

# INTERVIEW



## Djibouti's Makeover

Saad Omar Guelleh, General Manager of the Port of Djibouti S.A. (PDSA)

**Saad Omar Guelleh is the General Manager of the Port of Djibouti S.A. (PDSA). He is poised to inaugurate a new port the Doraleh Multi-purpose Port (DMP) located on the bay of Doraleh. This new port scheduled to begin operation by end of April 2017 is strategically significant as a main channel for international cargo. Now with a new port and a stronger handling capacity, the development of a free trade zone, new five star hotels and tourist facilities, Djibouti is set to not only improve the income of its workforce but to become the transportation hub of East Africa.**

**Capital sat down and talked with Saad Omar Guelleh, about the new facility and the various projects coming up with DMP.**

**Capital: What has led Port of Djibouti S.A to make all these infrastructural changes?**

**Saad Omar Guelleh:** First of all, I want to thank Capital for focusing on all that is going on with Djibouti's new port and the new railway between Djibouti and Addis Ababa. Because our country is strategically located, we have been able to rise to the challenge of making the port of Djibouti a regional hub for the Red Sea and Indian Ocean. The Government of Djibouti has launched major projects to make our role of regional hub and modern logistics platform stronger by creating a better port and keeping pace with developments in the maritime world.



Visiting Doraleh Multipurpose Port

**Capital:** Can you give us details about some of the new features of the port?

**Saad Omar Guelleh:** Due to its geographical position, at the intersection of major international shipping lanes connecting Asia, Africa and Europe, Djibouti Port is the natural gateway to Ethiopia.

Ethiopia is expanding its business activities, so traffic has been constantly growing. Djibouti has participated in this development by investing in modern port facilities to reduce port congestion and enhance productivity. For instance, PDSA purchased newer technology like new shipping equipment including modern Azimuth tug boats and has implemented a modern management system. In addition, the opening of the new railway between Djibouti and Addis Ababa is going to foster the relationship and allow smooth trade flow.

All these policies aim to ensure the efficiency of port operations and a high quality customer service to our partners.

**Capital:** What made you decide to build the new port and a tourist center?

**Saad Omar Guelleh:** Djibouti has started many new projects as part of our development strategy to become a transportation hub and logistics leader. Thus, to achieve this goal, we need to have a really impressive and modern port. When the new port, Doraleh Multipurpose Port (DMP), begins operating the Djiboutian government decided to rehabilitate the historic Port (PDSA) with commercial and tourist centers. Also, the government plans to build a city within the port and create a new urban way of life. The navy vessels will remain for security reasons and, as you know, our strategic position must be secured in order to allow the entire seaway to be free from all piracy and other constraints.

**Capital: What is DMP’s operation going to be like?**

**Saad Omar Guelleh:** Djibouti’s vision is to be a center of excellence and performance in regional maritime transport and logistics; so we will transform our ports into global competitive platforms for international trade. In fact, Doraleh Multi-purpose Port (DMP) is part of this goal. This facility has high performance and accommodates not only Ethiopia’s emerging economy, our main client, but also other partners in central Africa. This port, located on the bay of Doraleh, has a wide variety of facilities such as: more than 15m deep berths, as well as container, dry bulk, break bulk, and Ro-Ro terminals, and it is also connected to the railway.

**Capital: What will happen to the old port when DMP begins operating?**

**Saad Omar Guelleh:** Once all the activities are transferred to the DMP, the large spaces will be released. Due to the geographic location, the existing port has the required assets to become a central business district and tourist center. We have highly valuable projects such as hotels (especially for the five star hotels), a marina, and business districts to promote tourism in the region. It aims to comply with international standards of countries’ capitals, featuring a sophisticated, modern convention center, a marina with several terminals for cruise and tourist boats, business areas, an urban park and residential housing.

**Capital: Since the new port has several new services do you anticipate a change in the tariff?**

**Saad Omar Guelleh:** Djibouti’s President Ismael Omar Guelleh has instructed the Djibouti Port SA to keep the same tariff for the Doraleh Multipurpose Port. When the new port is inaugurated and begins operating by the end of next month, DMP is going to have several additional efficient port services but we will maintain the same pricing for imported or exported cargo. The Port of Djibouti is well known for its commitment to service excellence.

**Capital: What are some of the advantages of DMP?**

**Saad Omar Guelleh:** DMP is equipped with modern infrastructure and equipment. In addition, DMP has a large exploitable area that allows several companies to set up, a railway connection. DMP can accommodate the latest vessels (100,000DWT). The construction of DMP is part of the policy of the Djiboutian government to set up a multimodal transport system. DMP phase 1 will include a 94 hectare Terminal Area with a 1,200 meter berth length. Finally, there will be the largest free zone in East Africa next to the DMP to enable the storage of goods for transit.