



Outcome Document

**UN Global Supply Chain Forum
2024**

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Table of abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AIS	Automated Identification System
ASYCUDA	Automated System for Customs Data
BIM	Building Information Modeling
CBM	Coordinated Border Management
CLS	Collaborative Logistics System
COP	Conference of the Parties
CSME	CARICOM Single Market and the Economy
DPO	Development Policy Operations
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
EoT	Ecosystem of Trust
ESG	Environmental, Social and Governance
FAL	Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic
FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHG	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
GIS	Geographical Information System
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IPF	Investment Project Financing
LCI	Liner Connectivity Index
LCLs	Less than Containable Service
LDCs	Least Developing Countries
LLDCs	Landlocked Developing Countries
LNG	Liquefied Natural Gas
MARPOL Annex VI	Minimize pollution of the seas from ships



MDB	Multilateral Development Banks
MSMEs	Micro-, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises
MSW	Maritime Single Window
NDC	Nationally Determined Contributions
NTFC	National Trade Facilitation Committee
PCS	Port Community System
PPPs	Public Private Partnerships
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SLA	Service Level Agreements
SME	Small and Medium Enterprises
SSCBTs	Small Scale Cross Border Traders
SW	Single Window
TACB	Technical Assistance and Capacity Building
TF	Trade Facilitation
TFI	Trade Facilitation Indicators
TFSP	Trade Facilitation Support Programme
TRS	Time Release Study
WTO TFA	World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement
WTO TFAF	World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility



I. UN Global Supply Chain Forum: the general context

The context surrounding the GSCF 2024



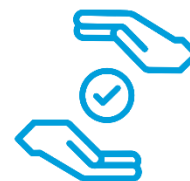
The Red Sea crisis lead to a **42%** decrease of transits in the Suez Canal between **May 2023 and January 2024**.



Redirecting vessels via the transport route South of Africa and increasing sailing speeds, could lead up to a **70%** rise in greenhouse gas emissions for a Singapore-Rotterdam roundtrip.



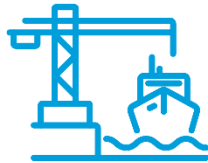
The Panama Canal's total transits have plummeted by **49%** between **December 2021 and January 2024**.



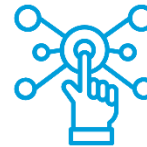
LDCs face **30-70%** higher transport costs for importing goods in comparison to other groups.

Developing countries, LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS are most affected by these disruptions

Issues and solutions for supply chain resilience



An increase of the maritime infrastructure investment-to-export ratio from the lowest 20th percentile to the 60-80th percentile, would reduce transport costs by **1.2 percentage points**.



Digitalization of trade transactions in the Asia-Pacific region would save **13 million tons of carbon dioxide**. And paperless trade would allow to save **\$600 billion** in the same region.



Investing between **\$8 billion** and **\$28 billion** yearly would be required to decarbonize the world's fleet.



1 in 5 people are employed in supply chains, with women representing **40%** of these workers. Capacity building is key.



LDCs have so far implemented less than **50%** of the WTO TFA commitments vs the **80%** global implementation rate.



Full implementation of the WTO TFA could potentially reduce trade costs for LDCs by **15%**.

II. UN Global Supply Chain Forum 2024 in ten takeaways

1. Resilient, green, and sustainable supply chains

The continuous disruptions in global supply chains highlight the critical importance of enhancing resilience and sustainability, particularly for Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs). Public-private partnerships must strengthen supply chain networks' adaptability by investing in infrastructure, diversifying production, leveraging technology, strengthening collaboration, prioritizing sustainability, and providing targeted support to vulnerable regions.

2. Decarbonization

Maritime shipping is responsible for 80% of the world's global trade and 3% of the world's greenhouse gas emissions (GHG). Climate change is already proving its dire consequences on economies worldwide. Decarbonizing shipping is a viable solution to mitigate the impact of climate change. This transformation poses a financial cost but also creates opportunities. Developing countries can create added-value in green industries, with a people-centered approach.

3. Financing energy transition

Public and private sector agendas are intertwined. To achieve energy transition, the private sector should come on board with resources and innovation. In exchange, the multilateral scene must accommodate a playing field that allows the private sector to grow and safeguard investments. This would translate into stronger partnerships, enhanced transparency, and accountability.

4. Food security and connectivity

Low connectivity can also lead to an increase in import and export prices and, therefore, to food insecurity. Improving outdated infrastructure and enhancing logistics offer solutions for both those issues. Developing countries should work on long-term logistics strategies. Ambitious trade policy agendas and trade facilitation measures can also enhance global food security and ensure the provision of affordable, nutrient-rich foods to small economies' households.



9. Gender equality in supply chains

Despite the advancements that the supply chain industry has seen in regards to gender equality, further measures must be taken: empowerment and mentorship programmes, capacity building, more transparent recruitment processes, and a promotion of women-led business. National solutions can be further enhanced by international conventions and by putting women at the center of policymaking, instead of adding them as an afterthought.

10. Strong political will and Capacity Building

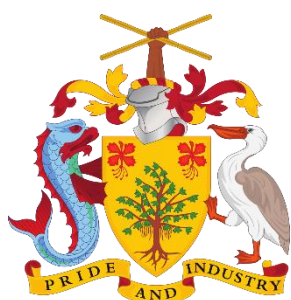
All stakeholders in the Global Forum, NTFCs, representatives from the public and private sectors, underscored that reforms could only be achieved with unwavering political will. Technical cooperation initiatives from various organizations play a vital role in building countries' capacity to address supply chain challenges. From facilitating Customs automation to implementing port reforms, these collaborative efforts empower countries to enhance trade facilitation, bolster resilience, and adopt sustainable practices.

