

TRANSPORT & TRADE FACILITATION NEWSLETTER

TRADE LOGISTICS BRANCH - DIVISION ON TECHNOLOGY AND LOGISTICS

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EDITORIAL

Dear Reader,

Trade facilitation, non-tariff measures and services are key elements for trade development. With the new post-2015 development agenda being defined by countries, there is a need to pay more attention to these areas, at national, regional and international levels to promote sustainable growth. UNCTAD, in collaboration with two other key agencies (UNECE and ITC), has already taken important steps in this regard: the three organisations have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen their strategic partnership for the purpose of providing effective capacity-building, technical assistance outreach and support to developing countries, Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and countries with economies in transition in order to enhance trade through the implementation of the World Trade Organization Agreement on Trade Facilitation (WTO TFA). The article on page 2 provides more information on this important collaboration.

In addition to the leadership provided by United Nations agencies, country ownership and experience in trade facilitation is crucial. Since its inception, 50 years ago, UNCTAD has worked with countries, supporting them through consensus building, innovative analyses and capacity building with the aim to help them make informed decisions and promote development-friendly integration of developing countries into the world economy including through trade facilitation and the newly adopted Trade Facilitation Agreement in WTO.

In today's trading environment, where reliability, speed and cost efficiency are of increasing importance, no country can afford to be the weakest link in global and regional value chains. UNCTAD remains firm in its commitment to work side by side with countries to achieve effective trade facilitation. By supporting trade facilitation implementation across countries, UNCTAD has also been documenting lessons learned and best practices, and continuously sharing it with its partners. The Transport and Trade Facilitation Newsletter serves to highlight and share knowledge on these important issues.

This edition of the Transport and Trade Facilitation Newsletter includes, in this regard, innovations on trade facilitation from Cote d'Ivoire and Greece, while also presenting regional trade facilitation innovations, including working with parliamentarians in Africa and partnerships in Latin America and the Caribbean, among others.

In this edition in particular, you will find articles on the intrinsic relations between transport, trade facilitation and development, as well as UNCTAD's first regional office in Africa and the new UNCTAD liner shipping bilateral connectivity index and benchmarking, among others.

Enjoy the reading!

UNCTAD Trade and Logistics Branch



UNCTAD OPENS FIRST REGIONAL OFFICE IN AFRICA TO 'MAKE TRADE WORK' FOR THE CONTINENT

To directly deliver on-the-spot authoritative advice on trade and development issues to policymakers and all stakeholders in Africa, UNCTAD has opened a regional office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Regional Office for Africa will be headed by Ms. Joy Kategekwa, a Ugandan former official with the World Trade Organization. The inauguration of the office was marked by an official ceremony at the Hilton Addis Ababa hotel on 22 July.

The first UNCTAD office of its kind, the Africa branch will, in the words of UNCTAD Secretary-General Mukhisa Kituyi, help "make trade work for Africa".

Trade among African countries is very low relative to the continent's total trade. Over the past decade, the share of intra-African trade in Africa's total trade was about 11 per cent, as compared to 21 per cent for Latin America and the Caribbean, 50 per cent for developing Asia and 70 per cent for Europe.

"Africa is at a crossroads in its trade agenda," Dr. Kituyi said. "Never has the political momentum and support for deeper trade integration been higher on the continent."

"Having UNCTAD on the ground provides Africa the opportunity to use UNCTAD's extensive technical and analytical resources," Dr. Kituyi added. By providing the "missing link" between recommendations and actions "the Regional Office for Africa will play a leading role in coordinating the delivery of UNCTAD's advisory services in support of implementation of the post-2015 agenda for African countries".

The office will help African governments to accelerate regional economic integration in Africa, Dr. Kituyi said. This will contribute to bringing prosperity to Africans by embedding their companies into regional value chains and making their economies more productive.

"UNCTAD has the necessary tool kit to support Africa in these processes," Dr. Kituyi said.

Speaking at the inauguration, African Union Trade Commissioner Fatima Haram Acyl, said: "We would like UNCTAD to support us on Africa's regional integration agenda, most especially the continental free trade area (CFTA). We are already receiving significant support, but we need more."



UNCTAD Secretary-General, Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi at the Opening Ceremony on 22 July 2015

African Union Economic Affairs Commissioner Anthony Mothae Maruping, also present, added: "It was a good decision to come closer to Africa where the action on development actually is. The UNCTAD mandate is very much needed on the continent and we will benefit from bringing global experience to Africa."

Ms. Kategekwa, the newly appointed head of the office, said that it had "already played a lead role in launching UNCTAD's Economic Development in Africa Report and will be working to follow up with member States in taking its recommendations forward".

In addition, she said, the office "will be central to delivering support to the African Union Commission and its member States in the process of negotiating the African Union CFTA".

UNCTAD – the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development – was formed

in 1964 to help poor countries adopt policies that would integrate them into the world economy and boost prosperity. UNCTAD is based at the United Nations Office at Geneva, Switzerland, and has a representative office at the United Nations in New York. It works at the behest of 194 member States and employs roughly 500 people. proach is a comprehensive food information management system that is described in the UNNEXT Guide Agri-food Chain Information Manag to high standards of this premi-um brand to avoid consumer disappointment.

For further information, please visit:
www.unctad.org

UNCTAD AND TRADEMARK EAST AFRICA STRENGTHEN COLLABORATION

In a Memorandum of Understanding, UNCTAD and TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) have agreed to strengthen the scope and impact of their activities in East Africa by joining forces on a number of issues.

Joakim Reiter, Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD and Frank Matsaert, Chief Executive Officer of TradeMark East Africa signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 1 July 2015.

TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) is a not for profit organization which promotes regional trade and economic integration in East Africa.

Collaboration between the two organizations dates back to 2012. This new MoU strengthens the collaboration and lays out a framework for future work in an area of mutual concern: inclusive and sustainable growth and development through economic integration.

Specific areas of collaboration:

- i. Trade and Gender.
- ii. Trade Facilitation, including Customs automation and trade portals.
- iii. Sustainable transport (road, rail and ports) and finance.

Joint work foreseen under this MoU:

- i. Joint policy-oriented research activities.
- ii. Joint policy advice at the country-level.
- iii. Joint in-country projects.

By joining forces with TMEA, UNCTAD will benefit from TMEA's in-depth knowledge of the region and well established presence.

TMEA, on its side, will benefit from UNCTAD's technical expertise and global reach. Both institutions will expand their network of partners. Countries and institutions in East Africa will benefit from enhanced scope and impact of activities.



“With this MoU our two organizations aim at further strengthening collaboration to efficiently deliver targeted assistance to countries and institutions in the region”

Joakim Reiter
Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD

Memorandum of Understanding UNCTAD - Trade Mark East Africa



**TRADE AND
GENDER**



**TRADE FACILITATION,
INCLUDING CUSTOMS
AUTOMATION AND
TRADE PORTALS**



**SUSTAINABLE
TRANSPORT (ROAD,
RAIL AND PORTS)
AND FINANCE**

The purpose of this MOU is to provide a framework of cooperation and facilitate collaboration between the Parties, on a non-exclusive basis, in these areas

“We are delighted to enter into a MoU with UNCTAD which provides a platform for cooperation between our two organizations.

This will help us work together with our partners in the East African Community in a more coordinated way, implementing issues such as Trade Facilitation and policies on Women in Trade”

Frank Matsaert
Chief Executive Officer of TradeMark East Africa

For further information, please visit:
www.unctad.org

NEW UNCTAD TECHNICAL NOTE ON WTO TFA RATIFICATION

UNCTAD's Technical Note #23 outlines the steps that WTO Members may need to undertake towards the ratification, acceptance and entry into force of the Protocol inserting the Agreement on Trade Facilitation to the WTO legal system.

At the Ninth Ministerial Conference in December 2013, Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) concluded the negotiations of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA). Subsequently, on 27 November 2014, WTO Members adopted the Protocol of Amendment in order to insert this new Agreement into Annex 1A of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the World Trade Organization (WTO Agreement). The TFA will enter into force (in the terms established in Article X.3 of the WTO Agreement) once two-thirds of the WTO Members, i.e. 108 Members as of June 2015, have ratified and notified acceptance of the Agreement to the WTO Secretariat.

To achieve this, WTO Members shall first complete the following three main stages:

1) Ratification stage: At the domestic level, each Member shall undertake ratification procedures, which vary from Member to Member.

2) Acceptance stage: At the multilateral level, WTO Members having completed their domestic ratification procedures should notify their acceptance of the Protocol Amending the WTO Agreement (the Protocol) to other WTO Members.

3) Entry into force stage: The Protocol will take effect upon acceptance by two-thirds of the WTO Members.

This Technical Note describes the steps within these three stages in a consecutive manner to guide Member States towards the application of the TFA

For further information, please visit:
www.unctad.org/technicalnotes



TRADE FACILITATION TECHNICAL NOTE #23

STEPS TOWARDS THE RATIFICATION, ACCEPTANCE AND ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE WTO AGREEMENT ON TRADE FACILITATION

INTRODUCTION

At the Ninth Ministerial Conference in December 2013, Members of the World Trade Organization (WTO) concluded the negotiations of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA). The TFA will enter into force once

2/3 of the WTO Members, i.e. 108 Members as of June 2015,

have ratified and notified acceptance of the Agreement to the WTO Secretariat.

To achieve this, WTO Members shall first complete the following **THREE MAIN STAGES**

STAGE I RATIFICATION

At the domestic level, each Member shall undertake ratification procedures, which vary from Member to Member

STAGE II ACCEPTANCE

At the multilateral level, WTO Members having completed their domestic ratification procedures should notify their acceptance of the Protocol Amending the WTO Agreement

STAGE III ENTRY INTO FORCE

The Protocol will take effect upon acceptance by two-thirds of the WTO Members

This Technical Note describes the steps within these three stages in a consecutive manner to guide Member States towards the application of the TFA.

