

13 June 2016

## **Transnet Port Terminals Richards Bay save international vessel from disaster**

Now safely anchored at its final destination, the crews of the Italian vessel MV Peppino Bottiglieri are no doubt still in gratitude to the Transnet Port Terminals (TPT) Richards Bay team for their skilled handling of a very dangerous situation they found themselves in last month.

According to Nombuso Afolayan, TPT General Manager: KZN Operations, Bulk, Break-Bulk & Cars, in mid-May TPT and TNPA were contacted by the vessel agent for the MV Peppino Bottiglieri cargo vessel requiring urgent layby berth in Richards Bay. The vessel was carrying coal, which had been loaded in Russia enroute to Malaysia and while rounding the Cape the crew discovered cargo coal smouldering in hatch #7 of the vessel. The crew was caught in a difficult situation because in order to suppress the fire, CO2 gas was used in the hatch, however, the risk with using this gas is that the pressure builds up in the hatch further increasing the risk of explosion. Hence air is allowed back into the hatch, which then further fuels the fire.

With no alternative but to seek help ashore, the vessel proceeded to the Port of Durban in search of assistance. However, due to vessel LOA and draft restrictions (the vessel is 229.2m long, and 12.5m draft) Durban's Port was unable to assist the vessel. With options and time running out the vessel contacted the Richards Bay Harbour Master, who approached TPT Richards Bay. Together with TNPA, TPT worked on a solution that would best assist the vessel and the urgency of the matter, in a manner that would be both safe and effective for all involved.

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of May the vessel berthed at Richard's Bay and TPT proceeded to unload the cargo, and the smouldering coal was suppressed. Over the next three days the cargo was then loaded back onto the vessel under the skilled supervision of TPT's landside team with the final result of the successful operation including no further incidents - much to the relief and satisfaction of all parties involved.

"We are delighted to have come to the aid of MV Peppino Bottiglieri in a situation that was potentially a life or death scenario. I am very proud of how our Richard's Bay team handled themselves during this high risk and very stressful period and it speaks volumes to the highly skilled and experienced staff we have onsite. We take the safety and security of our people and clients' cargo very seriously and TPT has invested in a number of programmes and measures to instill a culture and mindset that reinforces this. It is in unforeseen

circumstances such as this one that all the training and preparation to offset the risks and danger pays off”, concluded Afolayan.

**ENDS**



<b>WORDS</b>	<b>: 455</b>
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**Notes to editor:**

Transnet Port Terminals manages 16 cargo terminal facilities across seven South African ports with a staff compliment of over 9 000. Its operations target four major market sectors, namely the automotive sector, containers, bulk and break bulk, organised according to their respective geographical regions.

Karl Socikwa is the Chief Executive.

For information, visit [www.transnetportterminals.net](http://www.transnetportterminals.net)

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