International platform for supply chain collaboration

Having an international discussion platform allows the quest for solutions to continue, to create synergies, and to forge partnerships. The next GSCF in 2026 will allow the international community to measure what progress has been made since the first edition.

III. Strengthened partnerships

The UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has partnered with over 100 stakeholders, including UN agencies, regional organizations, governmental bodies, and private sector entities, to bring the GSCF to life. The key partners involved in this collaboration are listed below, while a comprehensive list is available in a supplementary document on the GSCF website. The six primary partners mentioned have worked closely with UNCTAD to develop the GSCF and overseen organizational aspects associated with this initiative.



The Government of Barbados hosted the first UN Global Supply Chain Forum. Ms Mia Amor Mottley, Mr Kerrie Symmonds, Mr Ryan Straughn, and Ms Lisa Cummins participated in six high-level sessions. The Government of Barbados also hosted the “Opening Day Reception” at the PM’s residence.

[First Global Supply Chain Forum To Be Held in Barbados](#)



MAWANI, the Saudi Ports Authority, has provided funding to support the first GSCF. UNCTAD will maintain its partnership with MAWANI for the 2026 Global Supply Chain Forum, hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

[Saudi Arabia bolsters first-ever Global Supply Chain Forum | UNCTAD](#)



The Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) has provided funding to support the GSCF 2024 edition and has ensured that representatives of Latin American countries can participate in the GSCF discussions. IDB organized three sessions, and 11 of its speakers participated in six sessions.





The Canadian Government provided funding to ensure representation from all regions of the world during the Forum, particularly for LDCs. Participants from these countries received financial support.

[Inaugural Global Supply Chain Forum gets funding boost from Canada](#)



The Caribbean Development Bank (CDB) facilitated the participation of Caribbean representatives, organized one session, and had five representatives speak in five sessions.

[CDB Strengthens Commitment to Sustainable Trade Logistics at Inaugural Global Supply Chain](#)



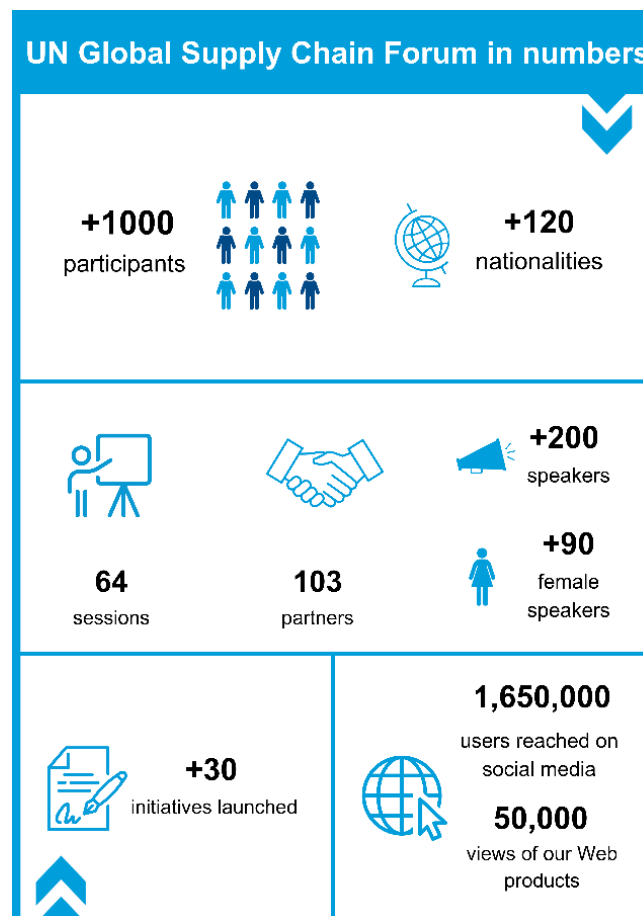
The Caribbean Community (CARICOM)'s contribution focused on supply chain disruptions' impacts on this specific region.



IV. Executive summary

The inaugural United Nations (UN) [Global Supply Chain Forum \(GSCF\)](#), hosted by UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Government of Barbados, convened from 21 to 24 May 2024 in Bridgetown. Over 1,000 participants from more than 120 countries addressed the escalation of disruptions and challenges supply chains face in response to a call by the PM of Barbados, Ms. Mia Amor Mottley, at the closing of UNCTAD 15, held in Bridgetown, in 2021.

Figure 1. Overview of the Global Supply Chain Forum in numbers



UN Deputy-Secretary General, Ms. Amina Mohammed, Prime Minister of Barbados, Ms. Mia Amor Mottley, and UNCTAD Secretary-General, Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, inaugurated the Forum in conjunction with its 100+ partners, showing UNCTAD's convening power in the field.

Trade and Transport Ministers from Barbados, Curaçao, Fiji, Guyana, Marshall Islands, Seychelles, and Tuvalu, representatives of UN agencies (such as the International Maritime Organization, the International Labour Organization, the UN Industrial Development Organization, UN Global Compact), regional entities, development banks, representatives of major ports, as well as leaders from the shipping industry, port authorities (such as Mawani, and the Panama Canal) took part in the discussions.