I. RATIFICATION STAGE

Ratification is a means of expression for a State to consent to be legally bound by a treaty. This stage involves the relevant procedures that need to be pursued at the national level before a WTO Member can notify its acceptance of the TFA.

STEP 1



Looking at the domestic legal requirements for the approval of International Agreements

STEP 2



Elaboration of the domestic instrument approving the Protocol Amending the WTO Agreement

STEP 3



Approval of the Protocol Amending the WTO Agreement

STEP 4



Ratification

- WTO Members express their consent to be bound to the TFA through ratification.
- In the case of Parliamentary approval, usually the Executive branch ratifies the agreement thereafter.
- The instrument of ratification has to be signed on behalf of the State.

II. ACCEPTANCE STAGE

This stage refers to the required procedure at the multilateral level that Members need to follow to become a signatory party to the WTO TFA.

STEP 5



Elaboration of the instrument of acceptance of the Protocol

STEP 6



Deposit of the instrument of acceptance to the WTO Secretariat

III. ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE PROTOCOL AND THE WTO TFA



The Protocol and the TFA shall take effect upon acceptance by 2/3 of the WTO Members, pursuant to Article X.3 of the WTO Agreement

RATIFYING THE WTO AGREEMENT ON TRADE FACILITATION

The Protocol will take effect upon acceptance by two-thirds of the WTO Members, and only for those WTO Members that have accepted it.

Introduction

Bringing to life a multilateral agreement at the World Trade Organization (WTO) is not a simple nor an expedite matter. This is a process that involves many phases, such as the inclusion of a new subject in the negotiations agenda, obtaining a commonly agreed text after many years of negotiating rounds, accepting the Protocol of Amendment of the relevant Annex of the Marrakesh Agreement Establishing the WTO (WTO Agreement), then ratification of the newly born Agreement, and last, but not least, its notification by at least two-thirds of the WTO Members.

In the case of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation (TFA), it was first envisioned in 2004 when it was included as one of the Singapore issues. Close to ten long years of negotiations passed until, in 2013 at the Ninth WTO Ministerial Conference in Bali, its Members agreed on a text. On 27 November 2014, the General Council of the WTO adopted the Protocol of Amendment (the Protocol) to insert the TFA into Annex 1A of the WTO Agreement, and opened it for acceptance by WTO Members. Now, the last but crucial step towards its entry into force is the ratification and notification of the Protocol by at least, at the moment, 108 WTO Members.

The WTO TFA is the first multilateral agreement ever accepted under the auspices of the WTO. As a consequence, WTO Members count with limited examples that can guide them during this ratification process. In addition, many developing countries, in particular least-developed countries (LDCs), are facing political, legal and even capacity constraints in ratifying the TFA. This factor might represent a slow down in the process of entry into force. Therefore, this article aims to present some of the legal aspects that developing countries and LDCs might need to take into account for avoiding to put in risk this very last phase of the entry into force of the TFA.

Firstly, it describes the steps that WTO Members may need to follow for completing the

ratification process, domestically. It also presents examples of different approaches that WTO Members are undergoing when it comes to ratifying the TFA. Secondly, it explains the legal steps that the acceptance process entails at a multilateral level. Specifically, it presents examples of the Members that have already notified their acceptance of the Protocol to the WTO. Thirdly, it talks about the TFA's entry into force for those Members that already notified their acceptance. Finally, policy and legal recommendations are provided for developing and LDCs that can be used to overcome the challenges that ratification may pose at the domestic level UNCTAD has recently launched guidelines and law models to help developing countries speed up ratification and acceptance of the WTO TFA. Thereby, the UNCTAD Technical Note No. 23 explains in depth the steps that WTO Members may need to undertake towards the ratification, acceptance and entry into force of the Protocol inserting the TFA into the WTO legal system. This process is composed of six consecutive steps spread over three different stages, as follows:

I. Ratification stage: Domestic steps and country experiences

At the domestic level, each WTO Member shall undertake ratification procedures, which might vary from Member to Member.

a) Step 1: Looking at the domestic legal requirements for the approval of International Agreements

The main challenge of the ratification process is that it depends on the internal rules of each WTO Member for approving international treaties. Domestic legal requirements typically contemplate that the Executive or Legislative branch shall undertake the approval procedure (see step 3). In either case, a legal assessment of the obligation contained in the TFA vis-à-vis the domestic legal framework might be required.

b) Step 2: Elaboration of the domestic instrument approving the Protocol

Notwithstanding the range of options, we have broadly identified two approaches for the elaboration of the domestic instrument, (either a law, act, decree or decision):

- 1) The approval of the Protocol of Amendment of WTO Agreement;
- 2) The approval of the Protocol and its annex, the TFA;

The UNCTAD Technical Note contains models that developing and least-developed WTO Members may use to elaborate the instrument of approval.

c) Step 3: Approval of the Protocol Amending the WTO Agreement

Depending on the domestic legal requirements of each WTO Member, the approval of the TFA can happen in two different instances:

- 1) Executive branch: if all the issues covered by the TFA are exclusively parts of the Executive's powers.
- 2) Legislative branch: The Parliament may be the appropriate body to approve the WTO TFA when the implementation of agreement requires enacting new or amending existing legislation, and/or the issues covered by the TFA are within the Parliament's powers.

d) Step 4: Ratification

By this step, a WTO Member expresses its consent to be legally bound by the TFA. Note that "ratification" does not mean that the concerned WTO Member should immediately apply the TFA. The agreement will only be binding for those WTO Members that ratify it and once it enters into force.

¹ Although the WTO TFA is the first multilateral agreement to be approved after the WTO creation, there are similar experiences, from which WTO Member can obtain guidelines, requiring the amendment of a WTO Agreement such as the TRIPS Agreement (WT/L/641) and the amendment of a plurilateral Agreement such as the revised Government Procurement Agreement.

² UNCTAD, Technical Note No. 23 entitled "Steps towards the ratification, acceptance and entry into force of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation" is available at <http://unctad.org/technicalnotes>

e) Ratification Members-experiences

Some WTO Members have already launched their domestic ratification process and issue domestic instruments for ratifying the TFA such as Switzerland, Tajikistan, Nicaragua, and Chinese Taipei. In other WTO Members, TFA's ratification process is underway, namely Chile, China, Colombia, El Salvador, Georgia, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, Norway, Saudi Arabia, and the EU. Lastly, there are some WTO Members that haven't properly started with this process, such as the case of Indonesia and many other

Hereby some examples of how ratification processes differ from one Member to another

Since the 2010 Constitution entered into force, the above mentioned process has undergone important changes. Specifically, the Executive Power has to review the text three times in total, whereas before it only needed to review it twice. Furthermore, the Constitutional Tribunal now has a word in this process while before it didn't. In other words, the process follows this order: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Executive Power, Constitutional Tribunal, Executive power, Parliament and lastly to the Executive again. This is the proceeding that the Dominican Republic has followed for the ratification of the TFA.

- a) approval of the International Treaty
- b) text of the Agreement
- c) details about its date of entry into force

iv. Indonesia

The Ministry of Trade (MoT) sends the TFA text together with a note, to a University or Academic Institution for them to do a Cost Benefit Analysis, called Academic Transcript (in Indonesia Bahasa is called: Naska Akademish). Once this Naska Akademish is done, MoT Presents and then they make suggestions to their draft. The Naska Akademish will be presented to all the stakeholders on TF



i. Switzerland

The Federal Council drafts an economic report on the agreement and sends it to the Federal Assembly. Then, this body revises the report and decides on the approval of the WTO TFA through an «Arrêt Federal». Once the agreement is approved, the «Arrêt Federal» might be submitted to national referendum. Then, the Federal Council shall ratify the TFA.

ii. Dominican Republic

Before the new Constitution of 2010, the Dominican Republic used to follow these instances when ratifying International Agreements. First the legal text was reviewed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and from there it was sent to the Executive Power, from there to the Parliament and lastly to the Executive again. This was the process used for ratifying Marrakesh Agreement through Resolution of the Parliament Num. 2/95, 20 January 1995, which entered into force 9 March 1995.

iii. Mexico

For ratifying the TFA, Mexico follows the same approach as with its other International Treaties.

Step by step:

1. The Ministry of Economy submits the text, translated in Spanish to the Congress
2. The text of the Agreement is discussed in the Congress, first by committees and afterwards in plenary session. The discussion of the Congress aims to approve or disregard the relevant Treaty
3. If it is approved, the Congress publishes, in the Federal Official Journal, an "approval decree"
4. Afterwards, the Executive power (the President of the Republic in this case) publishes a "promulgation decree" making reference to the:

and if the Agreement for approval. Once approved, is presented to the Parliament, which has to consider within 60 days. Afterwards, the agreement goes back to the TF task force and they will decide whether it will be ratified by an act of the Parliament or by Presidential Regulation.

II. Acceptance stage: legal steps and Members experiences

At the multilateral level, WTO Members, having completed their domestic ratification procedures, need to undertake the following steps to become a signatory party to the WTO TFA

a) Step 5: Elaboration of the instrument of acceptance of the Protocol

WTO Members, individually, prepare an instrument of acceptance, which indicates to the rest of the WTO membership their consent to be bound by the Protocol.

b) Step 6: Deposit of the instrument of acceptance to the WTO Secretariat

The acceptance to the Protocol should be deposited with the WTO Director-General.

c) First Members in the notification race

Up to today, only eight countries have notified its acceptance to the Protocol, namely Hong Kong, Singapore, United States, Mauritius, Malaysia, Japan, Australia and Botswana. The ratification process of the first four countries shares a common feature; they did not need to issue a legal instrument for ratifying the TFA insofar as its implementation does not require any legislative initiative.

