



# Congresso das Organizações da Sociedade Civil



**REPORT OF THE CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS CONGRESS  
– STRENGTHENING CAPACITIES AND STRATEGIES FOR A  
SUSTAINABLE CIVIC SPACE IN MOZAMBIQUE**



Hangout Hall  
B

ES  
ADEMOBAY

### MENTAL E HIGHLY MENSTRUAL

MENTAL E HIGHLY MENSTRUAL  
A woman's mental health is closely linked to her menstrual cycle. Understanding the connection between the two can help women manage their mental health more effectively. This infographic provides key information about the relationship between menstruation and mental health, including the impact of hormonal changes, the role of stress, and the importance of seeking support. It also offers practical tips for managing mental health during the menstrual cycle, such as maintaining a healthy diet, exercising regularly, and practicing self-care. The infographic is designed to be informative and easy to read, with clear headings and bullet points. It includes illustrations of a woman and a calendar to help illustrate the concepts. The overall tone is supportive and educational, aiming to empower women with knowledge about their own bodies and mental health.

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Initiative:



Pro-Cívico & Direitos Humanos



JUNTOS!

Financed by:



SUOMI FINLAND



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IMD



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cesc.



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## 1. THE CONGRESS ORGANISERS

The **Civil Society Support Mechanism Foundation (MASC Foundation)** is a non-profit platform created in 2007 that mobilises resources, provides funding and technical assistance to formal and informal social movements at the grassroots level, with the aim of strengthening good governance and promoting equitable socio-economic development in Mozambique. We act as:

- **Grantmaker:** we finance formal and informal movements with limited access to resources that promote local governance and the development of the most vulnerable communities.
- **Capacity buildings:** we offer training in management, governance and resource mobilisation. We strengthen the autonomy of community organisations and groups, with a focus on women and young people.
- **Implementer:** we develop community initiatives focused on local development, conflict prevention and good governance. We combine civic education, inclusion and social innovation.
- **Support to the private sector:** we establish partnerships with companies to improve the quality of life in disadvantaged communities. We stimulate local economies and restore livelihoods.
- **Broker:** We facilitate dialogue between the state, civil society, the private sector and citizens. We produce analyses and promote partnerships, advocacy and communication for fair governance.

The **Civil Society Learning and Training Centre (CESC)** is a Mozambican non-governmental organisation that works to promote active citizenship, good governance and social justice. Created in 2009, the CESC works to strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations and communities to exercise their rights, influence public policy and participate actively in development processes. Its approach is based on promoting participatory governance, social monitoring, transparency and strengthening dialogue between citizens and public institutions. The CESC believes that citizen participation is essential for sustainable and inclusive development, and therefore develops training, research, advocacy, and community mobilisation programmes in several provinces of Mozambique.

The **Centre for Democracy and Development (CDD)** is a Mozambican civil society organisation launched in 2013 and based in Maputo.. The CDD works to promote participatory democracy, transparency, responsible governance and respect for human rights, with the aim of contributing to a more just, equitable and democratic society. The organisation carries out research, advocacy, public policy monitoring and civic training, acting as a critical and independent voice in the public sphere. The CDD is also recognised for its active intervention in electoral processes, promoting integrity, justice and informed citizen participation.

The **Institute for Multiparty Democracy (IMD)** is a civil society organisation that works to strengthen the democratic system by supporting the institutional development of political parties, assisting in the reform of democratic institutions, and facilitating multiparty dialogue sessions and dialogue between political and social actors. The IMD has been operating in Mozambique since 2001, initially as the Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), and has been registered as a national organisation, since 2016. During this period, the IMD has accumulated experience working with political actors, taking into account the following thematic components: During this period, the IMD has accumulated experience working with political actors, focusing on the following thematic areas: elections, political participation of women and young people, peace and reconciliation, and the extractive industry. Since 2016, the IMD has been implementing its strategic plan, which is essentially based on four pillars:

supporting and influencing the political system, strengthening the capacities of political actors, influencing the political culture to ensure greater dialogue between actors, and gender and diversity (political participation of women and young people).

Together, a civil society learning and knowledge platform that currently brings together 27 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), supported by the **Aga Khan Foundation (AKF)** and the La Caixa Foundation. The AKF, an international development organisation, is an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) focused on improving the quality of life in vulnerable regions around the world. The foundation works in a variety of areas, including education, health, culture, rural and urban development, and historical heritage preservation. The organisation implements development projects and programmes in partnership with governments, non-governmental organisations and local communities, with the aim of promoting social inclusion, strengthening community capacity and encouraging sustainable development. The La Caixa Foundation carries out philanthropic work with a view to building a fairer society with more opportunities for all. Its origins date back to the former “Caja de Pensiones para la Vejez” (Pension Fund for the Elderly), founded in Barcelona in 1904. Its initiatives range from support for pensions for the elderly (its origins) to social programmes, education, promotion of livelihoods and research in various areas, thus contributing to innovation and progress in various areas of development.

## 2. BACKGROUND

In Mozambique, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) play a fundamental role in promoting good governance, providing complementary social services, defending human rights and mobilising citizens for civic and political participation. Acting as a bridge between communities and the State, the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) contribute to strengthening democracy, social justice and inclusion.

Despite its relevance, the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) faces numerous structural challenges, including institutional weaknesses such as deficiencies in internal governance, limitations in human resource qualifications, difficulty in mobilising its own resources, and excessive dependence on external funding.

Poor coordination with communities, limited social legitimacy and the absence of a common agenda have compromised the effectiveness and sustainability of their interventions. In addition, the external environment has become more complex, with restrictions on civic space, legal loopholes, such as the still inconclusive revision of the Freedom of Association Act (Act No. 8/911 of 18 July), and a progressive reduction in international financial support.

Looking ahead, the context for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Mozambique is expected to become even more challenging due to the progressive reduction in international funding, especially with regard to long-term institutional support. This reality has put pressure on organisations to operate with increasingly limited budgets, compromising their ability to retain qualified human resources, invest in effective management systems and ensure the continuity of their programmes.

This scenario particularly affects the Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), which, despite their social capital and local integration, lack the institutional capacities and minimum resources to act as relevant social partners.

At the same time, new civil society actors are emerging with alternative forms of organisation, such as spontaneous movements, thematic networks and digital citizen initiatives, revealing the dynamism and need for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to adapt to new social and technological dynamics.

In this context, there is an urgent need to create a regular space for dialogue, mutual learning and the development of common strategies linked to strengthening the capacities of Civil

Society Organisations (CSOs). It is within this framework that, under the PROCIVICO<sup>1</sup> and Human Rights and JUNTOS programmes<sup>2</sup>, the initiative to bring Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) together in an event called the Civil Society Organisations Congress was born, with the aim of reflecting on the development of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) capacities, exploring the main trends, dynamics, challenges and opportunities that impact their performance at the central and local levels. It also aims to build a space for regular debate and reflection, analysis, and the production of ideas and proposals for versatile solutions that can contribute to the strengthening of civil society in Mozambique.

Over two days, the event brought together national and local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), thematic networks, Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), donors, partners, government, parliamentarians, the private sector, academics and the social media, aimed to strengthen the role of civil society in Mozambique by promoting a space for dialogue and reflection on the performance and capacity building of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) within a complex context. The objective is to promote more effective and sustainable action, with the presentation of four thematic panels, namely:

- **Panel 1:** Civil Society and Social and Economic Transformations: Challenges, Trends and Opportunities in the Mozambican Context;

<sup>1</sup> The PROCIVICO and Human Rights is a programme implemented by IMD, MASC, CESC and CDD and funded by the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs through its Embassy in Mozambique. This programme aims to contribute to promoting greater visibility, participation and engagement of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and citizens in the decision-making process at different levels of governance, making them influential actors in promoting inclusive governance that is sensitive to human rights issues and respects the needs of marginalised groups.