Policymakers, industry leaders, representatives from the private sector, academia, and youth representatives joined forces to transfer knowledge, create synergies, increase cooperation, and find tailored solutions to transform supply chains and make them more resilient and efficient. Five parallel streams with over 60 sessions discussed questions about sustainability, digitalization, port-management, climate-change adaptation, food-security, inclusivity, private-public partnerships, resource mobilization, monitoring and assessment, procurement, connectivity, and trade facilitation.

The Forum addressed the compounding effects of climate change, geopolitical tensions, and the COVID-19 pandemic on global supply chains. For instance, geopolitical conflicts in the Red Sea are causing ships to spend more days at sea and emit higher levels of greenhouse gases, highlighting our interconnected world's growing unreliability and uncertainty.

A special focus was given to the urgent challenges faced by Small Island Developing States (SIDS) due to the disproportionate impact that disrupted supply chains have on their economy. For instance, SIDS are particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change on the transportation infrastructure. To achieve resilience and sustainable development, it is key for SIDS to focus on their transport and logistics sectors and on climate change adaptation, resilience-building and disaster risk reduction (DRR) for their ports. These states also require enhanced connectivity within and between their nations, as well as with regional and global markets. Achieving this connectivity requires strategic investments in maritime and air transport infrastructure, developing efficient multimodal transport networks, and improving customs and administrative procedures.

Participating Ministers from SIDS advocated for the adoption of green and sustainable technologies in maritime transport. Their aim was to enhance energy efficiency and address maritime pollution. In a joint [Ministerial Statement for Enhancing Transport and Logistics in Small Island Developing States](#), they urged international financial institutions, development banks, and donor countries to prioritize funding and investment in the transport and logistics sector. They emphasized the need for projects that promote resilience, sustainability, and inclusivity.

The Forum also drew emphasis on the challenges and opportunities of reducing carbon emissions from global shipping, particularly in developing countries with access to renewable energy sources. Ports play a crucial role in this transition, with port authorities acting as facilitators and links for different stakeholders. Encouraging the use of low- or zero-carbon fuels, establishing safety standards for new fuels, and creating assessment tools for port readiness are essential steps in preparing ports to handle different types of fuels and ensuring safe bunkering operations.

The use of digital technologies, along with strong political commitment, will be crucial in improving global supply chain resilience. Innovations such as blockchain-enabled traceability mechanisms and advanced customs automation systems were highlighted as essential tools for streamlining trade processes, increasing transparency, and reducing operational risks. Leading industry experts stressed the



significance of cooperation and digitalization in the maritime sector, urging ports to evolve into intermodal hubs integrating energy and digital capabilities.



V. Outcomes list

The Forum aimed to create an action-based platform where new projects could be developed and have lasting positive effects on the trade and development ecosystem. Over 30 initiatives were launched or originated during the GSCF. They included manifestos, joint statements, Memorandums of Understanding, essay competitions, new partnerships, among other formats.

Furthermore, innovations were paramount in attaining resilient, sustainable, green, and inclusive supply chains. Various sessions focused on this specific theme, and a myriad of innovative projects were launched during the Forum in the following areas:

1. SIDS

A Ministerial Statement for Enhancing Transport and Logistics in Small Island Developing States was signed by SIDS Ministers in charge of transport and related issues and the President of Territorial Collectivities present during the Conference.

2. Private Sector Collaboration

- The UN Global Compact launched its Sustainable Supplier and SME Programme. This new programme provides small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) an exclusive platform for global exchange, business action, and country implementation to accelerate sustainability in global supply chains and future-proof SMEs for the green transition.
- UNCTAD and A.P. Moller – Maersk, one of the largest global container shipping lines, will collaborate on training activities on building resilience in the maritime supply chain.
- Representatives from the Global Shippers Forum, Global Shippers Alliance, International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA), and World Shipping Council agreed to continue the conversation on strengthening service quality and connectivity in maritime transport to foster global trade and development.
- The World Maritime University and the Union of Greek Ship Owners launched a project report and a video on 'What would the world be like without shipping'.

3. Strengthened Partnerships

- UNCTAD signed an MoU with the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT) to strengthen stakeholder cooperation in trade, investment and supply chains.
- UNCTAD and the University of West Indies agreed to cooperate during the Global Supply Chain Forum and signed an MoU on trade-related cooperation, academic research, and training back in Geneva.

4. Energy transition

- SLOCAT launched a [“Manifesto for Intermodal, Low-Carbon, Efficient and Resilient Freight Transport and Logistics”](#).



- UNCTAD agreed to work with the Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) and its members on capacity building for green ports and sustainable smart ports (SSP).

UNCTAD and CARICOM kicked off a workshop on [“Strengthening capacity for evidence-based policymaking and the economic resilience of CARICOM”](#). The workshop's objective was to transform services and make them more resilient.

- UNCTAD and Kühne Foundation continued with discussions on capacity building on climate resilience and expanded cooperation on the broader aspect of resilience in a maritime supply chain.
- Barbados and the IMO held side meetings on impact assessment and essential linkages between the various sessions on decarbonization. In September 2024, the Government of Barbados introduced a Maritime Transport (Emissions Control) Bill to protect Barbados' maritime space. This Bill is based on discussions between the Barbados government and the IMO during the GSCF.

5. Digitalization

- UNCTAD launched its newest version of the Reform Tracker, a project management and monitoring tool to advance coordination and streamline trade facilitation reforms for National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs).
- The Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA) reiterated its request for the implementation of a Regional Reform Tracker.
- Various Caribbean and Latin American countries requested UNCTAD's Trade Facilitation Section to deliver technical assistance and capacity-building processes.