III. Entry into force stage:

The Protocol will take effect upon acceptance by two-thirds of the WTO Members, and only for those WTO Members that have accepted it, as established in paragraph 3 of Article X Marrakesh Agreement. Thereafter, the Protocol and the TFA shall take effect for each Member upon its acceptance.

Please note that all these steps vary depending on the legal features of each Member's legal system. For instance, the ratification of the TFA in Switzerland might require carrying out a referendum.

A way forward

As mentioned above, WTO Legal Texts have been revised before, such as the TRIPS Agreement (WT/L/641) and the amendment of a plurilateral Agreement i.e. the revised Government Procurement Agreement (GPA). In the case of the TRIPS amendment, it will be almost ten years from its acceptance; however, it hasn't entered into force yet due to the lack of ratification from the two-thirds of the WTO Membership. By the same token, the GPA, which is only a plurilateral agreement, took four years to enter into force.

In the TFA case, it will soon have two years of an agreed text and only eight from 108 Members (two-third of Membership) have notified its ratification to the WTO. Although many countries are in the process of doing it, it will be very difficult that 100 Members ratify the agreement before the Nairobi WTO Ministerial

Conference this December. However, 2016 will be a key year for the remaining Members to materialize the efforts towards the creation of a WTO TFA, which started since 2004.

If WTO Members would like to enjoy in full from the benefits provided by the TFA, this treaty needs to enter into force as soon as possible. Developing countries and LDCs may want to guide their process with the following recommendations:

- To launch the ratification process as soon as possible, raising awareness amongst all national stakeholders and designating a lead agency;

- To analyse the implications of applying the TFA in the national legal system. This consultation should involve all agencies concerned with cross-border trade in goods. The aim is to find out if new regulation or amendment of existing regulation will be required;

- .To adopt the necessary steps to ensure the ratification of the TFA, in accordance with the conclusions obtained from the previous analysis and the domestic legal requirements for introducing international agreements into the domestic legal system;

- To prepare the necessary instruments for the ratification of the TFA i.e. law, decree, act or decision along with, if necessary, a report containing the main arguments for and the impact of implementing the TFA;

- To send the draft instruments for the ratification to the competent authority;

- To facilitate, to participate in and to follow the debate and to be prepared for answering relevant/technical questions about the TFA;

- To provide support while adopting the instrument of ratification and during the notification of the acceptance of the Protocol to the WTO.

*For further information, please contact:
Pamela Ugaz or Edna Ramirez (tf@unctad.org), Trade Logistics Branch, UNCTAD*

UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES STRENGTHEN COOPERATION FOR TRADE FACILITATION IMPLEMENTATION

22 April 2015, Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland

Three key United Nations agencies have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen their support for developing countries as they implement the World Trade Organization's Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA), also known as the Bali Agreement.

Under the terms of the MoU, UNCTAD, the International Trade Centre (ITC) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) will leverage their unique strengths, products and services to provide a coordinated and integrated programme of support to developing countries implementing the WTO TFA.



The three agencies emphasized their longstanding work in the simplification and harmonization of international trade procedures, and the opportunity to enhance trade facilitation implementation in developing countries and least developed countries.

"Our wide range of UN recommendations, standards and tools in trade facilitation are freely available to all UN Member States," UNECE Executive Secretary Christian Friis Bach said. "Through this strengthened cooperation, we will enhance the capacity of countries to cut red tape, remove regulatory and procedural barriers to trade, and significantly reduce their cost of doing business."

"Effective trade facilitation is a win-win scenario for both trade and governments," ITC Executive Director Arancha González said. "This integrated approach will greatly strengthen our capacity to support the business community to benefit from the WTO Agreement. Ensuring that small and medium-sized enterprises benefit fully from the WTO TFA is crucial to ensuring that the potential gains from the Agreement are realized on the ground, and that they have a real impact on the cost of doing business in developing and least developed countries."

"The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement presents a great opportunity for developing and least developed countries to enhance their participation in the global economy, expand trade and create employment at the local level."

"By strengthening our collaboration, we are better positioned to help developing countries realise these potential gains. This is at the core of the work of the United Nations and the WTO TFA is an excellent catalyst to help achieve this goal."

Mukhisa Kituyi
UNCTAD Secretary-General

Cooperation between the agencies will concentrate on helping countries identify, categorise and implement the measures that they committed to under the WTO TFA.

Actions will focus initially on assisting countries to establish the necessary institutional arrangements for implementing the agreement - such as setting up national trade facilitation committees - and ensuring that countries are trained in using the various UN recommendations and tools available for implementing the measures in the agreement.

These include ensuring better and easier access to information for traders; facilitating greater predictability and reliability of procedures through simplified formalities, documentation and information flows using international standards; and the adoption of facilities such as single windows for trade - all of this in close collaboration with the WTO and the donor community.

Specific areas of collaboration include:

Joint missions to assist countries identify trade facilitation needs and approach to implementing the WTO TFA

Joint development and maintenance of the UN Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide

Joint publications related to trade facilitation implementation

Joint maintenance of repositories of Trade Facilitation Committees and related matters

Collaboration in the development and maintenance of UN Trade Facilitation Recommendations and Standards on Trade Facilitation

For further information contact Jan Hoffmann,
Trade Logistics Branch
(jan.hoffmann@unctad.org) UNCTAD;
Mohammad Saeed, (saeed@intracen.org) ITC
or Tom Butterly (tom.butterly@unece.org)
UNECE.

UN/CEFACT RECOMMENDATION 40 TEXT ON CONSULTATION APPROACHES WAS APPROVED

The aim of this Recommendation is to advise governments and the business community on how to approach effective consultations that will be flexible, transparent, fair, accountable and participatory.

A new UNECE Recommendation (No. 40) on consultation approaches in trade facilitation matters was approved on 16 February by the UN/CEFACT Plenary at its 21th session.

Consultations will help governments and organizations prioritize agendas and communicate results which will build trust between the parties and increase transparency in the process. Stakeholders will, as a result, find that each party will have the time needed to prepare for new rules or regulations. The Recommendation encourages the subdivision of consultation approaches between traders and border agencies into three layers: strategic, operational and technical.

This is an important step forward in supporting the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Along these lines UN/CEFACT is also working to revise UNECE Recommendation 4 on National Trade Facilitation Bodies that enable relevant stakeholders from the public and private sectors to discuss and coordinate trade facilitation measures at the national level.

Recommendation 40 adds to the 35 trade facilitation recommendations and standards developed by UN/CEFACT that support the implementation of trade facilitation measures at the national, regional and global levels.

The Plenary also elected Lance Thompson (United States of America) as the new Chair of UN/CEFACT for the period 2015-2018.

For further information, please contact the, Information Unit of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) at the following email address: info.ece@unece.org

MEETING OF THE GLOBAL FACILITATION PARTNERSHIP FOR TRANSPORTATION AND TRADE (GFP)

Organized by UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), in collaboration with UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and International Trade Centre (ITC) on 22 April 2015, Geneva, Switzerland.

The event brought together representatives of the private sector, WTO Member States and international organizations to discuss how best this implementation process can be supported and coordinated by the above parties and to maximize its benefits. In particular, participants discussed how the private sector can contribute to and support the implementation of the Agreement.

Background

The World Trade Organization (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) was adopted in December 2013 at the 9th WTO Ministerial in Bali, Indonesia. The Protocol of Amendment was subsequently adopted in November 2014. The TFA creates binding obligations for WTO members to conduct trade facilitation reforms by making trade processes more transparent and efficient in cooperation with border regulatory agencies and private sector. The Agreement also includes provisions for technical assistance and capacity building to support its implementation in developing and least developed countries (LDCs).

Developing countries and LDCs are currently in the process of self-designating, on individual basis, all measures of the agreement within one of the three following categories: provisions that will be implemented upon entry into force of the TFA (Category A), measures requiring a transition period prior their implementation (Category B), and measures for which implementation needs both a transition period and external technical and financial assistance for implementation (Category C).

The key international organizations have pledged to work together to support countries in this process and to assist in providing the necessary technical assistance, along with

other players, for implementing Category C measures as described above. The private sector, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as a key implementation partner and significant potential beneficiary, must also play an important role in supporting countries in these processes.

The Global Facilitation Partnership for Transport and Trade (GFPTT) aims at bringing together all interested parties, public and private, national and international, who want to help achieve significant improvements in transport and trade facilitation in World Bank member countries. The Partners have together agreed to design and undertake specific programmes towards meeting these objectives, making use of their specific advantages in the subject matter in a coordinated fashion.

The United Nations Trade Facilitation network was established as a common platform for UN agencies involved in trade facilitation activities. It was launched in response to a request from the High Level Committee on Programs of the United Nations Chief Executives Board to identify trade facilitation issues to be addressed in a coordinated manner within the United Nations system. Recognizing that these agencies have different approaches to trade facilitation, this platform concentrates information on each agency's approach. It provides a doorway for users to investigate further the work carried out by one or another UN agency.

Sessions

- WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement: An Overview and Update
- Governments' Priorities including Strategies for Fostering Private Sector Participation in the TFA Implementation Process
- Priorities, Perspectives, and Expectations from the Private Sector on TFA Implementation
- International Organizations' Coordination and Partnership for Supporting TFA Implementation

Participants

Private sector representatives from large corporations and SMEs; national government representatives, officials of international or-

ganizations and other relevant organizations and experts in Trade Facilitation.

