INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

TO THE JOINT PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES ON

BORDERLINE AND BORDER POST SECURITY

ON BEHALF OF THE VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

BY COMMISSIONER OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN REVENUE SERVICE

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8 NOVEMBER 2011

Introduction

Honourable chairpersons and members of the combined committees, thank you for the opportunity to brief you today on the work that government departments and agencies are doing - both jointly and individually – in respect of borderline and border post security.

With us today, Honourable members, are the primary roleplayers at South Africa’s border: the Department of Home Affairs whose delegation today is led by the Director-General Mr. Mkuseli Apleni, the South African Police Service whose delegation is led by the Acting National Commissioner Lieutenant General Nhlanhla Mkwanazi accompanied by Lieutenant General Elias Mawela, the South African National Defence Force delegation is led by the Deputy chief of Joint Operations Major General Iphraim Phako, and of course the South African Revenue Service which I am privileged to lead.

In addition to these primary agencies, our borders would not function effectively without the support and cooperation of the Department of Public Works which is today represented by Acting Deputy Director General Peter Chiapasko, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries represented by Director Inspection Services Mr Mooketsa Ramasodi, and the National Treasury represented by Director
for Governance and Administration Mr. G. Tembo and Director for Defence and Military Veterans portfolio Mr. P. van Schalkwyk.

We also have with us William Mpye who currently chairs the Border Control Operational Coordinating Committee (BCOCC).

Honourable members, each of these government departments and agencies perform unique roles in addressing the various aspects of borderline and border post security and efficiency. As part of today’s presentation, each of them will brief you on the work they are doing in line with their particular legislative mandates. I hope the committee members will understand the logistics involved in coordinating the presentations of six government departments which led to us only sending it out on Friday.

But before we get to this, permit me to provide some context on our borders and to brief the committee on how we as government departments are working together in collaboration to enhance our effectiveness.

**RSA borders in context**

Ladies and gentlemen, to put our borders into context it is useful to provide a view of the scale of the challenge we face in our vast country in providing an effective border security response.

South Africa has 4 800km of land borders (Botswana 1840km, Namibia 967km, Lesotho 909km, Mozambique 430km and Zimbabwe 225km) 1.2 million square kilometres of airspace and 2 800km of coastline.

Our points of entry comprise 730 registered airports and landing strips, 10 international airports, 53 land border posts, 7 rail crossings, 8 commercial sea ports, 11 non-commercial harbours and 92 other small harbours. Two further entry points also exist which pose security threats – via post and via cyberspace.

On the people side, in 2010 11.6 million foreign travellers and 5.1 million SA residents arrived in SA while 9.9 million foreign travellers and 5.2 million SA residents departed during the same year. That is a total of almost 32 million movements of people into and out of South Africa.
The bulk of foreign travellers arrived via road (8.3 million), with the remainder by air (3.2 million).

More than 50 airlines, making around 230,000 aircraft landings and carrying about 33 million passengers a year, move through South Africa’s 10 principal airports.

Johannesburg’s OR Tambo International Airport is Africa’s busiest airport, with about 8.81-million departing passengers and 8.78-million arriving passengers.

As far as goods are concerned, more than R1.5 trillion worth of goods moves through South Africa’s borders each year.

At our busiest road border posts 160 000 trucks move through Beit Bridge border post and a further 60 000 move through Lebombo. That is an average of over 600 trucks a day at these two border posts alone. At Beit Bridge that equates to an average of 20 trucks per hour, 24 hours a day – or a new truck every three minutes.

In terms of sea cargo, the Port of Durban is South Africa’s main general cargo and container port and handles 31.4 million tons of cargo worth more than R50 billion each year. Approximately 44% of South Africa’s break-bulk cargo and 61% of all containerised cargo flows through Durban and an average of 83,000 containers per month are handled at the Durban container terminal, the largest in the southern hemisphere.

Ladies and gentlemen, the men and women who job it is to safeguard our borders operate under some of the most extreme conditions 365 days a year, 24 hours a day. In the peak of summer, temperatures soar well above 40 degrees along our western, northern and north eastern borders. In winter the temperatures plummet to well below freezing and are blanketed in snow along our borders with Swaziland and Lesotho. And the seas around our coastline are some of the roughest and most notoriously unpredictable in the world.

The work of these officials is as wide and varied as the threats from which they must protect South Africa’s people which include:

- Threats from people who cross into South Africa carrying a multitude of illegal, unwanted and harmful items from guns, to drugs, to disease
• Threats from illegal immigrants who come seeking a better life but is so doing pose a direct threat to our own ambitions for job creation and a better life for our own people
• Threats from animal and plant products which can wreak havoc on our agricultural industry and our environment
• Threats of terrorism and international crime
• Threats from dumped or under-valued products in direct competition to our own industries which provide jobs and economic growth

**Challenges faced at the border**

Honourable members, South Africa faces significant challenges in securing our borders from these and other threats. These challenges are pressing, and require our ongoing attention. These challenges span our aviation, land ports, border line, ports of entry and maritime arena.

Our borderline fences are vulnerable, radar coverage of our airspace is insufficient and our vast maritime border is under patrolled.

The lack of available resources, the scourge of corruption, vulnerable transit facilities, poor security management by contracted private security companies at ports of entry and non-adherence to legislation all contribute to insufficient detection and deterrence of these threats.

The departments represented here today are all acutely aware of these challenges, and will set out in the course of our presentations the actions we are taking to better address them.

