

Fred Smiet & Jan Anne van der Veer

EMBASSY OF THE NETHERLANDS IN GHANA

ACCRA



Who are you and what is your profession?

I am Fred Smiet, First Secretary, Water & Climate affairs (left on the picture). My work deals with development cooperation in the water and sanitation sector, and trade promotion issues. Currently, we also started focusing on integrated water management and coastal zone issues in Ghana.

And I am Jan Anne van der Veer, Second Secretary of the Dutch Embassy in Ghana, Trade & Private Sector Development (right on the picture). I work for Dutch companies that want to do business in Ghana and with young Ghanaian entrepreneurs that want to set up their business here in Ghana.

How is the Dutch Embassy in Ghana involved with the Tema Port expansion?

We used to have a ports development program, and currently maintain contact with

companies that are involved with the port. The port expansion touches on the work of a lot of companies that either are Dutch, or have strong ties with the Netherlands. In fact, many shipping lines and shipping agencies have their European head quarters in Rotterdam. So for the Dutch embassy there is definitely a strong link between the port of Tema and Dutch companies, as the port development affects their work and business.

What is for you a sustainable port?

In my perception this is a facility that does not impact negatively on its environment, being the social and ecological surroundings. In that sense you can call it a green, or eco-friendly port. Apart from that, it should also be commercially sustainable, so that companies working in this port are able to make a profit and to keep developing.

What do you think the Tema Port area will look like in 20 years time?

The area is developing very fast. In the past year, several small developments have already started, especially concerning the roads connecting to the port. From the plans I've seen so far, the port will look very different: larger scale, more automated. So the port business will grow, not only because of the growth of the Ghanaian economy, but also because of the growth of ECOWAS and the countries that depend on Tema port: like Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger. The ECOWAS will provide easier trade across the borders and that will tremendously help the expansion of Tema port. And for the area around the port: if the encroaching is not stopped there, the lagoons might be completely filled and fully settled in a few years from now.

What do you hope the Tema Port area will look like in 20 years time?

I hope that the feeder roads and other systems that lead to the port will be improved. Hopefully there will also be room for other developments like the ones we see in the Rotterdam port: room for recreation and for nature. The ideal port would be a green port that has minimal negative impacts. And I hope that the lagoon will be saved. I regularly go bird watching in the lagoon for example; it has great value. Also, it seems to be an important religious and cultural spot. As this is of great importance to the Ghanaians, I hope this might help to save the the lagoon area.

