

UNCTAD Transport Newsletter

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NOTE

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Editorial

Dear readers:

From this issue of the UNCTAD Transport Newsletter onwards, we would like to communicate with you more frequently. It is planned to publish this newsletter on a quarterly basis, and we hope to encourage as much feedback as possible from you. It is for this reason that most items are signed and complemented with contact information and web links. There will no longer be a printed version, but the Transport Newsletter will instead be distributed on the web and by e-mail only, which is faster, less costly and – we hope – allows us to reach a broader audience and receive more feedback from you, our readers.

We are writing this newsletter particularly for our colleagues in the transport ministries of our member countries, their port and maritime authorities, the private sector and for international and non-governmental organizations that deal with international transport and development. We hope that the information is also of use for member countries' delegates and participants at our UNCTAD meetings in Geneva.

The selected topics should be relevant for policy makers as they deal with relationships between trade, transport and sustainable development. In this issue, we have included articles about technologies (ICT in logistics), legal aspects (transport documents), capacity building (port training), maritime economics (maritime policies; trade competitiveness), and infrastructure development (the Panama Canal). Also, we briefly review recent publications and inform about our upcoming UNCTAD XI conference.

For feedback, comments, and also for suggestions for our next Transport Newsletter, please contact Jan Hoffmann at jan.hoffmann@unctad.org.

With best wishes from the Palais des Nations in Geneva,

Your Transport Section Team

Subscriptions

To subscribe or un-subscribe to the UNCTAD Transport Newsletter, please use the following on-line form: <http://extranet.unctad.org/transportnews>

UNCTAD XI

UNCTAD will hold its eleventh four-yearly conference from 13-18 June 2004, in Sao Paulo, Brazil. The conference theme is "Enhancing coherence between national development strategies and global economic processes towards economic growth and development, particularly of developing countries". There will be four sub-themes: Development strategies in a globalized world economy; Building productive capacities and international competitiveness; Assuring development gains from the international trading system and trade negotiations; and Partnership for development.

Matters related to transport, trade logistics and E-commerce will mostly be covered on Thursday, 17 June. There will be a two-hour session on the topic "Trade and Transport Facilitation: Building a secure and efficient environment for trade" with panellists from the private and public sector and international organizations. We are pleased to announce that selected sessions from UNCTAD XI, including this one, will be transmitted live on the Internet via the United Nations web cast service. We will keep you informed about these sessions in our next Transport Newsletter.

*Information about UNCTAD XI will be continuously updated under <http://www.unctad.org>.
The United Nations Web cast, subtitled "streaming to the world" is available via <http://www.un.org/webcast>*

ICTs in logistics

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) have become an inseparable component of international logistics services, which are themselves crucial for a country's competitiveness. With this in mind, UNCTAD, in November 2003, organized a regional conference on "ICT Strategies for Competitiveness and Development: Promoting e-business, trade facilitation and logistics in Latin America and the Caribbean" in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

We reproduce excerpts from the Chairman's Summary and Conclusions:

"Transport and logistics services are increasingly important elements of determining the competitiveness of foreign trade of countries of Latin America and the Caribbean. Improved market access through negotiated tariff cuts will benefit traders only if adequate transport and logistics services are available, and international transport costs on their own tend to be far higher for Latin American exports than the importing countries' customs duties. National and international policies should therefore be geared to improve access by the trading community of the region to such services.

Transport and logistics infrastructure and services are essential prerequisites to advance regional integration. At the same time, regional integration is an important factor in improving overall international connectivity. Governments of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean actively pursue integration efforts through transport infrastructure investments and facilitation policies. The development of the IIRSA programme is witness of these endeavours. A new initiative, NAP LA, seeks to develop an international Internet exchange based in Latin America that would speed up access, retain content within the region and provide business opportunities. A number of issues remain to be resolved, including those of competition and economies of scale.

It is necessary to pursue policies aimed at improving infrastructure and networks and, at the same time, seek soft solutions to improve infrastructure utilization and service qualities. The

latter approach involves managerial improvements and systematic application of facilitation tools using ICT, including through the creation of international service zones. The application of such soft solutions and the creation of a knowledge infrastructure are key elements in the region's efforts to increase the efficiency of transport and logistics services and, hence, the competitiveness of its foreign trade. Being part of transport and information networks within globalized production processes requires the use of common standards and technologies.