<sup>2</sup> Juntos! is a civil society learning and knowledge platform that currently brings together 27 Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), supported by the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) and the La Caixa Foundation. The AKF, an international development organisation, is an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) focused on improving the quality of life in vulnerable regions around the world. The foundation works in a variety of areas, including education, health, culture, rural and urban development, and historical heritage preservation. The organisation implements development projects and programmes in partnership with governments, non-governmental organisations and local communities, with the aim of promoting social inclusion, strengthening community capacity and encouraging sustainable development. The La Caixa Foundation carries out philanthropic work with a view to building a fairer society with more opportunities for all. Its origins date back to the former “Caja de Pensiones para la Vejez” (Pension Fund for the Elderly), founded in Barcelona in 1904. Its initiatives range from support for pensions for the elderly (its origins) to social programmes, education, promotion of livelihoods and research in various areas, thus contributing to innovation and progress in various areas of development.

- **Panel 2:** Civil Society and Sustainable Development: Participation, Priorities and Financing;
- **Panel 3:** Capacities of Civil Society Organisations in Mozambique: Impact and Sustainability in a Context of Transformation;
- **Panel 4:** The Emergence of New Actors in the Context of Citizenship and Local Development in Mozambique.

### 3. OBJECTIVES OF THE CONGRESS

#### 3.1 GENERAL OBJECTIVES

- Strengthening of the role of civil society in Mozambique by promoting a regular space for dialogue and reflection on the performance and capacity building of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) within a complex context, with a view to promoting more effective and sustainable action.

#### 3.2 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

- Analysing critically the current context of global and national social, economic and technological transformations, identifying trends, dynamics, challenges and opportunities that impact the performance of civil society at the central and local levels.
- Strengthening of the capacities of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) by identifying practical and sustainable strategies to increase their effectiveness in promoting democratic participation, defending human rights and ensuring the sustainability of their interventions;
- Exploring the role of new emerging actors in civil society, assessing their influence on the exercise of citizenship, the promotion of social inclusion and the defence of the rights of the Mozambican population;
- Encouraging strategic collaborations between Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and other actors with a view to building a common agenda for the defence of civic space and the promotion of human rights, democracy and social justice;

- Identifying good practices and innovative experiences of institutional sustainability of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).
- Producing practical recommendations to strengthen the organisational capacity, financing and strategic advocacy of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

#### 4. METHODOLOGY

In order to ensure broad participation and inclusion of various civil society actors, the Congress adopted a hybrid format, with in-person sessions and online streaming, an approach that broadened the reach of the event, allowing participants from different regions of the country and the diaspora to interact actively.

The thematic panels were organised around predefined topics considered priorities for strengthening civil society in Mozambique. Each panel featured several speakers, including representatives of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), provincial Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) platforms, Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), experts, researchers and academics.

After the initial presentations, time was set aside for interaction with the audience, allowing questions, comments and experience sharing by participants, both in person and online.

At the end of each panel, participants presented suggestions and recommendations for future conferences, strengthening the ongoing and evolving nature of the initiative.

#### 5. EXPECTED RESULTS

- Good practices and lessons learned were mapped, with an emphasis on Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) resilience experiences in adverse contexts, particularly in the areas of alternative financing, internal governance and institutional sustainability.
- The foundations for the construction of a National Agenda for Civil Society Capacity Development, incorporating strategic priorities, mechanisms for inter-institutional collaboration and proposals to respond to the challenges identified at the local and national levels were established.
- A matrix of commitments and next steps was produced, outlining concrete actions for organisational strengthening, financial sustainability and coordinated action by Mozambican civil society.
- Policy and operational recommendations were systematised, focusing on improving the legal and institutional environment for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).



## 6. PROGRAMME

TIMETABLE	ACTIVITY	People responsible
08:30 – 09:00	Arrival and registration of participants	Protocol
Opening session		
09:00 – 09:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Context and objectives of the conference – ProCívicos</li> </ul>	Sérgio Muchanga, Vice-President of the IMD
09:10 – 09:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intervention by the provincial platforms</li> </ul>	Fernando Augusto – Maputo Platform
09:30 – 09:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Official opening speech of the event</li> </ul>	Mr. Justino Tonela (Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs)
09:40 – 10:30	Family Photo & Coffee & Visit to the Exhibition	Mr. Osman Cossing, Programme Coordinator & Master of Ceremonies
<b>PANEL 1: Civil Society and Social and Economic Transformations: Trends, Challenges and Opportunities in the Mozambican Context Key Notes – Mr. Alfredo Mazive. Expert</b>		
<p>This panel aims to explore the main dynamics shaping civil society action in Mozambique, considering internal and external social, political and economic transformations. It will discuss how Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) can navigate emerging challenges and opportunities, strengthen their relevance and impact, and create effective synergies with other sectors (government, private sector, international NGOs) to promote sustainable development, democracy and the promotion of human rights.</p>		
10:30 – 10:45	<p><b>1.1. Current trends:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How has civil society evolved in the face of political, social and economic transformations, both external (global and regional) and internal (within the country)?</li> <li>What are the main trends observed in the activities of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Mozambique in recent years?</li> <li>How do social and economic dynamics influence the performance and impact of civil society in Mozambique?</li> <li>How is civic space and the exercise of citizenship addressed by government policies in Mozambique?</li> <li>What is the social and political environment in which Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) operate at the central and local levels?</li> </ul>	Mr. Alfredo Mazive – Consulting
10:45 – 11:00	<p><b>1.2. Challenges and constraints:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the main challenges faced by civil society in the context of the country's social and economic dynamics?</li> <li>What are the main barriers limiting its performance and sustainability?</li> </ul>	Mrs. Paula Monjane – Programme Director, CESC
11:00 – 11:15	<p><b>1.3. Emerging opportunities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What opportunities can civil society seize in the context of its activities, taking into account trends and challenges?</li> <li>What opportunities can civil society seize in the context of its work, taking into account trends and challenges?</li> </ul>	Mr. Sérgio Zimba – Executive Director of AJOACO (Inhambane)

11:15 – 11:30	<p>1.4. Interaction with economic and government sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can more effective synergies be created between civil society, international NGOs, cooperation and development agencies, the private sector and government for sustainable development?</li> <li>• How can civil society adapt to changes in social and economic dynamics to remain relevant and effective?</li> </ul>	Mr. João Feijó – Principal Researcher at the Rural Environment Observatory (OMR)
11:30 – 12:30	Interactive Debate – Discussion on the issues raised in Panel 1	Moderator: Mr. Lazaro Mabunda – Researcher
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch and Visit to the Exhibition	All
<p><b>PANEL 2: Strengthening Civil Society: Priorities and Funding Opportunities</b></p> <p>This panel aims to reflect on the current and future role of civil society in defining and implementing sustainable development priorities in Mozambique. It will also address challenges and opportunities in accessing financing, strengthening participation in decision-making spaces, and strategies to maximise the impact of its interventions. The panel will feature presentations by representatives of Provincial Civil Society Platforms, who will share their perceptions and experiences on: (i) Opportunities, Challenges and Strategies for Strengthening Civil Society Participation in Development Processes; (ii) How to Maximise the Impact of Civil Society Platform Interventions; and (iii) Pathways towards more coordinated, cohesive and impactful action.</p>		
13:30 – 13:45	<p><b>1.1. The Role of Civil Society in Defining Development Priorities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What has been the space for participation and the role of Mozambican civil society in the formulation of sustainable development policies and priorities?</li> <li>• How can we ensure that the priorities defined (by cooperation and development agencies, the government, international NGOs and civil society) are aligned with the real needs of communities?</li> <li>• What mechanisms can be improved to strengthen the participation of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in decision-making spaces?</li> <li>• How can greater synergy be created between civil society, the private sector and the government in defining priorities, and between these and cooperation and development agencies?</li> </ul>	Mr. José Jaime Macuane – Professor
13:45 – 14:00	<p><b>2.2. Opportunities and Challenges in Fundraising</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the main sources of funding available to civil society in Mozambique?</li> <li>• How can Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) improve access to funding from the government and international partners?</li> <li>• What are the biggest challenges faced by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in fundraising and how can they be overcome?</li> <li>• How can funding sources be diversified to ensure the sustainability of civil society initiatives?</li> </ul>	Mr. Carlos Fumo – Consultant and Executive Director of IPERMO