But it is important to understand that South Africa is not alone in grappling with these challenges and how best to address them. One needs only to watch programmes on the work of border security agencies on Discovery Channel to see that these problems are universal and the solutions equally complex and elusive even in wealthy, developed nations.
What is also clear is that the challenges we face at South Africa’s borders cannot be viewed in isolation from broader socio-economic and political issues facing us, our region and the world.

The challenge of illegal immigrants, for example, is a symptom of regional inequality and instability and the long-term, cost effective and desirable solution is not to build higher, wider and more impenetrable fences – but to address the root cause through regional economic growth and stability.

**Inter-dependencies at the border**

Equally importantly, is that borderline and border post security requires a collaborative and combined response by the various government agencies at work in this arena.

At each port of entry, immigration procedures are required for human traffic and customs procedures are carried out for goods traffic. Each of these procedures requires a careful balancing of the needs of security and the facilitation of the movement of goods and people. The prevention of the illicit movement of goods and people is carried out jointly by the Department of Home Affairs, the South African Revenue Service and the South African Police Service – with critical input from the State Security Agency.

At the same time the movement of both people and goods needs to ensure that our agriculture and our people are protected from harmful diseases that may be carried over the borders.

In order to effectively channel and control the movement of goods and people the borderline must also be protected and secured. The chart in the presentation shows the role of the various departments within the border processes. As you can see the process flow at the border typically involves a series of inter-dependent agency processes and a number of hand-offs from the one department to the other.

Recognising that cooperation and collaboration are essential for the efficient and effective management of our borders, our government has initiated a number of responses in recent years to enhance cooperation and integration of these functions.
Following the National Crime Prevention Strategy (NCPS) in 1996 and the National Inter-Departmental Structure (NIDS) in 1997-2001, the Border Control Operational Coordinating Committee (BCOCC) was set up in 2005, initially under the National Joint Operations and Intelligence Structure (NAT JOINTS) but subsequently independently, in order to coordinate all these inter-related border functions.

The BCOCC has up to now been the main mechanism of port of entry coordination. At the same time operational activity undertaken in relation to the borders continued to be coordinated through the NAT JOINTS.

Honourable members, the enhancement of South Africa’s border security has been identified by government as a key strategic priority to enhance the safety and security of the country and its citizens as well as to protect the local economy and boost economic growth and job creation.

The establishment of a Border Management Agency (BMA) to give greater effect to alignment and coordination remains a key priority for government and Cabinet last year mandated the National Intelligence Coordinating Committee (NICOC) to pursue this initiative. Work is continuing under NICOC to establish the BMA by 2014.

In the interim, work to further enhance coordination and cooperation between the various agencies with a view to improving our borderline and border post security is not standing still.

The Inter Agency Clearing Forum is an informal structure established in early 2010 as a multi-agency coordination and cooperation committee to expedite and facilitate the implementation of border security enhancement measures – most notably FIFA guarantees in respect of the movement of goods and persons before and during the 2010 FIFA World Cup.

The IACF at that time comprised the various agencies involved in border protection and security including the departments of Home Affairs; Public Works; Justice and Constitutional Development; International Relations and Cooperation, the South African National Defence Force; the South African Police Service; the South African Revenue Service; and the State Security Agency.
The primary focus of the IACF was to coordinate and facilitate the urgent development and implementation of an Enhanced Movement Control System (EMCS) on behalf of the Department of Home Affairs ahead of the 2010 FIFA World Cup. The EMCS formed part of the guarantees provided to FIFA by South Africa and provided for a world-class movement control system able to accurately identify persons entering and leaving the Republic of South Africa and to instantly screen such individuals according to continuously updated data provided by a range of domestic and international agencies including the SAPS, SSA, Interpol and FIFA.

This project has been hugely successful and since its implementation the eMCS system has processed over 50 million movements.

A second key project being given impetus by the IACF is the one-stop border post between South Africa and Mozambique at Lebombo/Ressano Garcia which, when fully implemented, will enhanced the clearance of people and goods to significantly reduce congestion at the border by moving the clearance of goods away from the border to new facilities 7 kilometres inside South Africa and 4 kilometres inside Mozambique.

This project will see immigration, customs and security officials from both countries operating together to facilitate a smoother, faster and more secure flow of people and goods through this important border post. Achieving this requires international agreements and legislative amendments which are currently being considered by Parliament.

But perhaps more importantly, the success of the IACF has been in giving birth to a new cooperative and collaborative spirit between the various agencies involved – who of their own accord have chosen to continue participation in this informal grouping beyond the World Cup.

In fact, the IACF has grown since the World Cup to include the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development and the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries.
The IACF, which is chaired by my colleague the DG of Home Affairs, provides a platform at which the various agencies can jointly address both ad hoc and longer term border security issues with a view to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of individual departmental responses as well as combined efforts to improve security as an interim measure ahead of the establishment of the BMA.

A proposal by the JCPS Directors-General cluster committee concerning the formalisation of the IACF and on additional strengthening of existing structures, facilities and mandates of the various departments and agencies has been submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

Preparation for today's presentation between the departments was coordinated within the IACF.

**Plan for today**

Honourable chairperson and members, with that as an overview and introduction, allow me to hand over to the individual representatives from the various departments to provide a more detailed overview of their mandates, challenges faced and key achievements at the borders.

In terms of the proposed sequence, the Department of Home Affairs will begin by addressing immigration issues, I will return to present on behalf of SARS on customs, then hand over to the SAPS, followed by SANDF, the Department of Public Works and finally the National Treasury.

Regrettably, the State Security Agency which was to have provided an overview on the security assessment, is not with us today.

Thank you