

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT  
Geneva

**REVIEW OF MARITIME  
TRANSPORT  
2009**

*Report by the UNCTAD secretariat*

**UNITED NATIONS  
New York and Geneva, 2009**

**NOTE**

The *Review of Maritime Transport* is a recurrent publication prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat since 1968 with the aim of fostering the transparency of maritime markets and analysing relevant developments. Any factual or editorial corrections that may prove necessary, based on comments made by Governments, will be reflected in a corrigendum to be issued subsequently.

\*

\* \*

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

\*

\* \*

The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the United Nations concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

\*

\* \*

Material in this publication may be freely quoted or reprinted, but acknowledgement is requested, with reference to the document number (see below). A copy of the publication containing the quotation or reprint should be sent to the UNCTAD secretariat at the following address: Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland.

UNCTAD/RMT/2009

UNITED NATIONS PUBLICATION

Sales No. E.09.II.D.11

ISBN 978-92-1-112771-3

ISSN 0566-7682

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *Review of Maritime Transport 2009* is prepared by the Trade Logistics Branch of the Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD. The principal authors were Regina Asariotis, Hassiba Benamara, Jan Hoffmann, Eugenia Núñez, Anila Premti, and Vincent Valentine, who also leads the team of authors.

Contributions on various issues were also prepared by Liliana Annovazzi-Jakab, Bismark Sitorus and Birgit Viohl. Desktop publishing and administrative support was provided by Florence Hudry. Graphic support was provided by Nadège Hadjemian and the publication was edited by Daniel Sanderson.

Various parts of this publication were peer-reviewed by UNCTAD colleagues: Deepali Fernandes, Mina Mashayekhi, Anne Miroux, José María Rubiato and Frida Youssef.

This publication was peer-reviewed by the following persons from civil society, according to their particular expertise: Alf Baird, Tom Butterly, Pierre Cariou, Mahindokht Faghfour, Matthew Flynn, Hercules Haralambides, Ki-Soon Hwang, Harsh Khare, Mohamed Abul Kheir, Shashi Kumar, Heather Leggate, Socrates Leptos-Bourgi, Nora Neufeld, Melissa-Dawn Newhook, Adolf Ng, Thomas Pawlik, Aleksandra Pieczek, Derek Prentis, Sheri Rosenow, Wayne Talley, Beatriz Tovar de la Fe and Les Ward.

## CONTENTS

	<b>Page</b>
Acknowledgements.....	iii
List of tables, figures and boxes.....	vi
Abbreviations and explanatory notes.....	x
Vessel groupings used in the <i>Review of Maritime Transport</i> .....	xiii
Executive summary.....	xiv
<b>Chapter</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1. Developments in international seaborne trade .....</b>	<b>1</b>
A. World economic situation and prospects.....	1
B. World seaborne trade.....	6
C. Sectors of world seaborne trade .....	13
D. Maritime transport and the climate change challenge.....	26
<b>2. Structure, ownership and registration of the world fleet .....</b>	<b>37</b>
A. Structure of the world fleet.....	37
B. Ownership of the world fleet.....	52
C. Registration of ships.....	54
D. Shipbuilding, demolition and the second-hand market.....	57
<b>3. Productivity of the world fleet, and supply and demand in world shipping .....</b>	<b>75</b>
A. Operational productivity .....	75
B. Supply and demand in world shipping.....	79
C. Comparison of cargo turnover and fleets .....	81
<b>4. Trade and freight markets .....</b>	<b>85</b>
A. Crude oil and petroleum products shipping market .....	85
B. Liquefied natural gas .....	90
C. Dry bulk shipping market.....	92
D. The liner shipping market .....	98
E. Container production.....	103

