CHAPTER 5: Towards Congestion-Free Point of Entries

This chapter critically discusses the summary of the key findings along the study objectives. It then draws conclusions based on these findings and discussions are put forth for the recommendations of the study based on both policy and practice. Finally, the chapter presents the recommendations and further areas of research.

The conclusions for this study were made in accordance with the study objectives and research findings.

The research findings revealed that customs inefficiencies, inadequate and poorly managed infrastructure and lack of integrating activities of border management agencies were the causes of traffic congestion at Beitbridge Border Post during the period 2013 to 2016.

The study's findings publicised that corruption, insufficient state of supporting infrastructure, illicit trade and customs, contribution of various agencies to customs delays and systems incompatibility were the challenges faced by ZIMRA at Ports of Entry during the period understudy.

The study's findings confirmed that the level of traffic congestion at Ports of entry is increasing and impairing the performance of Zimbabwe Revenue Authority Ports of entry.

Considering the above conclusions, it can be recommended that:

To reduce traffic congestion and improve performance of Customs at Ports of Entry, there is need to improve the clearance process of goods by implementing measures that will establish an elaborate risk management system that will remove customs inefficiencies, bureaucracies, allow faster clearance for commercial vehicles and eliminate the need for physical inspection. Through streamlining the clearance process excessive customs inspections, lack of transparency and predictability, insufficient application of automated systems and too many documentary requirements for a single transaction will be easily resolved.

There is need to improve hard infrastructure at Beitbridge Border Post to reduce traffic congestion and improve performance of Customs at Ports of Entry. This includes improving road and truck parking bays, commercial offices, office space, inspection bays, bridge development, truck and baggage scanners, information and communication technology, surveillance technology. For example, a single

lane dedicated to commercial vehicles is grossly inadequate for the volume of traffic going through the border. This urgently needs to be updated. The area should be redesigned so that the necessary transport and economic infrastructure, such as the taxi rank and informal traders' space, does not interfere with commercial traffic.

There is also need to upgrade soft infrastructure such as truck scanners used by ZIMRA to deal with high traffic volumes. ZIMRA's information technology also needs to be upgraded to prevent the frequent communication crashes between the Beit Bridge and Harare offices, and to capacitate the head office's computer system to deal with the high volume of traffic.

ZIMRA should adopt a single window facility. The use of a single window facility will allow commercial vehicles to lodge information with a single body to fulfil all import or export related regulatory requirements. A single window environment provides one entrance, either physical or electronic, for the submission and handling of all data and documents related to the release and clearance of an international transaction. This reduces queues at Ports of Entry which in turn reduces traffic congestion.

The Zimbabwean and South African governments should embark on a programme to establish a One Stop Border Post (OSBP). OSBP concept promotes a coordinated and integrated approach to facilitating trade, the movement of people, and improving security. This eliminates the need for travellers and goods to stop twice to undertake border crossing formalities. The OSBP concept calls for the application of joint controls to minimise routine activities and duplications. Through a "whole of government" approach, the OSBP concept reduces the journey time for transporters and travellers and shortens the clearance time at border crossing points.

Further research should be undertaken on traffic congestion and its impact on the efficiency of freight logistics. Research should also be conducted on the indirect and consequential costs of traffic congestion. This will require an in-depth analysis to identify the actual indirect costs incurred by freight companies and the effect on the national economy.