14:00 – 14:15	<b>2.3. Strategies to Strengthen Civil Society Participation in Development Processes</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What strategies can be implemented to strengthen the voice and influence of civil society in spaces for dialogue and public policy formulation?</li> <li>• How can coordination and collaboration between different civil society organisations be improved to strengthen their representativeness?</li> <li>• How can greater transparency and accountability be ensured in the financing and implementation of civil society actions?</li> <li>• What role can technology and innovation play in expanding the impact and visibility of civil society actions?</li> </ul>	Mr. Suaré Cassamá Baldé (Guinea-Bissau) – Principal Researcher at National Institute for Studies and Research INEP  Mr. Munir Ahmad – Head of Global Innovation at AKF
14:15 – 14:30	<b>2.4. Maximising the Impact of Civil Society Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can the impact of civil society initiatives be measured and how can we ensure that they truly benefit communities?</li> <li>• What good practices have already been identified in Mozambique or other similar contexts that can be replicated?</li> <li>• How can civil society participation be made more inclusive, ensuring the representation of vulnerable groups (women, young people, rural communities, among others)?</li> <li>• How can the institutional capacity of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) be strengthened so that they can better manage resources and expand their impact?</li> </ul>	Mrs. Fátima Mimbire – FMO
14:30 – 15:30	<b>Interactive Debate</b> – Discussion on the issues raised in Panel 2	Moderator: Mr. Jeremias Langa All
15:30 – 15:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of the Day – Main points, recommendations and lessons learned</li> </ul>	Organisers
15:40 – 16:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questions for the Next Day &amp; Evaluation of the Day</li> </ul>	Organisers

## Second day

TIMETABLE	ACTIVITY	People responsible
08:30 – 09:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrival and registration of participants</li> </ul>	Protocol
09:00 – 09:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of Day 1</li> </ul>	Organisers
<b>PANEL 3: Civil Society Organisations (CSOS) capacities: Impact and Sustainability in a Context of Transformation</b> This panel proposes a reflection on how Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) can strengthen their technical and organisational capacities to increase their social impact, ensure greater sustainability and respond strategically to the challenges of a changing context. The debate will also address the role of legislation, digitalisation and community mobilisation as levers to increase the sector's influence and resilience.		

09:10 – 09:25	<p><b>1.1. Capacity and Effectiveness of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) strengthen their capacities to act more effectively in public policy formulation and rights advocacy?</li> <li>• What capacity gaps limit the effectiveness of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in Mozambique and how can they be overcome?</li> <li>• How can Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) improve their monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to demonstrate impact and strengthen their credibility?</li> </ul>	Mrs. Lina Inglês – Aga Khan Foundation
09:25 – 09:40	<p><b>1.2. Sustainability of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in a Context of Transformation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) Sustainability in a Context of Transformation. How can Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) diversify their funding sources to reduce dependence on international donors?</li> <li>• What strategies can be adopted to ensure the continuity of Civil Society Organisations (CSO) actions in the face of economic crises and political instability?</li> <li>• How can Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) governance and transparency be strengthened to increase the confidence of funders and communities?</li> </ul>	Mr. Hermenegildo Mulhovo – Executive Director of IMD
09:40 – 09:55	<p><b>3.3. Innovation and Adaptation of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in the Face of New Challenges</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) innovate in their approaches to respond to emerging challenges such as conflict and climate change?</li> <li>• How can strategic partnerships between Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the private sector and academia be promoted to expand their capacity to respond to social and economic transformations?</li> <li>• What is the role of technology and digitalisation in modernising and expanding the impact of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)?</li> </ul>	Mr. Rajabo Chimalawoonga Professor (Niassa) Mr. César Moreira – Global Consultant, Digital Transformation at AKF
09:55 – 10:10	<p><b>3.4. Community Mobilisation and Citizen Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How can Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) better engage communities to ensure that their actions are relevant and sustainable?</li> <li>• What strategies can strengthen citizen participation in decision-making and public policy formulation?</li> <li>• How can we ensure that marginalised groups (women, young people, people with disabilities, rural communities) are included and represented in civil society initiatives?</li> </ul>	Mr. Adriano Nuvunga – Executive Director CDD
10:10 – 11:10	<p><b>Interactive Debate</b> – Discussion on the issues raised in Panel 3</p>	Moderator: Mr. Ernesto Nhanale All

#### PANEL 4: Emergence of New Actors: Citizenship and Local Development

In recent years, Mozambique has seen the emergence of new social actors, such as Community-Based Organisations (CBOs), informal groups, young activists, traditional leaders and local civic networks, which play an increasingly important role in promoting citizenship, social inclusion and local development. These actors, often operating outside traditional structures, are positively influencing the dynamics of participation, mobilisation and accountability at the community level. This panel aims to reflect on how these actors are shaping new forms of civic engagement, collaborating with formal institutions and addressing the challenges of legitimacy, sustainability and access to resources in complex and changing contexts.

11:10 – 11:20	<p><b>1.1. Identification and Recognition of New Actors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Who are the new actors of active citizenship emerging in Mozambican communities?</li> <li>How have formal and informal Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) positioned themselves as relevant actors in local development?</li> </ul>	Mr. David Fardo – President of the Youth Parliament.
11:20 – 11:30	<p><b>4.2. Legitimacy, Representativeness and Sustainability</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can we ensure that informal Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) are recognised as legitimate and representative by local governments and development partners? How can we ensure their collaboration with formal community bodies in the local governance structure?</li> <li>What challenges do Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) face in remaining active and sustainable, especially those operating outside formal structures?</li> </ul>	Mr. Emmerson Ubisse – CCM Delegate (Pemba)
11:30 – 11:40	<p><b>4.3. Coordination and Collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How have Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) contributed to coordination and articulation between different local actors (local authorities, NGOs, private sector)?</li> <li>What models of articulation have worked best to integrate the efforts of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) with local, district and municipal development plans? Examples that work and/or could work better in the process of developing the Economic and Social Plan and State Budget (PESOE).</li> </ul>	Mr. Agnaldo Rufino – Nampula Provincial Forum
11:40 – 11:50	<p><b>4.4. Civic Innovation and Citizen Participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How are these new forms of community organisation innovating in citizen mobilisation and the defence of rights?</li> <li>How can the participation of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) in formal decision-making spaces and local public policies be strengthened?</li> </ul>	Mr. Wilker Dias – Decide Platform (Beira)
11:50 – 12:00	<p><b>4.5. Challenges and Opportunities for Strengthening</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What are the main obstacles faced by Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) in accessing technical and financial resources?</li> <li>What opportunities exist for training, support networks and financing that can boost the work of these organisations at the local level?</li> </ul>	Estêvão Neves – Executive Director of PRODEA Zambézia
12:00 – 12:10	<p><b>4.6. The role of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) in crisis contexts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How have Community Based-Organisations (CBOs) responded to crises such as displacement, conflict, food insecurity or climate change?</li> <li>What lessons can be learned from their community-based and resilient approaches?</li> </ul>	Mr. Aly Caetano – Project Coordinator, Fundação Azul

12:20 – 12:30	<b>4.7. Role of formal Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in strengthening and resilience</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How can we support informal Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to strengthen their effectiveness and development of the ecosystem and strengthen community resilience and sustainability?</li> </ul>	Community Based-Organisations (CBOs) – Development and Opportunity Forums (VDOs) of Cabo Delgado Province in the Districts of Montepuez and Chiúre
12:30 – 13:20	<b>Interactive Debate</b> – Discussion on the issues raised in Panel 4	Moderator: André Manhice – Programme Manager, CESC All
13:20 – 14:20	Lunch	
14:20 – 14:45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consolidation Session: General Summary of the Congress and Presentation of Strategic Recommendations</li> </ul>	Organisers
14:45 – 15:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Next Steps: Proposals for Collective Action and Strengthening Coordination between Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and other Actors.</li> </ul>	Organisers
<b>Closing Session</b>		
15:30 – 16:00	Official Closing and Acknowledgements.	Fidélia Chemane – Executive Director, CESC





## 7. SOLEMN OPENING SESSION OF THE CONGRESS

The first part of the first day of the event was dedicated to the formal opening of the Congress, marked by speeches from the organisers, provincial platforms and the Government.