6. Data

- UNCTAD and the World Bank launched and presented a new global dataset revealing the hidden costs of international trade and transport.
- The Korea Maritime Institute presented a port infrastructure index of 47 leading world container ports by focusing on three main components: Punctuality, Safety and Security, and Digitalization.

7. Youth

- Kühne Foundation launched a Young Professionals Essay Competition on “Opportunities of the Logistics Sector in the Low-Carbon Society of 2050”. Kühne Foundation brought the five winners to Barbados to participate in the Forum's discussions. UNCTAD, LEARN Logistics gGmbH by Kühne Foundation, and the University of West Indies organized a Youth-oriented session, which resulted in a document compiling recommendations on how young people can be better represented in supply chains.
- UNCTAD and LEARN Logistics gGmbH by Kühne Foundation will continue working on youth-related questions. Among other initiatives, they aim to hold a Youth Forum during the 2026 Global Supply Chain Forum and offer courses to young entrepreneurs specializing in logistics.



8. Innovation Challenges

- UNCTAD launched its first [Supply Chain Innovation Challenge](#), aimed to find solutions in building greener, more resilient, and sustainable supply chains. Over 75 proposals were received, a virtual Award Ceremony was organized, and UNCTAD brought the Winner of the Challenge to participate in the Global Supply Chain Forum.
- Women in Maritime Association Caribbean (WiMAC) Barbados Chapter, inspired by UNCTAD's Innovation Challenge, launched their own [Innovation Challenge](#), encouraging women and women-led businesses to develop solutions contributing to the advancement of the maritime industry in Barbados.

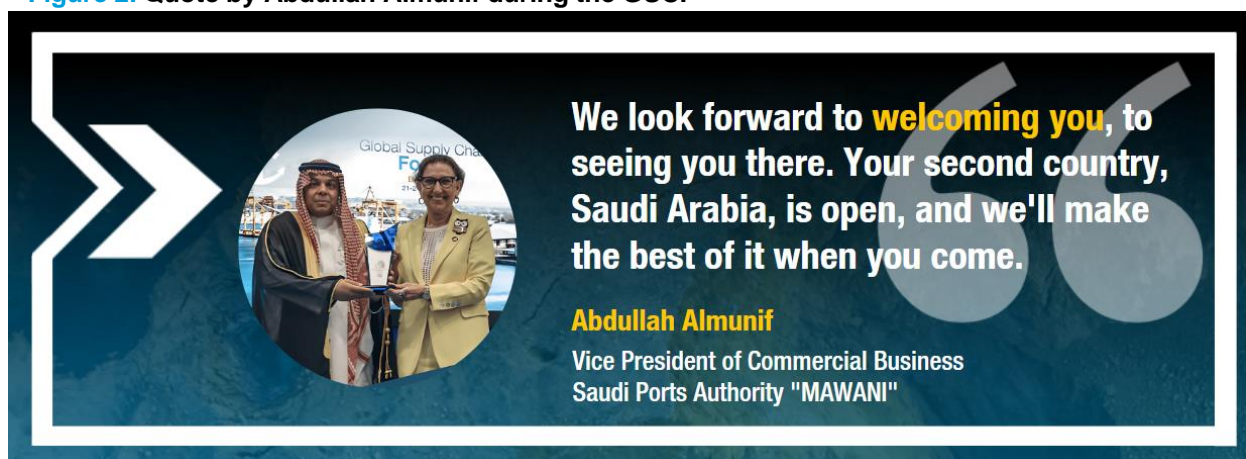
9. Trade facilitation

- UNCTAD and 11 partners co-organized the Third Global Forum for National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFC) for trade facilitation practitioners. The outcome document is available at https://unctad.org/system/files/information-document/gscf2024-ntfc_outcome_en.pdf
- UNCTAD, HM Revenue and Customs, and the World Customs Organization convened beneficiary-countries of the [Accelerate Trade Facilitation Programme](#) in a workshop to review their needs and priorities .
- UNCTAD organized a second workshop for a 6th-month review of the Action Plan for the NTFC's Chairs and Secretariats of Bolivia, Ecuador, Honduras and Peru.

10. International platform for supply chain collaboration

As highlighted by the UNCTAD Secretary-General in her concluding remarks, the Global Supply Chain Forum has become a successful series. The Forum will convene every two years, with the second edition already being organized for 2026 in Saudi Arabia.

Figure 2. Quote by Abdullah Almunif during the GSCF



VI. Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals through supply chain resilience

The discussions at the GSCF aimed to contribute to the implementation of the 17 integrated Goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The initiatives that have emerged from the GSCF have the potential to significantly advance these goals, positively impacting economies and communities in both the short term and long term, by focusing on enhancing supply chain resilience. The GSCF 2024 provided an important forum for discussions among stakeholders in support of a number of the SDGs, including in particular the following:



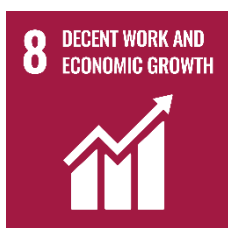
The GSCF featured several sessions on climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction for ports and supply chain infrastructure. The discussions highlighted issues of relevance to implementation of target 5 of SDG 1, which focuses on “building the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters”.



The GSCF also featured several sessions on building resilient food supply chains and improving regional connectivity. Relevant issues are pertinent to target 1 of SDG 2: “By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round”.