The door-to-door movement of goods with multiple operators and administrations results in information flows that are much more complex than the physical flow of goods. The development of port logistics community systems under multiple ownership are a proven means of coordinating the flow of cargo and thus making significant improvements in the productivity of transport services. Similarly, computerized operational packages for terminals and transport operators, such as the ACIS programme of UNCTAD, have been beneficial to improve productivity but require extensive training of staff. The ability to exchange information within the community and along the supply chain is made possible through the use of community and international standards and facilitated by the Internet. The development of these community systems takes time in order to define specific needs and to build trust amongst the various stakeholders.

ICT will play a major role in achieving a higher degree of security and in ensuring compliance with national and international requirements and regulations. Shippers and transport providers in the region will need assistance to comply with recent security requirements, be they mandatory or voluntary in nature. This particularly applies to those shippers who may have to reroute cargo through major ports thus increasing the delivery cost of goods. The implementation of security measures needs to avoid disrupting trade.

On the question of cargo theft, there is clearly a need for Government authorities to take action to improve the security of cargo along supply chains to reduce this multi-billion dollar cost to trade. There is, however, also a need for financial and technical assistance to ensure that traders and transport service providers be put in a situation not only to adhere to security provisions but also to draw long-term benefits inherent in the system.

Reducing the lead-time in international trade is crucial to be competitive. The largest component of this lead-time tends to be related to the importing procedures, including Customs. Improvement of risk management practices in customs using ICT tools – such as the ASYCUDA programme of UNCTAD – is one of the central elements not only of improving supply chain security but also of facilitating customs passage and improving customs revenue collection. Strategies need to be developed to enable customs to undertake risk analysis aimed at the same time at detecting security threats and customs irregularities.

One suggestion to possibly encourage trade facilitation in relation to Customs might be to transfer Customs Administration from the ministries in charge of finance to the ministries in charge of trade. A regional initiative for paperless Customs would also be beneficial. Another suggestion concerned the creation of public private facilitation partnerships on the national level. The necessary legal framework for ICT in trade facilitation mainly concerns the acceptance of electronic documents and of electronic signatures. The latter in particular has been found to be difficult to achieve given existing legal systems in Latin American countries.”

*The complete chairman's summary is available under
http://r0.unctad.org/ecommerce/event_docs/rio_conference.htm.*

Under the same address, you can also download the PowerPoint files of the presentations made during the conference, including topics such as “New safety and security requirements in international transport and ICT solutions”, “Transport information portals” and “ICT in Trade Facilitation”.

Port training in modular form?

In spite of port work being internationally recognized as a vocation since 1951, no international instrument is in force spelling out minimum training standards for port personnel. At the 16th International Port Training Conference (IPTC, Rotterdam, May 2001), conclusions were reached on problems concerned with the normalization of training curricula for the world port industry. As a result of these conclusions it was decided that 17th IPTC should examine the advantages of modular education when considering standardization of port training.

At this 17th IPTC (Hamburg, June 2003), the views were heard of representatives of government, workers' organizations, global terminal operators and training providers on prospects for introducing minimum port training standards by means of recognized international modular training programmes. Important papers were also delivered on new teaching technologies and their further impact on port training. Four working groups reached conclusions of the following subjects:

(i) The skill requirements needed by port personnel to ensure a practical application of the ISPS Code: It was concluded that the ISPS Code is a new instrument requiring clarification on a number of issues at international, regional and/or national level. The design of an international modular programme for training personnel in port security in line with the provisions laid down in the Code is considered feasible. Certification procedures recognized internationally should be established by IMO to ensure proper delivery of such an international programme. Training efforts should pursue the improvement of all aspects of port operations and not only the improvement of port security.

(ii) The role of global terminal operators and training providers in establishing minimum standards for port training: In practice, global terminal operators establish training standards for the terminals they manage. Personnel employed at levels ranging between supervisory and workplace functions are trained locally. Programmes delivered regionally and/or internationally train personnel above the supervisory level. Special courses are delivered for management and top management levels. Training providers will have to increasingly improve the quality of service they offer for designing and delivering training programmes in accordance with standards set by a global terminal operator. For reasons of competition, global terminal operators determine the training standards for the terminals they manage. For this reason global terminal operators would not favour international agreements on minimum port training standards. They may favourably consider standards in the field of safety and health subject to these standards being laid down in international conventions or regional agreements.

(iii) The benefit of modular programmes for training personnel to comparable competency levels required by the transport and logistic industries: Recognizing the existence of common competency requirements in the different links that compose the transport chain, modular training systems are important tools to train personnel requiring similar abilities but employed in different links composing the transport chain. Modular training systems allow training providers to offer flexible programmes based on what is needed to be known, what is nice to be known and what is good to be known by a trainee. Modular training systems are best suited to comply with established training standards. However, implementation of standards based on competency requirements and supported by recognized procedures for certification could be accomplished only if such standards are acknowledged in international, regional or national agreements.

