advocated by the IMF in 2019.[10] In northern Mozambique, which is on the cusp of civil war, increased militarisation, deployed to protect the interests of multinational corporations, is responsible for the wanton violation of human rights.

According to Jubilee Debt Campaign, government debt repayments in developing countries has increased by 85% since 2010.[11] There has been a rapid increase in lending to developing countries, due to the low global interest rates, higher commodity prices and positive ratings from credit agencies, facilitating greater access to market-based financing (ALSF, 2019). Between 2008 and 2018 external loans to low and middle-income countries increased from US$70 billion to US$166 billion – primarily from private lenders (up 240%), followed by governments (up 190%) and finally multilateral institutions (up 50%).[12]

10 http://opais.sapo.mz/fmi-defende-mais-cortes-na-despesa-publica-mocambicana

11 https://jubileedebt.org.uk/press-release/crisis-deepens-as-global-south-debt-payments-increase-by-85

12 https://www.internationalbudget.org/2020/05/crippling-debt-transparent-lending-and-borrowing-must-be-part-of-the-solution/.

The COVID-19 pandemic is taking a major toll on indebted countries, with many impacted countries receiving further loans to cope with the health and economic crises, and to deal with falling commodity prices and increasing interest rates.[13] As noted earlier, high debt payments correspond with public spending cuts, with Mozambique cutting 21% of public spending between 2015 and 2018 (Jubilee Debt Campaign, 2020), with disastrous consequences for local populations.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Bank provided around US$700 million in loans to the three affected countries following Cyclone Idai, from the International Development Association (IDA) Crisis Response Window (CRW). This is in addition to the US$150 million in resources from existing projects (World Bank, 2019a). Mozambique received US$350 million in CRW financing to re-establish the water supply, rebuild damaged public infrastructure and crops and support disease prevention, food security, social protection and early warning systems. For neighbouring Malawi, the CRW is to

PHOTO CREDIT: BAYNHAM GOREDEMA

provide US$120 million in financing to restore agricultural livelihoods, reconstruct priority infrastructure and support disease surveillance. Zimbabwe received US$75 million from the World Bank, which was distributed to select UN agencies to manage. Many of the UN agencies have close relationships with the state, offering financial support and expertise. This outsourcing of essential public services to international aid actors occurred especially in the context of the debt crisis, where donors removed direct support to the state budget and absorbed these resources.[14]

Debt campaigners such as Jubilee and Eurodad

14 Ruth Castel-Branco, Southern Centre for Inequality Studies, telephonic interview, October 2020.

PHOTO CREDIT: PATRICK HENDRY

are demanding payment breaks for countries: freezing repayments on loans for 2020; debt restructuring; debt cancellation; and immediate emergency finance that does not create further debt.[15] While these are important demands, the question is, do they go far enough?

Recently, there have been calls for an 'exit strategy' from this geopolitical and geo-economic (il)logic. Bello points out that there have been limited reforms to IMF and World Bank policies in the past decades, notwithstanding that under their neoliberal watch there has been rising poverty and inequality, which has been dramatically exacerbated by the COVID-9 pandemic (Bello, 2020).

Regarding commercial debt, new lenders have appeared on the African block, such as China, whose business dealings often lack transparency and accountability. China is the second largest lender to Mozambique,[16] and provides extensive loans and technical advice, amongst other support to the government. It has repeatedly cancelled unserviced debt. See below for further discussion on China's role in deforestation and the global timber trade.

The power and influence of financial markets and consequences of public debt collectively contribute to crowding out alternative, socially equitable development options (Castel-Branco, 2014), and driving an increased appetite for commercial debt.[17] While commercial loans may have fewer strings attached compared to international financial institutions such as that incurred to the World Bank and IMF, it is much more costly.[18]

Castel-Branco suggests that current levels of porosity, the direction and the high capital costs of the current development strategy, the volatility of commodity markets and the role of debt in restricting development options, are as great or greater than those of the second decade after independence, which resulted in two decades of IMF-driven structural adjustment programmes (2014) in the country. The present strategy may be contributing to undermining future generations to come, since future resource inflows are already earmarked for financing the ups and downs of indebtedness in the present, locking the government into a cycle of indebtedness intricately tied to an extractive economic core (see below).

Above this, increased financialisaton of resources reinforces the logic of wealth extraction, which is intrinsically expansionistic, speculative and destructive (FIAN International, 2020).

15 https://jubileedebt.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/International-statement_English_04.20.pdf; https://www.internationalbudget.org/2020/05/crippling-debt-transparent-lending-and-borrowing-must-be-part-of-the-solution/ ; https://jubileedebt.org.uk/briefing/drop-debt-save-lives-global-south-debt-and-covid-19 ; https://chimpreports.com/museveni-to-un-external-debt-complicates-africas-covid-19-recovery/

16 https://clubofmozambique.com/news/china-is-mozambiques-largest-country-debtor-up-to-2017/

17 Tim Jones, Jubliee Debt Campaign, telephonic interview August 2020.

18 Ruth Castel-Branco, Southern Centre for Inequality Studies, telephonic interview, October 2020.

Carbon- and capital-intensive mega-projects in Mozambique

Following the discovery of large oil and gas reserves in recent years off the coast of northern Mozambique near Cabo Delgado between 2010 and 2013, the LNG mega-project has become infamous for its riches and promises of relief for Mozambique's battered economy. Around 5 trillion cubic metres of natural gas was found off the coast of northern Mozambique, making it the ninth largest gas reserve in the world (FoEI, 2020). The LNG plans to recover approximately 1.84 cubic metres of natural gas, with the ability to expand up to 43 million tonnes of natural gas per annum by 2024.[1]

