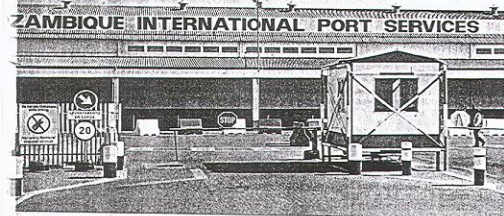


SOON ENJOY TRAIN RIDES TO MAPUTO



Front view of the Mozambique International Port Services.



Swaziland Railway CEO Gideon Mahlela (second left) with some of the delegation members captured on arrival at the Maputo Railway Station on Thursday. (Pic: Nomile Hlathwayo)

Business people taken on tour of Maputo Port

MAPUTO - Local stakeholders, including business people, were taken on a grand train ride of the Swaziland-Maputo Corridor. The train left Maputo at around 11am, meandering slowly with passengers enjoying the scenery; the tranquil surroundings. It was no means luxurious or fast, but was reasonably comfortable and safe, offering a relaxed way to see new parts of the country and Mozambique.

The train moved along the tracks, school children stared in awe, waving in envy at the passengers looking out the windows. The train arrived in Maputo at the Maputo Railway Station at exactly 1:13pm,

having made numerous stops along the way.

From there the entourage was driven in buses to the sea port, the Maputo International Ports Services (MIPS), where they were shown around. Unfortunately, because of security reasons, no one was allowed to get off the buses; this was in compliance with the strict rules of the International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS).

MIPS invested about E4 million (US\$500 000) putting in place safety and security measures in order to get the ISPS certification, and is one of the first ports in Africa to get such.

The port is owned 60 percent by Dubai Ports World and 40 percent by MIPS and operations started in 1996. It has a storage capacity of 100 000 TEU and can handle 15 containers per crane per hour; it can also accommodate two vessels at the same time depending on the size. "There is so much potential for expansion, we are just waiting for business people to bring their cargo; there is need for people to commit their businesses because most of the empty space seen around has already been taken or booked," explained Camilo Abdul, the Finance Director of Maputo Port Development Company (MPDC).

COMMENTS:

Swaziland Railway CEO -

Gideon Mahlela
The aim of this tour is to promote the Goba Corridor, as we feel Swaziland is at close proximity with Maputo when compared to the Durban Port. In order to reduce costs and for Swaziland to be competitive there is need for businesses to use a port that is closer in order to cut down on production costs. We have excess capacity; we can afford to have about five return trains per week. Some of the commodities we are targeting as potential cargo include coal, iron ore and fuel (we are currently transporting sugar and pulp). Currently, because of the high cost of fuel, it would be advantageous to import fuel from the Maputo Port than Durban; if fuel costs can be reduced by getting it closer, it could benefit a lot of people because everyone is affected by high fuel costs. We are hoping that with the restructuring of the Minerals committees into one, things are going to move faster with issuance of mineral licences, which could result in the country getting richer again. Most Swazi businesses used to utilise the Maputo Port before the war in Mozambique; we know it takes time for businesses to change their minds but we are promoting this corridor again as the ideal and cost effective way of transporting their goods.

Federation of Swaziland Employers and Chamber of Commerce (FSEACC) CEO -

Zodwa Mabuza
Our sense of a natural port is in terms of proximity; we believe the Maputo Port is closer and hence it would make sense to send goods through this port. However, because of experiences in the past, especially during the war in Mozambique, businesses abandoned this route. Taking business people on this tour was a good initiative by SR. Transportation costs constitute the largest component of production, which affects the country's competitiveness in out-

side markets. The partnership with Dubai is planned to boost the port, as they are pumping in a lot of money to improve it to meet international standards. Ours would be to encourage business people to utilise this port but they should also do their own investigations to be assured. With the congestion problems at the Durban Port, they could take advantage and use the Maputo Port.

Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiatives CEO - Brenda Home

Our role is to co-ordinate, communicate and integrate with stakeholders in order to promote ports and terminals. We believe a cost effective corridor would provide an enabling environment for trade in the region. In promoting this route/corridor, it will contribute to economies of scale and grow the number of shipping lines in Maputo. We strongly believe there should be bi-directional cargo flows of exports and imports between Mozambique and Swaziland. It is also important to work together in order to come up with the necessary costings so as to have competitiveness of the corridor. The container terminal has grown capacity and we are targeting 10 million tonnes but there is capacity for 20 million tonnes.

The overall drive is to reduce the cost of doing business; rail is certainly more cost effective and geared for heavier commodities. Because of the high premium attached to reliability, it is important to promote the rail in terms of its readiness to potential importers and exporters. With landlocked countries, ensure bureaucracies do not become a prohibiting barrier in terms of unnecessary errors and delays of cargo by engaging customs authorities. Of note is that border procedures are more efficient when cargo is moved by rail, which is a competitive factor; transportation is seamless by rail across the borders and hence shorter transit times.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Owners of bill board signs erected within Nhlango Town Council, who did not renew their contractual permit with the Nhlango Town Council this year 2008 are requested to do so immediately or remove their bill boards within seven days from the first date the notice appears in the local newspaper. Failure to comply, the Council will remove at the owners your expense.

MANDLA MDLULI
TOWN CLERK

NHLANGANO
TOWN COUNCIL