

**STATEMENT BY**

**H.E. JOAQUIM ALBERTO CHISSANO**

**FORMER PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE**

**AT THE**

**LAUNCH OF THE EUROPEAN FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY  
THROUGH PARTNERSHIP  
(EFDP)**

**Brussels, 15 April 2008**

**His Excellency José Manuel Durão Barroso, President of the European Commission;**

**His Excellency Vaclav Havel, Former President of the Czech Republic;**

**Mr. Roel von Meijenfeldt, Executive Director of the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy;**

**Mr. Etienne Davignon, Former EU Commissioner;**

**Excellencies;**

**Distinguished Guests;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Let me start by expressing my gratitude for the invitation addressed to me by the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy to participate at the launching ceremony of the European Foundation for Democracy through Partnership (EFDP). I wish to congratulate all those who had the initiative of

establishing this institution that will certainly provide another platform for a partnership in pursuing democracy worldwide.

Indeed democracy is a well sought commodity worldwide. However, Africa's journey for democracy has gone through a complex route. Africa has gone from an exercise of traditional democracy to a phase in which the African peoples, at least in many African countries, have been subjected to a colonial dictatorship.

The endogenous process of development of African democracy was interrupted, together with a similar process of nation-building. This was done through the scramble of Africa as well as the policy of dividing to rule pursued by colonial powers. Therefore, the ability of African citizens to participate in the political, economic and social life of their countries was blocked.

After independence, instead of following their own path to democracy, African countries had to deal with models of democracy imposed by developed countries. This was in total disregard to the accumulated experiences based on the culture, values and perceptions of the African peoples and societies.

In this era of globalization, consultations and electoral processes as well as referenda in Africa, have become heavily dependent on financial, technical and technological assistance from some countries willing to impose an universal model of democracy without giving due regard to the necessary steps to achieving the highest stage of democracy practiced in developed countries. However, multiparty democracy is being pursued in Africa in very poor countries, which allows for the manipulation of electoral process by some donors with bad intentions.

It is within this context that Europe has been conducting its initiatives for the promotion and strengthening of democracy in Africa, through support to electoral processes, including their organization, review of electoral legislation and financing of electoral observer missions, funding of NGOs, trade unions and other civil society organizations, promotion and strengthening of human rights, as well as support to decentralization and promotion of political dialogue.

In promoting and strengthening democracy, Europe has resorted to collective and individual efforts. However the results of such actions have been mixed.

Collective involvement through mainly the European Union has only yielded modest results, with more emphasis on rhetoric related to stressing democratic principles rather than results. The reason for these results might have to do with the fact that EU programmes, as carefully negotiated and agreed among the 27 member states, are rigid, lacking flexibility and focus, thus having little room for negotiation with the recipient country to adapt them to local demands and realities. Therefore they become models, inadequate to the local needs.

On the other hand, bilateral programmes by individual EU countries for the promotion of democracy follow other principles and philosophies than those pursued by the EU. With room for negotiations to tailor them to local needs, these programmes are more flexible, concrete and focused, therefore being more effective in reaching out to communities and promoting democracy.

### **Excellencies;**

### **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

For developing countries to reach the highest stages of democratic processes practiced in developed countries, Europe must support a gradual approach that takes into account the culture, values and the development stage of the country.

For instance, How can one pursue multiparty democracy in a country where the illiteracy rate is about 60% and absolute poverty about 70%. How can one implement multiparty democracy in a country where the nation is not yet consolidated, with numerous tribes, ethnic groups and languages? In a country where socio-economic interests are different from region to region? In a country with considerable religious diversity? For multiparty democracy to succeed in such countries concerted efforts are needed for mobilization of huge financial resources.

Europe must support the creation, development and rooting of a culture of democracy within the African peoples and societies. This should be done together with support to development so that we can achieve economic democracy. It is necessary to develop among Africans a deep understanding of the distinction between their rights and obligations. The conditionalities that are attached to assistance to developing countries become absurd when all these questions are not answered. Europe must also work for the democratization of international relations.

Europe must understand that support to democracy must go together with support to development. That one should not be a conditionality for the other.

I thank you very much.