

# MCLI discusses a bright future

The recent annual general meeting of Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative (MCLI) was an enormously successful, top class event, attended by over 350 stakeholders from Mozambique, Swaziland and South Africa.

The evening's meeting was preceded by a train trip from Komatipoort to Maputo that enabled 150 stakeholders to experience the rehabilitation of the rail line from Ressano Garcia to Maputo - it had recently been completed at a cost of \$20 million.

Proceedings were kicked off by MCLI's Mozambican chairman, Dr Antonio Matos. He mentioned the recent xenophobic attacks in South Africa and the fact that they had been perpetrated by an ill-educated and diabolical minority. Accordingly, a donation of over R6 000 was collected in aid of a

charity in Mozambique caring for people displaced by the violence.

Deputy director of USAID (United States Agency for International Development) Southern Africa, Mr Gary Juste, reaffirmed the continued commitment of USAID to MCLI, noting that this was a shining example of how cooperation between government and the private sector could promote regional integration and cooperation. He emphasised that safe, reliable transport systems were essential for Africa's economic development.

The keynote address was delivered by the secretary of Ministry of Transport and Communications in Mozambique, Mr José Albano Lourenço Júnior. He emphasised Maputo Corridor's role in regional integration and in opening up the markets in

the region.

He also commended MCLI for its role in ensuring permanent dialogue between public and private sectors on the corridor, thus creating a favourable environment for investment in the region. He also noted that Swaziland was an important partner in the coordination of efforts on the corridor.

MCLI's South African chairman, Dr Mathews Phosa, mentioned the anticipation for the implementation of the joint 24-hour one-stop border post at Lebombo/Ressano Garcia, as well as the impact this would have on the reduction of transport costs in the region. He was outspoken on the need for greater private sector engagement on the issue, saying that the joint 24-hour one-stop border post project was one of the most crucial ones this corridor had

ever undertaken.

Chief executive officer of the national ports authority and representative of the South African national department of transport (NDoT), Mr Riad Khan, delivered the closing remarks at the meeting and confirmed the NDoT's passion for the corridor. He emphasised the need for integrated planning as pivotal to the success of the corridor and that this integration was important across the public and private sectors.

On Friday May 30, 250 delegates participated in a tour of the Port of Maputo. Developments were evident. Delegates were impressed by the number of ships in the port and its increased capacity as a result of the many developmental and upgrade projects which had been undertaken.