Cabo Delgado, known colloquially as the "forgotten cape" or Cabo Esquecido, is where the anti-colonial war against the Portuguese broke out in 1964. It has since been economically and socially excluded, and with access to limited economic opportunities, has led to the emergence of artisanal mining and illicit drug trade into the Southern African region (Prashad, 2020). Since 2017, this area has come under attack by Islamic insurgents and is now home to increasing conflict, with the recent capture of the port, Mocímboa de Praia in August 2020.[2] The humanitarian situation in Cabo Delgado has deteriorated significantly since the beginning of 2020, with over 250 000 displaced people, waterborne disease outbreaks, and lack of health facilities and personnel.[3]

The conflict in Cabo Delgado has its roots in deepening inequality and growing discontent by neglected and marginalised populations,[4] where local communities find themselves caught between insurgents, the army, private security contractors and gas companies and their subcontractors, and being robbed of their land and their livelihoods (FoEI, 2020). By June 2020, 550 families had already been forced off their land, as land grabbing continues with impunity.[5] Cabo Delgado has also become the COVID-19 hotspot of Mozambique, adding additional shocks to an impoverished region.

The area has seen increased militarisation, with the hiring of private security companies and deployment of the national army to protect the interests of foreign multi-national energy giants such as ExxonMobil and Total (FoEI, 2020). These same companies are trying to shape their image towards decarbonisation strategies, yet in the Mozambican channel they continue to exploit fossil fuels and contribute further to the climate crisis, creating more vulnerability within this already fragile and volatile context.

Despite a crippling economy, the international financial community has provided massive loans for the LNG project, with the US and UK announcing a US$4.9 billion loan and IMF support, supporting foreign military intervention in the Cabo Delgado war, and indicating a wave of profiteering from this instability (Hanlon, 2020a). In addition, the "enabling environment" provided to foreign companies to operate in Mozambique offers little room for economic stability and sovereignty to take root. This is particularly so, given the World Bank's provision of tax breaks for coal and gas extraction and further investment in the fossil fuel sector (Mainhardt et al., 2020). This promotes insufficient domestic resourcing for national interests and priorities and building the resiliency and capacities to stave off and/or respond to shocks.

1 https://www.mzlng.total.com/homepage

2 www.noticias.sapo.mz

3 www.unocha.org

4 Décio Muainga, Kaleidescopio., telephonic interview, August 2020.

5 https://www.foei.org/take-action/gas-human-rights-covid-mozambique

Systemic shocks: **Ecological degradation, deforestation** and **economic imperialism**

Widespread land-use and cover change, brought about by deforestation of natural forests and the concomitant transformation of dense, biodiverse Miombo Woodlands into agricultural lands, play a major role in increasing ecological risks to shocks.

Figure 5: The *symbiotic relationship* between logging and agriculture

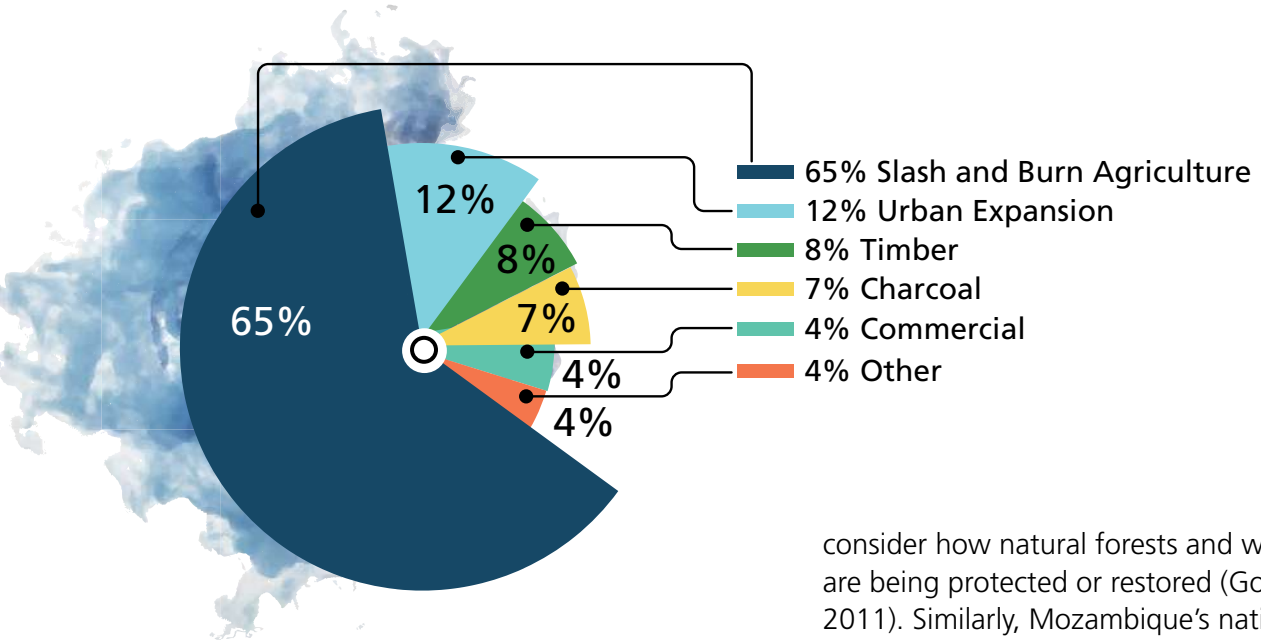
Declining woodlands and mangroves mean declining natural defences,[1] reducing the landscape's capacity to absorb and withstand intense rainfall and wind speeds. Through infiltration, healthy forests slow water speed, but the simplification of diverse ecological systems and exposed soils, as a result of deforestation and the conversion of forest to agricultural land accelerates and increases water runoff, resulting in erosion and losing topsoil, and, in this case, causing serious destruction to infrastructure.