<b>5.</b>	<b>Port and multimodal transport developments .....</b>	<b>109</b>
A.	Container port traffic .....	109
B.	Improvements in port performance .....	114
C.	Recent port developments .....	114
D.	Inland transport developments .....	117
E.	UNCTAD Liner Shipping Connectivity Index 2009.....	121
<b>6.</b>	<b>Legal issues and regulatory developments .....</b>	<b>123</b>
A.	Important developments in transport law.....	123
B.	Negotiations on trade facilitation at WTO .....	130
C.	Other legal and regulatory developments affecting transportation .....	133
D.	Status of conventions .....	148
<b>7.</b>	<b>Review of Regional developments: Africa .....</b>	<b>159</b>
A.	Economic background.....	159
B.	African ports: some improvements and more expected.....	163
C.	African shipping networks and liner shipping connectivity in Africa: a difficult path.....	166
D.	Trade facilitation issues in Africa.....	169
E.	Special case: transit and inland transport for landlocked developing countries in Africa.....	174

### Annexes

I.	Classification of countries and territories.....	181
II.	World seaborne trade by country groups.....	185
III (a).	Merchant fleets of the world by flags of registration, groups of countries and types of ship, as of 1 January 2009 (in thousands of GT).....	187
III (b).	Merchant fleets of the world by flags of registration, groups of countries and types of ship, as of 1 January 2009 (in thousands of dwt) .....	193
IV.	UNCTAD Liner Shipping Connectivity Index.....	199

## LIST OF TABLES, FIGURES AND BOXES

<i>Table</i>	<i>Page</i>
1. World economic growth, 2006–2009 .....	2
2. Growth in the volume of merchandise trade, by geographical region, 2006–2008 .....	6
3. Development of international seaborne trade, selected years .....	8
4. World seaborne trade in 2006–2008, by type of cargo and country group .....	9
5. World seaborne trade in ton-miles, selected years .....	14
6. Estimated cargo flows on major trade routes, 2007–2008 .....	26
7. Estimates of fuel consumption, CO <sub>2</sub> emissions from international shipping, and projected growth..	29
8. World fleet size by principal types of vessel, 2008–2009 .....	39
9. Long-term trends in the cellular container ship fleet .....	39
10. Geared and gearless fully cellular container ships built in 2007 and 2008 .....	40
11. Age distribution of the world merchant fleet, by vessel type, as of 1 January 2009 .....	41
12. The 35 countries and territories with the largest controlled fleets (dwt), as of 1 January 2009 .....	53
13. The 35 flags of registration with the largest registered deadweight tonnage, as of 1 January 2009...	55
14. Distribution of dwt capacity of vessel types, by country group or registration, 2009 .....	56
15. True nationality of 10 major open and international registry fleets, as of 1 January 2009 .....	58
16. Deliveries of newbuildings, selected years .....	62
17. Tonnage reported sold for breaking, by vessel type, 2000–2008 .....	64
18. Average age of broken-up ships, by type, 1998 to 2008 .....	65
19. World tonnage on order, 2000–2009 .....	66
20. Representative newbuilding prices in selected years .....	69
21. Second-hand prices for five-year-old ships, 2000–2008 .....	69
22. Newbuilding contract terminations .....	71
23. Cargo carried and ton-miles performed per deadweight ton (dwt) of the total world fleet, selected years .....	76
24. Estimated productivity of tankers, bulk carriers and the residual fleet, selected years (tons carried per dwt) .....	76
25. Estimated productivity of tankers, bulk carriers and the residual fleet, selected years (thousands of ton-miles performed per dwt) .....	77
26. Tonnage oversupply in the world merchant fleet, selected years .....	79

