

# goods to go

In Mozambique, major investments in port and harbour facilities are making Maputo a model for how small African ports can get ahead. By MURRAY HUNTER

**In the greater scheme of things, the port** of Maputo is pretty small beer. In sub-Saharan Africa, it doesn't even appear on the list of top ten ports. South Africa's Durban heads that list by a comfortable lead, handling 1.75 million tons of container volume. At 750 000 tons, Conakry in Guinea is a distant second, trailed closely by Cape Town, Abidjan, Mombasa, Port Elizabeth, Luanda, Dakar, Dar es Salaam and Richards Bay in short order.

The port of Maputo in Mozambique is also a study in marrying untapped potential with vital development – and other small ports in Africa would do well to take notice.

This year, the port's development director announced that it will process 8.7 million tons of cargo in 2010, with projections that this will rise to 26.2 million tons in 2015. From a port

that one might call a scrappy up-and-comer, it's just the kind of ambition that makes one sit up and take notice.

In truth, this is all ground lost and regained. It has been a difficult road for the port of Maputo. Before Mozambique gained its independence in the 1970s, the port handled about 14 million tons a year. About 40% of Gauteng's industrial exports were transported along the Maputo corridor and exported through the port of Maputo.

After Mozambique gained independence, cargo levels at the port plummeted to about one million tons. Railway lines leading to Maputo were sabotaged or fell into disrepair and exports from South Africa and Mozambique's landlocked neighbours were diverted to Durban and Richards Bay. By the late 1990s,