Ecological degradation increasing risk to disasters

Rampant deforestation in Eastern Zimbabwe and across Mozambique has degraded ecological systems. In Zimbabwe, this has been implicated in worsening the extent of the damage caused by Cyclone Idai.[2] Much of Zimbabwe's precious dry montane forests and grasslands have been removed through illegal logging or veld fires, or replaced by cash cropping, plantation forestry,

1 Allan Shwarz, founder of Mezimbite Forest Centre, telephonic interview, August 2020.

2 https://www.thezimbabwean.co/2019/05/cyclone-idais-deadly-impact-was-worsened-by-zimbabwes-forest-plunder/



Source: World Bank, 2018a.

Figure 6: Drivers of deforestation in Mozambique

and alluvial gold extraction. On average, Zimbabwe has lost 327 000ha of forests annually between 1990 and 2010.[3] This has resulted in a dire ecological situation of extreme vulnerability, with many living in precarious environmental conditions.

At one time, Mozambique had 32 million hectares of natural forest, covering 40% of its land area (World Bank 2018b). It is unknown, at the time of writing, how much of this remains. However, what we do know is that around 93% of all Mozambican timber exports are destined for China (Macqueen, 2018). Across Africa the picture is similar where 75% of African timber exports head for China (Canby et al., 2008; Weng et al., 2014). Timber trade disparities, based on customs import and export data, indicate a rate of harvesting that exceeds the higher limit of Mozambique's annual allowable cut. Mozambique's natural forests and biodiversity are being rapidly depleted, with 220 000ha of natural forests being lost every year, and causing pervasive erosion (World Bank, 2019d). Worryingly, Mozambique's 2009 National Reforestation Strategy focuses almost exclusively on increasing commercial forestry through large-scale corporate plantations, aiming to increase its commercial forest plantation area from 64,00 ha in 2009, to 1 million by 2030, while failing to effectively consider how natural forests and woodlands are being protected or restored (GoM MASA 2011). Similarly, Mozambique's national REDD+ strategy,[4] while taking an intersectoral and multifunctional approach including agriculture, energy, and conservation, the focus is still towards creating a favourable environment for forest business to function, and the provision of corporate seed to smallholder farmers to curb deforestation. These false solutions are blind to the intersectional and structural issues undermining biodiversity and rural livelihoods.

The conversion of forest to agriculture is the single biggest contributor to forest loss (Ryan et al., 2014; World Bank, 2018b). This is primarily through swidden[5] agriculture practised by the family farming sector. The majority of the agriculture sector in Mozambique is small-scale, family farming, with small amounts of industrial agriculture, primarily sugar and sisal by larger commercial farmers. Farmers typically cultivate food and cash crops, including cashews, cotton, sunflowers, sesame and maize, amongst others.

Timber harvesting has a larger impact on the forest beyond the 9% directly attributable to logging. Allan Shwarz,[6] the founder of Mezimbite Forest Centre, explains, "Loggers are the first ones to enter the forest, and this

3 https://rainforests.mongabay.com/deforestation/2000/Zimbabwe.htm

4 The Republic of Mozambique, Ministry of Land, Environment and Rural Development, 2016. National Strategy for the Reduction of Deforestation and Degradation Emissions Forestry, Forest Conservation and Increase of Carbon Reserves Through of Forests (REDD+) 2016-2030. https://www.forestcarbonpartnership.org/system/files/documents/ESTRAT%C3%89GIA%20NACIONAL%20DO%20REDD%2B.pdf

5 A form of agriculture, used especially in tropical countries, in which an area of ground is cleared of vegetation and cultivated for a few years and then abandoned for a new area until its fertility has been naturally restored. Swidden and shifting cultivation are used interchangeably in this paper.

6 Allan Shwarz, founder of Mezimbite Forest Centre, telephonic interview August 2020.

Table 1: Forest plantation companies and land allocation in Mozambique in 2015

No.	Company	Province	District	DUAT Area (in ha)	Area Planted (in ha)
1	Ifloma	Manica	Manica	15,000	13,285
1	Ifloma	Sofala	Muanza	69,350	100
2	Chikweti forest	Niassa	Lago e Lichinga	63,040	14,250
3	Companhia florestal Massangulo	Niassa	Ngauma	5,332	4,378
4	New Forest	Niassa	Lichinga	33,040	3,400
5	Funda ao Malonda	Niassa	Lichinga e Sanga	4,076	1,101
6	Green Resources	Niassa	Sanga	7,880	2,683
6	Green Resources	Nampula	Mecuburi, Ribaue e Nampula	126,060	3,612
7	Floresta do Niassa (Rift Valley)	Niassa	Lichinga	42,102	5,400
8	Portucel	Zambezia	lie e Namarroi	173,000	6,500
8	Portucel	Manica	Manica, Gondola, Barue, Sussundenga, Mussurize	183,000	0

is mostly destined to China. To move the logs, you need infrastructure, i.e. roads. This then allows for the entry of others to convert land to agriculture and to produce charcoal." Castel-Branco calls this a "symbiotic relationship" between loggers and smallholder farmers, which she suggests is necessary to understand the local political economy.[7] Most Mozambican smallholder farmers have extremely limited financial resources and receive virtually no state support in terms of direct agricultural support, infrastructure or social welfare. Woodlands in Mozambique contribute 80% of total domestic energy needs in the form of firewood and charcoal, as well as provide a variety of non-timber forest products used by local communities. (World Bank, 2019d). Therefore, while logging activities have their own implications on the landscape (Mambondiyani, 2019), they facilitate the entry of other knock-on activities that entrench logging as being necessary to sustain local livelihoods and that can also lead to further loss of biodiversity. Participation of smallholders in such practices has been described as "desperate ecocide" within a broader political economy shaping them:

> *[T]here's a reciprocal link between poverty and environmental forces where poor people cause environmental degradation because of their poverty and desperation. In turn, environmental degradation worsens their condition … such problems are rooted in the broader political economy, which forces many rural societies to increase their pressure on the environment. (Chipango, 2020).*

There is investment in large-scale, monoculture agriculture and plantation developments along the Beira and Nacala corridors, such as the Chinese joint venture to increase rice production. The largest plantation operations are currently in Manica, Niassa and Zambesia Provinces, although mostly still in early stages of establishment, with the largest plans by Portuguese investor Portucel, that has obtained a DUAT[8] area of 173,000ha in Zambesia and 183,000 in Manica (World Bank, 2016). In

7 Ruth Castel-Branco., Southern Centre for Inequality Studies, telephonic interview, October 2020.

8 Direito do Uso e Aproveitamento da Terra, i.e. individual or communal rights to use the land, under the Mozambican Land Law 1997.

many cases conflict with local communities has arisen in these processes of land acquisition (The Oakland Institute, 2011).

Large-scale agricultural and foresty projects in Mozambique have largely failed, including tobacco, sugarcane, jatropha and eucalyptus projects. Many of these projects are driven by international financial institutions, promoting public-private partnership and commercial investment, and in a sense, "making business from the climate crisis".[9] This is particularly true in the World Bank's support for forest product value chains, related to forest plantations under REDD+ and reforestation programmes through forest plantations (World Bank 2016). The World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility, which is tied to the commodification and destruction of forest ecosystems, is perhaps one of its most controversial: providing financial support for REDD+ projects and forcing forest communities off their traditional lands (Bello, 2020). While there are possibilities to link such projects towards local needs, such as a more sustainable supply of fuelwood and charcoal to rural and urban populations, these projects require massive investment from the private sector, land acquisition, and are geared exclusively toward export markets, which is a blatant distraction and farcical tactic surely unable to meet the challenging conditions locally, and in light of future shocks to come.

The World Bank provides extensive budgetary support to the Mozambique government through a mosaic of projects and programmes.[10] In early 2019 the World Bank approved US$60 million additional financing for the Agriculture and Natural Resources Landscape Management Project (SUSTENTA), which initially started in February 2017, and is now being extended across the entire country. This aims primarily to enhance agricultural and forest-based value chains (Mosca, 2020; World Bank, 2019d). While the programme targets smallholder farmers, the project will mainly serve larger commercial farmers and companies, who have the ability to compete on regional and international markets. This therefore provides smallholders little benefit beyond a few, low-paid wage jobs or as out-growers, carrying extensive risk on behalf of large business in a volatile international commodity market. The main

9 Anabela Lemos, JA!, telephonic interview October 2020.

10 https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/projects-list?lang=en&searchTerm=&countrycode_exact=MZ

problem, as explained by Abel Arnaldo Sainda from ORAM, a peasant organisation, is that the value chains are incomplete or unequal in Mozambique.[11] The issue for Sainda, therefore, is not about productivity, but about protecting and supporting smallholder farmers to produce, with a guaranteed market, at a good price. This suggests that no transformation of the lives of smallholder farmers is possible without putting in place the structures of state support, which responds to the realities, needs and interests of the people of Mozambique.[12] Despite the Mozambique government acknowledging that small-scale agriculture is the driver of the economy, there is very little support provided.[13] Rather, the government tends to focus on foreign direct investments, of which 90% is channelled to extractive industries, including mining, forestry, and agricultural commodity value chains and associated infrastructure,[14] with little to no benefits going to the people of the country. Obtaining land for these extractive projects often means expropriation from rural communities and incorporation into a monocropping, export-oriented plantation agriculture, as the ProSavana Project[15] exemplified.

11 Abel Arnaldo Sainda, ORAM, telephonic interview, October 2020.

12 Abel Arnaldo Sainda, ORAM, telephonic interview, October 2020.

13 Ruth Castel-Branco, Southern Centre for Inequality Studies, telephonic interview, October 2020.

14 Ruth Castel-Branco, Southern Centre for Inequality Studies, telephonic interview, October 2020.

15 Triangular Co-operation Programme for Agricultural Development of the Tropical Savannah in Mozambique. A programme between Japan, Brazil and Mozambique that aimed to convert 10 million hectares of land from 19 districts into monocropping, export-oriented plantation agriculture. The resistance to the ProSavana project was successful in keeping farmers on their land, rather than removing them or deepening poverty and inequality through out-grower systems, and thus stalled the project.

Build back **better?**

The above sections explain some of the systemic issues driving vulnerability to shocks in the region. In this section we seek to look beyond the false solutions emanating from old and outdated discourse on development aid and disaster management, and explore systemic solutions for a post-pandemic world. As with the entire paper, this section aims to stimulate discussion on how to move forward, where the dignity of peoples and landscapes are restored and reclaimed.

Farmers seed systems and restorative agroecology

Peasant family farmers are the cornerstones of food production systems in the region and are, therefore, necessary and most suited for partnering to develop solutions towards responding to natural disasters and building socio-ecological systems' ability to effectively withstand and adapt to impending shocks.[1] In similar situations across the globe, it has been found that landscapes managed agroecologically, outperform those using conventional land-use practices, suffer fewer soil and crop losses and recover considerably faster following natural disasters and most notably tropical cyclones (Alvarez et al., 2006; Febles and Felix, 2020; Holt-Giménez, 2002). Diversified landscapes have been shown to be more resilient and able to absorb impacts of flooding and high winds, and yield more sustainability during droughts (Altieri and Koohafkan, 2013; Pretty et al., 2006).

