

Tangier International Conference on Transshipment
Tanger, 20 mai 2008

Official opening ceremony speech

By Karim Ghellab, minister of equipment & transports

**Mister Ambassador of the United States in Morocco,
Mister Wali of Tangier,
Mister Mayor of Tangier,
Mr. President of the Directory of the Tangier Med Special Agency,
Honorable assistance,**

It is with a great pleasure that I participate with you in the opening of the proceedings of the Tangier International Conference on Transshipment.

First, I would like to thank the United States Government for taking the initiative to organize this important meeting on transshipment activities, which, through their close relationship with the competitiveness of world economy, contribute to the integration of countries and regions within a more total economic environment.

I am confident that the organization of such an event will be the beginning of a worldwide recognition of Tangier-Med port as a partner of the various leading actors in the field of transshipment.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The globalization of economy, the introduction of new information and communication technologies, as well as the developments in the

structure of the production apparatus, are factors that modify the current logistic organizations.

Today, we are witness to a space concentration of activities, itself a factor of the lengthening of the average distances covered and of the reduction of the number of production and distribution sites.

The world trade expansion has significantly contributed to the important increase of container traffic. In addition, the growth of Asia, in the world trade, has deeply modified the high flows of maritime transport, articulated around the lines Asia-the West Coast of the United States, intra-Asia, and Asia-Europe via the Mediterranean.

To meet the need for reduced times and handling periods, the increase of competitiveness in the multimodal transport chains, the intensification of flows, maritime companies prefer to transport boxed goods and to stop only at large ports. Consequently, transshipment flows have clearly increased in recent years.

With the arrival of new generations of container carriers/container-carrying ships, transshipment ports should have a greater role.

Conscious of these facts, governments have directed the most recent port developments in such a way as to meet these new constraints.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Conscious of the stakes and opportunities that transshipment presents for the improvement of the logistical services, Morocco decided, since 2003, to build the Tangier Med port complex as a regional transshipment platform at the crossing of the main world maritime roads.

This port aspires for excellence and for becoming one of the principal transshipment points both on the North-South axis and on the East-West sea routes.

Of the 200 ships that navigate the maritime roads daily, passing through Gibraltar Strait, many are those that will make a stopover in the Tangier-Med port, which guarantees a direct access along a major maritime axis, the capacity to accommodate the largest containerships in the world, the availability of the most modern handling equipment, and practices in conformity to the best operational standards.

In the long run, the target maritime companies can use the port as a transshipment hub for their North-South and East-West lines. This platform will also participate in the growth of Europe, North America and Africa.

The vision is to offer the port users more opportunities and solutions at the Gibraltar Strait, giving them a competitive advantage on the worldwide markets as well as ensuring the development of a large logistical and industrial platform in the North of Morocco.

The extension of this port, Tangier Med II, comes only to enlarge the business container activities of the Tangier Med Complex, on one of the

most important sea routes in the world, with the proximity of Morocco to the European market's 400 million consumers creating a unique trade opportunity.

The port complex is intended to become, in the midterm, one of the most important container platforms in the Mediterranean, with a capacity of more than 8 million EFV (EVP).

Since the opening of its first container terminal, on July 27th, 2007, conceded to APM Terminals Tangier, the port had, by the end of April 2008, accommodated nearly 200 stopovers and treated nearly 275,000 twenty-foot containers.

The import/export activities, on the other hand, started last March. Since January the 1st, 2008, service liners have been more frequently calling into the container terminal, in particular:

- The Asia-Europe service which mainly serves Europe through Asia. This service particularly calls into the Asian ports of Shanghai, Singapore, Hong-Kong and Port Saïd, as well as into the European ports of Le Havre, Felixtow, Rotterdam, Bremen and Zeebrugge.
- The West Africa service which mainly serves the West African ports namely Abidjan, Dakar, Freetown, Apapa, San Pedro, Libreville bound for Algesiras, Malaga and Lisbon.

Along with liners, feeder services have been calling more frequent into the terminal since the beginning of the year. These services concern Agadir, Tangier Med bound for Algeciras.

Starting May 2008, a more steady program of the major lines will be fixed. It concerns connections with Northern Europe, Latin America, the Western Mediterranean, the Middle-East and the Far-East.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Tangier-Med port illustrates the will of Morocco to devote a real logistic competitiveness to its economy, which constitutes one of the main objectives of the Governmental program for 2008-2012.

So far, in addition to the pursuit of the large transport projects policy and increasing their related investments, in the next five years, through new structuring projects such as the High Speed Rail (TGV), the Tangier Med II port, in addition to the ongoing reform process of the transport sector and its services, I would like to re-affirm the strong political will of the Government to give a real impetus to the logistics service sector.

Our vision to the end of this year is the implementation of a new logistical strategy based on a strong and effective partnership with the private sector.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Port and maritime security, which occupies an important place in this conference, constitutes a major preoccupation for the Moroccan Government.

Morocco, a SOLAS convention signatory state, has taken the necessary measures to protect its port installations and ships and to ensure their conformity to the ICSS code.

Besides, port safety plans were elaborated with the active participation of the representatives of the various concerned Departments and the our trade ports declaration of conformity was addressed to the International Maritime Organization (IMO).

On the implementation level, the actions undertaken concern the separation of the port activities (namely commercial and fishing activities), the sealing of restricted zones, which constitute the interfaces between ports and ships, and the efficiency of access control to the port installations.

Moreover, the safety system efficiency was strengthened by the acquisition of the safety equipment and scanners for the control of containers and trucks in the ports of Casablanca, Nador, Tangier and Agadir.

To bring Tangier Med port up to international standards, particularly those related to safety and security, the Tangier-Mediterranean Special Agency, with the support of United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA), has opted for an integrated system in conformity with the requirements of the CTPAT (Customs Trade Partnership Against

Terrorism), ISC (Initiative of Safety of the Containers), the ICSS (International Code for the Safety of the Ships and the port installations) and those of IMO (International Maritime Organization).

The implementation of this system is underway and will allow Tangier Med port to have a last generation integrated security system, which costs approximately 20 million Euros for the stage Tangier Med I and for the RO-RO port.

The Moroccan Government welcomes with satisfaction this cooperation with the United States in matters of safety and security in Tangier Med port; and the organization of this important event in Morocco testifies to the excellent relations between our two countries and the mutual will to diversify the fields of our cooperation.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are, of course, delighted with the initiatives to take the world towards an integrated and effective transport system. The organization of this conference in Morocco deeply reinforces the cooperation and exchange links between the countries present here to address transshipment preoccupations and problems.

At the end, I would like to express my congratulations for the excellent level of the speakers and contributors to this conference for which I wish a great success.

Thank you very much.