## **SÉRGIO MUCHANGA**

*First Vice-President of the IMD*

“Good morning, everyone and welcome to this historic event.

Welcome to this Congress of Civil Society Organisations, a joint initiative of the PROCÍVICO and Human Rights programmes implemented by the IMD, MASC Foundation, CESC and CDD, and the Juntos Platform, supported by the Aga Khan Foundation and La Caixa Foundation. This initiative also benefits from the valuable partnership of civil society platforms.

On behalf of the organisers, as already mentioned, we would like to acknowledge and highlight the presence of His Excellency the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs, Mr. Justino Ernesto Tonela, distinguished representatives of the Government, esteemed representatives of civil society organisations, provincial platforms and thematic civil society networks, distinguished Members of the Parliament, distinguished representatives of political parties, cooperation partners, members of academia, the private sector, the press and other guests.

Thank you very much for your availability. It is a great honour for us to have you here. This Congress, held under the theme “Strengthening Civil Society to Ensure

Inclusive and Transformative Citizen Participation”, is a true platform for dialogue and reflection on the role of Mozambican civil society in the current political, economic and social context, which is undergoing constant change.

This initiative is a continuation of the National Forum for Dialogue between the Government and Civil Society held last year. Let us recall that one of the main recommendations made at that time was the regular holding of forums for dialogue between civil society organisations and between these organisations and the Government.

The presence of Government representatives at this forum is therefore not only welcome, but also a clear sign of openness and commitment to dialogue. With this initiative, we want to promote a permanent space for critical analysis of our progress and challenges, as well as to identify concrete ways to strengthen our capacities, our sustainability and our relevance.

We must have the courage to reflect openly and honestly on our weaknesses and to draw up a strategic vision capable of transforming each obstacle into an opportunity. As civil society, it is time to strengthen our collective and collaborative work. We are therefore very honoured by your presence in this room full of partners.

**“ With this initiative, we want to promote a permanent space for critical analysis of our progress and challenges.**

Despite the achievements, we recognise that civil society organisations in Mozambique continue to face several challenges, such as institutional weaknesses, heavy dependence on external funding, weak community coordination, legal limitations and, unfortunately, restrictions on civic space. Added to this is the situation of insecurity in some regions of the country, such as Cabo Delgado, which also conditions our action. However, despite these challenges, we remain steadfast in our commitment, our relevance and our resilience.

We have witnessed the emergence of new forms of civil society organisation, new youth movements and new platforms which, together, share the common goal of ensuring that no citizen is left without a voice, without rights and without opportunities. We want to continue to participate actively in the stabilisation and development of our country. We want our voices to be effectively heard in the decision-making processes that shape the present and future of Mozambique.

We also want to participate actively in spaces for political dialogue for national stabilisation and we want to contribute with concrete proposals and solutions for development in areas such as health, education, governance, justice and the environment, among others. This Congress is taking place in a critical context, following the elections that highlighted the growing distance between state institutions and citizens.

This reality reinforces the urgency of permanent spaces for interaction, such as this one. In this context, we would like to affirm that we are in favour of a legal,

transparent and predictable environment that is conducive to freedom of association and citizen participation. Any legislative initiative in this regard must be built in dialogue and coordination with citizens. This is just one example of the type of advocacy we intend to continue to develop. Today and tomorrow, we will have the opportunity to discuss in depth the challenges and paths towards a more sustainable, influential and community-oriented civil society.

We want this Congress to become a continuous and regular space for interaction, learning and consultation between civil society actors at the national, provincial and local levels. We hope that all those present will contribute their reflections and enrich the scheduled debates.

In conclusion, allow me to express my special thanks to the entities that made this Congress possible. We thank the Embassy of Finland, the Aga Khan Foundation and the La Caixa Foundation, whose support has been instrumental not only for this event but also for other initiatives aimed at strengthening Mozambican civil society.

We also reiterate our appreciation to the partner organisations of this initiative: the IMD, the MASC Foundation, the CESC and the CDD, as well as the Aga Khan Foundation for their collective work in making this event a reality. Thank you very much to everyone, and I hope we have an inspiring, active and educational Congress”.





## **FERNANDO AUGUSTO**

*President of the Maputo Provincial Forum*

“Thank you very much. Good morning, everyone.

Allow us, first of all, to express, on behalf of the Mozambique NGO Forum, our deep satisfaction at being part of this unique and noble event, which brings together civil society organisations in Mozambique.

We would also like to extend a special greeting to His Excellency, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs, for his remarkable commitment to promoting dialogue with all the living forces of society, in particular civil society, always with a view to peace, stability and national progress.

Our greetings also extend to the organisations that mentored this initiative, their partners, and the participants who have come from different provinces of the country.

We also welcome the presence of representatives of the Provincial NGO Forums, namely from Niassa, Cabo Delgado, Nampula, Manica, Sofala, Inhambane and Gaza, whose contribution is crucial to the strengthening of civil society in our country.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

in Mozambique, civil society organisations play an essential role in providing complementary services to citizens, positively influencing the formulation and implementation of public policies, promoting good governance and social development, and defending and promoting the fundamental rights of citizens.

At the same time, they have been key players in civic mobilisation and citizen participation in the country’s public, social and political life.



However, despite this undeniable role and the efforts made, various studies and research point to persistent weaknesses in civil society organisations in Mozambique.

Among the main challenges are structural fragility, dependence on external funding, limited institutional capacity and difficulties in implementing their activities in a sustainable manner.

One example is the article entitled **Civil Society and Civic Space in Mozambique: Fragilities and Challenges**, which discusses in detail the dynamics and difficulties faced. Another relevant study is **The Civil Society in Mozambique**, which explores new approaches to understanding the sector and the challenges it faces.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

distinguished guests, despite the constraints that directly affect the development and impact of civil society organisations, it is increasingly imperative to invest in the capacity building and strengthening of these organisations at various levels, given the importance of their role in the social, political and economic progress of our country.

It was in this context that this initiative was born to bring together civil society organisations in a unique space for debate, reflection, analysis and the production of ideas and proposals for innovative solutions that can contribute to strengthening the sector.

We are confident that, over the course of this two-day Congress, we will:

- Analyse the current context of social and economic transformations, both globally and nationally;
- Explore the main trends, dynamics, challenges and opportunities that impact civil society action;
- Identify practical and effective strategies to strengthen democratic participation, the defence of human rights and the sustainability of interventions;
- Explore the role of new emerging actors in civil society, assessing their influence in promoting active citizenship, social inclusion and the defence of human rights.

Among these new actors, we highlight the work of the National Forum of NGOs in Mozambique, as a platform for promoting synergies and coordination between the various civil society organisations in the country.

