



The 1st EASTERN AND SOUTHERN AFRICA PORTS ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGERS WORKING CONFERENCE

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MOMBASA CONTINENTAL RESORT, MOMBASA, KENYA

Communiqué

1st Eastern and Southern Africa Ports look at Cooperation in Environmental Management

Eastern and Southern African have for the first time held an environmental conference with the theme “Creating a Platform for Information and Experience Exchange to Improve Environmental Performance in Port Area and Hinterland Logistics”. The conference was organized by the Port Management Association for Eastern and Southern Africa in collaboration with the Ports Environmental Network-Africa (PENAF), a non-profit organization with an interest in environmental performance in African ports and supported by Kenya Ministry of Environment and the UNEP/Nairobi Convention. It was attended by ports in Eastern and Southern Africa as well as Western and Central Africa with facilitators and presenters from Africa and Europe.

The conference initiated a platform aimed at stimulating discussions on environmental challenges facing Eastern and Southern Africa ports and sharing good practice experiences in environmental protection and management. The presentations covered topics ranging from the need to undertake coastal risk and vulnerability mapping as one essential component of port environmental management, the need for research directly aimed at answering key questions posed to port environmental managers, the need to link various international protocols and conventions to local structures and legislation to facilitate their implementation.

Several opportunities for furthering good environmental management practice in the ports were identified. The significant benefits gained from implementing a coordinated and co-operative approach by acting in partnership with other competent authorities and stakeholders are a cornerstone to successful port environmental management. This would also assist in ensuring that landlocked countries distant from the port recognized that impacts arising from their activities also affected the ports and took responsibility for those ensuring good environmental management practices. One example of such a co-operative approach should be the sharing of environmental expertise and lessons learnt in each of the ports in implementing their environmental management systems between the ports. The concept of “negotiated compliance” was also identified as a practical approach to facilitating port operators, users and stakeholders accepting responsibility for the environmental consequences of their activities.

Several key environmental challenges facing the ports were identified and discussed including illegal and hazardous waste shipments which raised awareness on its implications and underscored the need for ports to build capacity and play an effective role in handling and detection. The focus areas were waste management, responses to emergency incidents such as oil spills, and the management of ballast water, specifically the risks associated with the potential introduction of alien invasive species to the ports. Although all these issues are subjects of international conventions, international protocols and, in many cases, local legislation, the implementation and management of those protocols is not consistent across the ports. This provides opportunity for systemic failures and possible environmental disaster. The platform initiated by this conference is an important tool in facilitating regional and international co-operation between the ports and the sharing of expertise and experiences, which will promote achieving a uniform high standard of environmental management throughout the region.

The conference concluded with the drafting of terms of reference for the setting up the EASAF ports environmental cooperation network. Key environmental issues facing each of the ports in the region were discussed and a list of five key common issues facing the EASAF ports was compiled together with an action plan on how these challenges could be addressed through the new cooperative network. The conference was considered a great success by all the participants.