Outcomes

- The GFP members will strive to strengthen their existing collaboration and will build stronger partnerships between the international organizations and the private sector;
- All parties are aware of the benefits of greater participation of key stakeholders from the public and private sector for ratification and implementation of the Agreement;
- The GFP is ready to collaborate with the private sector at international, regional and national levels;
- The GFP encourages the private sector involvement including the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in trade facilitation matters and to make the private sector's voice heard in national and international forums;
- The private sector needs to be aware of the priorities of the governments within trade facilitation reforms;
- Establishing national committees on trade facilitation is an important step to ensure regular consultation with the private sector representatives, for collecting their views and for identifying legislative gaps and bottlenecks that need to be addressed in implementing trade facilitation reforms;
- The recommendations, standards, tools and best practices developed and/or applied by the GFP partners are available to support the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement;
- Trade-related technical support and capacity building provided by the GFP partners
- Is essential to assist in the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement in developing countries, transition economies and least developed countries

For further information, please contact, Mr. Khan Salehin (khan.salehin@unece.org) or Mrs. Aruna Vivekanantham (aruna.vivekanantham@unece.org), UNECE or visit: www.gfptt.org

STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS ESSENTIAL FOR ROBUST DELIVERABLES ON TFA IMPLEMENTATION

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) joins forces with the World Bank and the United Nations (UN) on ratification and implementation of the World Trade Organization's (WTO) Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA).

During its annual meeting in Geneva, the Global Facilitation Partnership for Transportation and Trade (GFP) identified private sector engagement as vital for effective implementation of the agreement, according to ICC.

The GFP brings together ICC, the World Customs Organization (WCO), the World Bank, the International Trade Center (ITC), the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) to achieve significant improvements in transport and trade facilitation.

Gathering at UN Headquarters in Geneva on 22 April, over 150 representatives of governments, private sector, international organizations and trade experts discussed the role of the business community in the implementation of the TFA. The meeting reinforced the numerous benefits the agreement will bring, in particular to small- and medium-sized enterprises and developing countries. By implementing the TFA many developing countries will increase their capacity to handle and grow their share of international trade and attract foreign direct investment (FDI).

Implementing the TFA

Since its adoption by WTO members in November 2014, thus far only Hong Kong, Mauritius, Singapore and the United States, have ratified the TFA. Ratifications from 108 WTO members are needed for the agreement to enter into force.

Donia Hammami, ICC policy manager in charge of customs and trade facilitation, highlighted four key characteristics for a successful approach to TFA implementation: business engagement, ambition, speed and a coherent approach to implementation.

Applauding the 55 countries that already submitted their Category A commitments to

the WTO Ms Hammami said: "Although many of the TFA provisions are to be implemented on a "best endeavors" basis, the message to governments is simple: the more you embrace the trade facilitation agenda, the more you give a leg-up to your local businesses in global markets".

Category A provisions are to be implemented upon entry into force of the TFA. In order to capture the full benefits of TFA provisions, ICC recommends a harmonized implementation of TFA articles and identifies the World Customs Organization's Mercator Programme as a useful guideline for a harmonized approach to implementation. While emphasizing the need for multistakeholder dialogue on the national level, Ms Hammami said: "In making coordinated border management a reality, trade facilitation would need to be championed by all agencies and stakeholders involved."

Private sector engagement

In its global advocacy efforts ICC has always underscored the importance of understanding the border challenges businesses face to enhance national competitiveness. Fostering private sector participation to facilitate practical feedback is instrumental to ensure government solutions fit practical needs and enhance trade flows rather than being burdensome for businesses.

In Geneva, the GFP's members agreed to encourage private sector involvement, including SMEs, in their trade facilitation efforts. In its outcome document the GFP declared the establishment of national committees on trade facilitation an important step to safeguard regular consultation with private sector representatives in order to identify legislative gaps and bottlenecks. Furthermore, the GFP partners will provide technical support and capacity building to assist in the implementation of the WTO TFA in developing countries.

Article based on the «Financial», 08 May 2015. <http://www.finchannel.com/index.php/business/item/43871-stronger-partnerships-essential-for-robust-deliverables-on-tfa-implementation>

UNITED NATIONS REGIONAL COMMISSIONS (UNRCs) GLOBAL SURVEY ON TRADE FACILITATION AND PAPERLESS TRADE

In response to the lack of comprehensive cross-country data on implementation of trade facilitation and paperless trade measures, the United Nations Regional Commissions (UNRCs) initiated a global survey in October 2014 to better understand and monitor progress on implementation of trade facilitation and paperless trade measures; as well as to support evidence-based policy making and highlight capacity building and technical assistance needs. This first Global Survey builds on an annual regional survey undertaken by ESCAP since 2012, and has been conducted in close collaboration with UNCTAD, OECD, ITC, OCO and SELA.

1 is based on 22 (out of 38) TF measures from 102 countries (for which data for all 22 measures was available). Preliminary results were presented at the 5th Global Review on Aid for Trade on 1 July 2015 and survey reports and data have been made gradually available at: unnext.unescap.org/UNTFSurvey2015.asp.

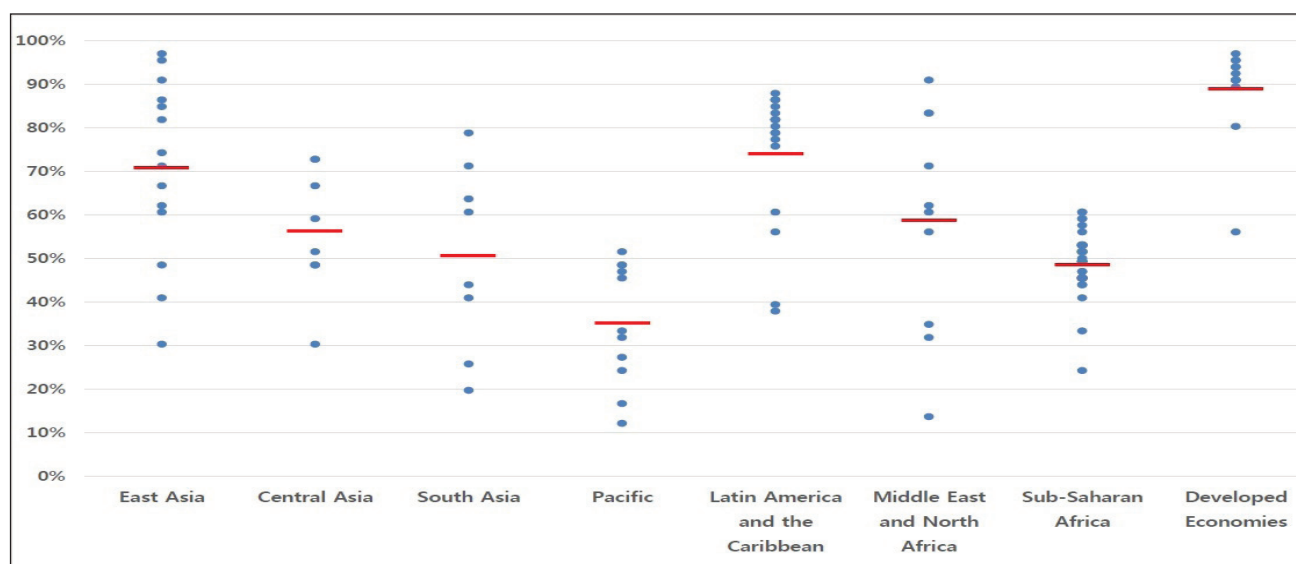
The highest average levels of trade facilitation implementation in the developing regions were recorded in Latin America and East Asia. The Pacific Islands region is found to be lagging significantly behind most other regions in this area.

- Establishment and publication of average release times;
- Trade facilitation measures for authorized operators;
- Electronic Single Window System.

The full global report will be made available in August 2015.

The Global Survey is expected to be conducted regularly, using the data already collected as a baseline. Additional partners are

Figure 1: Trade facilitation implementation around the World (Cross-border paperless trade measures not included)



The Global Survey covers 38 trade facilitation measures, which have been grouped into 4 categories: i. General Trade Facilitation measures (Transparency, Formalities, Institutional Arrangement and Cooperation); ii. Paperless trade; iii. Cross-border paperless trade; and iv. Transit Facilitation. The Global Survey goes beyond the scope of the WTO TFA by including additional measures related to paperless trade and cross-border paperless trade.

Overall, the results highlight very wide disparities in trade facilitation implementation among economies. However, most regions and economies, including several LDCs, are found to have implemented at least 50 percent of the WTO TFA-related measures, with many economies focusing on implementation of automated and paperless formalities and risk management. The results also showed that, at the global level, the three least implemented WTO TFA related measures were:

welcome to join the effort. Preparation for the 2nd Survey will be discussed at the upcoming Asia-Pacific Trade Facilitation Forum in Wuhan China on 20-21 October 2015.

For more information please visit: : <http://unnext.unescap.org/UNTFSurvey2015.asp> or contact [Tengfei Wang \(wangt@un.org\)](mailto:wangt@un.org), Trade Facilitation Unit, ESCAP

Data from 111 countries has been collected as part of the 2015 Global Survey. Figure

¹ To see the survey questionnaire: <http://unnext.unescap.org/tforum14-survey.asp>
² ECA: 26 African countries, ECE: 13 European countries, ECLAC: 17 Latin American & Caribbean countries, ESCAP: 44 Asia-Pacific countries, ESCWA: 11 Western Asia/Middle East countries
³ Only 22 measures, essentially all related to the WTO TFA provisions, were retained for the preliminary global analysis due to missing data from many countries on cross-border paperless trade measures implementation.

COTE D'IVOIRE HAS A NEW WEB-BASED PLATFORM TO FACILITATE THE IDENTIFICATION AND ELIMINATION OF TRADE OBSTACLES BY TRADE OPERATORS

This interactive tool was developed by the International Trade Centre (ITC) and sponsored by the European Union.