27. Analysis of tonnage surplus by main type of vessel, selected years.....	80
28. Maritime engagement of 25 major trading nations.....	83
29. Tanker freight indices, 2007–2009.....	86
30. Tanker market summary: clean and dirty spot rates, 2007–2009 .....	88
31. Dry cargo freight indices, 2006–2009.....	97
32. The 20 leading service operators of container ships at the beginning of 2009.....	100
33. Container ship time charter rates .....	102
34. Freight rates (market averages) per TEU on the three major liner trade routes.....	104
35. Liner freight indices, 2009–2009.....	105
36. World container fleet.....	105
37. Container port traffic for 63 developing economies, 2006, 2007 and 2008.....	111
38. Top 20 container terminals and their throughput for 2006, 2007 and 2008.....	113
39. The global terminal operators equity share of world container throughput.....	116
40. Total length of navigable waters and tons of goods transported by inland waterways.....	118
41. Rail: International transport of goods for selected countries.....	119
42. Countries and regions with total rail networks of 20,000 km and above.....	120
43. Share of intraregional trade in total African trade.....	163
44. Performance indicators .....	165
45. Indicators of African countries’ connectivity in liner shipping.....	168
46. Selected indicators of border administration efficiency in Africa.....	170
47. Global Enabling Trade Index, Africa, 2008 .....	172
48. Major African regional economic communities.....	173

*Figure*

1 (a). World GDP growth, 2003–2009, selected countries .....	3
1 (b). Indices for world economic growth (GDP), OECD Industrial Production Index and world seaborne trade (volume), 1994–2009.....	4
2. Indices for world economic growth (GDP) and world merchandise exports (volume), selected years.....	7
3. International seaborne trade, selected years.....	11
4 (a). World seaborne trade, by country group and region, 2008.....	12

4 (b). Developing countries' seaborne trade, selected years .....	12
5. Oil and natural gas: major producers and consumers, 2008 .....	16
6 (a). Major bulks (steel and iron ore): producers, consumers and traders in 2008 .....	20
6 (b). Major bulks (coal and grain): producers, consumers and traders in 2008 .....	21
7. Global container trade, 1990–2020 .....	25
8. Shipping sector CO <sub>2</sub> emission and CO <sub>2</sub> efficiencies by cargo carrier.....	28
9. World fleet by principal vessel types, selected years .....	38
10. Geared and gearless fully cellular container ships by age .....	40
11. Age profile of world fleet, all vessel types.....	43
12. Age profiles of world fleet for eight major vessel types .....	44
13. Age profiles of world fleet: major flags of registration of developing countries, countries with economies in transition, and open and international registries located in developing countries .....	45
14. Age profiles of world fleet: developing countries and countries with economies in transition among the major 35 vessel-owning countries.....	49
15. Deliveries of newbuildings, 1997–2008. ....	63
16. World tonnage on order, 2000–2009 .....	68
17. Ton-miles per deadweight ton (dwt) of the world fleet, selected years .....	77
18. Tons carried per deadweight ton (dwt) of the world fleet, selected years.....	78
19. Ton-miles per deadweight ton (dwt) of the world fleet, by vessel type, selected years.....	78
20. Trends in surplus capacity by main vessel types, selected years .....	81
21. Growth of demand and supply in container shipping, 2000–2009 .....	82
22. Evolution of prices of new containers.....	106
23. Evolution of leasing rates.....	107
24. Trends in connectivity indicators.....	122
25. WTO trade facilitation needs and priorities: self-assessments status .....	133
26. Growth in Africa, oil vs. non-oil economies, 2006–2008.....	160
27. Growth of GDP by African subregions 2006–2008.....	161
28. Top and bottom performers in Africa .....	161
29. Africa's share of world trade, 1970–2007.....	162
30. Main international shipping lanes, Africa.....	164
31. Burden of customs in Africa, 2007 .....	171



32.	Annual average cost of importing a container .....	176
33.	Main road, rail, sea, lake and river corridors in Africa .....	176
34.	Average number of documents required for import.....	177
35.	Time to imports .....	177

*Box*

1.	Scientific evidence, global warming and some associated effects.....	27
2.	Potential efficiency gains of selected technology and operational measures.....	30
3.	Contracting States parties to selected conventions on maritime transport, as at 23 October 2009.....	149