(iv) The procedures to be followed for achieving international comparable training: The STCW Convention includes detailed provisions of competency requirements for all maritime functions covered by this instrument. With this example in mind, training providers for the

transport and logistic industries would benefit from the availability of a recognised data bank, listing the competency requirements for these industries. The compilation of such a competency data bank could only be accomplished by efforts of either an international organization of the United Nations or by regional authorities such as the European Union. The realization of this data bank could be a step forward for establishing minimum training standards for the transport and logistic industries.

The conclusions reached and all papers presented, including those delivered on new teaching technologies and their further impact on port training, are recorded in the Summary of Proceedings of the Conference.

The 18th International Port Training Conference will be held from 8-11 May 2005 in Setubal, Portugal.

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Further information and the complete IPTC proceedings can be obtained upon request from the author. See also the Hamburg IPTC web site <http://www. iptc-online.net>.

Towards an updated and consolidated single ILO Convention on maritime labour

According to UNCTAD's *Review of Maritime Transport, 2003*, 47.2 per cent of the world fleet (dwt) currently fly a flag belonging to a major open-registry country. The creation of FOCs has sometimes led to a substantial decrease in the quality of onboard working and living conditions for seafarers. To address the ongoing erosion of seafarers' rights, seafarer and shipowner representatives within the ILO Joint Maritime Commission adopted the Geneva Accord in 2001. Under this agreement, the Social Partners established that there was a need to consolidate and update the existing maritime labour instruments. This was the starting point for the International Labour Organization (ILO) to pursue the ambitious goal to create a comprehensive Maritime Labour Code. This new ILO Convention is designed to consolidate all 69 Conventions and Recommendations on Maritime Labour Law into one single instrument.

Given the importance and inherent complexity of this project and the ILO's strong commitment to create a widely ratifiable instrument, the organization has given Social Partners and interested Member States the opportunity to shape this instrument already from its early beginnings. To this effect, the ILO's Governing Body decided to form a High-level Working Group on Maritime Labour Standards, which met several times during the last two years and held its final session from 12 to 14 January 2004.

Held in the French city of Nantes, a town with a notable maritime past and present, this fourth meeting allowed the Working Group to develop a final draft of the Convention, which has been referred to as the "seafarers' bill of rights".

While earlier meetings had been focused on fundamental questions, such as the creation of a mechanism to easily update the instrument, this meeting provided for the opportunity to further shape its main body of substantial provisions. Four working parties concentrated on four main aspects of the Consolidated Convention's regulatory issues and allowed for the fine-tuning of existing text.

The hard work and invaluable guidance provided by the delegates will be reflected in the draft to be presented to the Technical Preparatory Conference in September 2004 and should allow

for the adoption of the new Consolidated Convention in 2005 by a Maritime Session of the International Labour Conference.

Considering the high level of participation at such an early stage, the prospects for the Consolidation are high. It can safely be assumed that every single one of the 210 delegates, who have been working so feverishly on the new Convention, will advocate and further promote decent work in the maritime industry.

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Global Facilitation Partnership and United Nations Trade Facilitation Network

The joint Global Facilitation Partnership (GFP) and United Nations Trade Facilitation Network (UNTF) Web Site is a collaborative tool for practitioners and policy makers involved in trade and transport facilitation. It provides brief explanatory notes and comprehensive coverage of topics and projects, and aims at stimulating exchanges on trade and transport facilitation policies and operational experience. The site is maintained by the partners active under the Global Facilitation Partnership for Transportation and Trade and the UN Trade Facilitation network.

The site is organized by topic and by sub-items. Topics include, for example, Border Agency Modernization, Customs Procedures, Logistics Costs and Export Earning, Trade Logistics and Developing Countries, Maritime Transport and Port Operations, as well as around 80 further topics. Under each topic, information is shared concerning News, Events, Recommendations, Work Groups, Discussion Groups, Activities, Training, Reference Readings, Links and Newsletters.

Visit the Site at <http://www.gfptt.org>. For questions related to the Partnership and contributions to the website, please contact Gerald Ollivier admin@gfptt.org. For questions related to data entry or technical features of the website, please contact Kremena Gotcheva support@gfptt.org. For comments and suggestions concerning the multimodal transport operation topic, contact José María Rubiato jose.rubiato@unctad.org. For comments and suggestions concerning the maritime transport and port operation topic, contact Jan Hoffmann jan.hoffmann@unctad.org.

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