Such considerations regarding the type of agricultural support provided in the aftermath of a shock are essential. In a collaborative research project in Manica Province in Mozambique, researchers found diverse local seed that has been passed from generation to generation, which performed better than the corporate seed, especially as they continue to experience rain shortages (ACB, 2019). Researchers found up to nine different maize varieties, seven to nine millet varieties, and also diverse sorghum seed, all much more than what was on the national variety catalogue (Antonio et al., 2016). Despite this, Mozambican seed policies continue to focus exclusively on corporate seed, even in emergency situations, and farmer input subsidy programmes continue to promote expensive and ill-suited corporate seed in the region (ACB, 2019).

Therefore, the focus of reconstruction efforts should be on re-establishing just, local socio-ecological systems, of which farmer seed systems are a part (McGuire and Sperling., 2011, 2016; Sperling and McGuire, 2020). Without this, there is a great risk of complete displacement of local seed systems and loss of

These good recommendations should be discussed with farmers and if accepted, anchored in law, as part of a discreet and robust seed regime that recognises farmers' seed systems and implements farmers' rights.

1 Isidro Macaringue, advocacy officer UNAC, telephonic interview, July 2020.

genetic and crop biodiversity in such contexts, with ominous implications for the ability of local food systems to restore and nourish themselves. However, the current trajectory is moving in the opposite direction. For instance, the Water Efficient Maize for Africa (WEMA) Project is still being proposed and supported in Mozambique by the government.[2] WEMA, funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, promotes the adoption of hybrid and failed GM drought-tolerant maize seed, of which the triple stacked varieties were rejected in South Africa for poor agronomic performance.[3]

The value of local seed systems and locally adapted seed are gaining more recognition and attention, particularly as part of responses to both slow onset and rapid shocks. Following the recommendations by McGuire and Sperling (2011, 2016) on seed security in Mozambique to inform the humanitarian efforts related to the El Nino event of 2016/17, an assessment by the FAO, International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) emphasised the importance of the farmer seed system and local markets (often referred to as the informal seed sector) in relief efforts, due to the poor quality and inadequacy of the formal seed system in Mozambique (Mazvimavi et al., 2017). Due to the lack of sufficient seed for farmers to plant, this study recommended several years ago already that:

> *seed delivery mechanisms that enhance exchanges between farmers such as seed fairs should be promoted to facilitate access to locally adaptable materials, which could include the use of unconditional cash transfers; enhance the informal seed sector so that seed can be sourced for emergency interventions with mechanisms to guarantee the quality of the seed; and extension training on selection, grading and post-harvest management of good quality local and recycled seed. (Mazvimavi et al., 2017)*

These recommendations were never implemented and were, of course, not in place when Idai and Kenneth hit.[4] These good recommendations should be discussed with farmers and if accepted, anchored in law, as part of a discreet and robust seed regime that recognises farmers' seed systems and implements farmers' rights.

A crucial issue that needs to be addressed at a regional, national and provincial level, is how to ensure that local seed is available, multiplied and stored in different areas across the country, particularly in light of seed laws that restrict such activities. As a representative of UNAC explains,

> *The biggest challenge for us is to lobby and advocate for better public policies, because our legislation does not recognise the informal sector of seed, it criminalises farmers who exchange their own seed, but does not recognise it as an existing sector, as it does not comply with DUS (Distinct, Uniform and Stable) and VCU (value for cultivation and use) criteria. That is our ultimate goal, to advocate for and obtain changes in the legislation, that these traditional seeds, which account for 80% of our seed sector, to be recognised by the legislation, then we could have more support. Then if we have a big climatic shock, we can easily move [farmers'] seed around from one place to another.*[5]

Within this context, we need to consider locally appropriate methods of restoring degraded landscapes and consider diversified agroecological and agroforestry systems that restore, repair, recover from shocks and prepare for future unavoidable shocks. Yet this must also occur within a climate justice approach, considering the broader geopolitical and geo-economic framework in which these systems operate. Underlying laws, policies, programmes, agreements and investments that promote the wholesale destruction of forests, landscapes, oceans and the atmosphere, and that dislocate and displace peoples' land and resources, livelihoods and seed and food systems need to abolished.

2 Abel Arnaldo Sainda, ORAM, telephonic interview, October 2020.

3 For more information see: https://www.acbio.org.za/sites/default/files/2017/08/WEMA-Discussion-Doc-web.pdf ; https://www.acbio.org.za/en/sa-government-rejects-monsantos-triple-stacked-gm-drought-tolerant-maize

4 José Mantishe., FAO programme officer, telephonic interview 14th September 2020.

5 Isidro Macaringue, advocacy officer UNAC, telephonic interview, July 2020.

Case study: Socio-ecological landscape solutions in Chimanimani District, Zimbabwe

Chimanimani has been a hub of agroecology since 1991/92, in response to widespread drought and flooding. Chikukwa Ecological Land Use Community Trust (CELUCT), Towards Sustainable Use of Resources Organisation (TSURO), Trust and Nyahode Union Learning Centre (NULC) and others promote agroecological farming practices to reduce the impacts of climate change and support the resiliency of ecological and food systems. Julious Piti from Participatory Organic Research Extension and Training (PORET) explained that where there were well-designed agroecological series of water catchments and good swales,[1] these were able to withstand the storm, but in those that had no real design, swales were damaged, and water was lost, causing extensive damage to the landscape.[2]

A study done by Gadzirayi et al. (2020) found that forested landscapes, followed closely by those that supported agroecological practices, contained the most organic soil matter and was able to absorb excess run-off and retained more nutrients, thereby making these nutrients more available for cropping the following season. Biodiversity, tree cover and increasing soil cover increased the overall resiliency of farms and landscapes (Manatsa and Chatiza, 2020). Further, contours and terracing on slopes increased surface water infiltration, which also reduced soil erosion and topsoil loss. Soil management practices, watershed management and windbreaks were also crucial components for the well-functioning of the entire system (Gadzirayi et al., 2020). Holistic management of livestock proved vital, as well as silvopasture management,[3] agroforestry and intercropping.