## ABBREVIATIONS AND EXPLANATORY NOTES

### *Abbreviations*

<b>AEO</b>	Authorized Economic Operator
<b>APEC</b>	Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation
<b>ASEAN</b>	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>BAF</b>	bunker adjustment factor
<b>BCI</b>	Baltic Exchange Capesize Index
<b>bcm</b>	billion cubic metres
<b>BDI</b>	Baltic Exchange Dry Index
<b>bpd</b>	barrels per day
<b>BRIC</b>	Brazil, Russian Federation, India and China
<b>BWM Convention</b>	International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments
<b>CAF</b>	currency adjustment factor
<b>cbm</b>	cubic metres
<b>CBP</b>	United States Customs and Border Protection
<b>c.i.f.</b>	cost, insurance and freight
<b>CIS</b>	Commonwealth of Independent States
<b>CO<sub>2</sub></b>	carbon dioxide
<b>COMESA</b>	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
<b>COMESA-CD</b>	COMESA Customs Document
<b>CSR</b>	Special Register of Ships and Shipping Companies of the Canary Islands
<b>DIS</b>	Danish International Register of Shipping
<b>dwt</b>	deadweight tons
<b>EAC</b>	East African Community
<b>ECA</b>	Economic Commission for Africa
<b>ECOWAS</b>	Economic Community of West African States
<b>EEDI</b>	Energy Efficiency Design Index
<b>EEOI</b>	Energy Efficiency Operational Indicator
<b>EIA</b>	Energy Information Administration
<b>EORI</b>	Economic Operator Registration and Identification
<b>ERF</b>	European Union Road Federation
<b>ESC</b>	European Shippers' Council
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FEU</b>	40-foot equivalent unit
<b>FIS</b>	French International Ship Register
<b>FNTR</b>	Fédération Nationale des Transports Routiers
<b>f.o.b.</b>	free on board
<b>FPSO</b>	floating production storage and offloading
<b>GATT</b>	General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade
<b>GDP</b>	gross domestic product
<b>GHG</b>	greenhouse gas
<b>GT</b>	gross tons
<b>ICC</b>	International Chamber of Commerce
<b>ICIR</b>	initial cash investment return
<b>ICS</b>	International Chamber of Shipping

<b>ICT</b>	information and communication technology
<b>ICTSI</b>	International Container Terminal Services Inc.
<b>IDE</b>	International Data Exchange
<b>IEA</b>	International Energy Agency
<b>IICL</b>	Institute of International Container Loss
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>IMB</b>	International Maritime Bureau
<b>IMF</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>IMO</b>	International Maritime Organization
<b>IMSO</b>	International Mobile Satellite Organization
<b>IPCC</b>	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
<b>IRU</b>	International Road Transport Union
<b>ISO</b>	International Organization for Standardization
<b>ISPS Code</b>	International Ship and Port Facility Security Code
<b>ITO</b>	international terminal operator
<b>LDC</b>	least developed country
<b>ldt</b>	light displacement ton
<b>LLDC</b>	landlocked developing country
<b>LNG</b>	liquefied natural gas
<b>LOA</b>	length overall
<b>LPG</b>	liquefied petroleum gas
<b>LRIT</b>	Long-Range Identification and Tracking system
<b>LSCI</b>	Liner Shipping Connectivity Index
<b>mbd</b>	million barrels per day
<b>MCCC</b>	Modernized Community Customs Code
<b>MDG</b>	Millennium Development Goal
<b>MEPC</b>	Marine Environment Protection Committee
<b>mmt/y</b>	million metric tons per year
<b>MRA</b>	mutual recognition agreement
<b>MSC</b>	Maritime Safety Committee (IMO)
<b>mtoe</b>	million tons oil equivalent
<b>n.a.</b>	not available
<b>NAFTA</b>	North American Free Trade Agreement
<b>n.e.s.</b>	not elsewhere specified
<b>NGTF</b>	Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation
<b>NIS</b>	Norwegian International Ship Register
<b>OECD</b>	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>OPEC</b>	Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries
<b>ppm</b>	parts per million
<b>SACU</b>	Southern Africa Customs Union
<b>SAD</b>	South African document
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SDRs</b>	Special Drawing Rights
<b>SDT</b>	special and differential treatment
<b>SEMP</b>	Ship Efficiency Management Plan
<b>SIDS</b>	small island developing State
<b>SITC</b>	Standard International Trade Classification
<b>SMEs</b>	small and medium-sized enterprises
<b>SOLAS Convention</b>	International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea

<b>TEU</b>	20-foot equivalent unit
<b>THC</b>	terminal handling charges
<b>TNC</b>	transnational corporation
<b>TRIE</b>	Transit Routier Inter-Etats
<b>UASC</b>	United Arab Shipping Company
<b>ULCC</b>	ultra-large crude carrier
<b>UNCITRAL</b>	United Nations Commission on International Trade Law
<b>UN-DESA</b>	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNEP</b>	United Nations Environment Programme
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>UNODC</b>	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
<b>VLCC</b>	very large crude carrier
<b>VLOC</b>	very large ore carrier
<b>VLOO</b>	very large ore oiler
<b>WAEMU</b>	West African Economic and Monetary Union
<b>WCO</b>	World Customs Organization
<b>WEF</b>	World Economic Forum
<b>WMU</b>	World Maritime University
<b>WS</b>	Worldscale
<b>WTO</b>	World Trade Organization

### *Explanatory notes*

- The Review of Maritime Transport 2009 covers data and events from January 2008 until June 2009. Where possible every effort has been made to reflect more recent developments.
- All references to dollars (\$) are to United States dollars, unless otherwise stated.
- Unless otherwise stated, “ton” means metric ton (1,000 kg) and “mile” means nautical mile.
- Because of rounding, details and percentages presented in tables do not necessarily add up to the totals.
- Two dots (..) indicate that data are not available or are not separately reported.
- A hyphen (-) signifies that the amount is nil or less than half the unit used.
- In the tables and the text, the terms *countries* and *economies* refer to countries, territories or areas.
- Since 2007, the presentation of countries in the *Review of Maritime Transport* is different from that in previous editions. Since 2007, the new classification is that used by the Statistics Division, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, as well as by UNCTAD in the *Handbook of Statistics*. For the purpose of statistical analysis, countries and territories are grouped by economic criteria into three categories, which are further divided into geographical regions. The main categories are developed economies, developing economies, and transition economies. See annex I for a detailed breakdown of the new groupings. Any comparison with data in pre-2007 editions of the *Review of Maritime Transport* should therefore be handled with care.

### Vessel groupings used in the *Review of Maritime Transport*

As in the previous year's *Review*, five vessel groupings have been used throughout most shipping tables in this year's edition. The cut-off point for all tables, based on data from Lloyd's Register – Fairplay, is 100 gross tons (GT), except those tables dealing with ownership, where the cut-off level is 1,000 GT. The groups aggregate 20 principal types of vessel category, as noted below.

Review group	Constituent ship types
<b>Oil tankers</b>	Oil tankers
<b>Bulk carriers</b>	Ore and bulk carriers, ore/bulk/oil carriers
<b>General cargo</b>	Refrigerated cargo, specialized cargo, roll on-roll off (ro-ro) cargo, general cargo (single- and multi-deck), general cargo/passenger
<b>Container ships</b>	Fully cellular
<b>Other ships</b>	Oil/chemical tankers, chemical tankers, other tankers, liquefied gas carriers, passenger ro-ro, passenger, tank barges, general cargo barges, fishing, offshore supply, and all other types
<b>Total all ships</b>	Includes all the above-mentioned vessel types

### Approximate vessel size groups referred to in the *Review of Maritime Transport*, according to generally used shipping terminology

