

Thinking 'out the port'

"Africa needs to think 'out the port', we need to develop the entire value chain, including the hinterland infrastructure, and customs need to see themselves as trade facilitators," said Erik Kok, CEO of DSM Corridor Group from Tanzania, speaking at [African Ports Evolution 2016](#). African Ports Evolution is the largest African gathering for maritime and logistic industry professionals to think out the box, and beyond the port, to devise solutions to the multiple challenges this sector faces.



[Image Source: Transnet Port Terminals](#)

Sani Umar Galadanchi, the director of maritime services from the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Transportation discussed these challenges in his keynote address, "most ports are facing major challenges such as congestion, sustainable growth and lack of investment. We need to consider the interests of all port stakeholders."

Another speaker at the event, Barbara Mommen, CEO, Maputo Corridor Logistics Initiative (MCLI) stated that "we need to use forums like these where we can take advantages of the networking opportunities. African Ports Evolution is an excellent meeting place for the different entities in the entire supply chain."

Pursuing export-led growth

Karl Socikwa, the CEO Transnet Port Terminals advised the delegates in the audience that "businesses in Africa should be pursuing export-led growth economy. At 11%, intra-African trade is the lowest in the world. Localisation is a key issue and it's important to encourage local manufacturing."

Increasing competitiveness, attraction foreign investment

Finance and investment was another hot topic at African Ports Evolution. The Development Bank of South Africa hosted a Finance and Project Preparation Master Class where three DBSA speakers discussed DBSA's approach to project preparation focusing on funding available and selection criteria. Thabadiawa Mufamadi, the chairman of the Ports Regulator of South Africa commented that "we need to make South Africa a destination for foreign investment and that there needs to be a deliberate commitment to increasing competitiveness".

According to Deanne de Vries, who is the senior vice president of Agility Africa, based in Mozambique, "there need to be 'win-win' partnerships between the private and public spheres."

Making ports more reliable and efficient

Mixo Mayemele, the general manager of the Southern African Netherlands Chamber of Commerce asked an important and key question: “As ports are the catalyst for growth and social change, how do we make them more reliable and efficient?” William Petty, the head - Regional Committee for Africa, International Road Transport Union (IRU), from Switzerland suggested that “time and cost are not always the most important considerations, it’s predictability that’s key and must be built into the business model.”

Ports of the future

In his keynote, the German Ambassador Walter Lindner, stated, “Deep sea ports are the way of the future”. Not only was the Africa’s future development of hard infrastructure addressed, but future technology was a key theme in the Ports ICT Summit, a breakaway track, where topics included demystifying the concept of Smart Ports and the understanding how best to combat cyber-crime.

Speaking at the African Ports Evolution 2016 Conference, Ristha Joga, information, management and services manager at Transnet National Ports Authority’s Port of Durban said: “a [Smart People’s Port](#) will result in an efficient data-rich and information-rich eco-system connecting port assets, port employees, terminal operators and the port community including road and rail.”

Women in Transport

The networking highlight of the forum was the glamorous Mayoral Cocktail Function that hosted the [Women in Transport Awards](#), where the Deputy Minister of Transport, Lydia Sindisiwe Chikunga, addressed the audience and presented awards that recognised dynamic and inspirational women in the transport sector.

The next African Ports Evolution will take place from 4 - 5 October 2017 at the Durban International Convention Centre.

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