We conclude by reiterating our commitment to continue working for a stronger, more coordinated, more sustainable and more relevant civil society for the promotion of democracy, human rights and development in Mozambique.

Thank you very much”.



## JUSTINO TONELA

*Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Justice, Constitutional and Religious Affairs*

“Mozambican civil society has been an indispensable partner in promoting human rights, defending the rule of law and strengthening our democracy. Your tireless work in communities, your critical and proactive voice and your commitment to social justice are essential pillars for the development of our country.

In Mozambique, civil society has been the voice of those who are often not heard, complementing the work of the State and supporting the population, especially in remote areas of our country.

We therefore reaffirm our commitment, as a government, to promoting an environment conducive to the flourishing of civil society, an environment where there is freedom of expression, transparency, and where accountability and mutual respect are fundamental pillars. We know that dialogue does not replace action, but precedes it.

That is why meetings such as this are essential for us to listen with humility, reflect seriously and act responsibly.

We would like to highlight three fundamental commitments of our Government in this regard. First, to strengthen the mechanisms for permanent dialogue with civil society,

ensuring that your voices effectively influence public policy.

Second, to facilitate access to information and funding, while always respecting your autonomy and institutional independence. And finally, third, to promote citizen participation in the planning, implementation and monitoring of public policies, with a special focus on local communities and historically vulnerable groups.

Ladies and Gentlemen, the future we want, which is fairer, more inclusive and sustainable, requires us to walk together.

The State, the private sector and civil society are not competitors, but partners with distinct and complementary responsibilities. Only through collaboration can we respond effectively to the great challenges of our time.

On this occasion, I would like to thank the civil society organisations and guests for their presence and commitment to a better future for our country.

May this Congress be productive, rich in ideas and result in concrete commitments and renewed paths for cooperation. Thank you very much”.



## 8. PRESENTATION OF THE PANELS

After the formal opening of the Congress, four panels were presented on the first day in the following order:



**PANEL 1: CIVIL SOCIETY AND SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS: CHALLENGES, TRENDS AND OPPORTUNITIES IN THE MOZAMBIKAN CONTEXT**

The purpose of this panel was to explore the main dynamics shaping civil society's performance in Mozambique, considering social, political and economic transformations (internal and external).

The panel discussed how CSOs can navigate emerging challenges and opportunities; how to strengthen their relevance and impact; and how to create effective synergies with other sectors (government, private sector and international NGOs) to promote sustainable development, democracy and the promotion of human rights.

The panel featured four speakers, who focused on *Current Trends; Challenges and Constraints; Emerging Opportunities; and Interaction with Economic and Social Sectors.*



## I) CURRENT TRENDS

Mr. Alfredo Mazive

“Many NGOs do not know where they come from, where they are, or where they want to go. They are only available to provide services that they sometimes do not know how to provide”.

Mr. Alfredo Mazive began by giving a chronological overview of the state of Mozambican civil society, noting that from 1990 to 2025, it experienced a regression, as the spaces previously occupied by CSOs ceased to exist and political priorities were reversed, leading to an increase in poverty, inequalities in access to health and education, with a dysfunctional and weakened civil society due to reduced room for manoeuvre, limiting its action to the national political scene as influencers of public policy.

With regard to the sustainability of CSOs, he noted that external dependence on financial resources has transformed the third sector from an active society to a beggar.

The social dynamics experienced in the country, such as the events that took place

after the October 2024 elections, showed that the community no longer trusts its representatives, rendering CSOs irrelevant. During this period, communities acted alone in communicating with the executive in order to safeguard their interests.

Regarding the extractive industry, Mr. Alfredo Mazive considers that the income from the exploitation of natural resources deserves reflection, to avoid that the amount channelled to communities is confused with what should be the responsibility of the State, such as the construction of schools and hospitals.

Strengthening the institutional capacity of CSOs was considered essential to ensuring the relevance of these institutions in their area of activity, *as many NGOs do not know where they come from, where they are and where they want to go. They are only available to provide services that they sometimes do not understand.*



Even recognising these barriers, CSOs have demonstrated and continue to demonstrate resilience in the face of political repression and some digital activism.



## II) CHALLENGES AND CONSTRAINTS

*Mrs. Paula Monjane*

Mrs. Paula Monjane's intervention focused on the political and legal dimension and the issue of funding for CSOs, against the backdrop of the challenges and constraints faced by CSOs.

Her explanation of the challenges began with a historical overview of the evolution of legal instruments related to associative movement, highlighting the characteristics of each moment.

In her view, the lack of regulatory clarity, combined with excessive bureaucracy, limits the active participation of citizens in the definition of public policies.

Threats, kidnappings, murders of journalists and manipulation of public opinion are barriers that limit the action of CSOs in the Mozambican legal system. In addition to these elements, the speaker pointed to the information provided to the government by the FATF on combating money laundering and terrorist financing as realities that limit the mobilisation of financial resources by CSOs, as a major obstacle to their sustainability.

## III) EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

*Mr. Sérgio Zimba*

Mr. Sérgio Zimba, Programme Director at AJOACO, pointed to emerging opportunities in the context of rapid societal change, highlighting the need to consider locally based organisations; digitalisation and access to the internet; government recognition of CSOs; and the strengthening of South-South cooperation. External financial dependence, weak institutional capacity, marked social inequalities, restriction of civic space by the executive, and unequal access to information are, in Mr. Sérgio Zimba's view, some of the challenges faced by CSOs, which require maximising opportunities arising from these scenarios.

In terms of opportunities, CSOs should use new information and communication technologies for mobilisation, civic education and accountability; establish partnerships as a way to diversify sources of income; connect communities to government; and lead local adaptation initiatives, such as reforestation, resilient agriculture and community-based natural resource management.

## IV) INTERACTION WITH ECONOMIC AND GOVERNMENT SECTORS

*João Feijó*

The lead researcher at the Rural Observatory, Mr. João Feijó, one of the speakers on the first panel, highlighted that in order to create synergies between CSOs and other relevant sectors, as guarantors of sustainable development, CSOs need to focus more on beneficiaries, diversify their sources of funding and act as a pressure group on the private sector to ensure that it fulfils its tax obligations.

In his speech, Mr. João Feijó highlighted the role of CSOs, which are a driving force in political pressure for reforms in the decentralisation process, public services, the tax system, and the revision of the Land Law and the Mining Law.

During the interaction with the audience, several questions were posed to the panellists, which revolved around:

- the restriction of civic space;
- the social responsibility of companies that almost replace the obligations of the State when they build schools, roads and hospitals, instead of promoting the empowerment of communities living in areas where such companies operate;
- the need to decentralise funds allocated to CBOs;
- the need to create a single national platform bringing together all CSOs;
- the reconquest of the space and role of CSOs in society;
- advocacy in defence of interests related to education, land and health.





## PANEL 2: CIVIL SOCIETY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: PARTICIPATION, PRIORITIES AND FINANCING

The second panel aimed to reflect on the current and future role of civil society in defining and implementing sustainable development priorities in Mozambique. It addressed the challenges and opportunities in accessing financing, strengthening participation in decision-making spaces, and strategies to maximise the impact of their interventions.

This panel featured four speakers, who presented their reflections on topics such as *the role of civil society in defining development priorities; opportunities and challenges in fundraising; strategies to strengthen civil society participation in development processes; and maximising the impact of civil society actions.*



## I) THE ROLE OF CIVIL SOCIETY IN DEFINING DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

*Jaime Macuane*

The second panel began with a presentation on the central theme of participation. Throughout his speech, Mr. Jaime Macuane highlighted that in Mozambique, opportunities for participation are still limited by political power, which means that community involvement in decision-making is almost non-existent.

Mr. Jaime Macuane believes that popular consultations or participation alone do not solve the issue of representation in decision-making bodies; it is necessary to consider the opinions of those consulted and take them into account in such a way that they are binding.