<i>Crude oil tankers</i>	
ULCC, double-hull	350,000 dwt plus
ULCC, single hull	320,000 dwt plus
VLCC, double-hull	200,000–349,999 dwt
VLCC, single hull	200,000–319,999 dwt
Suezmax crude tanker	125,000–199,999 dwt
Aframax crude tanker	80,000–124,999 dwt; moulded breadth > 32.31m
Panamax crude tanker	50,000–79,999 dwt; moulded breadth < 32.31m
<i>Dry bulk and ore carriers</i>	
Large capesize bulk carrier	150,000 dwt plus
Small capesize bulk carrier	80,000–149,999 dwt; moulded breadth >32.31m
Panamax bulk carrier	55,000–84,999 dwt; moulded breadth < 32.31m
Handymax bulk carrier	35,000–54,999 dwt
Handy-size bulk carrier	10,000–34,999 dwt
<i>Ore/Oil carrier</i>	
VLOO	200,000 dwt
<i>Container ships</i>	
Post-Panamax Container ship	moulded breadth >32.31m
Panamax Container ship	moulded breadth < 32.31m

Source: Lloyd's Register – Fairplay.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*Against the background of a global financial crisis and economic downturn, growth in seaborne trade continued, albeit at a slower rate.*

The year 2008 marked a major turning point in the history of the world economy and trade. Growth in the world economy slowed abruptly in the last part of 2008, with the deepening of the global financial crisis. Growth in developing economies and countries with economies in transition has turned out to be less resilient than expected.

In tandem with the global economic downturn and reduced trade, growth in international seaborne trade decelerated in 2008, expanding by 3.6 per cent as compared with 4.5 per cent in 2007. The volume of international seaborne trade in 2008 was estimated at 8.17 billion tons. Reflecting a sharp decline in demand for consumption goods, as well as a fall in industrial production in major economies and reduced energy demand, the deceleration in seaborne volumes affected all shipping sectors.

Existing forecasts suggest that the outlook for seaborne trade is uncertain and that some challenging times lie ahead for shipping and international seaborne trade. These challenges are further compounded by other developments, including maritime security at sea and the need to address the climate change challenge.

*While demand fell, the supply of new vessels continued to grow.*

At the beginning of 2009, the world merchant fleet reached 1.19 billion deadweight tons, a year-on-year growth of 6.7 per cent compared to January 2008. This growth was the result of vessel orders placed before the financial crisis, when the industry was still expecting continuing high growth rates in demand – which did not materialize (see chapter 1). As the world's shipping capacity continues to increase even during the current economic downturn, the industry finds itself confronted with a surge of oversupply (see chapter 3) and tumbling charter and freight rates (see chapter 4).

*The demolition of existing tonnage is not enough to compensate for the downturn in demand and the increase in supply.*

Since the beginning of the economic crisis, numerous orders at the world's shipyards have been cancelled. Shipbuilders have been spending more time on renegotiating existing contracts than on receiving new enquiries or orders. Although new orders for most vessel types have practically come to a standstill, vessels continue to be delivered by the world's shipyards, especially in the dry bulk segment. Even without the current economic crisis, the tonnage that entered the market in recent years would have led to an oversupply of tonnage and a decline in vessel prices. Prices for scrap metal in 2009 remain very low when compared to early 2008, and many vessel owners have preferred to hold on and lay off their ships, hoping for better times to come.

*As a consequence of falling demand and increased supply, freight rates have fallen from their 2008 highs.*

The beginning of 2008 saw a continuation of the buoyant trend experienced in the preceding year in all sectors. However, by the start of the third quarter of 2008 things had taken a turn for the worse, as the global financial crisis began to affect demand. Trade volumes in the bulk cargo and liner sectors sustained dramatic declines, which continued for the remainder of the year and well into 2009. The tanker market fared slightly better during 2008 compared to other sectors, although by the middle of 2009 all sectors were experiencing similar declines.

