

TNPA provides emergency assistance to pipe-towing tug

(Richards Bay, South Africa, 11 April 2019) Transnet National Ports Authority's Port of Richards Bay marine operations team recently came to the aid of the MTS Vanguard tug, when it lost one of eight 500 metre long pipes it was towing along the South African coast en-route from Carolina in the United States to Kuwait in the Middle East.

The pipes, each weighing 360 tons, were being towed using a specialised towing bridle, when one pipe broke loose during adverse weather conditions.

TNPA Port Control received a request from Marine Technical Services (MTS) on Wednesday, 3 April 2019, requesting an emergency diversion to the Port of Richards Bay.

The MTS Vanguard arrived at port limits with the pipes in tow on Sunday, 7 April 2019, where she was brought safely into port by a TNPA marine pilot, with the assistance of two TNPA tugs, IPHOTHWE and UKHOZI.

Subtech Group was contracted by MTS to assist with the recovery and tow of the snapped pipe (approx. 500 miles east of Richards Bay), which was brought alongside the Repair Berth, Small Craft Harbour by their Indongeni tug on 9 April 2019 with the assistance of the two TNPA tugs and three pilots.

The whole operation took six hours and the pipes were all secured along the Repair Berth by Tuesday, 9 April.

"I would like to thank the team consisting of three well experienced pilots and marine operations personnel for ensuring TNPA fulfilled its responsibility to respond to operational emergencies, particularly with this incident being the first of its kind at the port," said Nompumelelo Mkhize, Deputy Harbour Master.

"Due to the size of the pipes, the port's navigational buoys at the Small Craft Harbour had to be repositioned to ensure the successful tow and 'berthing' of the pipes at the Repair Berth," said Morgan Castle, Marine Superintendent, Subtech Group. "We are extremely grateful for the assistance from TNPA."

On inspection by Subtech Group, it was discovered that the entire towing bridle sourced from Holland, needs to be replaced before the MTS Vanguard can continue on her journey with her cargo.

The crew on board the MTS Vanguard has been at sea for three months since leaving Carolina and their journey is expected to take another 7 to 8 weeks to reach Kuwait. When the MTS Vanguard tug needs to refuel, another tug boat is required to hold the pipes at outer anchorage.

The MTS Vanguard is expected to continue with her journey and cargo within the next 10 days.

ENDS

Images Overleaf

Below:

The 500 metre long, 360 ton pipes – one of which broke loose during adverse weather conditions and had to be retrieved by Subtech with the aid of TNPA.



About Transnet National Ports Authority

Transnet National Ports Authority (TNPA) is one of five operating divisions of Transnet SOC Ltd. The National Ports Authority is responsible for the safe, effective and efficient economic functioning of the national port system, which it manages in a landlord capacity. It provides port infrastructure and marine services at the

eight commercial seaports in South Africa – Richards Bay, Durban, Saldanha, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, East London, Mossel Bay and Ngqura. It operates within a legislative and regulatory environment and is governed by the National Ports Act (Act No. 12 of 2005). For more information visit www.transnetnationalportsauthority.net.

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