The CSOs must equip themselves with tools that provide them with the knowledge to intervene with the government as advocates for the interests of the voiceless.



## II) OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES IN FUNDRAISING

*Carlos Fumo*

The speaker on this panel, Mr. Carlos Fumo, was responsible for presenting an approach that included a reflection on the mechanisms for mobilising financial resources for the sustainability of CSOs, beginning by outlining some pillars for this purpose, such as:

- a) *organisational sustainability*  
In this pillar, Mr. Carlos Fumo argues that CSOs should design norms and

standards for good management and accountability; have a sense of mission; demonstrate good internal governance and enjoy a good internal and international reputation;

b) *technical sustainability*

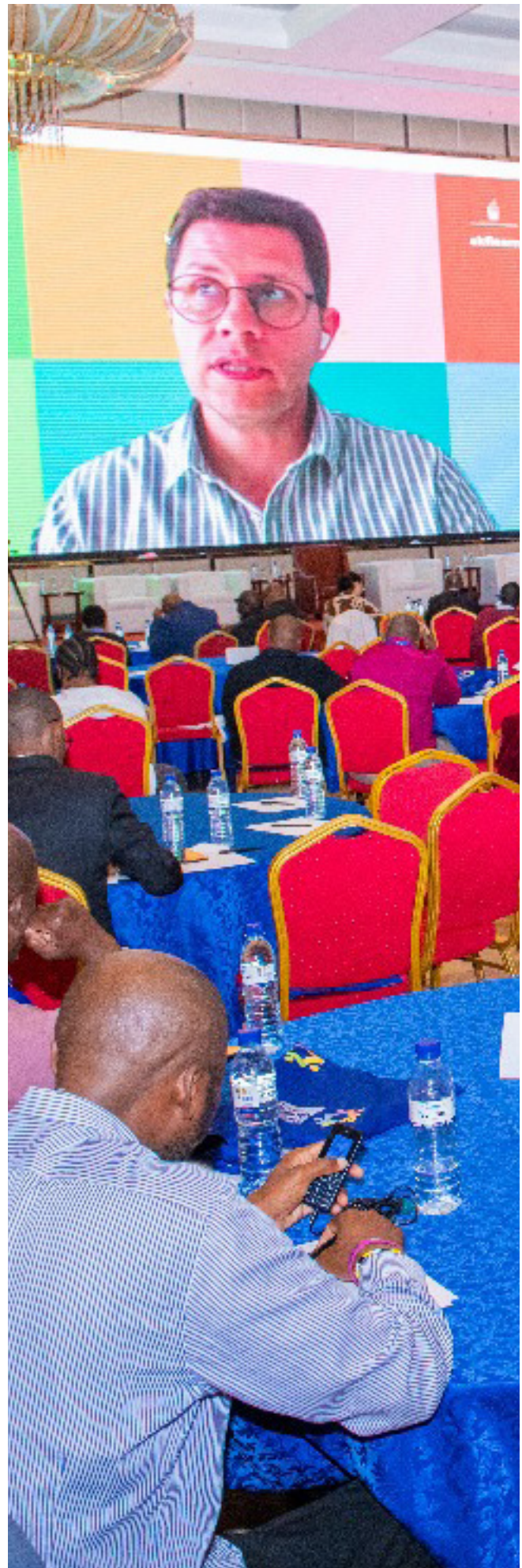
This requires that CSO members have technical knowledge relevant to their area of activity, enabling their intervention in defence of the disadvantaged, be carried out in a conscious and informed manner;

c) *financial sustainability*

In this regard, there is a call for improving the capacity to generate and manage financial resources, while building synergies to this end.

Fundraising was presented as one of the main concerns of CSOs, which, in situations of crisis and constant changes in the national and international political scenario, must make efforts to ensure that companies have a corporate social responsibility towards communities, serving as a bridge to connect communities and companies, generating a situation of business solutions for poverty eradication.

Mr. Carlos Fumo argues that, in the interaction between communities and companies, the language should be changed from begging to business language, as this approach allows communities to be part of the value chain in the productive and commercial sectors of these companies, contributing, within their means, with their workforce and receiving, in return, some financial return as a result of their work in and for the company.





### III) MAXIMISING THE IMPACT OF CIVIL SOCIETY ACTIONS

*Fátima Mimbire*

Invited to discuss how to measure the impact of CSOs' actions, Mrs. Fátima Mimbire preferred to look at two horizons, one macro and one micro.

From a macro perspective, she emphasised that the way in which the government acts in response to CSO intervention, which sometimes results in structural changes in the way it manages public goods, can be seen as an indicator of the impact of CSOs' actions in their mission to look after the excluded majority.

The micro view is directly linked to the changes taking place in the lives of each member of a given community as a result of the gains obtained from the exploitation of natural resources in their area.

When asked to cite good practices involving CSOs in defending community interests in Mozambique, Mimbire referred to the issue of telecommunications tariffs; the monitoring and public condemnation of so-called hidden debts; ongoing negotiations with companies operating in the extractive industry to ensure that they pay fair compensation in the process of resettling people who move because of the installation of a company in their areas of residence, as well as the incorporation of community development plans into such companies.



### IV) STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT PROCESSES

*Suaré Cassamá Baldé - Principal Researcher at INFP, Guinea-Bissau*

To strengthen the participation of CSOs in the development process in Mozambique, the Guinean researcher referred, as did previous speakers, to institutional development, capacity to mobilise resources, training and strengthening of communication networks for social mobilisation and job and income generation, and the creation of mechanisms for the sustainability of CSOs.



**PANEL 3: CAPACITIES OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS IN MOZAMBIQUE: IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY IN A CONTEXT OF TRANSFORMATION;**

This panel reflected on how CSOs can strengthen their technical and organisational capacities to increase their social impact, ensure greater sustainability and respond strategically to the challenges of a changing context.

## I) INNOVATION AND ADAPTATION OF CSOS IN THE FACE OF NEW CHALLENGES

*César Moreira*

Mr. César Moreira, who spoke virtually, explained the role of new information and communication technologies in modernising and expanding the impact of CSOs, with a focus on artificial intelligence.

During his presentation, he highlighted the difficulties of universal internet access in third world countries, a disproportionate situation when compared to the number of people who have access to a mobile phone.

