

WELCOME ADDRESS 9TH INDIAN OCEAN PORTS & LOGISTICS (DRAFT)

HIS EXCELENCY THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORTS AND COMMUNICATION

MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS

DISTINCT ORGANIZERS

DISTINCT PORT MANAGERS AND OPERATORS

LADIES AND GENTLEMAN

This is the second time Mozambique hosts the Indian Ocean Ports & Logistics. Either Transports Events has ran out of ideas or our country is awakening the attention of the transports and logistic specialists from around the world. We want to believe in this second option.

With coal and gas discoveries taking the lead of the economic boom of our country, the last decade has seen an enormous growth in the ports and logistics sector. The Port of Maputo believes that all this growth can only be measured if local economies and people benefit from the enormous amount of investment.

Twelve years ago, with humbleness and our hands filled with dreams, we signed a concession agreement. But even then we had full conscience that we were not only taking the management of a mere infrastructure; we had in our hands an historic legacy and the huge responsibility of taking care of the thousands of families that depend on it.

Our dreams gave way to a clear vision: to handle 40 million tons by 2020. But our goal remained the same: to grow for Mozambique and for Mozambicans.

Throughout the years we have testified a growth that is visible not only in the amount of the cargo handled but also in other numbers hidden behind record throughputs and TEUs. In 2014 alone, almost 60 million dollars have been invested in the local market. Stevedoring, catering, civil works, cleaning, equipment hire and acquisition and a multitude of services and products supplied to the Port by companies that are not featured in Fortune 500 but whose growth benefits thousands of Mozambicans.

People are a serious business for us, if not what wakes us up and brings us to the port every day. Our head count is measured by how many families we are making happy. The Port of Maputo employs directly 4000 people and indirectly almost 10.000 in casual labor. We are as this famous soda brand: sharing happiness all around.

In the last couple of years MPDC has seen its team become younger and more vibrant with more than 50% of its staff being below 40 years old. I read somewhere that “Young people don't always do what they're told, but if they can pull it off and do something wonderful, sometimes they escape punishment”. At the Port of Maputo, we advocate that we are always “trying again and again but always failing better”.

In a male dominated industry, we also take pride in having more than 10% of our staff being composed by women and a strong female presence in the management team. If we multiply this by all the ports in Mozambique than we are definitely looking at a promising future for our country.

Ladies and Gentleman,

As in any long journey, much is still to be done. Investment in rail infrastructure is much needed to ensure an efficient and competitive cargo flow; the investment in people, the vital tissue of this activity, has to be continuous and of greater excellency. Stronger partnerships between all stakeholders of the transports and logistics sector have to be established.

The global market crisis means that we will have to adapt and reinvent ourselves. Indian Ocean ports will have to look at this as an opportunity and not a challenge. I am sure that this conference will shed a light on how we can face these challenges and maintain our growing trend. I wish you a fruitful conference and I advise you to take this opportunity to get to know our vibrant and cosmopolitan capital city. I have heard that Beira's shrimps have left strong happy memories in a lot of you; we hope that we will be able to be even more unforgettable!

I now have the great honour of inviting His Excellency the Minister of Transports and Communication, Mr. Carlos Mesquita to deliver his key-note speech.