

KEY NOTE ADDRESS BY PROF. C. AMEYAW-AKUMFI
HON. MINISTER OF HARBOURS AND RAILWAYS
(PRESENTED BY MR. BRIAN ADOMAKO, CHAIRMAN,
GHANA PORT AND HARBOURS AUTHORITY) AT THE 6TH
INTERMODAL AFRICA 2008 FROM FEBRUARY 28 - 29,
2008 AT THE ACCRA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
CENTRE

DISTINGUISHED CHAIRMAN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS
CONSULTANTS AND DIRECTORS
EXHIBITORS AND PARTICIPANTS
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

I welcome you all to this 6th Intermodal AFRICA event in Accra and wish you a happy stay in Accra.

Over the past years, the transport industry has been transformed by the demands of an increasingly integrated global economy.

Besides, world trade had seen an exponential increase in containerized freight since the introduction of containers in the mid 1960's.

The maritime transport industry has become an integral component of comprehensive door to door transport services.

Containerization has brought about greater efficiency in cargo handling in the ports and inland freight stations through the use of specialized equipment which has contributed to the changing patterns and practices in the industry.

The use of containers in multimodal transport operations supported by information and communication technologies has enabled logistics services to grow with international trade.

With the advent of containers and the ever increasing size and design of vessels, Port Authorities have upgraded and developed facilities to meet the challenges of ship operators and have improved on the efficiency of their cargo handling functions, Ghana not being an exception, with the acquisition of modern state-of-the-art equipment to enhance her port operations activities.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, in our desire to develop the transport modes in the port industry in the sub-region, we should take note of the fact that competition between the modes has tended to produce a transport system that is segmented and un-integrated. Each transport mode has sought to exploit its own advantages in terms of cost.

It is however, my desire, that, the transport modes be integrated and a single document issued for transactions in order to reduce the over all cost of transportation.

Intermodal transportation has come to stay in this era of globalization. This involves the transportation of freight in a container or vehicle using multiple modes of transportation (rail, ship and trucks) without any handling of the freight itself when changing modes.

Furthermore, at the heart of modern intermodalism are data handling, processing and distribution systems that are essential to ensure the safe, reliable and cost effective control of freight cargo movement being transported by several modes.

Besides, Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) is an evolving technology that is helping Port Authorities, Shipping companies, freight forwarders and customs, cope with an increasingly complex global transport system.

Today, intermodal transport is transforming a growing share of the medium and long haul freight flows across the continent.

The well established large integrated transport carriers provide door to door services.

The limits of intermodality are imposed by factors of space, time, form, pattern of the network, the number of nodes and linkages and the type and characteristics of the vehicles and terminals.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and gentlemen at this juncture let me say that the most important feature of intermodalism is the provision of a service with one ticket for passengers or one Bill of Lading for freight. This has necessitated a revolution in organization and information control.

Freight forwarders should form partnerships with shipping companies and shippers should establish logistic platforms in their countries and intra regional organization to promote intermodalism to enhance the delivery of cargo through the ports in Africa.

The neighboring countries (Ivory Coast, Togo, and Nigeria) and landlocked countries (Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso) use the ports of Ghana for the transportation of their freight containers.

I am also aware of the Customs Authorities in the Sub-region implementing the Advance Cargo Identification System (ACIS) to track freight through their corridors.

With the ACIS in place, I would encourage shipping companies, shippers and freight forwarders to use intermodalism to reduce multiple handling of freight cargo and reduce cost of transportation on the continent.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, the ECOWAS Secretariat wants to link the sub-region with the railway network for the transportation of freight cargo and therefore has appointed a consultant to do a feasibility study and develop a railway system to cover the ECOWAS region. Similarly, the Government of Ghana intends to open up the hinterland of the country by developing railway systems to the Northern part and the Inland Port Project at Boankra in the Ashanti region. All these, in an attempt to facilitate trade and movement of cargo to/from the hinterlands at cost-effective rates that meets the pockets of all.

Mr. Chairman, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, I will like to conclude my address here and encourage you to put in your maximum effort at making this Conference and Exhibition very useful and beneficial to your companies and the maritime community at large.

THANK YOU.