

Badagry port: one of Nigeria's deepsea projects

\$133Bn

trade
between
Africa
and China

'The OEDC countries used to be key and the rest of the world deemed irrelevant. Increasingly it's the reverse'

will go a long way in solving the current logistical challenges," Peder Sondergaard, APM Terminals' chief executive officer, Africa-Middle East region, told *Fairplay*.

APM Terminals has recently invested over \$200M in Apapa and West Africa Container Terminal (WACT), Onne, to improve capacity at both terminals, which should increase Nigerian cargo throughput by 8-10%/year over the next decade. "By January 2014 we expect the capacity to increase to 1.2M teu, from 750,000teu," Sondergaard told *Fairplay*.

Ghana has an expected GDP growth of 8% in 2013. The mining sector is valued at \$1.2Bn, with the country heavily focused on exports of cocoa, bauxite, timber and, more recently, oil. The port of Takoradi is under development to handle increased trade flows in cocoa, bauxite, manganese, and timber.

Tema in particular has increasingly served as an outlet for Ghana's landlocked neighbours, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Mali, and in 2012 the two Ghanaian ports collectively handled

19.4M tonnes of cargo, comprising 4.4M tonnes of exports and 15M tonnes of imports and transshipments – an 8% increase on 2011.

Angola, on the other hand, has an expected growth of 8.2% this year, with oil, gas, diamonds, and hydroelectric being potential key drivers. Chevron's Angola LNG project shipped its first cargo this week following a protracted development period that saw the plant's start-up date pushed back from 2011. The first cargo is being shipped by state oil firm Sonangol to Brazil on one of the project's seven LNG tankers under long-term charter. The official launch is expected in August.

However, with the recent US shale gas boom, Angola LNG has had to switch to a spot-market focus mostly with Asian buyers. That said, project partners are expected to take advantage of high Asian demand and attractive pricing.

Meanwhile, Côte d'Ivoire's economy is back on track after its political crisis, and posted growth of more than 8.5% last year, with projected growth of 8.7% this year.

Côte d'Ivoire is the world's biggest cocoa producer and the government is predicting a 10% growth in 2014. Plans are under way with the construction of the Lagos-Abidjan expressway, expected to begin in November

2014, the importance of which was underlined by the Ghanaian president, speaking at Chatham House in London last week.

"Presidents of the five countries along the Abidjan-Lagos corridor agreed that construction work on the proposed six-lane highway on the corridor should commence in 2014 and we expect the private sector to be fully involved in the project," he told *Fairplay*.

Following a peaceful election in November 2012, and with Africa's highest proportion of mineral wealth, Sierra Leone's GDP is expected to grow by 7.2% this year. Its largest single trading partner is the European Union, buying an average of 80% of the country's exports and supplying 30% of its merchandise imports. The government signed a million-dollar agreement with the China Railway International Consortium last year for the construction of a new airport. Other intermodal developments and expansion projects at Freetown port are also expected to support trade growth demand.

Other parts of coastal Africa are also being developed, with two terminals expected to open in 2017 at Tangier-Med in the north that are expected to increase capacity at the facility from 3M teu to 8.5M teu.

"The Tangier-Med port, designed for the latest generation of container ships, is both a platform for global business transshipment and a gateway to Morocco to accommodate the traffic associated with import-export," the website of the Tangier-Med Port Authority says.

Africa and the world have a lot to gain and going by the forecast growth for 2013 and beyond, together with the growth in maritime trade and infrastructure development, it would appear that closer attention will be paid to this bloc of nations in the future. ■

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