

of them, it would seem, could match Chissano's credentials.

For one, Obasanjo soiled his record by the way he tried to extend his stay in power, against constitutional requirements, earlier this year. Kabbah, on the other hand, stepped down and elections were held without too many complications. But despite overseeing the end of the country's civil war, he failed woefully to lift the standard of living of Sierra Leoneans and as a result his party lost the presidential and parliamentary elections held in August and September this year.

So, even before Annan made his announcement in London last month, Chissano was the man many were expecting to bag the prize. The citation of the prize committee noted: "...it is in his role in leading Mozambique from conflict to peace and democracy that President Chissano has made his most outstanding contribution. It is a measure of the change that has taken place, that national and regional elections have been contested in a generally peaceful manner by both sides in the bitter civil war. This remarkable reconciliation between opponents provides a shining example to the rest of the world, and is testament to both his strength of character and leadership.

"His decision not to seek a third presidential term reinforced Mozambique's democratic maturity and demonstrated that institutions and the democratic process were more important than personalities.

"President Chissano also made a major contribution outside his country's borders. He was a powerful voice for Africa on the international stage and played an important role in pushing debt relief up the agenda."

The committee drew on

research from the recently published Ibrahim Index of African Governance, in which Mozambique came 23rd, and a range of other sources, to assess the quality of governance in the areas of economic and social development, peace and security, human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The prize, according to Annan, "celebrates more than just good governance. It celebrates leadership; the ability to formulate a vision and to convince others of that vision; and the skill of giving courage to society to accept difficult changes in order to make possible a longer term aspiration for a better, fairer future".

On hearing the outcome of the committee's deliberations, Mo Ibrahim, the Sudanese telecommunications billionaire and founder of the foundation, said: "I am absolutely delighted that Joaquim Chissano has been selected as the first Laureate. As a man who has reconciled a divided nation and built foundations for a stable, democratic and prosperous future for the country, he is a role model not just for Africa, but for the rest of the world."

Chissano became head of state in November 1986, after the death of President Samora Machel in a plane crash. After the 16-year civil war, Mozambique held its first multi-party elections in 1994, which was won by Chissano. When he was re-elected in 1999, he announced he would step down in 2005, even though he was entitled to a third term. He kept to his word.

The prize is to be awarded annually but Annan said there could be a year when there would be no award. "If there is a year in which no one meets the criteria, we won't award the prize," he said, while taking questions from members of the assembled media.



Entrepreneur to create 1.3 million jobs in 5 years in India

A retired Swedish entrepreneur, Percy Barnevik, wants to create 1.3 million jobs and 250,000 small businesses in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu and has given himself five years to do it. 250,000 women are already trained and have started 85,000 enterprises.

In line with the United Nations Millennium Goals to halve poverty by 2015 and eradicate it by 2025, Job creation is one of the ways Mr. Barnevik believes he can contribute with his money and expertise.

With regards to future projects of the Charity, the chairman told "North-South" that, "we are setting up a 'Hand in Hand Academy' in Chennai to do research and training in entrepreneurship and micro-financing and the Stanford and Oxford Business Schools are supporting us. We need to develop 1,600 Indian business consultants in addition to our needs in India in order to install our model in other countries as we are presently doing in South Africa and Afghanistan. We send out 30 Indian consultants who then train 1,200 local aid workers who in turn train 3-400,000 local people per year to create 1 million jobs. This way we may contribute to 50 million jobs within the next 10 years".