

Lebombo Border Post hours extended

■ André Bakkes

NELSPRUIT - There's some good news for importers, exporters and commuters travelling to and from Mozambique. The Lebombo Border Post hours have recently been extended until midnight.

"It is certainly a step in the right direction," said CEO of the Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative, Ms Brenda Horne. "Eventually we would like to see a 24-hour border post, but for now, every extra hour will make a massive difference," she said.

Apparently the traffic moving through has been growing exponentially over the past two years ever since the visa system was abolished. Horne confirmed that the border was up to 80% busier than it was a couple of years ago. Since hiring more staff will create logistical problems, the next best solution is to extend the time the border is open.

"This will definitely have an impact on imports and exports. By keeping the post open an extra two hours, traffic at the border would be slightly less congested and as a result, fewer truck drivers would spend the

night there."

According to Horne, both Mozambique and South Africa have agreed to establish a joint one-stop facility by 2009. She also reckons a 24-hour service is in the offing. "This December it will be open around the clock," she noted.

When asked about the effects the new hours would have on commuters, she said they would now have more time to reach the border which would contribute to their safety.

Trade documents for exports are accepted till 20:00 and imports until 21:00.