

GHANA PORTS & HARBOUR AUTHORITY: TEMA PORT

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Who are you and what is your professional background?

I am Edward Kofi Osei, a man of diverse background with a diverse education ranging from business to law, and international relations. I have six degrees and have lived in Ghana and abroad, spending most of my working life in the United States.

How are you involved with Tema Port / this project?

In March 2017, I was appointed Director of Tema Port by the President (Nana Akufo Addo). I was asked to come back to Ghana for this position. It has been quite an adjustment.

What do you think of Sustainable Ports?

It is a very interesting concept in the sense of how do you define sustainability. Is sustainability dealing with the main functions of a port or does it refer to both the main functions of a port and its impact on its immediate environment? I think of the examples of like the Port of Camden (in the United States), which is a 'shithole' dump, but the port exists and functions even though the neighbourhood around it is 'dead'. In contrast there is New York Port, which has vibrant city life around it and port functions.

So, is sustainability ensuring that the port continues to function or considering the immediate environment? For me it means that sustainability is both continuing port functions and taking the impact on the immediate environment into account, because in the long run for a port to attract cargo and workers it has to exert an impact on its environment.

Take congestion, for example. If a port is a first class port, but the road networks are congested the importers and exporters will refuse to use the port. The port itself suffers. A sustainable port means that the port impacts its immediate environment, but that the linkages between the port and the economies around it need to be sustained.

How does the Sustainable Ports project differ from a more traditional view?

I'm excited about the project. We can take this thinking and make it part of long term strategic planning. In strategy meetings, instead of talking about building another berth, we can also think about road

networks, housing for workers and others, and education, so that it is attractive to the workforce. We can bring this to bear in planning any port.

What is your particular learning?

Awareness - I have gained awareness of these issues that one naturally doesn't think about when planning a port - dealing with environmental impact issues.

What are the next steps?

The next step is not to make this another classroom exercise, but to actually engage the port community, the stakeholders whose functions impact the ports functions and vice versa. Also, to engage policy makers from municipal level to the president, because some policies (port developments) are driven at the national level.

What does this mean for the coast of Ghana, and Africa?

The project, if explored/expanded and policymakers are made aware, will shape the debate and influence the construction of new ports in Ghana and West Africa, because a lot of port expansions are anticipated along the West African coast.