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Transport Newsletter



February 2003

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Explanatory notes

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The term “billion” signifies 1,000 million.

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TRANSPORT NEWSLETTER

Editorial

Now that we are publishing the Newsletter in a new format, we have made some changes in content. Transport has been in the news a great deal this past year, notably with steps being taken to reduce the risk of maritime transport being used by terrorists. We have all heard of the Container Security Initiative and the Customs and Trade Partnership against Terrorism Agreement, and in this issue we examine these and other initiatives in more depth. A related topic is the new regulations for container traffic to the United States, which will have major impacts on carriers and shippers.

Another example of the economic cost of terrorism is the reaction to the 6 October terrorist attack on the French VLCC tanker Limburg. After this attack, the Aden Container Port and Hodeidah Shipping and Transport Co announced that port activity had halved as a result and that the country was expected to lose around \$3.8 million a month. Ships were rerouted to competitor ports in Djibouti and Oman as insurance underwriters imposed a 300 per cent increase in premiums on all vessels and ship owners applied for a war risk surcharge of \$250 per TEU.

Many other serious problems in transport need fixing. Cargo theft is excessive – an estimate by the AAPA of the value of cargo stolen in the United States each year is \$10 billion (this includes both international and national cargo). A comprehensive database of cargo losses compiled through a formal system of reporting and analysis is an essential analytic tool for reducing such losses in the maritime industry. Lloyd's List Maritime Asia reported in August that damages to fruit and vegetables in China, largely as a result of poor transport management, totalled close to \$9 billion – enough food to feed a staggering 200 million people. Transport infrastructure in Africa is deteriorating so badly that much of the continent has been marginalized from the benefits of globalization. While the solutions to these problems are largely national, greater use of information and communication technology to exchange information internationally can improve transport efficiency and security. A major initiative for infrastructure renewal needs to be launched in Africa; it is hoped that NEPAD will act as a catalyst for this.

At the same time, the major carriers have been having a financially disastrous year – Maersk Sealand's operating profits fell some 46 per cent compared to the first six months of 2001, while P&O Nedlloyd had a \$206 million operational loss for 2002. These losses resulted from the economic slowdown but also from the deteriorating freight market. These poor financial results are expected to continue in 2003 because of oversupply and trade imbalances. A compounding factor was the port shutdown on the west coast of the United States. Standard and Poor's analysts estimated that the 10-day shut down cost COSCO \$20 million, CSSL \$10 million, NOL \$10 million and NYK \$8 million. (The report did not comment on other lines.) The shutdown also disrupted logistic chains and even led to the closure of some factories because of lack of parts. New United Motor Manufacturing in California, which uses the Toyota method of keeping auto parts inventories to a minimum, was forced to stop production of some models. Canon and Sony had to switch to air freight for some components. These events demonstrate the crucial role that maritime transport plays in globalization and the lack of a viable alternative if it is disrupted.

CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development (seventh session)

At the Commission's seventh session (24 to 27 February of this year), item 4 dealt with the subject of efficient transport and trade facilitation to improve the participation of developing countries in international trade. The Commission reviewed two publications: "Report of the Expert Meeting on Efficient Transport and Trade Facilitation to Improve Participation by Developing Countries in International Trade: Problems and Potential for the Application of Current Trade Facilitation Measures by Developing Countries" (TD/B/COM.3/52) and "Efficient Transport and Trade Facilitation to Improve Participation by Developing Countries in International Trade" (TD/B/COM.3/53). The discussion was launched by a representative of a leading shipping company and a specialist on the implementation of transport and trade facilitation programmes. Both panellists presented empirical data that illustrated the relevance of transport costs in the marketing of exports and highlighted the need for investment and improved productivity in this sector.

The Commission stressed that transport efficiency and trade facilitation were decisive for development. An extremely important issue linked to transport and trade facilitation involved the recently adopted measures related to security, health and environment. There were concerns regarding the possible marginalization of some countries and ports because of new security requirements. The idea was expressed that security policies and proposals, as well as technical norms for agricultural imports, should be based on multilateral agreements.

