

## SHIPPING AGENTS

### TEMA PORT



#### **Who are you and what is your background?**

I am Bas de Vaal, managing director of Ports Marine and MTG. We are a shipping agents and logistic company delivering ship agency and freight forwarding services for importing and exporting in Africa. We are located right outside the port at the fishing harbour gate.

We operate liner services and chartered vessels, which call Tema port with project and any other types of cargos. And we operate a container depot, where we store containers for various companies. On our premises we also have a warehouse, used to store tuna cans for a tuna-canning factory; these are sent to the Netherlands.

#### **How are you and your company involved with the expansion of Tema port?**

I am personally not involved in the expansion itself, the project is fully done by the MPS group. But I am very interested in it because it will bring a lot of changes. All container traffic will go to the new port and that might have impact on our depot. I'm sure the expansion will also affect my business.

#### **What is a Sustainable Port to you?**

For me it means that a port is fair. It's a place for fair employment. A safe place to discharge and load cargos. Sustainability means that an eye is kept on the environment, even in the difficult West African conditions. These are very different from the Dutch conditions and conduct, but for a sustainable port we must try to keep certain standards.

When I speak of difficult conditions, I mean issues like the heat, the dust, the age of the port, and the kind of products that are being discharged; for example cement clinker that is very dusty. And also the pollution by the trucks, this is incomparable to the new trucks we have in Holland. For sustainability, we have to try to slowly raise the standards and improve the conditions in the port, within the means we have here in Ghana.

#### **What do you think the Tema port will look like in 20 years time?**

I think it will still be congested, even with the new port coming. So they already have to think about the next step. Ghana is growing very quickly. For a start, the infrastructure leading towards and out of the port is still lacking. There is no water, no rail, just roads. If Tema Port wants to compete with the ports

of Lomé and Abidjan, and wants to serve Burkina Faso and all the hinterland countries, it has to grow even bigger because these economies are growing as quickly as the Ghanaian. So, twenty years from now, I hope there are new plans to expand the port even more.

#### **What do you hope Tema port looks like in 20 years from now?**

I hope the roads will be improved, and that there will be a place where trucks can park before reaching Tema roundabout. This would be perfect to limit traffic inside and in the immediate surroundings of the port, and to stop trucks from parking randomly alongside the roads. In twenty years, the organization of incoming and outgoing trucks will be more efficient, so they don't have to wait so long around the port.

Such efficiency can be created for example by developing better access roads and by clearing cargo more quickly. That means improving the customs system, like with the step that is being taken now by the vice-president: a paperless system. But this is only the first step. In the future I hope a fully paperless process will clear goods in a few hours.