

Afke van der Woude

CONNECTING BUSINESS IN GHANA AND THE NETHERLANDS

ACCRA



Who are you and what is your profession?

I am Afke van der Woude, since two years I am working in Accra at the GNBCC, the Ghana Netherlands Business and Culture Council, as a project manager. Together with the Dutch Embassy and other Dutch organisations, we do a lot of projects to broadly promote business between Ghana and the Netherlands.

How is GNBCC involved with the Tema port?

GNBCC is involved in the port through several projects, organizing activities for our partners that have an interest in the port and the port expansion. I first got to know about it because of the Sustainable Ports project we do together with the consortium that Delft University of Technology is also part of. For this project we facilitated several things, such as workshops in the port, which also enabled us to meet a lot of stakeholders.

And on the other hand GNBCC also knows about current developments and expansion of the port through our members. There's a lot of trade between Rotterdam and Tema, so many of our members, either Ghanaian or Dutch, are active in the port and in the free zone around the port.

How is the work of GNBCC related to the port expansion?

In 2015 GNBCC was involved in a tender towards the port expansion, we acted as a facilitator for the Dutch partners that submitted a proposal for this tender. That is how we work, we usually don't initiate, but facilitate. In the practical sense of organizing things for members, but also with relations and connections.

What is a Sustainable Port to you?

A sustainable port would be a port that is eco-friendly, inclusive towards the people living in and around the area, and economically sustainable. With that I mean that the companies and people working there can sustain a profit, can benefit. Furthermore a sustainable port means that it is well connected to other areas and actors around the port. Not only the port in itself should be sustainable, but also the connections to the hinterland.

What do you think the Tema port looks like in 20 years?

I fear from what I see going on now that it will be completely constructed covered in concrete, very congested, and very polluted. Tema is growing fast, but not in a very green or eco-friendly way. Yes, within the port there are good developments; it's quite clean and well-organized. But surrounding the port

there is still a lot of development needed for it to function well. Congestion and pollution will not change for the better if the current trends continue.

What do you hope Tema port looks like in 20 years?

I hope of course that it will look much nicer than what I just described. I do see some developments going on - in terms of infrastructure and connectivity - that will improve the area. And that people are aware that some form of city planning is needed to deal with all these flows of goods, people, cars, trucks and other traffic around the port. So I think that there will be some movement in that direction. But in an ideal world, it would not only be targeted at infrastructure connectivity, but also green areas, proper housing, and cleaning up the area to make it a more inclusive and sustainable city. That would be nice, to use the economic development to develop also other aspects of Tema.

From the GNBCC perspective, I also hope it will be a very well functioning and profitable port, that attracts a lot of Dutch companies. Tema Port is functioning quite well already, as we know from our members. So, if the port becomes even more efficient and professional, I think we will have a very nice partner for Dutch companies to use as an entry point to West Africa. To do their trade and hopefully establish themselves in Ghana.