The Commission made a number of recommendations to the UNCTAD secretariat and agreed that the next Expert Meeting, to be held in Geneva from 24 to 26 September, would focus on multimodal transport and logistic services.

For further information please visit www.unctad.org and check under Meetings 2003.

Expert Meeting on Efficient Transport and Trade Facilitation to Improve Participation by Developing Countries in International Trade

Experts met from 25 to 27 November 2002 and focused on "Problems of and Potential for the Application of Current Trade Facilitation Measures by Developing Countries". They examined the impact of trade facilitation measures on the international trade of developing countries and on effective capacity-building. Issues discussed included the following: security and trade facilitation; e-technology and trade facilitation; landlocked and transit countries and trade facilitation; measurement of the effectiveness of trade facilitation; multilateral rules on trade facilitation; the legal framework; the implementation of trade facilitation measures; and institutional aspects of trade facilitation. The experts agreed that there was considerable potential for country networks to make significant improvements to their trade through the simplification and harmonization of national procedures using international standards and recommendations. Also, it was clear that most developing countries would need assistance in implementing trade facilitation measures. It was hoped that the WTO negotiations and the new security initiatives would lead to steps that would facilitate trade for developing countries. There were a number of presentations by panellists and national experts on their respective experiences. For more details and links to presentations see www.unctad.org/ttl.

Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development (sixth session)

At its sixth session (18 to 21 February 2002), the Commission reviewed the impact of electronic commerce on international transport services and best practices for enhancing the competitiveness of developing countries. The Commission noted the importance of e-commerce as a vehicle for improving the efficiency of transport services and promoting the participation of developing countries in global trade. The Commission emphasized that the obstacles facing many developing countries in this context, in particular least developed countries (LDCs), included lack of transport infrastructure, lack of appropriate legal frameworks, and skill deficiencies among traders and providers of transport services. Recommendations to the UNCTAD secretariat included the following:

- to keep under review and monitor developments relating to economic, commercial, legal and infrastructure aspects of e-commerce affecting international transport services, and analyse the implications thereof for developing countries, and to collect and disseminate this information to member countries;
- to undertake studies on the use of traditional transport documents in international trade, particularly the extent to which negotiable bills of lading are necessary for modern-day international trade, and the extent to which they can be replaced by non-negotiable transport documents, such as sea waybills, and by electronic alternatives;
- to develop and deliver training materials, where appropriate, and disseminate information on best practices in the fields of e-commerce and international transport services for developing countries in cooperation with relevant public- and private-sector organizations; and
- to prepare guidelines for the establishment of model port community systems and logistic platforms in developing countries.

For further information please visit www.unctad.org/en/docs/c3d46.en.pdf.

IAPH World Ports Conference

The National Ports Authority of South Africa (NPA) will host the twenty-third International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH) World Ports Conference in Durban (South Africa) from 24 to 30 May 2003. This will be the first IAPH conference to be held in Africa. The theme will be “Ports – The Catalytic Impact” and the subtheme “Uniting World Economies through Ports and Harbours”. The conference will have five working sessions dealing with the following subjects: prospects and challenges of the global economy and trade (with a special focus on African and Latin American economies); emerging trends in world shipping and logistics (strategies of global manufacturers and terminal operators); impacts of IT and technical innovation on ports (including trends in IT business and e-commerce for logistics); port security and environment management (the role of Customs, port police and port authorities); and challenges for the future (which will also cover port competitiveness).

During the Conference there will be an exhibit on new developments in port management and services. For further information, please visit www.iaph2003.co.za.

Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries on Transit Transport Cooperation

In 2002 the UN General Assembly decided to convene an International Ministerial Conference of Landlocked and Transit Developing Countries and Donor Countries and International Financial and Development Institutions on Transit Transport Cooperation, which will be held on 28 and 29 August 2003 in Alma-Ata, Kazakhstan. The conference will review the current situation of transit transport systems, including the implementation of the 1995 Global Framework of Transit Transport Cooperation, and will formulate appropriate policy measures and action-oriented programmes for developing efficient transit transport systems. The meeting will also include transit countries and the donor community.

