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Absence of direct callers continues to inhibit Maputo Port growth

THE LIMITED number of shipping lines calling directly at the Port of Maputo continues to stymie significant growth despite the many positive indicators.

"Total volumes were up 25% this year compared to last, transit cargo grew 20% and we recorded an 868% increase in transit traffic

received by rail," Pedro Pena, operations director at MIPS (Mozambique International Port Services), told delegates at last week's Maputo Corridor Update event held in Nelspruit.

"And although the situation has improved with the support of MOL and Delmas, shipping lines are

still unsure about our ability to service their vessels," said Pena. To claw back trust, MIPS is in the process of securing two mobile gantry cranes and additional handling equipment to improve its service capacity.

The rail link is another stumbling block, says Pena. "Although Mozambique's railway company CFM and

Transnet Freight Rail have made a block train service available to and from Maputo, few have utilised this service.

"MIPS is currently investigating a weekly Maputo/Gauteng rail option in order to attract more shippers to the port."

Referring to the absence of both origin and destination

cargo for South Africa, Pena said that the repositioning costs of empty teus reduced the port's competitive advantage. "MIPS is currently working closely with shippers, agents and forwarders to create synergies that will reduce the overall freight cost and encourage two-way traffic."