

Gearing up for 2010

(and it's not soccer)

Demise of customs barriers brings opportunities and challenges

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While in South Africa 2010 has become shorthand for the 2010 Fifa Soccer World Cup, in Maputo 2010 is the year that customs barriers come down in the SADC region – bringing with it both opportunities and challenges.

One of those preparing for the change is Filipe Franco, managing director of the Matola Cargo Terminal (MCT). At present, the terminal's "main activity" is customs clearance between Mozambique and its neighbours.

Being one of only two road terminals on the route between South African and Mozambique, MCT supplies logistical and storage facilities to the Mozambique customs authority.

Complementary services include warehousing, handling, cold storage, distribution, transport, citrus cooling and handling.

And business is growing. "The country is in a very fast investment phase. There is a shift in what we see coming through – from consumer goods to manufacturing

machinery and agricultural equipment," he says.

Indicative of the growth is that, in the first half of 2008, the terminal handled more transport units than it did in the whole of 2007.

Growth in traffic in the port has also spilled over into MCT, which has a direct rail link to the harbour and is effectively "part of the port se-tup," says Franco. It is just six kilometres by road from the Maputo port as well.

Matola has been developed into a full transit facility, with a bonded warehouse that provides stuffing and destuffing services, refrigerated store rooms and citrus cooling facilities, as well as general warehousing.

The 25 000-square-metre facility is fully fenced and secure.

It has its own fleet of 10 trucks, a rail shunting machine and a 15-ton crane to move containers to switch between road and rail.

"Our emphasis is moving to transit goods. We are geared to help South



The Matola Cargo Terminal is having a busy year, with imports of agricultural equipment and other machinery up.

African exporters and importers," says Franco.

MCT is also gearing up for the introduction of more direct services

between Maputo, Europe and the East. This will give exporters and importers an alternative to Durban and help speed up the movement of cargo, he says.