

LOWVELDER 18 JANUARY 2008

# Busy border

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KOMATIPOORT - A total of 580 116 passengers crossed the Lebombo/Ressano Garcia Border Post during December this year compared with 465 600 the previous year. That is a remarkable increase of 25%.

According to Ms Brenda Horne, chief executive officer of the Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative (MCLI), traffic peaked on December 22 with 116 979 crossing the border on that day followed by another 103 893 the following day. This is a 71% increase in traffic from December 21 to 25.

"This, on top of the 44% increase in December 2006 over 2005 is a clear indication that the Maputo Corridor is fulfilling its strategic need to enable people to move between the two countries. We have experienced a mammoth 70% increase, representing 229 769 more passengers in December 2007 than the 330 368 of December 2005," Horne said.

This increase has considerable spin-offs for economic activity in the region and emphasises one of the key objectives of the MCLI, which is to ensure regional integration and promote the movement of people and goods across the border and in so doing stimulate trade, tourism and other related economic activity. Additional temporary facilities were added to supplement existing ones with buses, taxis and commercial traffic cleared at the old airport and cargo cleared separately from passenger traffic.

"The pressure of increased passenger traffic during the peak seasons of December and the Easter period on the limited infrastructure at the border, made the implementation of the planned one-stop border post a very welcome development," she added.

The growth in traffic across the border is a clear indication of the growing awareness and success of the corridor as an instrument of regional economic integration.