The GSCF emphasized the importance of women's roles in supply chains and explored new ways to further empower them. The speakers' interventions focused on “eliminating all forms of violence” against women in the supply chain sector, “ensuring women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making” and “enhancing the use of enabling technology” to reduce the digital divide and ensure women's empowerment.



The Forum featured several sessions on the promotion of decent work in supply chains and stronger involvement of minorities, in line with targets 5 and 6 of SDG 8, to “achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for youth and persons with disabilities” and “protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers”.





Resilient and sustainable supply chains strongly depend on resilient infrastructure, sustainable industrialization and innovation. The GSCF tackled discussions surrounding port resilience, digitalization and automation. All the conclusions reached were in line with target 1 of SDG 9: “develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and trans-border infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access to all.”



The Forum shed light on the urgent nature of climate change and its impact on supply chains, particularly for SIDS, which are particularly vulnerable and disproportionately affected. The Forum's sessions highlighted, among others, issues reflected in targets 1 on “strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards” and 3 on “improving education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning”.



The GSCF successfully brought together international and regional organizations as well as private and public stakeholders. These multi-stakeholder partnerships support target 9 of the SDG to “enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries”.



VII. High-level sessions

The document provides an overview of the discussions during the plenaries and parallel sessions, along with the recommendations made. These discussions aimed to inform conversations at the SIDS4 Conference, the World Investment Forum, the Summit of the Future, and other international discussion platforms.

Opening Ceremony

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 1 \(21 May 2024\) \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website page: [Opening Ceremony | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/gscf)

Organizers: UNCTAD and Government of Barbados

Speakers:

- Mia Amor Mottley, Prime Minister of Barbados
- Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General, United Nations (UN)
- Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

The first UN Global Supply Chain Forum kicked off on 21 May 2024 with a panel composed of Prime Minister Ms. Mia Mottley, UN Deputy Secretary-General Ms. Amina Mohammed, and UNCTAD Secretary-General Ms. Rebeca Grynspan.

Figure 3. Quote by Rebeca Grynspan during the GSCF



Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, UNCTAD Secretary-General, commenced by reviewing the significant disruptions that dramatic climate events, war and conflict, and the COVID-19 pandemic have inflicted on global supply chains. She emphasized how these disruptions have highlighted the vulnerability of our interconnected world. Ms. Grynspan stressed the importance of inclusivity, ensuring that all countries, particularly SIDS and Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs), have a voice in global supply chains. She questioned whether enough support is being given to these nations or if the current system merely perpetuates a divide between winners and losers. Ms. Grynspan also pointed out the rise in protectionism and the trend

of developed countries integrating vertically as key issues preventing the healthy development of all nations.

Ms. Grynspan emphasized the importance of sustainability in supply chains. She envisions a future where ports operate without paper, ships follow common IMO standards, trade becomes digital, and supply chains are environmentally friendly from the beginning. She called for the use of sustainable maritime fuels and stressed the need for open discussions about production methods to ensure resilience in global supply chains. She also highlighted the requirement for significant financing and resources to achieve these goals and pointed out the necessity for increased investment, particularly from the private sector, as trade investment in developing countries has been inadequate. Ms. Grynspan concluded by stating that the Forum aims to provide practical tools for achieving resilient, sustainable, and inclusive supply chains, pointing out that the Caribbean region exemplifies these global challenges. She also mentioned that the Forum is a direct outcome of the Bridgetown Covenant from UNCTAD's last quadrennial conference and emphasized the urgency of taking action for the benefit of future generations.

Figure 4. Quote by Amina Mohammed during the GSCF



Ms. Amina Mohammed, Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, discussed the uncertainties threatening our future, with geopolitical tensions fragmenting global trade and endangering decades of economic convergence. She noted that global supply chains have become a new source of vulnerability and called for a robust multilateral response, stressing the importance of embracing multilateralism and recognizing our intertwined fates. Ms. Mohammed advocated for policy measures that prioritize diversification to support sustainable development and specifically addressed the severe consequences of inaction on SIDS. She expressed that the Forum would inspire future discussions at the UN at the highest level and shape UNCTAD's agenda, aiming for a future where no nation is left behind.

Prime Minister Ms. Mia Mottley of Barbados emphasized the necessity of understanding the challenges faced by SIDS. By accepting the presidency of UNCTAD 15th, she aimed to bring greater awareness to these nations' plight. Ms. Mottley highlighted that the lack of special and differential treatment harms smaller nations, exacerbating their vulnerabilities.

Reflecting on the COVID-19 pandemic, Ms. Mottley noted that it revealed humanity's best and worst. Essential supply chains were often diverted away from the countries that needed them most, illustrating the domination of powerful nations over those struggling to survive. She thanked UNCTAD for fulfilling its promise to revisit and address these critical issues, recognizing the organization's efforts to study and understand the realities faced by SIDS.



Ms. Mottley spoke about the broader shift from inequality and vulnerability towards prosperity for all but acknowledged that the world has changed in ways that make achieving prosperity more challenging. Climate change and human-made disruptions force carriers to travel longer distances, increasing energy consumption. SIDS, she pointed out, pay more than any other country group for the transport and insurance of goods, making them the first to lose and the last to be considered in global supply chains. Financial support and fairer trade agreements are essential to ensure a more equitable world.

