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### **Welcome!**

Welcome to all our readers involved in the maritime and associated industries around the globe.

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### **5. Afrimari group launch boosts London Africa links**

Afrimari, a new networking group aimed at strengthening the links between London and the African shipping world, has got off to a splendid start.

The Afrimari Group was founded by Temi Binitie and Gemina Cooper, both members of the Institute of Chartered Shipbrokers and WISTA-UK. The network is designed for those of African descent working in the maritime, energy and trade and sectors.

Afrimari will be the incubator where like minded business persons can develop new business relations in the hope of generating mutually beneficial opportunities, Temi and Gemina told us. In addition to the facilitation of business ventures, Afrimari aspires to be a hub for knowledge sharing and management; and to create an atmosphere for topical discussion about new developments and advances in the maritime, energy and trade fields.

The first general meeting, at the Baltic Exchange on March 25, attracted a high calibre participation, including members of leading companies such as AET, Braemar Seascope, Chevtex, Oando, JP Morgan, AEG Energy Market Consultants and Mitsui OSK Bulk Shipping.

WISTA-UK president Maria Dixon sent a message of congratulations to the Afrimari founders on the initiative and expressed strong support for the move.

The Afrimari Group promotes pride, professionalism and presence of persons of African descent. We aim to be the best individuals in our fields and Afrimari is here to house that, said Gemina. London as the centre of all things maritime-related has many links to African shippers and cargo owners. With West Africa a large source meeting world crude oil demand, its links to London cannot be ignored. VLCC and suezmax tankers, whose owners tend to reside in the UK, ply trade routes often originating in West African ports including Bonny and Forcados. The recent discoveries of oil and gas reserves in Ghanaian waters is another link Africa has to the global shipping market in London (exports are expected to commence in 2011).

In recent years, Africa has grown its presence in the market with shipowners finding a viable secondhand market for small oil tankers (6,000 to 8,000 dwt) perfect for pan-African movements of petroleum products. Afrimari aspires to bolster these business dealings and more from the simple yet necessary concept of networking.

An Afrimari advisory board will comprise five permanent advisors (each with voting capacity) representing maritime and logistics, energy and trade, banking and finance, insurance and risk, and legal sectors.

Membership fees will eventually apply, for funding Afrimari and providing services including opportunities to network, expansion of business spheres for capacity building, and knowledge transfer from industry experts.

The Afrimari Group is very excited about the great potential for growth and development. Lastly, we are confident in our ability as an entity, together with our members to enlarge our circles of influence within the Maritime, Energy and Trade sectors to become future leaders, said Gemina and Temi.

The group will meet every quarter, with the next meeting on June 24. Further meetings will be on September 30 and December 16 2010.

Afrimari main contacts: Gemina Cooper and Temi Binitie. [theboard@afrimari.com](mailto:theboard@afrimari.com)