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NOTE

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures. Mention of such a symbol indicates a reference to a United Nations document.

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EDITORIAL

What have been the major events in the international transport industry in the last twelve months? This period can be characterized as volatile with the growing volumes and high freight rates initially recorded being replaced by declining volumes and falling rates. Shipping lines generally posted excellent financial results for 2000 but are apprehensive this year as many brought new capacity on line at a time when volumes were falling. However, the first six months of 2001 have seen a continuation of the strong results of 2000. Although port traffic has continued to grow, the rate of growth will likely decline this year particularly in Asia. In fact, this may be the first time since the start of containerization that container throughput in Singapore and Hong Kong, China declines. Singapore has indicated it will seek to increase capacity through investment in productivity improvements rather than in new berths.

The terrorist attacks against the United States and particularly the destruction of the World Trade Center (WTC) in New York has had global ramifications. The WTC was owned by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and port authority employees and thousands of other were lost in the attacks. The men and women of the port authority responded with great determination to restore the airports, ports, bridges, tunnels, bus terminals and rail transport systems to their full capacity. These transport services are the backbone of the economic life of the region and staff responded with vigor. When contemplating this terrible tragedy one should be inspired by the vision of the chief architect of the WTC, Minoru Yamasaki: "*the World Trade Center should ... become a representation of man's belief in humanity, his need for individual dignity, his belief in the cooperation of men, and through cooperation, his ability to find greatness.*"

One of the major events in the transport sector has been the growing use of information technology, particularly via the Internet, to improve the flow, availability and accuracy of information. The major container shipping organizations offer or plan to offer schedules, tariffs, bookings, seaway bills, track and trace, and payment on line. While this presently accounts for only 15 per cent of business it is likely to grow, particularly for small volume shippers. With this improved information flow there has also be a move toward supply chain management and the development of logistics providers. In some cases these have been the traditional shipping companies such as Maersk and their Maersk Logistics Group or freight forwarders (Danzas Group, Kuehne and Nagel) and express carriers (DHL, UPS) who became more involved with their clients and provide all services along the distribution chain. Work is ongoing on a number of packages such as supply chain management (SCM), enterprise asset management (EAM) and customer relationship management (CRM). Similarly, many ports are developing websites that allow interaction with clients to enable speeding up the transport of goods. Although these innovative and technological advances are promising, it must be acknowledged that systems are only as good as the quality and timeliness of the information entered, people will make mistakes, not everyone has access to ICT and security and backup of information is essential.

The importance of security in road transport has been again underscored with the closure of the St. Gotthard tunnel (Switzerland) with the collision of two freight lorries in September 2001. The accident included the loss of life of drivers and passengers of other vehicles. The transit cargoes through Switzerland, which is not a member of the European Union (EU), had increased after the accident in the Mont Blanc tunnel in early 1999. The Mont Blanc tunnel accident, severely restricted the road freight capacity across the Alps. These accidents, therefore, would probably strengthen the arguments of proponents for an increased share of seaborne traffic between EU countries. As short sea shipping has been a long-standing transport policy in the EU, the Directive on Quality Service in Ports presented in early 2001 could be regarded as fostering this needed development.

The authors of the Transport Newsletter are pleased to announce that this Transport Newsletter No. 21 will be the last hardcopy issue and that further issues will only be made available on the web. In fact, the past two issues were also posted on the web on a trial basis with positive results. Therefore, readers are encouraged to forward their e-mail address to the UNCTAD secretariat at transport.section@unctad.org to allow advance notice to be sent for future issues of the electronic version of the Transport Newsletter.

CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS

Third United Nations Conference on Least Developed Countries

The Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC III) was announced in the last newsletter and took place in the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium from 14–20 May 2001. The LDC Conference, attended by more than 6,500 participants from Governments, specialized agencies and civil society, adopted an ambitious programme for the next decade that addresses development assistance, debt cancellation, and private investment in the 49 least developed countries (LDCs). At the concluding session a political declaration was adopted in which 193 participating Governments committed themselves to the eradication of poverty in the world's poorest countries and to the improvement of the quality of life of the more than 600 million people living in them.

