

**MAPUTO CORRIDOR LOGISTICS INITIATIVE**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

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***Welcome Remarks:***  
***Her Excellency Ms Thandi Lujabe-Rankoe***  
***South African High Commissioner to Mozambique***

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Good evening

It is a great honour and privilege for me to attend the Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative's Annual General Meeting Gala Dinner and Corridor Update Event. I would like to thank the MCLI's CEO, Ms Brenda Horne for inviting me to this important event.

I wish to extend a warm welcome to the South African business representatives and government officials to Maputo and I hope that they will have a very productive and fruitful time here in Mozambique. Although you have come here to discuss business I would like to encourage you to also explore what Maputo has to offer with regards to entertainment, cuisine and culture. The South Africans should however please first finalise all their business deals before embarking on tasting the succulent prawns and indulging in the very nice beers that Maputo has to offer. So please be warned and remember business before pleasure.

I would also like to welcome the Mozambican business community and government officials present here tonight. The importance of this event can be measured by the calibre of guests in this room and I am sure that the Honourable Mozambican Minister of Transport would not be present here tonight if he was not convinced that the MCLI is indeed making the Maputo Development Corridor the First Choice for all stakeholders and thereby contributing tremendously to the success of the Corridor.

It is very encouraging to see the private sector represented here in large numbers tonight. It is of the utmost importance that our two governments together with the private sector work together to increase the operational efficiency of the Maputo Corridor. Your presence here tonight is a testimony of the will and commitment to further develop co-operation and to strengthen the spirit of friendship and good neighbourliness between our two countries even further. Your presence, distinguished guests, is a clear sign that the MCLI is indeed successful in promoting the Maputo Corridor.

Ladies and gentlemen, we can no longer talk of investment in South Africa without considering the integral nature of our relationship with other countries in Africa and especially with Mozambique. The African continent has opened up new markets for our business community to expand and grow their exports. Our economic and political relations with Mozambique have shown dramatic improvements and created many new business opportunities.

Trading with and investing in Mozambique represents one of the most dynamic areas of growth for South African businesses. South Africa and Mozambique has been part of initiatives to stimulate regional economic development and we are already starting to see the positive outcomes of these initiatives with faster economic growth taking place in the region and in Africa as a whole. But we have a long way to go.

Our regional integration programmes must assist in assuring the eradication of poverty, enable sustainable economic growth and development and we as government must create a positive and conducive environment for the private sector to operate in. Most importantly we together with the private sector must continue to work towards removing obstacles to investment. Together we must work towards establishing conditions for shared growth and find solutions to our problems.

The economic growth that both our countries are experiencing is indeed good news, but it also places enormous strain on our infrastructure. There is increased freight movement on the Maputo Corridor coupled with an increasing number of tourists making use of the Corridor. This is excellent news for our two countries and for the region as it proves that the Maputo Development Corridor is indeed a success story. Unfortunately we are however also victims of our own success. With growth, come growing pains. It is quite clear that over the past few years South Africa has outgrown its infrastructure at the border post. The Lebombo border post's infrastructure is struggling to cope with the increased movement of people and goods.

I am aware of the fact that the border issue is most definitely one of the biggest obstacles and concerns when we talk about the efficiency of the Maputo Corridor. Let me assure you that we are well aware of the situation and we recognize the fact that the only solution to the border problem is to have a One-stop Border Post. Ladies and Gentleman, let me assure you that officials are working very hard to make the One-Stop-Border-Post a reality and a success. There is a number of Departments involved making the process a bit complicated and certain Constitutional issues had to be clarified.

Ladies and Gentleman, we must guard against just putting up infrastructure for the sake of having a One-Stop-Border Post. It must be carefully planned in order to ensure maximum efficiency and effectiveness. It should be a project that both our countries should be proud of and for the rest of the region it should set the benchmark of how a One-Stop Border Post should function. The upcoming Soccer World Cup in 2010 lends further urgency to this project as traffic on the Maputo Corridor will certainly increase if not double during the Soccer World Cup.

We realise that while preparations for the One Stop Border Post are being finalized we still have a very serious problem with congestion at the border. The South African High Commission in Mozambique is therefore having regular meetings with all

relevant role-players at the Lebombo border post to discuss ways of solving some of the logistical problems at the border. Complaints and suggestions that we receive at the Mission are relayed to the border officials and together we discuss how best to solve these problems.

Although we realise that the infrastructure at the border limits efficiency we are concentrating on those areas where we can make improvements, such as addressing the behaviour and attitude of staff, the management of traffic and in general to see how to make processing at the border as easy and as fast as possible. I am glad to say that there have been some improvements and the border officials are continuing to work together with us in improving the service at the border.

On 23 December 2006 more than a 113 000 people crossed the border and we must realise that at any border where this amount of people crosses there will be congestion. But again the more than 40% increase in the movement of people travelling through the border in December 2006 when compared to December 2005 is a clear indication of the Corridor's success.

Ladies and Gentleman I would like to mention that we are celebrating Africa Day on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May, and the theme for this year is: **LET'S STRENGTHEN AFRICA'S PLACE IN THE WORLD THROUGH STRATEGIC, BALANCED AND RESPONSIBLE PARTNERSHIPS**. I want to tell the MCLI that through their efforts and their partnership with the Mozambican and South African governments they are indeed contributing towards strengthening Africa's Place in the World.

Ladies and Gentleman I would like to conclude by thanking the MCLI and especially Ms Brenda Horne for the role they are playing through private sector participation to ensure the success of the Maputo Corridor and making it the First Choice for all stakeholders. Brenda, thank you very much for your newsletters, the excellent service you provide to your members, your hard work and all the effort you put into making the Maputo Corridor work. The South African High Commission will continue to support your efforts and I would like to encourage members of the MCLI to continue to make positive suggestions and inputs on how the Maputo Corridor could be improved and also to continue to identify problem areas.

Let us all work together for regional integration and development.

I would like to wish you well and I trust that the MCLI will continue to be successful in their endeavours.

Thank you very much.