Thin and patchy ground cover resulted in increased surface flow and ultimately washed away grazing and cropping lands. Soil compaction and the creation of bare surfaces from animal grazing, high stocking rates, overgrazing and the creation of reduced infiltration rate, resulted in excessive surface flow (Manatsa and Chatiza, 2020). The loss of trees and ground cover increased the vulnerability of farmers and communities to the impacts of the storms.

Monocropped hybrid maize, along with synthetic fertilisers, promoted through government support programmes and cash incentives, contributed to land use pressure, denuded soils and reduced agrobiodiversity, which would otherwise build resilience and stabilise soils (Manatsa and Chatiza, 2020). Traditional leaders also played a role by giving permission to denude fragile lands and forested areas (Manatsa and Chatiza, 2020).

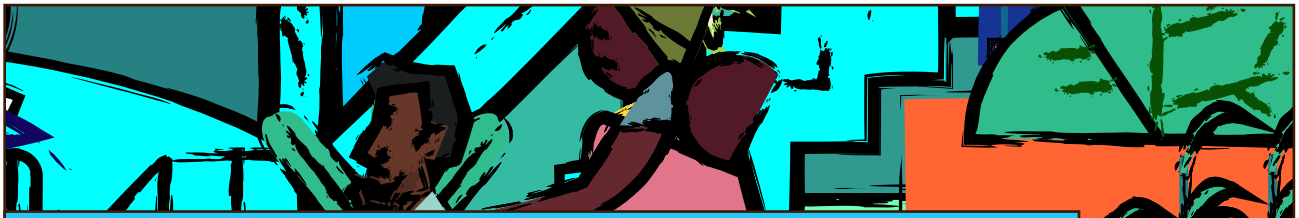
However, there are several current activities to restore and heal the land. These include the planting of indigenous red mahogany trees to facilitate the regeneration of local forests, restore biodiversity and absorb water; and holding seed fairs and a national food festival to share seed and knowledge. Seed from other farmers has been brought in and multiplied, with 26 farmers being at the forefront of this initiative. This seed has been distributed and cultivated and plans are afoot to develop community managed seed banks and food security storage facilities.[4] However, niche crops, such as madumbe and yams, have completely disappeared in the area following the storm.

PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN WILSON, MR CHIEZA ON CONTOUR SWALE HE DUG WITH HIS WIFE, ZIMBABWE

Local NGOs have assisted in various ways, including: providing health training, using health clubs, to prevent outbreaks of waterborne diseases; rebuilding infrastructure, so communities are able to access food and health aid; transporting local produce to markets; providing farmers with implements and inputs of open pollinated variety (OPV) maize, millet and beans; providing agroecology training; setting up a watershed management and climate change unit that focuses on awareness, consultation, rehabilitation and afforestation; and forming Farmer Action Learning Groups.[5]

4 Julious Piti, PORET, telephonic interview August 2020.

5 Roseline Mukonoweshure and Farai Gumisai, TSURO, telephonic interview, August 2020.



Case study: Regenerative agroforestry, Mezimbite Forest Centre, Mozambique

The Mezimbite Forest Centre is located almost 50kms outside of Beira, directly in the path of Cyclone Idai. Here they practise regenerative agroforestry, sustainable forestry and artisanal woodwork. Along with the rest of the area, this site was battered, yet was able to bounce back quickly. The Centre was able to plant seed they had stored in cold boxes in a container inside a proper structure, which had withstood the storm, and could produce food for neighbouring villages within six weeks of the storm.

Under normal circumstances, Mezimbite receives higher rainfall and fewer insect pests than surrounding areas. Allan Shwarz[1] claims that this is due to the high forested areas and the birds these forests attract, which create natural regulatory systems for the ecosystem to function optimally. Natural forests create the conditions for natural predators to thrive, which can reduce the need for intensive pesticide use.[2]

Shwarz, an architect and forest engineer, has developed two agroforestry systems, and is developing another in partnership with the City of Beira. Mezimbite is actively reforesting their area, using these systems and conducting training in the area. The first system is a permanent agroforestry system using an alley cropping system, and according to Shwarz, "In this system, one hectare can provide all subsistence needs for one family, and enough firewood for 2.5 families, with surplus to sell, and provide feed for livestock".[3] The second system is a forest restoration system, using indigenous trees. Shwarz claims that "within seven to ten years you have a well-established biomass, and are able to use these for firewood, construction poles and non-timber forest products". The third system still being developed, operates on a four-hectare plot and integrates peri-urban agriculture and sustainable charcoal production, animal integration and other aspects, such as beekeeping to increase cash flow, and will operate on an eight-year cycle.

1 Allan Shwarz, founder of Mezimbite Forest Centre, telephonic interview, August 2020.

2 http://www.fao.org/ecosystem-services-biodiversity/background/regulating-services/en/

3 Allan Shwarz, founder of Mezimbite Forest Centre, telephonic interview, August 2020.

Shifting the paradigm: Decolonising African economies and ecologies

Despite the fact that Mozambique is ranked as one of the most vulnerable countries to climate-related risks, and is poised to experience further intensified shocks due to the climate crisis, the government continues to follow an extractive model of so-called development. While it is critical to attain energy and economic sovereignty, continuing down the fossil fuel trap adds to the climate crisis and deepens indebtedness of countries in the South, which are on the frontline of increasing climate disasters. In order to build back better, countries with the historical responsibility of creating the climate crisis should move beyond simple development rhetoric of resilience and recovery, but invest in enhancing capacity to prevent and withstand future shocks, and in supporting social welfare systems and rural livelihoods. This requires addressing structural issues directly, rather than following conventional neoliberal, international development dinosaurs that severely limit the ability of the Mozambican state to respond meaningfully.