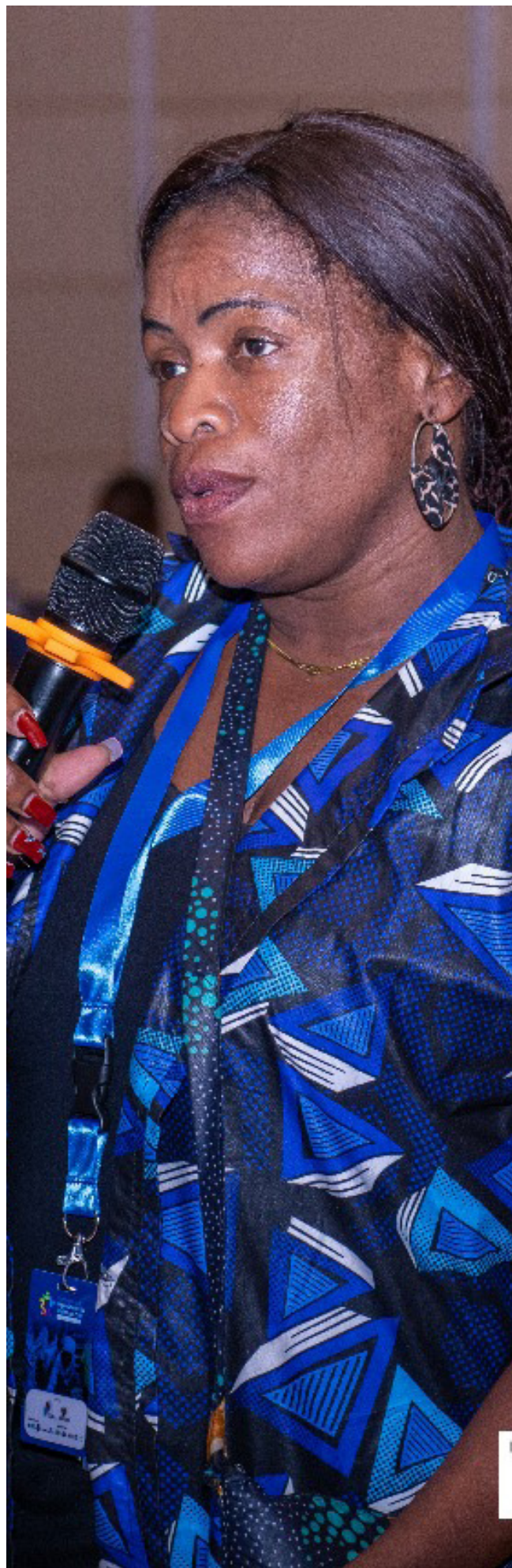
In his view, regardless of whether or not there is access to the internet, artificial intelligence should be considered an ally of CSOs, as it would help to disseminate their activities. He added that the use of this technological tool requires corporate responsibility in order to strengthen data protection, which is often compromised when this technological innovation is not used correctly.



## II) CAPACITY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

*Lina Inglês*

From the Aga Khan Foundation, represented by Mrs. Lina Inglês, one of the speakers on the third panel, we heard, as in the various speeches made on the first day of the Congress, about the role given to CSOs, which must continue to serve as influencers



in decision-making spaces, complementing the provision of public services by the State.

In the process of scrutinising government action, CSOs require their members to have a high level of technical competence, which goes beyond defining the strategies, vision and mission of each organisation to enable them to intervene appropriately in their mission to represent the interests of third parties.

In the final part of her speech, reflecting on the relevance of CSOs' actions, the speaker raised several questions, namely: **are CSOs investing enough in strengthening institutional capacity? How does the current funding model contribute to or limit the effectiveness of CSOs in the long term? Are we really listening to the communities we work for, or are we responding to the priorities of funders? Are we measuring efficiency and social transformation? How can we strengthen the relationship between Government, the private sector and CSOs?**



### III) SUSTAINABILITY OF CSOS IN A CONTEXT OF TRANSFORMATION

*Hermenegildo Mulhovo - Executive Director of the IMD*

In an increasingly globalised world, where political decisions influence the way states function, especially when such decisions are imposed by those in power, it is necessary and urgent for CSOs to be resilient to these impacts, taking into account the notion of sustainability presented by that panellist, namely that sustainability is the ability to adapt to different contexts.

In times of uncertainty and in order to cope with social and political shocks, he recommended that organisations invest in forecasting the external, political and social environment, becoming proactive rather than reactive. As the mobilisation of financial resources is a problem that afflicts CSOs, Mr. Hermenegildo Mulhovo showed that there is an urgent need for strategic financial planning capable of guiding the organisation in relation to financial capital mobilisation mechanisms.



## IV) COMMUNITY MOBILISATION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

*Dr. Adriano Nuvunga*

Mr. Adriano Nuvunga's presentation focused on introspection into the field of action of CSOs as a way of demonstrating their relevance to the community.

He pointed out that most CSOs are distant from the marginalised groups they claim to represent and act on their behalf to safeguard their interests. He believes that there is a huge gap between CSOs, the government and communities, which has hampered the possibilities for development and improvement in the lives of those who are almost forgotten.

A strong appeal was made to the CSOs gathered at the Congress to assume their responsibilities in the area of representation and not to become part of the oppressors, as the people need encouragement to continue to nurture their hopes and regain some dignity.

At the end of the presentations in panel 3, participants asked questions related to:

- The safety of CSO members when confronted with allegations of malpractice by the government or other private entities;
- The barriers imposed on CBOs in accessing the government and companies operating in mining and forestry areas;
- The gender inclusion and representation at all levels, starting with the structure of CSOs;
- The lack of solidarity among CSOs and the unbridled race for donor funds;
- The mechanisms to ensure that community ideas are taken into account in public policy design.





#### **PANEL 4: EMERGENCE OF NEW ACTORS: CITIZENSHIP AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT**

The aim of this panel was to reflect on the actions and emergence of new social actors, namely CBOs, informal groups, young activists, traditional leaders and local civic networks, which, acting outside the traditional structure, are positively influencing the dynamics of participation, mobilisation and accountability at the community level.



## I) IDENTIFICATION AND RECOGNITION OF NEW ACTORS

*David Fardo – President of the Youth Parliament*

On the proliferation of new actors in the CSO landscape, the President of the Youth Parliament, Mr. David Fardo, spoke of their relevance in mobilising and empowering communities, as actors made up of a new model involving organised youth, anonymous individuals, community movements and new trends led by digital groups and their influencers.



## II) CIVIC INNOVATION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

*Wilker Dias*

The participation continues to be a backdrop to most of the presentations made, revealing a commitment by CSOs to the cause of those considered voiceless, namely the communities on whose behalf the organisations advocate.

Before touching on the role of emerging organisations, Mr. Wilker Dias, an activist representing the DECIDE Platform, drew attention to the nomenclature used to designate new social actors, calling for a unifying designation that does not reveal the existence of elites within CSOs, avoiding formulations such as CBOs, new actors, emerging actors, etc.

He recognises the role of new actors in mobilising a collective consciousness for citizen participation in formal decision-making spaces and in the fight to defend their rights.

In order to achieve their objectives, it is imperative that CSOs find a common platform for action, focusing on deconstructing the idea of elitism that hangs over some organisations.



## III) LEGITIMACY, REPRESENTATIVENESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

*Mr. Emerson Ubisse – CCM delegate (Pemba)*

In mapping CSOs, Mr. Emerson Ubisse clarified that they have been actively involved in humanitarian aid programmes, although some face constraints in accessing available funds due to non-compliance with eligibility criteria.

This has had a negative impact on the participation of local CSOs in the community empowerment process, placing them far from the decision-making centre.

From experience working with communities and the government, it has been found that

organisations working in the humanitarian field and assisting local governments in times of disaster or other concerns have greater access to power than those working simply in advocacy, good governance and human rights defence.

This duality has called into question the representativeness and legitimacy of CSOs, which participate in advisory councils when there is a need to do so. The question that arises is: **whether those who participate in these meetings truly represent the interests of the community. Do they have the legitimacy to act on their behalf?**

At present, activism movement in Cabo Delgado is mired in a doubly hostile environment, firstly, due to the current situation of terrorism, which makes it difficult to access communities in need of support, and secondly, due to government restrictions on the eligibility of CSOs, which require mechanisms to be put in place to relax the eligibility criteria for CSOs and protect human rights defenders by the state.



#### IV) CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR STRENGTHENING CBOs IN MOZAMBIQUE

*Estevão Neves - Executive Director of PRODEA*

The President of the Provincial Forum of NGOs in Zambezia and Coordinator of the Installation Committee of the National Forum of NGOs in Mozambique, David Neves, spoke of the existence of two types of CBOs, formal and informal. Formal CBOs are legally constituted and operate without significant opposition from the government, depending on their area of activity. Informal CBOs are those that come into being naturally within the community, where people come together to influence decision-making processes, considering that they are closer to the community and know the real problems that affect them.

