

## **Handover ceremonies of protective equipment by the WeCAPS project - Actions against the COVID19**

**Brief Remarks by Mrs Diana ACCONCIA,  
EU ambassador to Ghana**

- WeCAPS is a project funded by the European Union **with €8,5m** and implemented by Expertise France.
- The project is part of the European Union's Critical Maritime Routes (CMR) program, which aims to improve the safety and security of maritime routes in the Gulf of Guinea and the wider Indian Ocean.
- *WeCAPS aims at strengthening West and Central African ports* in their fight against risks and threats to their safety and security. It seeks to support partner authorities to help them better address the vulnerabilities of their ports.
- The three main components of the project are:
  - Strengthen the security of port facilities by improving their compliance with the requirements of the International Ship and Port Security Code (ISPS Code);
  - Support port governance: organization, management, regulation;
  - Assist civil security and actions for the prevention, risk management, handling, and storage of hazardous materials.
- In response to the COVID 19 outbreak, WeCAPS is committed to supporting the efforts of partner ports in the region to manage and mitigate the impact of the new coronavirus.

- The team considered that the project could propose additional measures to help ports protect personnel working in port areas and thus ensure continuity of operations.
  
- WeCAPS approached the ports - partners of the project, in consultation with the European Union Delegations concerned - with a series of actions to support them in facing this crisis:
  - Raising the awareness of port stakeholders through a **knowledge sharing and distance learning tool**, concerning biological risk, with a focus on the SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus and the associated COVID-19 disease;
  - The drafting of a **best practice guide** aimed at the port authorities and first responders, which should enable them to define operational procedures within the port (behavior to adopt in the event of a contamination or suspect case, etc.).
  - The **delivery of a kit of protective equipment - thermometers, disposable clothing, gloves, protective glasses, respiratory protection, etc.-** allowing the implementation of "barrier" gestures and thus continue activities and ensure safety and security missions within the port.
  
- Beneficiary ports of WeCAPS actions against COVID19 include obviously Tema and Takoradi, Douala (Cameroon); Brazzaville, Pointe-Noire (Congo Brazzaville); Abidjan, San Pedro (Côte d'Ivoire); Dakar (Senegal); Lomé (Togo).
  
- To engage local markets, the project decided to prioritize purchase in situ. One of the project's partners, the *French Directorate for Security and Defense Cooperation (DCSD)*, *offered its support through its local cooperants -and we acknowledge today here with us the presence of the Defense attaché of the Embassy of France-* who supported the team to

list the needs of partner ports, reference suppliers, and ensure the proper delivery of the material.

- The aim of these actions is to help WeCAPS' partner ports to address their urgent needs, enabling them to cope with the urgency of the situation and to maintain their activity operational, in order to continue supplying the countries of the region.
- They are also an example of WeCAPS' capacity to adapt in order to help its partners putting in place effective response measures, in difficult or unpredictable situations, and strengthen their initiatives in the areas of port governance, safety and security.
- Last but not least, WeCAPS' response to the emergency is part of the European Union and its Member States response to the COVID-19 emergency worldwide and in Ghana. There has been a major effort to adapt and re-direct our funding to support partner states, institutions and communities to fight against the pandemic. I am happy and proud to be here together with my French colleagues to show a concrete example of our coordinated action.