Debt, trade and investment relations are central in shaping patterns of ecological degradation, cycles of debt, and ultimately the abilities of African countries to invest in their own societies, avoid, mitigate and respond to multiple shocks. Private interests are promoted by the Global North, resulting in the extraction of natural resources and wealth, degrading landscapes to supply global value chains and financial markets (FIAN International, 2020). Land and workers

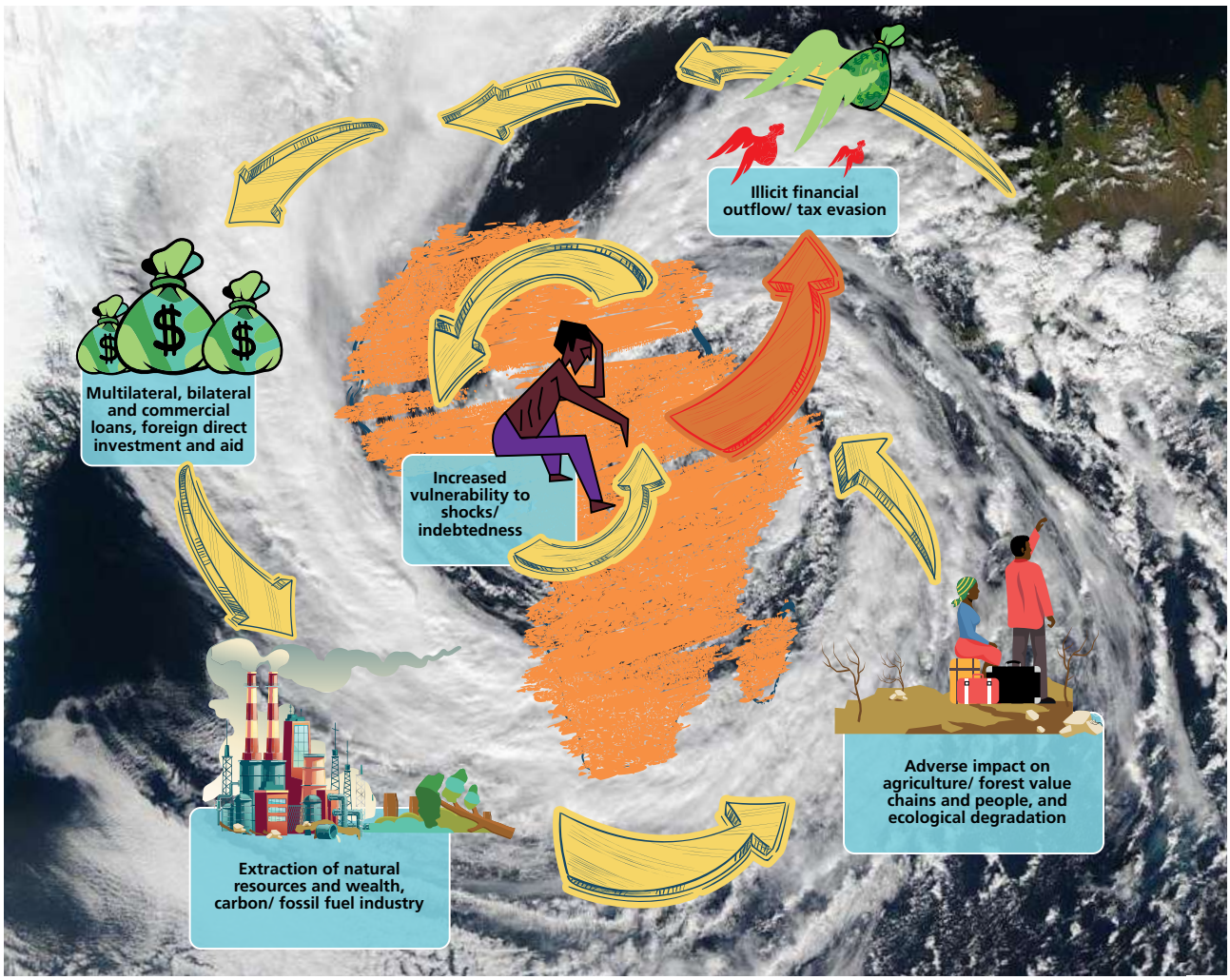


Figure 7: Vicious cycle of aid, investment and loans increasing risk to disaster

are exploited, with no long-term ecosystem restoration efforts (Foster and Holleman, 2014) being put in place. Ultimately, this locks countries of the South into never-ending cycles of debt. There is a need to question and resist this dominating economic logic. In Mozambique and Zimbabwe, we are witnessing a deepening of ecological debt owed by countries of the North to the people of African countries, where peasant farmers are increasingly shifted into cities and perpetual low wage labour.

The relationship between countries of the Global North and Global South is highly unequal, where international financial institutions promote private sector-led development, skewed toward capital flows to Northern countries, with few benefits locally beyond for the national elite. This is not simply a question of debt cancellation, but the way investment is made, in which sectors, and for whom to benefit. At the global level, cooperation is required to prohibit illicit financial flows and tax evasion of companies operating in the Global South. These rapaciously promote the extraction of natural resources, where the returns are more loans and aid.[6] The African Forum and Network on Debt and Development (AFRODAD) and Economic Justice Africa emphasise how domestic resource mobilisation is required to obtain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), yet the total amount of aid to Africa, coupled with foreign direct investment, is lower than the amount that is being lost through multinational capital flow, tax avoidance and evasion schemes.[7] Unless this is urgently addressed, countries like Mozambique and Zimbabwe will never be in a position to define and address their own development agendas, in consultation with their people, and based on local priorities, interests and needs.