Among the obstacles identified that make the activities of CBOs difficult are the lack of training of CBO actors; excessive bureaucracy in accessing the centre of power; the lack of a network of contacts that can guarantee the viability of some CBO interventions; excessive external dependence with regard to the sustainability of CBOs; internal competition, which turns the race for funding into a kind of unfair competition, with legally constituted CBOs recognised by decision-makers having an advantage; the need to create a single platform to unify the family of Mozambican NGOs.





## V) THE ROLE OF CBOS IN CRISIS CONTEXTS

*Aly Caetano - Project Coordinator, Fundação Azul*

Mr. Aly Caetano, the Project Coordinator of the Fundação Azul, addressed the role of CBOs in crisis contexts, focusing on Cabo Delgado

He took 2017, 2018 and 2019 as peak periods for CBOs' intervention, given the climate of insecurity that prevailed (and still prevails), motivated by the situation of terrorism, which forced the internal displacement of people living in the affected areas.

In response, the CBOs, in fulfilment of their mission, were forced to map the affected areas, the places where the people were heading and the number of people, in order to be able to intervene with donors as a valid interlocutor in establishing a bridge between communities, government and donors.

This is the role reserved for CBOs, which, using their knowledge and proximity to various actors, do everything they can to alleviate the suffering of those most in need, especially in times of great social and political upheaval.

Towards the end of the Congress, the role of formal CSOs in strengthening and increasing the resilience of CBOs was the last point raised by some CBOs, who used a map

to demonstrate the level of intervention of formal CSOs in their communities, highlighting the current situation and the needs to be met.

Asked to summarise the two days of the Civil Society Organisations Congress, the representative of the MASC Foundation, Mrs. Maura Martins, thanked those present for their valuable contributions to the heated debates, highlighting the **commitment made by the Government**, which consists of:

- Creating a space for permanent dialogue with CSOs, ensuring a voice for members of civil society;
- Ensuring citizen participation in the planning and monitoring of public policies;
- Allowing, as far as possible, easy access to information and financing.

The following **recommendations** were made to CSOs:

- Promote participation and direct links with communities;
- Adopt a transformational stance, focusing on reform, justice and citizen participation;
- Reflect internally on identities and practices, reinforcing coherence between values and mission within our organisations;

- Include grassroots community initiatives as part of institutional strategies;
- Diversify sources of funding;
- Align the agendas of CBOs;
- Create a national forum of NGOs in Mozambique as a mechanism for articulation, coordination and representation of CSOs at the national and international levels;
- Assume fiscal and social responsibilities;
- Respect human rights;
- Contribute to local development;
- Establish productive partnerships between CSOs, supporting initiatives that promote employment, inclusion and sustainability.

The recommendations to **partners** were:

- Build agendas with organisations;
- Provide financial support for agendas aligned with social justice and community needs.

The following **recommendations** were made to the **Government**:

- Recognise CSOs as legitimate partners;
- Overcome perceptions of antagonism;
- Promote democratic dialogue with CSOs;
- Create a favourable institutional environment;
- Create legal reforms that genuinely

- recognise organisations, their role and their work at the community level;
- Strengthen the collaboration established between organisations and partners.

In her official closing speech at the Congress, Mrs. Fidélia Chemane, Executive Director of CESC, representing the organisers, noted that the Congress was a good starting point, revealing the reality of Mozambican CSOs, showcasing their work, their area of activity and the main challenges they face in carrying out their activities.

She regretted the fact that there were misunderstandings surrounding what she called the “maputisation” of growth opportunities and access to resources, among other issues with the potential to divide CSOs.

On gender and inclusion, she regretted that the organisation had not taken into account quotas to ensure balanced participation between men and women and people with disabilities, issues to be considered in the organisation of future events.

From the recommendations and commitments made, it is hoped that the heat of the discussions will not fade with the end of the congress, and that each organisation, in its own way, will create conditions for follow-up action.





**9. MEETING OF THE PRESIDENTS OF THE PROVINCIAL NGO FORUMS**



On 17 May 2025, at 9 a.m., the Presidents of the Provincial NGO Forums met at the MASC Foundation's premises for a meeting with the following agenda items:

- Presentation of the previous minutes;
- Proposal to hold the General Assembly of the Provincial NGO Forums;
- Evaluation of the First Congress of CSOs;
- Presentation and consideration of the proposed Statutes of the National NGO Forum.

At the meeting, the participants proposed 9 July as the date for the General Assembly of the Provincial NGOs Forums in the province of Zambézia, where the delegates elected to the Assembly would comply with a quota of 60% for men and 40% for women, which would include delegates and members of the governing bodies of the forums.

With regard to the participation of the provincial forums in the Congress, the assessment is positive, with some recommendations to be observed in the near future, such as the selection of topics that reflect the reality of the country; ensuring gender balance among delegates to the Congress; and reinforcing the need to create a national forum for NGOs in Mozambique.

Mrs. Maura Martins, representing MASC Foundation, suggested to the Presidents of the Provincial NGO Forums that, within the scope of the creation of the National Forum, they should promote this idea, conducting a kind of consultation at the provincial level. As a way of ensuring the legitimacy of this forum, Mrs. Maura Martins believes that it is necessary to map out, register and document all the steps leading to its creation and map as many thematic networks as possible in order to gather different perspectives on the idea.

## 10. WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT THE FIRST CONGRESS OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

**ENOQUE MARCELINO** (Representative of the Provincial Forum of NGOs in Inhambane)

*This Congress was a great opportunity for us, as representatives of the Provincial NGO Forums, to expose the difficulties we face on a daily basis, some of which are related to the closure of civic space and the recognition and representation of NGOs by local governments, which sometimes calls into question the legitimacy of those who claim to represent the interests of communities.*

**RUI CASTELO SEMENTE** (Executive Coordinator of the Sofala Provincial NGO Forum)

*Allow me to say that in Mozambique, civic space is not closed, but rather vandalised, and this Congress has helped us to reflect on the need to unite as CSOs in order to recover the space that has been legally reserved for us, in the interest and safeguarding of the rights of those who need it most. This involves creating a single platform for dialogue and intervention by CSOs, with representation at central, provincial, district and even local levels.*

**Ana Bela Lucas** (Chair of the Board of Directors of the Niassa NGO Forum)

*I must say that the Congress was very productive, in that it*

*showed us ways to create an institution that functions as an umbrella organisation and guarantees the protection and representation of its members.*

*With regard to the representation of women, it would be interesting if the organisers, in the near future, tried to ensure equity, not necessarily equality, to allow women to feel included in these debates that are so important for the life of the Mozambican nation.*

**ESTEVÃO JOSÉ NEVES** (President of the Provincial Forum of NGOs in Zambezia and Coordinator of the Installation Committee of the National Forum of NGOs in Mozambique)

*The Congress, which ends today, comes at a time when we are striving to create a national mechanism for discussing our ideas and showcasing our work as CSOs, seeking joint solutions to improve the quality of our interventions with the relevant authorities.*

*Of the recommendations, the most important for us is the creation of the National Forum of NGOs in Mozambique, a body that will have the task of uniting all forums, all platforms, all networks, so that our actions are more structured and coordinated, from the central level to the grassroots.*



## 11. CONCLUSION

CSOs in Mozambique face several problems in their work, two of which are the most talked about: the closure of civic space and difficulties in mobilising financial resources to ensure their sustainability, in a context of permanent change, both from a political and social point of view, which forces those involved in these organisations to find mechanisms to overcome such difficulties.

The proposal to create a single platform that brings together the values of its members, allowing them to take a coherent approach aligned with the purposes of their existence, was seen as an idea that will transform the future of Mozambican CSOs, where it is

hoped to see improved levels of intervention by various organisations operating at the national, provincial, district and even local levels. national, provincial, district and even local levels.

The CSOs can only actively intervene in defence of marginalised and neglected communities when they have effective access to the organs of power, the private sector and financiers, and serve as a link between them and the communities they defend.

