

“Unleashing Entrepreneurship” launched at the Africa Economic Summit 2004



Luisa Diogo (left) during the press conference. On the right, the moderator. Photo: Felisberto Laíce (Notícias)

The Mozambican Prime Minister Ms. Luísa Diogo is one of the fifteen members of the UN Commission on Private Sector and Development convened by the Secretary-General Kofi Annan in July 2003.

The Commission just published the results of its works in a report entitled **Unleashing Entrepreneurship : Making Business Work for the Poor**. Taking advantage of the World Economic Forum/ Africa Economic Summit 2004 in Maputo, Mozambique, Luisa Diogo launched the report on Thursday, 3 June 2004, in front of the national and international press, at the Joaquim Chissano Conference Center..

Referring to the inspiring theme of the Summit *Engaging Business in Development*, Ms Luisa Diogo acknowledged the growing role of the private sector in Africa and its valuable contribution to the state budget.

She recognized, however, that there is still a lot to do to create an enabling environment for a competitive private sector to develop. **Despite its painful nature**, she said, **countries like Mozambique are in the right direction with the reforms and modernization processes that are undertaken in the public sector. But entrepreneurs and business leaders in Africa are facing a huge challenge regarding their human resources: HIV/AIDS, which is dramatically reducing their qualified human resources.**

Responding to the question of a foreign journalist about the expectations from the developed countries, Luísa Diogo responded **Just three things: infrastructures (human, physical and institutional), markets and solidarity. Solidarity means friendship, partnership, mutual understanding and respect.**

Luisa Diogo further explained the vibrant role of the informal sector in African countries in the fight against poverty. But she also highlighted the need to mainstream it by giving it a legal and economic legitimacy. This is an important issue addressed by the Report. The document also highlights a broad range of best practices that show how the capacities of the private sector can best be harnessed for the cause of development and poverty alleviation.

On the occasion, UNDP Resident Representative, Marylène Spezzati, indicated that UNDP has made Private Sector Development one of its practice areas and a pillar of its poverty reduction programmes. She indicated that development partners such as UNDP can play a major role on the side of governments in helping them create the enabling environment for private sector development.

Recently TIMES magazine has selected Luísa Diogo as one of the world's most influential people and she also has been singled out by the World Bank for her successful efforts in poverty reduction.

The UN Commission on the Private Sector and Development presented this report to the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in New York in March 2004.