At LDC III a half-day Round table was devoted to transport (the issues note (A/CONF.191/BP/1) prepared for this session is available in pdf on the website www.unctad.org/conference/ by clicking on documents). The participants to the session underlined the importance of transport services for the development process. They reiterated that transport is both a prerequisite for LDCs to be integrated into the global economy and also a condition for a balanced development within the countries. The development of a coherent rural, national and international transport network is necessary to facilitate commercial transactions between surplus and shortage areas and to support the development of trade between different regions within the country, neighbouring countries and international markets. In their declaration the Governments confirmed their belief that increased trade was essential for the growth and development of LDCs.

Transport infrastructure was considered to be an essential element of a development strategy. However, regulatory reforms, better management practices and human resource development could have a direct bearing on LDC competitiveness and on more efficient use of existing infrastructure and equipment. The availability of adequate transport services is particularly important for the trade based development process of landlocked LDCs. Regional transport cooperation can reduce inland transit costs through the establishment of regional transit transport corridors and the adoption of common rules and standards. A number of bilateral and regional agreements have been concluded to provide the legal framework for transit operations, but more technical assistance is needed to consolidate these arrangements and broaden areas of cooperation.

Deregulation, liberalization and privatization are being used to reduce costs and improve efficiency with the creation of public-private sector partnerships (PPP) in a number of LDCs. Private sector involvement appears more and more necessary for transport infrastructure development. An approach to attract finance for transport infrastructure is to develop an integrated investment programme that brings together industrial projects, such as mining, agriculture and forestry to provide cargo for the transport operator. With this security the private sector is more willing to provide funding for infrastructure and equipment. This can result in a cluster of development along a transport corridor that links landlocked states with the sea.

Regional harmonization and coordination of regulatory instruments are necessary to avoid proliferation of national regulations that operators must adhere to. Standard documentation and reduced bureaucracy are a necessity. There was also the need for Governments to refrain from levying excessive taxes or charges on transport movements that could unduly raise the cost of transport and consequently reduce competitiveness of LDC exports or increase import prices to the detriment of local consumers.

22nd IAPH World Ports Conference

The Conference was held in Montreal, Quebec, Canada from 16 to 26 May and hosted by Montreal Port Authority. Mr. Dominic Taddeo, President and CEO of the Port and IAPH President was Conference Chairman. The Conference was attended by 800 participants from some 60 different countries. During the course of the Conference there were seven working sessions with highly indicative and informative presentations on seven subject areas of prime importance for the future of world ports. The areas covered were: The world economy at the dawn of the third millennium; Port industry – realities and new challenges; Productivity and competitiveness in a global market; Ships to ports – inland waterways in the twenty-first century; Port management – the emerging realities in maritime commerce around the world; Technological innovations – indispensable tools for success in the maritime industry; and, New responsibilities for ports — a real challenge. The Montreal Port Authority has posted the texts and PowerPoint presentations of some of the 29 speakers on their website at www.port-montreal.com.

The IAPH Information Technology Award 2001 was given to officials from the ports of Administraçao dos Portos de Paranaguá e Antonina (Brazil), Port of Brisbane Corporation (Australia) and Port of Houston Authority (United States).

The twenty-third World Ports Conference will take place from 24 to 30 May 2003 in Durban, South Africa hosted by the National Port Authority. The theme of this Conference is: Ports – The Catalyzing Impact – Uniting World Economies Through Ports and Harbours. A website is already available: www.iaph2003.co.za. Furthermore, Shanghai has been selected as the venue for the twenty-fourth Conference to take place in 2005. Please note that the unique domain name for IAPH is now www.iaphworldports.org.

UNCTAD Expert Meeting on Electronic Commerce and International Transport Services: Best Practices for Enhancing the Competitiveness of Developing Countries

Experts met in Geneva from 26 to 28 September to examine the impact of electronic commerce on international transport services and to draw up recommendation on measures and policies that Governments and the trade and transport industry need to take in order to fully benefit from electronic commerce. Ms. Joan Remsu, Senior Counsel at the Canadian Department of Justice, Chaired the Meeting. The Meeting gathered together experts representing many of the players in international trade and transport and provided a unique opportunity for an exchange of views and experiences covering operational, economic, legal and documentary aspects.

