

# Preventing illegal smuggling of goods

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Border police, government departments and a number of stakeholders are working hard to prevent illegal and dangerous goods being smuggled into the country via South Africa's border posts.

Thousands of illegal goods, such as cigarettes, counterfeit clothing and DVDs, food, computers and alcohol as well as stolen vehicles cross over the country's borders everyday from mostly countries such as Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana.

Border officials at the Lebombo Border Post explained to **BuaNews** on Tuesday that some of the goods such as cigarettes and alcohol do not meet South Africa's standards and pose a danger to the health and lives of South Africans.

More than 50 stolen cars, which have been stolen in South Africa to make their way to Mozambique, are confiscated in a month, the border officials said.

The vehicles are identified with the help of a Vehicle Circulation System stationed at the border.

## Challenge of prevention

The border officials said that while they were able to confiscate goods worth millions, preventing illegal commodities getting into the country was a challenging and technical job for a number of reasons.

When *BuaNews* visited the border, hundreds of Mozambique nationals, particularly women, were queued at the border to South Africa wishing to buy food and clothing.

Officials from the South African Police Services, South African Revenue Services and various departments visited the border between South Africa and Mozambique on Tuesday, 3 March 2009.

They were able to gain on-the-ground knowledge of the operations taking place at the busy border which processes about 300 people an hour. They were also able to assess what further security measures could be implemented.

Director Generals who visited the site included the Department of Correctional Services's Commissioner Xoliswa Sibeko, Department of Justice and Constitutional Development's Advocate Menzi Simelane, Silumko Sokupa of the National Intelligence Co-ordinating Committee and South African Police Services Deputy National Commissioner Andre Pruis.

## One-stop border post

Commissioner Sibeko announced that the Lebombo and Ressano Garcia Border Post in Mozambique would be integrated into a one-stop border post to facilitate the legal movement of people and commodities across the border.

"Travelers will only stop once as opposed to the current dispensation which requires that they get processed at two facilities of the two countries," said Commissioner Sibeko, adding that this would also address congestion at the border and ensure convenience for travelers.

"It is our intention to ensure that law enforcement in all South African ports of entry is effective," she said.

## Use of satellite imaging

Addressing reporters after confiscated goods estimated at over R1 million were destroyed at a storage facility at the border, Advocate Simelane said although there were remaining challenges at the border, the department was content with the work done by law enforcement agencies.

"Our visit helped us to come up with comprehensive strategies to enhance our security measures at the post," he said, adding that their visit would further assist government to quickly fix things that needed special attention.

Deputy Commissioner Pruis said the SAPS was expecting to install a satellite imaging system and sensors at the border soon which would more effectively monitor the movement of people, goods and vehicles.

## Joint Border Clearance Initiative

Government has always made law enforcement at ports of entry a priority, however, efforts are being doubled ahead of the 2009 FIFA Confederations Cup and 2010 FIFA World Cup.

A Joint Border Clearance Initiative is expected to be implemented at both the South African and neighbouring states' border posts to deal with the anticipated influx of soccer fans.

The Commissioner explained that during the two sporting events, additional police would be deployed at the country's borders and helicopters with programmed cameras would be operating at the posts to ensure safety and security in these areas.

Specific attention will be given to Lebombo, the Zimbabwe border at Beit Bridge, the Botswana border at Kopfontein, the Swaziland border at Oshoek and the Lesotho borders at Ficksburg Bridge and Maseru Bridge.

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