*By the end of 2008, the effects of the global economic crisis could be seen in all major transport modes.*

World container port throughput grew by an estimated 4 per cent to reach 506 million TEUs in 2008. Mainland Chinese ports accounted for approximately 22.6 per cent of the total world container port throughput. However, 2008 marked a turning point for port throughput as well as traffic volumes on other modes of transport. In China, the Russian Federation and India, rail freight traffic measured in ton-kilometres showed growth rates of 3.5 per cent, 5 per cent

and 8.4 per cent respectively for 2008. However, rail freight traffic declined in Europe by 5 per cent. In both Europe and the United States, rail freight declined significantly in the early months of 2009 compared to the same period in the previous year.

***2008 saw the United Nations General Assembly adopt the “Rotterdam Rules”, a new international convention on contracts for the international carriage of goods wholly or partly by sea.***

After many years of preparatory work carried out under the auspices of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), the United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Carriage of Goods Wholly or Partly by Sea was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in December 2008. The new Convention, which requires 20 ratifications to enter into force, was opened for signature at a special signing conference held in Rotterdam in September 2009 and will be known as the “Rotterdam Rules”. Policymakers will now need to carefully consider the merits of the new Convention and decide whether it complies with their expectations, both in terms of its substantive provisions and in terms of its potential to provide international uniformity of laws in the field.

***Since 2004, the World Trade Organization’s Doha Development Round has been negotiating on trade facilitation matters.***

A major part of the trade facilitation measures proposed so far focuses on the time needed for the release and clearance of goods taking into account not only the loss of time, but also the consequences in terms of possible damages, opportunities missed and increased costs affecting the competitiveness of the products. At the end of 2008 and the beginning of 2009, the overall pace of negotiations in the World Trade Organization’s Negotiating Group on Trade Facilitation slowed down, with less time being devoted to review of the textual proposals, and comments made by delegations limited to oral interventions. This situation changed in the second half of 2009, when signs of a possible compromise on contentious issues of the Doha Round emerged, and delegates adopted an ambitious work plan for the period up until the ministerial conference scheduled for early December 2009. Delegations are now aiming at finalizing by that date a first draft text for a new WTO agreement on trade facilitation.

***Key challenges for international cooperation and regulation include piracy, supply-chain security and climate change.***

The great number of disturbing incidents of piracy and armed robbery against ships – particularly off the Somali coast and in the Gulf of Aden – have become an increasing concern not only for the maritime industry that is heavily affected by these incidents, but also for international organizations, including the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and the United Nations. Joint efforts are being made in various forums to find adequate responses to piracy. In the field of maritime and supply-chain security, efforts to implement and refine relevant legal instruments and standards are ongoing. Noteworthy environment-related developments include IMO’s continued commitment to making progress in a number of areas, including in relation to reducing emissions of greenhouse gases from international shipping and in its work towards the establishment of a relevant global regime.

***Despite the global financial crisis, Africa experienced strong growth in 2008. However, Africa’s share of world trade remains at 2.7 per cent.***

Every year, the Review of Maritime Transport gives attention to transport developments in a particular region. The focus in 2009 is on developments in Africa since 2006 when UNCTAD last reported on the region. Despite the global financial crisis, the region still experienced strong growth in 2008 (5.1 per cent), the top performers being the resource-rich countries. Africa’s share of world trade remains at 2.7 per cent. Global port-operating companies have sought to expand along the main international African shipping routes, however in some countries, physical, legal, social and economic constraints have prevented them from doing so effectively. High numbers of cross-border documents, poor inland connections, security issues, excessive transaction costs and delays are common. This has serious consequences in the case of landlocked countries, whose dependence on transit countries complicates export and import processes, with the costs of imported freight estimated to be three to five times higher than the world average. In recent years, however, there has been a growing recognition of the need to improve port operations and inland connectivity in the region. Even when new investments are being considered in Africa, these could be affected by the global financial crisis.