It emerged from the discussions that most Governments, being aware of the importance of electronic commerce and international transport for development, have drawn up strategies to increase access, reduce connectivity costs and train the public. At the same time, a number of Governments are taking steps to adapt national laws to remove legal uncertainties arising from the use of electronic means of communication in international trade and transport. It was noted that electronic commerce will become twenty-first century commerce.

Electronic commerce was worth \$433 billion in 2000 and is expected to reach \$8.5 trillion by 2005. Limited telecommunication systems and high access costs are impeding the growth of electronic commerce in many developing countries. The experts encouraged Governments and international organizations to promote investment in information and communication technology (ICT) and transport infrastructure.

For express carriers, such as United Parcel Services (UPS), managing the flow of information is as important as moving the cargo. Clearly the greater use of ICT can reduce costs and speed up the flow of goods. The

benefits of using new technology for transport providers is clearly shown by the fact that UPS spends \$1.5 billion each year and Maersk Sealand some \$0.3 billion on ICT.

With the growth of the demand economy, more frequent and rapid shipments of smaller volumes of goods is required. International container shipment of goods continues to grow and at the same time the volume and complexity of information required for these shipments increase. The present system relies heavily on paper-based transactions and information. Maersk Sealand, the world's largest container carrier, cited the example of one container, which needed 25,000 pages of information to account for its contents.

Experts encouraged commercial parties to revise their existing commercial practices to limit the use of traditional negotiable transport documents and replace them by non-negotiable electronic alternatives, such as sea waybills. For example, in the liner trade, it was estimated that only 10 per cent of goods shipped needed to use negotiable bills of lading although 60 per cent were shipped with these transport documents.

It was recalled that most existing national laws and international conventions governing transport did not recognize electronic transport documents, such as electronic bills of lading. Contractual systems, such as Bolero and Global Trade Secure Payment and Trade Management Systems are examples of mechanisms based on voluntary rules that seek to provide electronic alternatives to traditional transport documents.

The experts, therefore, urged Governments to streamline and adapt their existing legal infrastructure to the requirements of electronic transactions. International rules and guidelines such as the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law Model Laws on Electronic Commerce and on Electronic Signatures should be used in this process. At the same time, Governments were encouraged to simplify administrative regulations and practices, in particular customs procedures, to facilitate electronic commerce and transport operations.

Governments, customs, port authorities, port communities and transport operators were encouraged to establish port community systems to facilitate the exchange of information amongst traders, service providers and administrations using international standards. The experts believed that the international community had a key role to disseminate information on developments in this field and requested UNCTAD to prepare guidelines for the establishment of model port community systems and logistics platforms.

Experts called upon UNCTAD to undertake a number of studies covering economic, commercial and legal aspects. UNCTAD was also requested to consider the possibility of reconvening the Meeting to provide a forum where developing countries can benefit from a continuing dialogue on best practices in electronic commerce and international transport services as a means of facilitating trade. The documentation of the meeting is available at www.unctad.org/en/special/c3em12do.htm.

UNCTAD Ad Hoc Expert Meeting on Multimodal Transport Rules

A group of Experts on multimodal transport from several regions met in Geneva from 26 to 27 November. They reviewed the impact on international trade of the existing rules and regulations adopted in multimodal transport at regional, subregional and national levels as reflected in secretariat's study: Implementation of Multimodal Transport Rules (see review in the section Recent UNCTAD Reports). They made recommendations on the future course of action to be followed with a view to achieving greater uniformity of laws in this field. Experts recommended, among other things, that the UNCTAD secretariat investigate the feasibility of preparing a new legal international instrument taking into account the views of all interested parties.

