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WFP Shipping Brings Life To Haiti's Once Devastated Port-Au-Prince Port

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WFP Shipping has worked tirelessly to help bring Haiti's ports back online. Port-au-Prince port, where 90% of all seaborne container traffic arrives in Haiti, is once again running smoothly thanks to the efforts of the team. WFP has now also successfully docked the first passenger vessels in 35 years at the port's South Pier. The Sea Voyager and Ola Esmeralda, both WFP chartered vessels, arrived yesterday at the south pier.



First passenger vessels in 35 years being maneuvered into place along the South Pier. Copyright: WFP/Jonathan Thompson

It has been a little over two months since the port was severely damaged and destroyed during the January 12th earthquake. Known as APN (Autorite Portuaire Nationale), the port has been under repair by the Haitian government and the US military for the past two months. The largest importer in Haiti, WFP has worked to help facilitate the repair process whenever possible.

In addition to their coordination efforts, Port Captains Niels Olsen and Mary Theresa O'Neill have worked hard to clear massive cargo congestion and the backlog of customs documentation that has kept the port from running at full capacity. Thanks to their efforts the port is now moving more cargo than before the earthquake. Turn over is now around 300 containers per day whereas before the earthquake they unloaded less than 300 containers per day.

South Pier repairs have been the work of Commander Matthew Hahne and a team of US military divers. They have been capping the tops of fractured pilings with steel and concrete for weeks. The pier is 70% complete with an estimated completion date of March 20th. The south side of the pier is already being used for discharge of container and break bulk cargo. Once work on the north side is completed simultaneous unloading on the south pier will once again be possible.

The images below are some of the first aerial shots taken of the bustling port since the earthquake. Most satellite images still show an absence of vessels and the two barges critical to the unloading process. The barge located in the middle of the port is know as Red barge and it, along with its sister Blue barge (which lies just to the north), are responsible for handling the lion's share of all container traffic. Two Ro-Ro (roll on/roll off) ramps can also be seen situated between the two barges and in the photos a logistics support ship can be seen discharging its cargo at one of the ramps.



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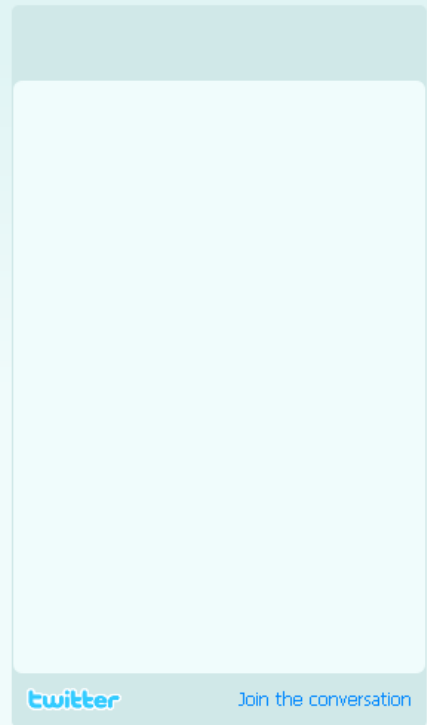
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