The Trade Obstacles Alert (TOA) platform is an interactive tool designed to facilitate the identification and elimination of trade obstacles encountered by trade operators.

This web-based platform allows trade operators to report obstacles they face when exporting or importing their products. Via an alert system based on email notifications, the relevant national authorities are informed of these obstacles and can provide timely solutions. In addition, users can choose to receive alerts of the obstacles encountered by other operators for the products and markets of their interest.

The overall objective of the TOA platform is to address the need of exporters and importers for enhanced transparency in trade regulations and business processes. The private sector often lacks information, infrastructure and/or technical support to meet the complex requirements imposed to them. In addition, policy makers do not always have a clear understanding of the main obstacles to trade affecting the private sector, which makes difficult the development of appropriate trade policies.

The International Trade Centre (ITC) conducts large-scale company-level surveys to identify regulations that companies find burdensome, known as the NTM business surveys. Despite the efforts of national authorities to improve

the business environment of their country, many obstacles remain. They derive, on the one hand, from regulations adopted by partner countries and national authorities and, on the other, from the procedures required to implement said regulations. The NTM business survey aims to improve the understanding of trade obstacles affecting the market and facilitate the implementation of trade policies that can effectively tackle them.

The TOA platform ensures the continuity of the public-private dialogue on trade obstacles triggered by the NTM business survey in order to improve the country business environment.

Trade obstacles

Within the context of the Trade Obstacles Alert (TOA) platform, a "trade obstacle" can be defined as any requirement imposed on the export or import of goods that has an economic impact on international trade by affecting quantities, prices or both. Trade obstacles may arise from the application of non-tariff measures (NTMs) by a government or may be inherent to the business environment of a particular country.

NTMs include all mandatory legal requirements, other than tariffs, that companies have to comply with when exporting or importing goods. These measures are implemented for

legitimate or protectionist reasons. They include quotas, import licensing, requirements analysis, certification procedures, health regulations and prohibitions (see the complete classification of trade obstacles). These measures may constitute obstacles to trade either by nature, i.e. through the rigorous requirements they impose, or because of the procedures that are associated to them.

Business environment includes all domestic factors that may affect the activity of a company with the exception of the aforementioned regulations and procedures. Obstacles related to the business environment might include, among others, issues related to the availability of raw material, electricity supply, transport system and port infrastructure.

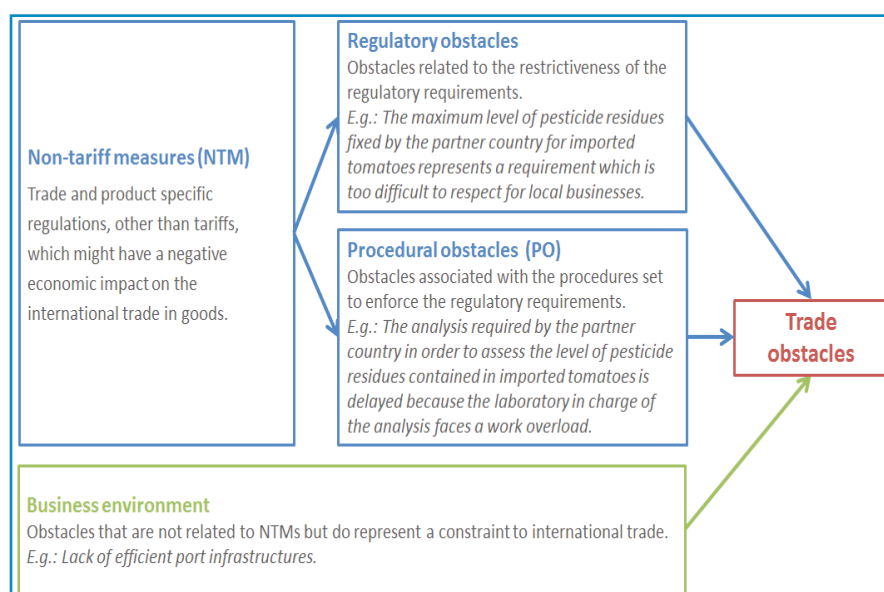
The TOA platform aims at identifying the origin of said obstacles (regulatory, procedural or related to the business environment) in order to facilitate the implementation of targeted actions to eliminate them.

The TOA mechanism

1. Definition

The trade obstacles alert mechanism is the public-private dialogue that is created through the Trade Obstacles Alert (TOA) platform. The platform provides a direct link between trade operators and public authorities, with the final purpose of identifying and tackling obstacles to trade. The main actors of the mechanism are:

- Trade operators who use the platform to report the obstacles they face to the public and semi-public authorities involved in the drafting and implementation of trade regulations and related procedures;
- Public and semi-public agencies that, through their respective focal points, answer to the reports submitted by trade operators and proceed to remove the obstacle;
- The National Focal Point (NFP), which ensures the transmission of information between public and private actors in respect of anonymity. The NFP also oversees the correct functioning of the platform and its promotion;



•The National Monitoring Committee (NMC), an assembly of representatives from public or semi-public agencies involved in the enforcement of procedures and trade regulations within the country. The NMC oversees the correct functioning of the mechanism by ensuring the dialogue between the different parties and monitoring the resolution process of the obstacles reported through the TOA platform.

2. Functioning

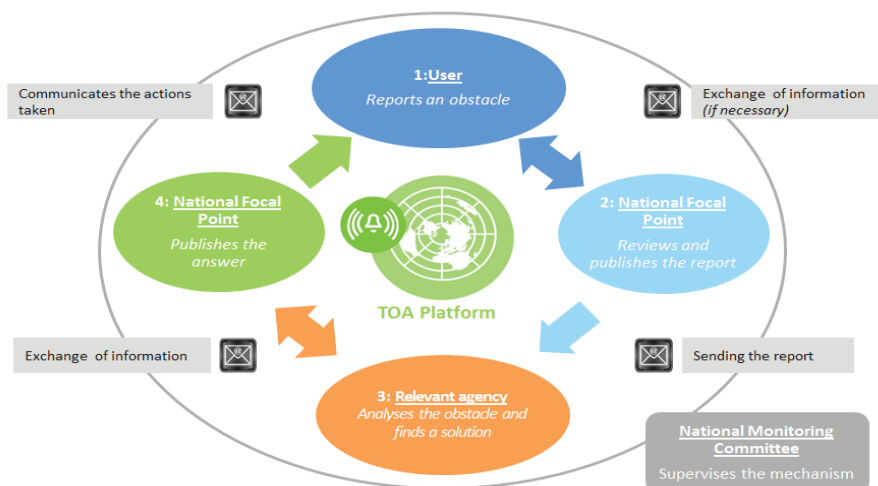
All users registered to the TOA platform can report a new trade obstacle through an online questionnaire, which is then sent to the NFP. The latter then checks the validity of the submitted obstacle report.

•If the report is considered valid, it is automatically emailed to the agency concerned so that it can respond. After this initial step, the report becomes “public” and therefore will be visible to all users that access the TOA platform (including unregistered users).

3. The obstacle reports

Each obstacle report on the platform is associated with a specific colour-coded status. The status indicates the progress of the reported obstacle through the resolution process. The different statuses of a report are described in the table below.

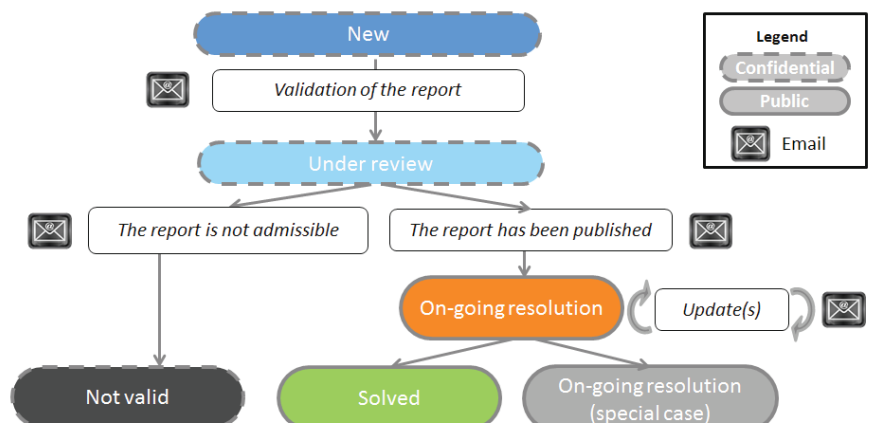
Obstacles status	Accessibility	Description	Colour code
New	Confidential (NFP and NMC)	The obstacle report has been submitted by the registered user and has to be reviewed by the NFP.	Blue
Under review	Confidential (NFP and NMC)	The obstacle report has been reviewed by the NFP but further details are needed in order to validate it.	Light blue
Not valid	Confidential (NFP and NMC)	The obstacle report has been reviewed and rejected by the NFP because its content is inappropriate or the problem reported does not correspond to an obstacle as defined in the TOA platform.	Dark grey
On-going resolution	Public	The obstacle report has been reviewed and validated by the NFP. The obstacle has been communicated to the relevant agencies.	Orange
Solved	Public	The obstacle has been removed by the relevant agencies.	Light green
On-going resolution (Special Case)	Public	The obstacle cannot be removed in the short term as it represents a special case. Discussions on how to solve the obstacle will continue within the NMC.	Grey



The above-mentioned statuses of the obstacle report can be categorized as public (i.e. visible to all users of the TOA) and confidential (i.e. accessible uniquely to the user that reported the obstacle, the NFP and to the members of the NMC). In order to view the obstacles reported that are associated with a confidential status, users have to access the page View my reports within the module My account. Changes to the obstacle report status are validated by the NFP and for each change the user who reported the obstacle will receive an automatic email notification. The obstacle report resolution process is represented in the graph below.

