A luta continua!

Mozambique’s most remote railway has had a bumpy ride but thanks to an enthusiast’s determination, investment capital is forthcoming, writes Paul Ash

A nation-state on wheels

Paul Ash

The Mozambican rail corridor from Beira to the border with Tanzania is the longest railway in southern Africa. It stretches for over 1,600km, passing through some of the most remote and difficult terrain in the world. Despite its importance, the railway has been neglected and underfunded for decades. However, a recent development in the railway industry is changing the face of this nation-state.

The Mozambican government, led by President Joaquim Chissano, has recognized the importance of the railway to the country’s economic development. In March 2005, the government announced plans to modernize and expand the railway network. "This is a crucial moment in the history of Mozambique," said President Chissano. "We need to invest in our infrastructure in order to attract more foreign investment and boost our economy." The government has also sought assistance from international donors, including the African Development Bank and the World Bank.

The railway corridor runs from Beira in the north to Nacala in the south, passing through the provinces of Cabo Delgado, Sofala, and Niassa. The railway was built in the late 19th century by the Portuguese colonial authorities and has been in use ever since. It was originally intended to transport goods and passengers from the Mozambican coast to the interior of the country. However, over time, the railway has become more isolated and has faced numerous challenges.

One of the main problems facing the railway is the state of the tracks. Many sections of the line are in poor condition, with significant maintenance required. The railway also faces logistical challenges, such as the lack of freight services and the limited capacity to transport goods.

These challenges have led to a decline in the railway’s revenue, making it difficult for the government to maintain the network. In recent years, the government has attempted to address some of these issues by implementing a range of reforms, including the privatization of some of the railway’s assets.

Despite these efforts, the railway remains a crucial asset for Mozambique. It is an important route for the transport of goods and passengers, and it plays a key role in the country’s economic development. The government is committed to modernizing and expanding the railway network to meet the needs of the future.

With the recent announcement of plans to modernize the railway, there is hope that Mozambique will be able to overcome its challenges and become a key player in the regional and international transportation networks.

The Mozambican government is working closely with international partners to secure the necessary funding and support for the railway’s development. The government is also seeking to attract private investment to help finance the project. With the right investment and support, Mozambique’s railway can become a vital asset for the country’s growth and development.