

# Mozambique volumes near 'tipping point'

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By Ed Richardson

Freight volumes through Maputo and the other Mozambican ports are reaching the "tipping point" after which volumes will grow very rapidly, says Maersk Mozambique managing director, Christopher Crookall.

That growth will happen when shippers realise they can "save significantly today by shipping through Maputo," he says.

Maersk operates a feeder service from Maputo to Durban on Ocean Africa Container Line (OACL).

"Over time," he says, "there will be 'direct connections' to the rest of the world."

While the lack of direct services and the economies of scale of larger vessels are inhibiting factors at present, Crookall believes that these problems are in the process of being solved.

"As the Maputo corridor becomes more efficient, the demand for direct services increases and hence the likely returns make such a service increasingly viable.

"The port is also busy sorting out its long-term strategy and we are hopeful the channel depth will be increased to accommodate the larger vessels." The opening of the SADC borders in 2010 will provide a further boost



The Port of Maputo ... demand for direct services increasing.

It will not all be transit cargo. Crookall is also confident about the economic prospects for Mozambique. "The country is enjoying an 8-10% GDP growth, it has a young and educated workforce, and there is strong IMF and World Bank support."

Crookall has a regional perspective as Maersk's Maputo office manages operations in Maputo, Beira, Nacala, Quelimane, Lusaka, Harare, Lilongwe and Blantyre.

There is a strong emphasis on training and empowerment. "It is the Maersk mission to have local people in senior positions,"