•If the report is considered not valid (e.g. it does not meet the requirements to be defined a trade obstacle within the platform), the user will receive an email informing him/her about the non-validity of the report. The report will not be visible to other users of the platform.

When a report is valid, the agency concerned has to submit a response to the NFP who will then publish it online as a part of the obstacle report. Any update concerning the status of the report and/or the actions taken by the concerned agency will be communicated by email to the user who reported the obstacle. Additionally, all registered users will be notified of any modification or update in those reports that concern the products and the markets of their interest. The chart below illustrates how the mechanism works.



For further information visit: <http://www.obstaclesaucommerce.org> or <http://www.intracen.org/news/ITC-Impact-Cote-dIvoire/>

BRIEFING PAPER ON AGRICULTURE TRADE FACILITATION IN GREECE

This briefing paper was developed by UNECE under the framework of the United Nations Development Account project “Deepening Regional Connectivity: Strengthening Capacities of Asian Developing Countries to Increase Intra-regional Trade by Implementing Paperless Trade and Transport Facilitation Systems” (a UNECE-and UNESCAP project).

Introduction

In many developing and transition economies, agri-cultural trade is the backbone of sustained social and economic development. However, cross-border trade in perishable produce remains a challenge and many transition and developing countries have not been able to seize possible opportunities to increase their income through exports. Inefficiencies in the agri-food supply chains have not only led to income losses but also food losses and insecure food supply. The emergence of innovative agriculture supply chains and the latest approaches to improve supply chain management through trade facilitation provide new business and income opportunities, particularly for rural communities, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and for women. To assist developing countries, UNECE and UNESCAP developed the UNNEXT Guide on information management in agro-food supply chains for trade facilitation. This Guide applies latest trade facilitation and eBusiness technologies for improvement of agri-food supply chains.

In 2013, the Greek Government started a major trade facilitation reform programme. In the framework of this overall reform programme, UNECE used an early draft of UNNEXT Guide to assist the government agencies and exporters in improving the export competitiveness of Greek Fresh Fruit and Vegetables. The activities focussed on the business process analysis (BPA) of the Greek agriculture supply chain, the implementation of an approved exporter scheme, the implementation of an automated and risk based inspection system and the preparation for use of electronic quality certificates. Based on the progress in the trade facilitation and eBusiness infrastructure that is created by these projects, Greece has now developed a concept for Greek Smarter food export.

This policy paper describes the strategic approach taken by Greece, the activities undertaken and the progress made within the past one and a half years of implementation.

Background

With the objective of enhancing growth, the Greek Government made a commitment in October 2012 to implement a comprehensive trade facilitation reform programme to simplify and automate procedures for export and import. Core activities included the implementation of an eCustoms solution, simplification of procedures and legislation and a move towards paperless trade, and Single Window. The UNECE Trade Facilitation Implementation Guide (TFIG) provides a case study that summarizes the reform.

With the reform programme having made good progress, Greece undertook a study in the first quarter of 2014 to analyse the competitiveness of its fresh food and vegetable supply chain. The ultimate objective was to develop improvement strategies for its export competitiveness building on the achievements made in the trade facilitation sector. This policy brief informs about the approach taken and the findings. The paper reflects the developments up to the third quarter of 2014.

TRANSPARENCY IN THE WTO SYSTEM

Step 1: Analysing supply chains for agriculture exports

As a first step and in order to set the baseline, export processes of important Greek products (i.e. kiwi fruits and feta cheese) were analysed in detail using the UNNEXT Business Process Analysis (BPA) approach. This analysis provided important insights into the time and costs associated with the export of agricultural produce. One conclusion of the study was that inspections and certificates for quality inspection were major time and cost factors in the export process.

The findings of the Business Process Analysis triggered a number of projects that aimed at improving the regulation of agriculture exports.

Step 2: Implementing key projects for Agriculture Trade Facilitation

Based on the findings of the BPAs, the Greek Ministry of Rural Development and Food (MRDF) and the Department of Customs of the Ministry of Finance started a number of projects to simplify the procedures for Greek agriculture exports. Under European Legislation¹, the export of fresh fruit and vegetables to third countries (i.e. non-EU countries) requires conformity checks and issuance of conformity certificates. In addition, the above mentioned legislation requires member States to introduce risk based inspections and keeping a record of traders.

In Greece, in order to receive a quality certificate for an agriculture export consignment, the trader needs to send a notification for inspection through the MRDF electronic system (MENOS). Before the project was implemented each of the 50000 export consignments shipped every year was inspected and a quality certificate on paper was issued. As a result, there were a large number of inspections required which delayed exports. Therefore, Greece decided to introduce a risk based inspection system.

The objective of the Greek administrations was to improve the implementation of this regulation and the inspection process while guaranteeing highest quality standards for Greek agriculture exports through three trade facilitation projects:

Project #1: Approved trader scheme

Project #2: Automated risk based control in agriculture exports

Project #3: Electronic exchange of quality certificates with Customs

¹ Council regulation (EC) 1234/2007 and implementing regulation 543/2011

Step 3: Vision for an export strategy for Greek agricultural produce based on trade facilitation and eBusiness

Through the reforms and in just over two years Greece succeeded to significantly improve its trade facilitation competitiveness^{2,3}

Greece is now aiming at taking advantage of the automated risk management and the IT systems that were introduced through the trade facilitation reforms to develop new value added products and export opportunities for Greek agriculture trade.

To support the new strategy, UNECE together with MRDF undertook a full scale review of the Greek fresh food and vegetable export conditions. The findings were presented and discussed with public and private sector stakeholders in two full-day workshops. In the first workshop, specific conditions of the Greek production, logistics and exports were analysed and strengths and weaknesses of Greece agro-food exports determined. Specific areas for improvement (hotspots) were identified and potential solutions discussed. The most relevant hotspots were then benchmarked internationally, recommendations developed and validated with the stakeholders. This exercise provided an opportunity of open dialogue between the public and the private sector and to compare the current state of the Greek production and export process with high profile solutions applied in other countries. In the second workshop, the experts adopted a number of recommendations and developed a vision for a competitive production and export strategy with trade facilitation and information management as enabling technologies.

The strategy chosen by the Greece is outlined in the UNNEXT Guide for agriculture trade facilitation and is summarised as the Smarter Food Vision.

The Smarter Food Vision is based on using information technology consistently a key resource to develop agricultural exports: by collecting and providing relevant information along the supply chain smaller producers can participate in export chains, food becomes safer to produce and eat. Most importantly of all, consumers get the chance to make informed choices about the food they eat.

Implementing the vision helps to turn natural disadvantages of Greek agricultural produc-

tion, such as smallholding, into competitive advantages.

During the two workshops the experts concluded that in the case of Greece, with its long history of excellence in small-scale food production, the Smarter Food Vision could be best realised by creating premium, IT-enabled brands and focus on delivering high value products, such as organic and socially aware products, to high income markets. This avoids competition on price and instead bases market differentiation of Greek products on strong positive associations, such as being a well-known tourist destination, looking back on thousands of years as producers of highly renowned produce and the traditions of Greek smallholder productions.

The cornerstones of such a Greek Smarter Food Vision approach are:

- Quality of Greek produce
- Origin of Greece as a world class tourist destination
- Tradition of Greek smallholders and regions

The basis of the Greek Smarter Food Vision approach is a comprehensive food information management system that is described in the UNNEXT Guide Agri-food Chain Information Management For Trade Facilitation, as a Smarter Food Single Window.

The Smarter Food Single Window consists of several components, some of which are already in place in Greece. Geolocalisation places the products sold under the brand on the map and connects them with local stories to create a link between the vastly different Greek regions and the consumer. The export and quality control systems of Customs and MRDF contribute to high standards of this premium brand to avoid consumer disappointment.

Conclusions

At the time of drafting of this policy brief⁴, the Greek trade facilitation process is still in full progress.

Specifications for the electronic document exchange between MRDF and Customs have been completed

and a recommendation has been made to the Government for implementation. The Greek

Smarter Food Vision was supported by a group of experts which recommended the presentation of

the concept to high level policy makers from the relevant ministries.

The factors of success of the on-going trade facilitation strategy for Greek fresh fruit and vegetables

have been:

- Detailed analysis of export processes using the UNNEXT Business Process Analysis and subsequent

identification of bottlenecks,

- Targeted projects to pre-approve exports for compliant and trusted traders, automated riskbased

controls and electronic exchange of certificates between different authorities. Key

improvements are time to export and resource needs in the export control process,

- Involvement of stakeholders to identify hotspots and design solutions to key export challenges,

- Using the advances in trade facilitation and stakeholder feedback to develop a consistent

export strategy for agricultural products, based on the UNECE and ESCAP Smarter Food Vision.

For further information, please contact:
Mr. Markus Pikart (markus.pikart@unece.org), UNECE

² Source: World Bank DoingBusiness.org 2013 report; <http://www.doingbusiness.org/data/exploreeconomies/greece>

³ Source: World Bank Logistics Performance Index (LPI): comparison 2011 to 2014 <http://lpi.worldbank.org/international/scorecard/radar/200/C/GRC/2014/IOEC/2014/C/ITA/2014>



MAURITIUS: WTO - REGIONAL WORKSHOP FOR AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARIANS

The aim of this workshop was to sensitise participants on the implementation of the WTO TFA.

A WTO Regional Workshop, aiming to sensitise African Parliamentarians on the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, was held at the Hennessy Park Hotel, in Ebène.

A joint initiative of the World Trade Organisation in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, the three-day event also had as objective to sensitise participants on the work of the WTO and on the state of play in the negotiations of the Doha Development Agenda.