Figure 5. Quote by Mia Amor Mottley during the GSCF



Setting the Scene-Global Supply Chain Challenges and Solutions

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 1 \(21 May 2024\) \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [High-level session: Setting the scene – Global supply chain challenges and solutions | UNCTAD](https://unctad.org/en/press-releases/2024/05/240501-setting-the-scene-global-supply-chain-challenges-and-solutions.aspx)

Organizers: UNCTAD and Government of Barbados

Speakers:

- Kerrie Symmonds, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Barbados
- Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Mr. Kerrie Symmonds, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados, and Ms. Rebeca Grynspan, UNCTAD Secretary-General, opened the first session of the Global Supply Chain Forum by focusing on Global Supply Chain Challenges and Solutions. The session was divided into three main pillars: global supply chains, regional supply chains, and finance and international cooperation.

Mr. Symmonds recalled that the COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted economies worldwide, particularly those relying on tourism and hospitality. He highlighted the significant increase in shipping costs due to the pandemic, posing challenges for imports and exports. The Minister invited all participants to be as creative as possible to help identify ways to confront today's and tomorrow's global supply chain challenges and determine the solutions.



Figure 6. Quote by Kerrie Symmonds during the GSCF



Ms. Grynspan stressed that collaboration, consensus-building, and collective action are key principles to fight global supply chain challenges.

Figure 7. Quote by Rebeca Grynspan during the GSCF



1. Global perspectives

Speakers:

- Moderator – Didier Trebucq, UN Resident Coordinator, Georgia
- Arsenio Dominguez, Secretary-General, International Maritime Organization (IMO)
- Gerd Müller, Director-General, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
- Ricardo Treviño Chapa, Deputy Secretary-General, World Customs Organization (WCO)
- Sanda Ojiambo, Assistant Secretary-General and Executive Director, UN Global Compact

The next session, moderated by Mr. Didier Trebucq, former UN Resident Coordinator of Barbados, looked at global perspectives of supply chains.



Figure 8. Quote by Didier Trebucq during the GSCF



In the realm of global shipping, the Secretary-General of the IMO, Mr. Arsenio Domínguez, underscored the significant impact that geopolitics have on industry. As vessels face disruptions in key maritime routes like the Suez Canal and the Panama Canal, longer routes increase CO2 emissions. Despite this challenge, decarbonization remains a priority for the IMO, with efforts focused on developing technical standards that support the industry's transition to greener practices without compromising its operations. Mr. Domínguez emphasized the need for global collaboration to address this pressing issue, leveraging IMO's experience in building resilience within the sector.

Figure 9. Quote by Arsenio Domínguez during the GSCF



Mr. Gerd Müller, Director General, UNIDO, contrasted the profitability of major oil companies and the shipping industry, amounting to trillions of dollars in recent years, against their contribution to addressing environmental concerns. He stressed the importance of global standards in supply chains and called for investment in local production, particularly in SIDS. Mr. Müller advocated for increased involvement and contribution from profitable entities towards sustainable development efforts.

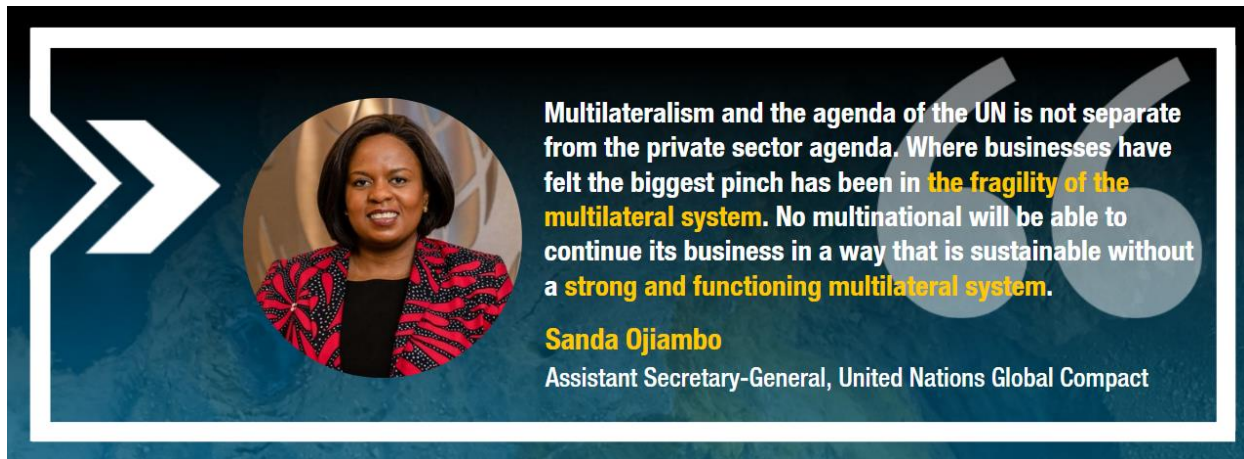


Figure 10. Quote by Gerd Müller during the GSCF



Ms. Sanda Ojiambo, Assistant Secretary-General of the UN Global Compact, underscored the vital role of the private sector in addressing sustainability challenges. She emphasized the interconnectedness of the UN agenda with that of the private sector, highlighting the need for a conducive regulatory environment that fosters innovation and resilience. Ms. Ojiambo agreed on the impact of the 3Cs in supply chains: Climate change, Conflict, COVID-19; and suggested adding another C for “Capital” which plays significant constraints on the private sector.