6 Robert Ssuna, Economic Justice Africa, telephonic interview, October 2020.

7 Robert Ssuna, Economic Justice Africa, telephonic interview, October 2020.

Further research

Further research is required to gain a better picture of what has happened since the cyclones, taking into account the COVID-19 pandemic, and how farmers are coping with limited state support and the multiple shocks that have hit them leading up to and following the cyclones. Mutual aid and solidarity networks may provide an indication of where future investment in adaptive capacity building could focus.

It would be useful to conduct an audit of the multilateral, bilateral and commercial loans and their conditions, and pair this with the ecological debt owed to countries of the South, from destroying the atmospheric and ecological commons and driving further risks and disasters to countries on the front line of climate crisis. Coupled with this, it is necessary to ensure adequate funding is made available and accounted for, to reduce dependency on carbon, extractives, and false solutions to these crises such as under the guise of REDD+ and agricultural and forest value chains.

Research of the extent which commercial investments are being made into forest plantations and agricultural value chains in these countries are necessary to understand the extent to which lands are being progressively denuded, and the impact this is having on the economic, social, and ecological welfare of local rural and urban communities.

Unfortunately, in Mozambique, it is expected that the large-scale projects on the horizon will fail to lead to general improvement of lives; rather they will maintain power for the political elite, prevent transformative and meaningful change on the ground, and probably plunge the country into further unsustainable debt. The revision, restructuring and reorientation of public investment is an area of vital importance for the recovery and transformation of an economy (Castel-Branco and Massarongo, 2016). Freeing up resources to support a strategy of diversification, economic coordination and a broadening of the social base of development is urgently needed. This is particularly true to prevent indebted countries from being locked into debt traps in the context of a multiple crisis. But if the objective is limited to fiscal stabilisation, the risk is a worsening of foreign dependence and consolidation of the debt cycle. Diversification of economies shifts the focus from current practices of neoliberal adjustment and requires the renegotiation of debt and the end of financial speculation, to generate an economy of well-being for society as a whole.

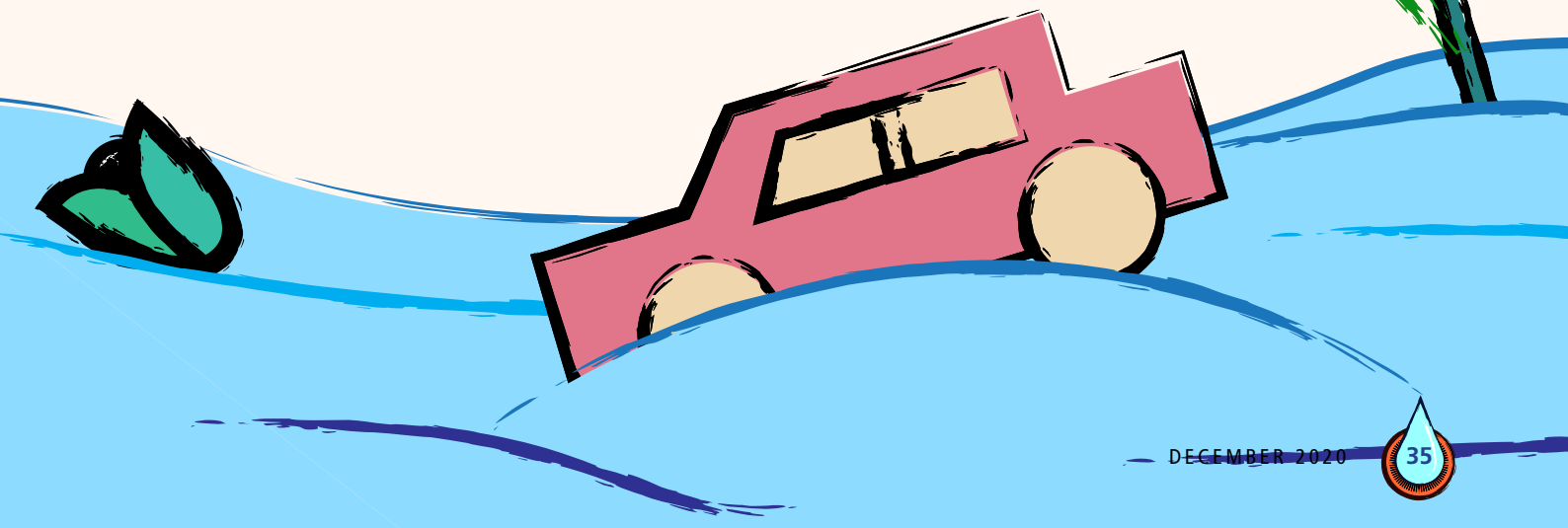
Conclusions and recommendations

The cases of cyclones Idai and Kenneth show that, with one shattering shock after another striking the African continent, it is urgent and imperative that we ensure adequately resourced local response efforts, and address the structural causes blocking socially and ecologically just adaptation and mitigation measures, while building systemic solutions to future shocks.

Growing calls for the restructuring of global debt and investment relations need further exploration. This could take the route of calling for a people's charter on the IMF and World Bank loans,[1] and calling for global cooperation to prohibit illicit financial flows that maintain African governments in a continuous under resourced state, and lock them into a carbon-based future. International aid and donor support limits development options, and therefore strengthening social movements at local levels may help to shift Africa away from development aid towards resourced governments with effective and democratic political leadership. The impact of increasing disasters and shocks on under-resourced countries needs to be urgently addressed, taking into account the ecological and climate debt of countries of the North.

The disastrous impacts of Idai and Kenneth reveal the complex interplay between fragile socio-ecosystems, political economies, geo-politics and neo-colonial realities, evident and perpetuated by the responses of the national and international community. The economic logic driving these interventions is highly flawed, and in fact deepens vulnerability at every angle. Adequate resourcing and restructuring are required to address these imbalances and check the interests of national elites and foreign companies, banks and countries.

1 Ruth Castel-Branco, Southern Centre for Inequality Studies, telephonic interview, October 2020.



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