Mauritius, for its part, shared its experience on the services sector and on actions taken to implement the Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Nine sessions were scheduled during the workshop and discussions addressed the following topics: How the WTO works; The WTO at the age of 20 – What Challenges for the Future; Trade in Services and the WTO; The Trade Facilitation Agreement – What Impact for the African Region; Regional Trade Agreements and the WTO; and, The Multilateral Trading System and Parliamentarians

Around 22 African Parliamentarians and Members of the Indian Ocean Commission and the East African Community from eight countries attended. Participants were from: Burundi, Comoros, Kenya, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Tanzania and Uganda.

According to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Mr Etienne Sinatambou, the present picture does not suggest that the emergence of the WTO has actually brought out the enshrining of the rule of law in international economic and trade relations in Africa's particular case as the continent would be thriving. Africa's share in global trade is revolving around 3%. It does not appear, unfortunately, that the desired effects have been brought to Africa since the emergence of the WTO 20 years back, pointed out Mr Sinatambou.

The Minister also recalled that today the WTO with 160 members accounts for some 98% of the world trade. Phenomenal increase in world exports has been recorded with figures reaching 364% since the advent of the WTO, that is mainly two and a half times more than the world GDP over the past 20 years. Yet, Africa has only 3% of that share and this is what we have to change by getting to grips with the rules and regulations, learning about the state of play and getting to see how others are taking advantage of the rules and regulations of the mechanisms of the WTO, stressed the Minister.

Moreover, Mr Sinatambou cited the 2015 Report of the World Heritage Foundation which ranked Mauritius 9th globally on trade freedom with a score of 88.4. On that note, the Minister stated that Mauritius, engaged in continued process of reforms since its

accession to the WTO, is not solely interested in ranking high in indices but rather believes that reform is one of the sine qua non conditions for its economy to thrive. The Minister made an appeal to participants as members of parliaments, senators and decision makers to ensure that the WTO comes to be at the service of Africa.w



*For further information please contact:
Mauritius Government Information
Service (gis@govmu.org) or visit <http://gis.govmu.org>*

INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT FORUM'S 2015 SUMMIT

Trade flows are growing, but also shifting. A third of trade will occur among non-OECD countries by 2050 (2010:15%).

Transport ministers from around the globe, business leaders, top researchers and key sector representatives met at the International Transport Forum's 2015 Summit (ITF) on 27-29 May 2015 in Leipzig, Germany.

Transport, Trade and Tourism

Trade and tourism are important engines of economic growth. International trade represents 50.6% of global GDP and is expected to increase 350% by 2050 (in t/km). Tourism accounts for 21% of global export services. International tourist arrivals reached 1.1 billion in 2013 (1995: 0.5 bn); it will be 1.8 billion in 2030.

Both trade and tourism depend on effective transport systems. Yet transport faces huge challenges as a provider of human mobility and facilitator of goods exchange. The rise of Asia and Africa will drive demand for freight transport. Trade patterns will shift, creating uncertainty for supply chains. Growing numbers of tourists will put pressure on international and domestic transport networks around the world, highlighting the need for more sustainable and accessible services and infrastructure.

UNCTAD Deputy Secretary-General, Joakim Reiter, participated as speaker in the Plenary:

"Enhancing transport system resilience and sustainability", taking place on the second day of the ITF. This session explored recent experiences with two major challenges to transport system operations: natural disasters, such as earthquakes and volcanoes, and manmade technological innovations, such as larger ships calling at ports.

Respond to new trade flows

Trade flows are growing, but also shifting. A third of trade will occur among non-OECD countries by 2050 (2010: 15%) Of the world's 10 largest container ports, nine are now in Asia Pacific – Shanghai handles more containers than Europe's three biggest ports put together. Road freight will boost its share of international freight tonnage by 40% by 2050. These trends will require strategic investment - in carrier and port capacity, in complementary hinterland infrastructure and in multi-modal connections. Governments will



also have to consider the impact of current restrictions on transport services operating across borders.

How transport should respond and meet these challenges was at the centre of debate at the International Transport Forum's 2015 Summit.

For more information please visit: www.internationaltransportforum.org/2015



VII LATIN AMERICAN AND CARIBBEAN REGIONAL MEETING ON FOREIGN TRADE SINGLE WINDOWS

**Single windows as tools for Trade Facilitation and Commercial Integration.
Montevideo, 15-16 October 2015**

Background and justification

The Permanent Secretariat of the Latin America and Caribbean Economic System (SELA) and the Institute for Promotion of Investments and Exports (Uruguay XXI) of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay are pleased to announce the conduction of the “VII Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting on Foreign Trade Single Windows: Single Windows as Tools for Trade Facilitation and Commercial Integration”, to be held in Montevideo, Uruguay, on 15 and 16 October 2015.

The VI Meeting, held in Port of Spain on 30 and 31 October 2014, welcomed Uruguay's request to provide the venue for the VII Regional Meeting on Foreign Trade Single Windows. Additionally, attending delegations made a recommendation for SELA, in synergy with other relevant agencies and related entities, to continue with the efforts started in 2010 with the First Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting on Foreign Trade Single Windows, conducted jointly with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism of Colombia.

Since then, SELA has systematically promoted these annual regional meetings with the purpose of fostering coordination processes to contribute to digital inclusion within the framework of regional integration, as well as a permanent and proactive debate on relevant issues relate to Single Windows, covering regulatory, technical, technological and governance areas, with a view to encouraging governments in the region to commit themselves to designing public policies and national instruments to favour regional efforts aimed at consolidating Single Windows throughout Latin America and the Caribbean as part of e-Commerce and e-Governance strategies.

The VII Latin American and Caribbean Regional Meeting on Foreign Trade Single Windows will be focused, as indicated in its title, on reviewing the strategic role of Single Windows within the context of the recent WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation and the mechanisms for trade integration in Latin America and the Caribbean, which becomes more relevant when considering that by properly developing these tools, they can generate favourable conditions for making strides with intra-regional trade as a crucial instance to achieve higher levels of productivity and competitiveness in individual countries and in Latin America and the Caribbean as a whole.

As a complement, a review will be made of the progress with the Project on Single Windows Interoperability (SWI), of UN/CEFACT, which intends to issue a Recommendation in this connection later this year. Also, an analysis will be carried out on the specific case of the Business-to-Government (B2G) relationship involved in the interoperability between Foreign Trade Single Windows and the Port Single Windows (Port Community Systems); and, of course, debates will be conducted, and the achievements of SWs in Latin America and the Caribbean over the past year will be disseminated.

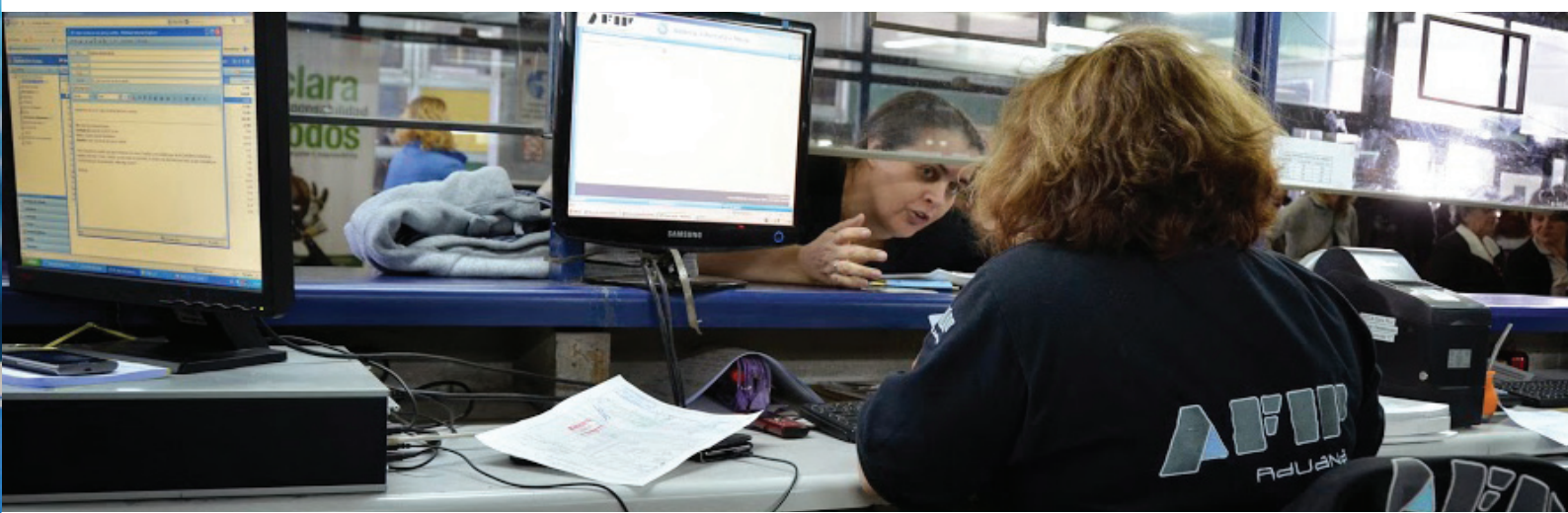
General objective

Provide a space for encounter and dialogue to encourage regional dialogue through an exchange of successful experiences and relevant information on strategic issues and developments that have taken place in the region in terms of Foreign Trade Single Windows, with the purpose of contributing to their development and consolidation, within the framework of the processes of regional and digital integration in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Specific objectives

- i. Discuss emerging and innovative topics with a relevant impact on the design and development of Foreign Trade Single Windows in Latin America and the Caribbean, as essential instruments for facilitating trade and commercial integration.
- ii. Provide analytical elements to foster the progress and deepening of Single Windows and to promote the expected relationship between them along the international supply chain.
- iii. Disseminate the best practices stemming from Projects and Programmes aimed at designing and implementing SW, making emphasis on the methodologies, procedures and resources with proven effectiveness in the field of cross-border paperless trade, following the criteria of interoperability, efficiency, compatibility of standards and security.
- iv. Generate convergence as regards the development of Single Windows, aiming at the unification of the criteria required for implementing common processes and systems with capacity to exchange information, the development of organizational and technological interoperability, and the harmonization of data, on the basis of international standards on foreign trade.