TRANSPORT LITERATURE

A Model in Privatization: Successful Change Management in the Ports of Saudi Arabia

In his book, Mohammed Bakr, former Director-General of the Saudi Arabian Ports Authority, describes the unique model developed to deliver the benefits of privatization while protecting the interests of both the public sector and the national workforce. Over the last four years, the operation of Saudi Arabia's ports has been transferred to the private sector, boosting efficiency and triggering a surge of investment in the country's port network. Already, this programme has raised productivity, brought in more than \$1 billion of private sector investment and significantly increased revenue from the ports to Government coffers. The model implemented has two interesting components, firstly a programme to increase, over a period of several years, the number of Saudis working in the privatized organizations from 15 to 70 per cent on average. The second feature involved fixing the tariff levels throughout the contract period. There are certain exceptions and the operator can offer discounts but can not subsequently decrease payments to the Authority. This book provides an insight into the implementation of port privatization in Saudi Arabia.

London Centre of Arab Studies; London W1H 7LH, Fax +44 20 7724 8481 and email Arabia@lcas.co.uk.

World Bank Port Reform Tool Kit

The World Bank has done magnificent work in putting together this comprehensive guide to assist policy makers in Governments and port authorities to successfully implement port reform. Further the material is available in public document format (pdf) on their website (www.worldbank.org/transport/ports/toolkit.htm). The material includes an overview and the following eight modules:

1. Framework for port reform;
2. The evolution of ports in a competitive world;
3. Finding the right structure for your port;
4. Port reform options;
5. Financial implications of port reform;
6. Overseeing the public interest in ports;
7. Labour reform and related social issues;
8. Implementing port reform.

The toolkit includes narrative text, mini-case studies, graphics and stylized representations of decision processes. Support is provided in understanding the needs, challenges and risks for sector reform and institutional redesign that are emerging from the changing business environment surrounding port operations. Guidance is provided on choosing among options for private sector participation and analyzing their implications for redefining interdependent operational, regulatory and legal relationships between public and private parties. Examples are given on preparing legislation, contracts and institutional charters to govern private sector participation.

The World Bank Group, Washington D.C., email transport@worldbank.org.

Port Security

In their September 24 Advisory letter the American Association of Port Authorities (AAPA) gave a number of usefully references that are available on the Internet. They are as follows:

Report of the Interagency Commission on Crime and Security at U.S. Seaports (www.seaportcommission.gov);

Port Security: A National Planning Guide (www.marad.dot.gov/publications/pubs);

Port Security: Security Force Management (www.marad.dot.gov/publications/pubs).

Reinforcing Quality Service in Sea Ports: A Key for European Transport

In February 2001, following a number of years considering port matters, the European Commission presented the draft directive “Reinforcing Quality Service in Sea Ports: A Key for European Transport” to the European Parliament. The document addresses the regulation of access to the market of port services. It also gives initial ideas on two major issues for European Community ports - the inclusion of some of them in the Trans-European Transport Network and the public financing of seaports and port infrastructure. Port services considered by the proposed Directive are technical-nautical services, such as pilotage, towage and mooring, cargo handling services including stevedoring, stowage, transhipment and other intra-terminal transports, storage, depot and warehousing, cargo consolidation and finally, passenger services including embarkation and disembarkation.

The substantive articles focus on the criteria for granting authorizations to provide port services, limitation in the number of service providers, the selection procedure, duration of the authorizations, allowing of self-handling, and the separation of accounts to clearly reflect the role of port authorities as service providers and infrastructure suppliers.

The criteria for granting authorizations must be transparent, non-discriminatory, objective, relevant and proportional. The service provider would have professional qualifications, including those related to local conditions, and sound financial situation and enough insurance coverage to cover installations, equipment and persons and maritime safety. The authorization may include public service requirements relating to safety, regularity, continuity, quality and price. The number of service providers may be limited for reasons of constraints relating to available space or capacity and for technical-nautical services due to maritime traffic-related safety. In those ports in which the port authority is also providing port services and to avoid conflict of interest, another authority should be nominated by the Government to decide on this matter.

The licensing authority should invite interested parties to participate in the selection process and announce the minimum requirements, selection and award criteria and service requirements. Duration of the authorization would vary. Maximum of 5 years is set out for service providers making low or no investments, 10 years for those making significant investments in movable assets and 25 years for those making investments in fixed

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