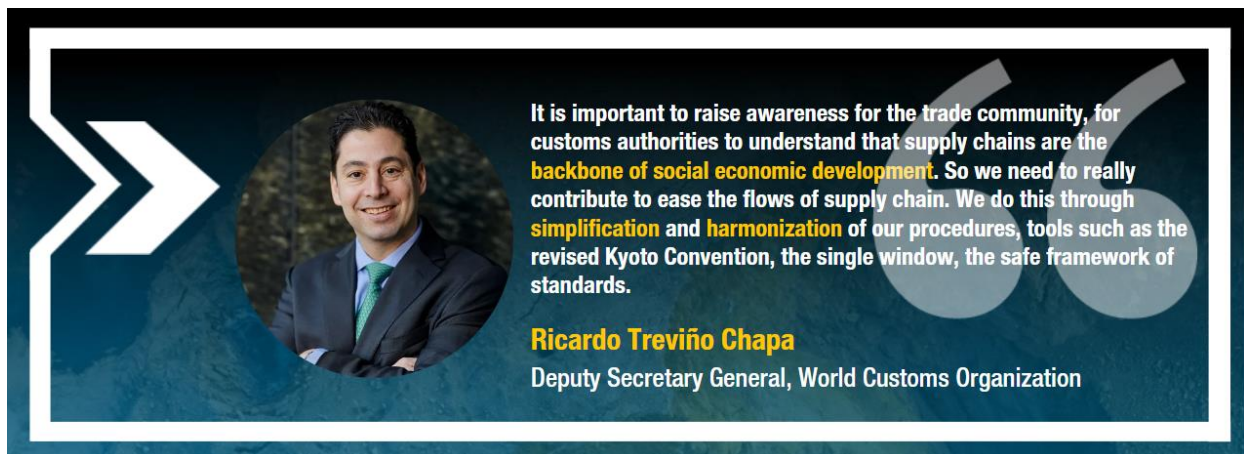
Figure 11. Quote by Sanda Ojiambo during the GSCF



Mr. Ricardo Treviño, Deputy Secretary General of the WCO, spotlighted the importance of cooperation and innovation in facilitating global trade while promoting environmental sustainability. WCO's initiatives include Green Customs, aimed at promoting eco-friendly practices in customs operations and supply chains. Mr. Treviño advocated for streamlined customs procedures to ensure the smooth flow of goods while fostering collaboration between customs authorities and the private sector.



Figure 12. Quote by Ricardo Treviño Chapa during the GSCF



2. Regional dimensions of supply chain

Speakers:

- Moderator – Jaime Granados, Chief, Trade and Investment Division, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- Francisco A. Lima Mena, Secretary-General, Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA)
- Jeffrey Hall, Executive Committee Member, CARICOM Private Sector Organization (CPSO)
- Winston Moore, Vice Principal, University of West Indies (UWI)

The Forum continued to examine the regional dimensions of supply chains. Mr. Jaime Granados, Chief of the Trade and Investment Division at the IDB, moderated the session, reminding speakers to shift focus towards opportunities within regional supply chains despite the acknowledged challenges.

Figure 13. Quote by Jaime Granados during the GSCF



Mr. Francisco A. Lima Mena, General Secretary of SIECA, identified regional competitiveness as the main challenge, citing infrastructure deficiencies such as inadequate roads hindering product transit. He emphasized the importance of trade facilitation and digitalization in Central America, noting the potential for significant improvements in trade efficiency through integrated border posts and enhanced digital processes.

Figure 14. Quote by Francisco Lima Mena during the GSCF



Mr. Jeffrey Hall, representing the CPSO, observed a trend of ships becoming larger (to meet demand) and slower (responding to conflict and climate change issues). This worsens the opportunities for Caribbean ports and trade. He emphasized the need for solutions that facilitate regional trade, attract investment, and promote economic growth.

Figure 15. Quote by Jeffrey Hall during the GSCF



Mr. Winston Moore, Vice Principal of the UWI, focused on issues linked to human and natural resources and the small size of domestic markets in the region. He highlighted the need to develop regional business clusters to enhance regional competitiveness.



Figure 16. Quote by Winston Moore during the GSCF



3. Financial and international cooperation

Speakers:

- Moderator – Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Carlos Felipe Jaramillo, Regional Vice President for Latin America and the Caribbean Region, World Bank Group (WBG)
- Therese Turner Jones, Vice President (Operations) Ag, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)
- Ren Hongbin, Chairman, China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT)
- Anton E. Edmunds, General Manager of the Caribbean Region, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

A panel on financial and international cooperation, moderated by Ms. Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director of the Division of Technology and Logistics at UNCTAD, closed the morning session.

Figure 17. Quote by Shamika N. Sirimanne during the GSCF



Mr. Carlos Felipe Jaramillo, Regional Vice President for Latin America and the Caribbean at the WBG, emphasized the transformative power of trade in providing societies with access to goods otherwise inaccessible. He identified non-tariff barriers and subsidies as hindrances to the inclusion of developing countries in the global market, advocating for economic alliances to address these challenges. Mr. Jaramillo stressed the importance of ensuring inclusive global trade, particularly for youth, women, and vulnerable groupings.

Figure 18. Quote by Carlos Felipe Jaramillo during the GSCF



Ms. Therese Turner Jones, Vice President of Operations at the CDB, focused on the fact that small countries can be success stories in global supply chains. Achieving this and driving economic progress in the Caribbean region requires building a strategic vision and leveraging partnerships with development and financial institutions.

Figure 19. Quote by Therese Turner Jones during the GSCF



Mr. Ren Hongbin, Chairman of the CCPIT, discussed initiatives to enhance security and access to global supply chains. He emphasized the importance of Forums like the Global Supply Chain Forum in identifying practical solutions to promote sustainability.

