



## UNCTAD15 pre-event

Date 20 September, 14:30 to 16:00 (CET)

# Sustainable and Resilient Supply Chains: Overcoming Vulnerabilities in Transport and Trade Facilitation to Ensure Prosperity for All

Countries that are most vulnerable to shocks affecting international transport and trade facilitation services – notably SIDS, LLDCs, and LDCs – require enhanced support, advice, technology and finance to be able to ensure the sustainability and resilience of their infrastructure and transport and logistics and other trade supporting services.

The Panel will assess global trends and challenges for the logistics of international trade, and what developing economies can do to reduce their vulnerabilities in the areas of transport and trade facilitation, considering implications of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The discussion will provide a platform for consideration of key issues and related areas for policy action, with special regard to the role of UNCTAD.

### Background

Well-functioning transport and logistics systems are essential for countries economic, social, and trade related sustainable development, as well as for supporting regional and global integration particularly for landlocked developing countries (LLDCs) and small island developing states (SIDS).

High transport cost, low connectivity, cumbersome manual trade procedures including at customs, restricted access to the sea (in the case of the LLDCs), inadequate transport infrastructure, limited services, transit-related challenges, and difficulties securing investments are among the challenges that must be addressed in order to achieve sustainable development in these countries. The rise in electronic commerce, further spurred by the pandemic, adds a new dimension to the challenges that these countries need to address in ensuring trade flows efficiently and sustainably. At the same time, digitalization has showed great potential in improving trade efficiency, including during pandemics.

Addressing these challenges including through promotion of sustainable transport and logistics, improved port and corridors performance and connectivity, as well as simplified, harmonized standardized and automated procedures and trade facilitation reforms will be key.



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CONCEPT NOTE



The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement has been in force for four years in January 2021. It sets out a series of harmonized and minimum requirements for facilitating cross-border trade, for import and export and transit. These requirements are particularly onerous for developing and least developed countries (LDCs), which is the reason why the agreement contains provisions for Special and Differential Treatment that are meant to assist these countries in the implementation.

Promoting sustainable and climate-resilient transport infrastructure and trade logistics can have broader effects in supporting the sustainable development of developing countries, SIDS and LLDCs, and promote economic growth and social equity, while significantly reducing environmental and climate change risks and the effect of impacts. In this context, building technical capacity, and promoting cooperation, partnerships and experience sharing, as well as scaling up technological and investment levels and diversifying sources of funding are crucial.

In this context, UNCTAD is increasingly focusing its work to help developing countries including SIDS and LLDCs build their trade efficiency, sustainability and resilience, including in the area of port, transport and trade facilitation, with customs automation and the ASYCUDA programme playing an important role, as well as The TrainforTrade Port Management Programme supporting port communities' efficient and sustainable management practices. This work aims to help developing countries address, among other challenges, their relatively high transport and trade logistics costs, including customs and borders inefficiencies and limited shipping connectivity. Furthermore, UNCTAD has been focusing on assisting developing countries in promoting economic, social and environmental sustainability in maritime transport and to strengthen the climate resilience of their ports and other coastal transport infrastructure with a view to ensuring social inclusiveness and overall sustainable development well into the future.

### Expected outcome:

Heightened awareness and better understanding of key vulnerabilities associated with trade logistics in developing countries, including those related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the growing risks of climate change impacts. Considerations are expected to inform the UNCTAD15 deliberations in respect of issues for accelerated action and UNCTAD's related mandates.

### Questions for discussion:

- What are the main challenges faced by developing countries, SIDS and LLDCs in connection with transport and trade facilitation that have the highest impact on their trade and development prospects?
- How has the COVID pandemic affected these challenges and what have we learnt in these past two years about vulnerabilities associated with trade logistics in developing countries?
- How has the COVID pandemic changed national and regional strategies and priorities in the field of trade logistics?
- What kind of support needs have become more prominent after the pandemic in this area?



- What needs to change to help developing countries, SIDS and LLDCs reduce transport and trade facilitation vulnerabilities to enhance their trading and development prospects?
- How can UNCTAD help developing countries, SIDS and LLDC succeed in this context?

### Programme

- H.E. Ms Beata Habyarimana, Minister of Trade and Industry, Rwanda
- H.E. Mr. Faiyaz Koya, Minister for Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport, Fiji
- Ms. Isabelle Durant, Deputy Secretary General, UNCTAD
- Mr. Bismarck Rosales, Gerente General, Complejo Portuario Jennefer s.r.l. Bolivia
- Mr. Owen Holder, Comptroller of Customs, Barbados
- Mr. Ruth Banomyong, Dean, Thammasat Business School, Bangkok, Thailand

**Moderated by** Ms. Shamika Sirimanne, Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD

The discussion will be moderated and take place through Zoom.

Please register in advance for this webinar :

[https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_t\\_vXeLbCQMGFUvYoElmNw](https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_t_vXeLbCQMGFUvYoElmNw)