For further information, please visit the website of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States www.un.org/special-rep/ohrlls/ohrlls/default.htm.

E-COMMERCE AND INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT SERVICES

At its sixth session (February 2002), the Commission on Enterprise, Business Facilitation and Development recommended that UNCTAD monitor developments relating to economic, commercial, legal and infrastructural aspects of e-commerce affecting international transport services, and that it analyse the implications of these developments for developing countries and disseminate this information to member countries. Following is a summary of the information that has been gathered.

Major developments include the creation of Internet-based portals and websites for shipping services, the development of port community systems, the use of mobile phones for transmitting SMS messages on vessel arrival information and for trucking operators, and the use of an e-mart to reduce the costs of repositioning empty containers.

For shipping lines, IT suppliers have continued work on developing the three portals, INTTRA, GT Nexus and CargoSmart. The portals enable shippers, forwarders and logistics providers to book and track cargo across multiple shipping lines via the Internet. CargoSmart focuses on carriers, GT Nexus on shippers and INTTRA on both suppliers and users of transport services. Since its inception in January 2001 INTTRA has been used to manage more than 850,000 bookings. Shippers have indicated they would like to see these portals linked.

E-logistics portal	Website
INTTRA	www.inttra.com
GT Nexus	www.gtnexus.com
CargoSmart	www.cargosmart.com

To use INTTRA, a shipper must also register individually with the carriers that are members. The shipper can then, via a single request, get information from multiple carriers. However, rate information and bookings are transmitted individually with each carrier. The system does not compare rates; rather, the shipper does this based on information from the various carriers. At the recent (Nov. 2002) Expert Meeting on efficient transport and trade facilitation, a representative from Maersk Sealand indicated that online cargo bookings had doubled in the

last year and that by the end of 2004, the majority of the firm's clients would be booking online. The main carriers are also developing their own websites. The table below provides a listing of the top carriers' sites and the online services they offer.

The Kenya Ports Authority has announced a project to become an electronic port by the year 2005. The first stage was the introduction of an Enterprise Resource Planning System that integrates human resource management, financial planning, material management, plant maintenance, sales and distribution, and project systems management. The system is operational and provides real-time information. The next phase will be the implementation this year of a waterfront and cargo management system that will improve gate pass control, traffic management, and ship and yard planning and billing. The third stage of the project will be the implementation of a community-based system. This system will link the entire port community and allow the exchange of shipping information via a common platform.

The National Port Authority of South Africa has signed an agreement with Portnet.com Pte. Ltd., a fully owned subsidiary of PSA Corporation, to market, implement and operate the first nationwide Port and Shipping Community system for South Africa. The proprietary port community system will link the six ports of Cape Town, Durban, East London, Port Elizabeth, Richards Bay and Saldanha with the port and shipping community. Portnet.com will work in partnership with the leading technology companies Cisco Systems (networking), Frontline (IT systems), Oracle (database software) and Sun Microsystems (hardware) to create a world-class port system in South Africa. The project is estimated to be worth more than \$4.6 million.

The port community system in Hamburg, Dakosy (www.dakosy.com), has an application named TRUCKSTATION that supports haulers and terminals in the container handling sector around the port of Hamburg. The terminals are notified of planned cargo transports via the "advance notification of transport" system. The terminals reply with status information to the haulers, informing them about any errors in the advance notification (e.g. wrong indication of container height, unexpected delay with container handling or missing documents). This enables haulers to improve planning and disposition arrangements and avoid misdirecting vehicles or moving empty trucks. The hauler transmits a route plan containing details of the transport (e.g. the estimated time of arrival and the truck's number plate) to the terminal, facilitating quick and preferential treatment at the terminal. TRUCKSTATION offers online communication with truck drivers via SMS (short message service) under the product name FOCUS. Drivers receive order data or free-formatted text messages on their mobile phones via SMS. They can choose to continue updating the database with SMS messages or to send

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