

LOWVELDE, FRIDAY 12 OCTOBER 2007

Friday October 12, 2007



Border very busy

■ Sonette van den Berg

NELSPRUIT - With the 80% increase in passenger volumes since April 2005 when the visa requirements between Mozambique and South Africa were lifted, it is no wonder that tourists have, over the past school holidays, experienced passenger congestion and a number of frustrating moments at the Lebombo/Ressano Garcia Border Post.

There are two realities at the border post, which must be taken into consideration. The first is the limited infrastructure. Little can be done to process abnormally large volumes during peak periods at a faster pace when teams are already at full capacity within the available infrastructure.

The second is the major frustration caused by tourists who support the illegal runners. This exacerbates the waiting times for those law-abiding citizens waiting patiently in the queue.

Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative (MCLI) is extremely encouraged by the high level of attention that the one-stop border post is receiving, as it was again

high on the agenda of the recent South Africa-Mozambique heads of state economic bilateral commission in Pretoria in mid-September. Work on the new border post will begin in 2008 and MCLI encourages all tourists and those crossing the border to be patient in the interim and to cooperate with authorities in these very difficult circumstances.

The initiative participates actively in the monthly border planning meetings with the border stakeholder departments and all indications are that the hours for passenger clearing will be extended to 24 hours again from the end of November until schools start again in 2008. These dates have not yet been officially confirmed, however, MCLI is committed to keeping the public informed as this process unfolds. Over this period, like the recent Easter peak time, commercial passenger clearing will be done at the Lebombo Border dry port, in order to facilitate the increased number of passengers and to make the frontier crossing less congested for tourists and business passengers.