For further information please contact: Ms. Gloria Canas Arias (gcanas@sela.org), SELA or visit www.sela.org



PUBLICATIONS

MARITIME CONNECTIVITY AND TRADE POLICY ISSUES IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND COMMODITIES

Research Study Series N°70

Access to foreign markets is a critical determinant of export performance. In technical literature foreign market access is seen as representing the foreign market potential of a country and relates inter alia inversely to bilateral transport costs.

The existence of a direct maritime connection has also been recognized to play an important role in determining trade costs. However, little theoretical and empirical attention has been devoted to its impact on bilateral exports. The lack of comprehensive evidence on the relationship between maritime connections and bilateral exports is due to the lack of data to a large extent.

The objective of this paper is to fill this gap by using novel information on maritime connections for a sample of 178 countries collected over the 2006-2012 period. Some basic statistical analysis reveals that over the whole period on average about 14 per cent of country pairs are connected directly, about 11 per cent need a single transshipment, about 36 per cent two transshipments and about 28 per cent three transshipments. This is to say that about 61 per cent of country pairs are connected with no more than two transshipments and around 90 per cent with no more than three transshipments.

This paper is a first assessment of the impact of the nature of maritime connections on bilateral exports of containerizable goods using a comprehensive set of country pairs observed over several years. Although a causal relationship remains difficult to identify, our estimates suggest that the absence of a direct connection is associated with a drop in exports value varying between 42 and 55 per cent depend-

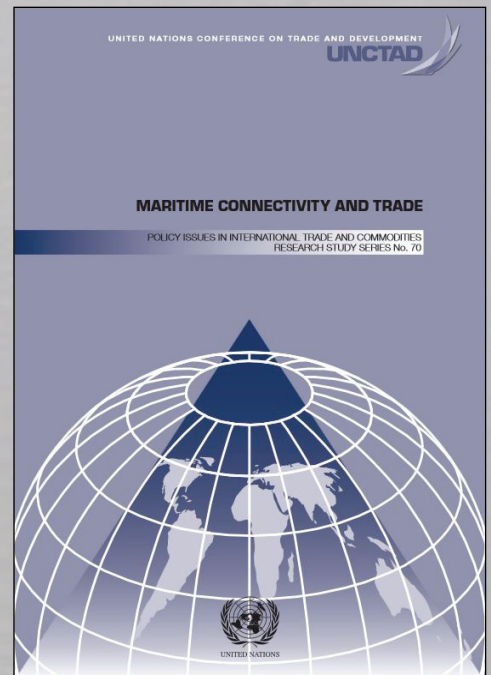
ing on the underlying empirical specification. Results also indicate that any additional transshipment is associated with a drop in exports value varying between 20 and 25 per cent.

We also find evidence that the relationship between bilateral exports and the number of transshipments necessary to transport containerizable goods between two countries is likely to be non-linear. These results suggest that the quality of maritime connectivity is likely to be a preponderant determinant of foreign market access.

By definition landlocked could not enjoy any direct connection with any trade partner but contiguous countries. The above results provide an estimate of the handicap in terms of export value landlocked countries have to face on top of the impact of the quality of transit transports.

High transport costs continue to constitute the greatest impediment to LDCs' trade competitiveness, equitable access to global markets. The improvement of the quality of maritime connectivity should be at the core of any strategy aiming at stimulating exports and promoting the participation of the domestic economy in global chains of production. Such improvement could only contribute to the reduction of transport costs.

Intervening efficiently on maritime connectivity is certainly not an easy task. Several options exist and their respective desirability could only reflect country specific characteristics. However, investing in infrastructures would be vital in all options. This would require a financial effort most countries are not able to bear alone. International cooperation and partnerships is thus crucial.



International cooperation and partnerships could take the form of establishing strategies aiming at creating incentives for shipping companies to serve destinations which are not necessarily profitable in first place. For instance, it could consist in granting companies serving "remote" countries some preferential access to major maritime hubs around the world. Countries interested in technical assistance or capacity building activities in this field are invited to contact: TFbodies@unctad.org

For further information please contact:
Marco Fugazza (arantzazu.sanchez@unctad.org)
or visit : [http://unctad.org/en/
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The WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement: consulting the private sector

Trade facilitation concerns itself with the operational quality of the international trade environment; and has its roots in the frustrations experienced by businesses when moving goods across borders – especially with regard to inefficient border management practices and trade and customs procedures. On 7 December 2013 the WTO reached an agreement on trade facilitation. Now, with trade facilitation at the very heart of contemporary trade policy, trade diplomats are faced with the challenge of having to reach a view about the quality of trade facilitation in any given country. Subsequently, as this paper argues, dedicated institutional mechanism involving the private sector – for example, within the spirit of UN CEFAC Recommendation 4 – need to be developed. Although consultation with the private sector is not without its challenges, they would help ensure that the resources invested into trade facilitation are put to best use, and that the quality of implemented trade facilitation measures are continuously monitored and assessed

<http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/28471/>

Call for papers: Thematic series on Connecting the World through Global Shipping Networks

Journal of Shipping and Trade

Most international trade in manufactured goods, as well as an increasing share of commodities, is transported by container shipping services, provided mostly by “liner” shipping companies. The liner services form a network that connects practically all regions of the world with each-other, increasingly involving transshipment in seaports that act as nodes in the network. Over the last decade, data and research on the global liner shipping network has expanded significantly. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has published country-level indices, and the term “connectivity” is increasingly used to characterize aspects of a country’s trade competitiveness. This Thematic Series with the theme on “Connecting the World through Global Shipping Networks” aims to publish high-quality research papers that employ a variety of rigorous and pertinent research methodologies supported

with empirical evidence to examine the challenges of global shipping connectivity. Broad themes may focus on alternative measures of connectivity, describing and explaining the structure of maritime shipping networks, and analyzing the impact of connectivity on trade and trade costs.

<http://www.jshippingandtrade.com/about/update/unctad>

Volume 17, Issue 2 of Maritime Economics and Logistics

Economics at your fingertips

Maritime Economics & Logistics is a quarterly scientific journal committed to the rigorous methodological analysis of global supply chains; that is, ocean transportation, ports, marine terminals and maritime logistics. In this issue, you can find articles on: containerization of bulk trades, new environmental demands, the container transport system and freight rate dynamics among others.

<http://mel.iame.info>

Volume 42, Issue 5 of Maritime Policy and Management

Journal of international shipping and port research

This issue includes articles on the following topics: Disruption risks and mitigation strategies, mature hub ports, toolkit for port-related socio-economic impacts, business-process management in high-turbulence environments, “inland terminal centred” value positions and public preference for the attributes of the marina port in Korea, among others.

<http://mpm.iame.info>

UNCTAD Stat

Statistics is an inherent part of UNCTAD. Being the United Nations’ focal point for the integrated treatment of trade and development and the interrelated issues in the areas of finance, technology, investment and sustainable development, UNCTAD compiles, validates and processes a wide range of data collected from national and international sources. Most of the time series cover long periods, with some dating back to 1948, for almost all economies of the world. This allows making an analysis of emerging and most urgent issues within a framework of long-lasting tendencies and wide geographical scope

<http://unctadstat.unctad.org/EN/Index.html>

ASYCUDA

Newsletter

The latest Newsletter of UNCTAD Automated System for Customs Data is online.

http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/webdttla-sycuda2015d1_en.pdf

UNCTAD Toolbox

Delivering results

This edition of the UNCTAD Toolbox contains a dozen of our technical cooperation products that can assist countries to put in place the policies, regulations and institutional frameworks and mobilize the resources needed to fulfil the ambitions of the post-2015 development agenda.

http://unctad.org/en/PublicationsLibrary/osg2015d6_en.pdf

PROCEEDINGS

The 25th UN/CEFACT forum.

**20 to 24 April 2015, Palais des Nations,
Geneva, Switzerland.**

The United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and E-business (UN/CEFACT) organised the 25th session of the UN/CEFACT Forum in Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland from 20 to 24 April 2015.

Priorities at the Forum were:

- Advancing current projects and domain activities
- Ongoing maintenance tasks (such as UN/EDIFACT Data Maintenance Requests)
- Formulating and approving a series of new projects to be conducted within the framework of the approved programme of work
- Continuing liaison and cooperation activities with external organizations (governmental as well as industry and standards consortia)
- Advancing UN/CEFACT's current and forthcoming technical framework

Forum sessions are held bi-annually in different locations throughout the world. Information on previous Forums is available at: <http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=3145>

UN/CEFACT supports activities dedicated to improving the ability of business, trade and administrative organizations, from developed, developing and transition economies, to exchange products and relevant services effectively. Its principal focus is on facilitating national and international transactions, through the simplification and harmonization of processes, procedures and information flows, and so contributing to the growth of global commerce.

The next and 26th session of the UN/CEFACT forum will take place on 2-6 November 2015 in the Palais de la Bourse, Marseille, France.

For further information contact Mr. Fabrizio Meliado, Trade Facilitation Section or Ms. Amélia Delle Foglie Programme Assistant (forum.registration@unece.org), UNECE.





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please contact jan.hoffmann@unctad.org, arantzazu.sanchez@unctad.org or
julian.fraga-campos@unctad.org

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