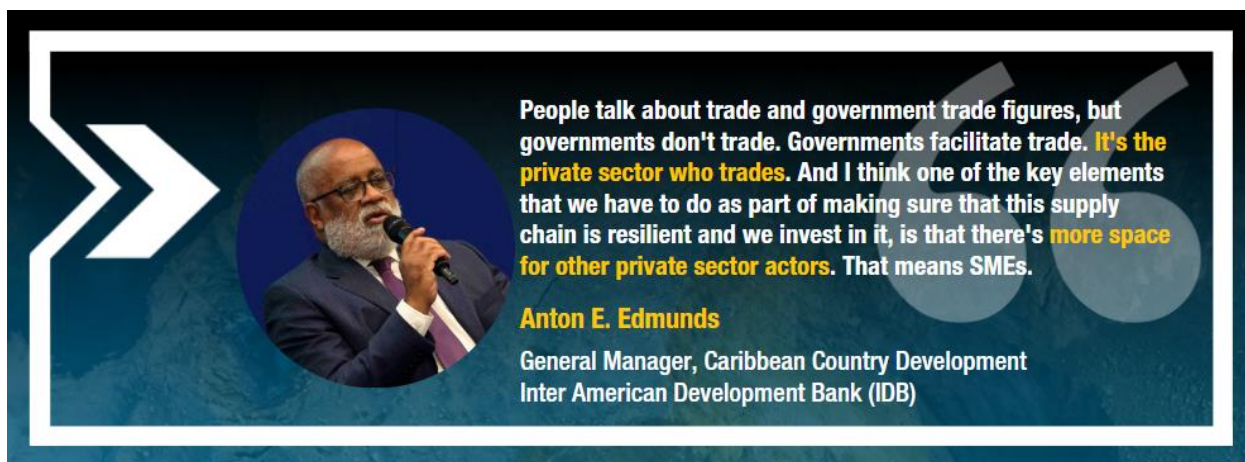


Figure 20. Quote by Ren Hongbin during the GSCF



Mr. Anton Edmunds, General Manager of the Caribbean Region at the IDB, acknowledged the challenges faced within public sector infrastructures and processes, emphasizing the need for prioritized investments aligned with sustainable development goals. He highlighted the importance of transparent governance and investment priorities that should transcend political cycles to ensure long-term sustainability and development.

Figure 21. Quote by Anton E. Edmunds during the GSCF



SIDS Ministerial Dialogue: Key Challenges and Opportunities

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 1 \(21 May 2024\) \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [High-level SIDS Ministerial Dialogue: Key challenges and opportunities | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/...)

Organizers: UNCTAD and Government of Barbados

Speakers:

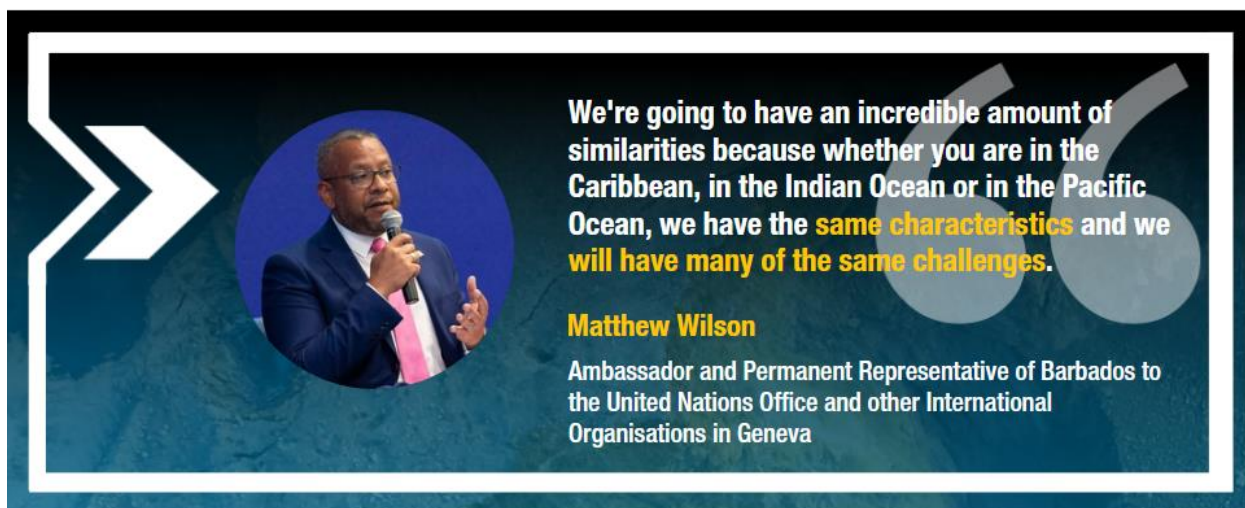
- Moderator – Matthew Wilson, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva
- Jeffrey Hall, CARICOM Private Sector Organization (CPSO)



- Kerrie Symmonds, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Barbados
- Charles Cooper, Minister of Transport and Urban Planning, Curaçao
- Juan Edghill, Minister of Public Works, Guyana
- Antony Derjacques, Minister for Transport, Seychelles
- Hilton Kendall, Minister of Transportation, Communication and Information Technology, Marshall Islands
- Simon Kofe, Minister of Transport, Energy, Communication and Innovation, Tuvalu
- George Tavo, Deputy Secretary for the Ministry of Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport, Fiji
- Sandra Casanova, President of the Territorial Logistics Strategies Commission, Research and Innovation Policy of the Territorial Collectivity of Martinique
- Trisha Tannis, Chairman, Barbados Private Sector Association

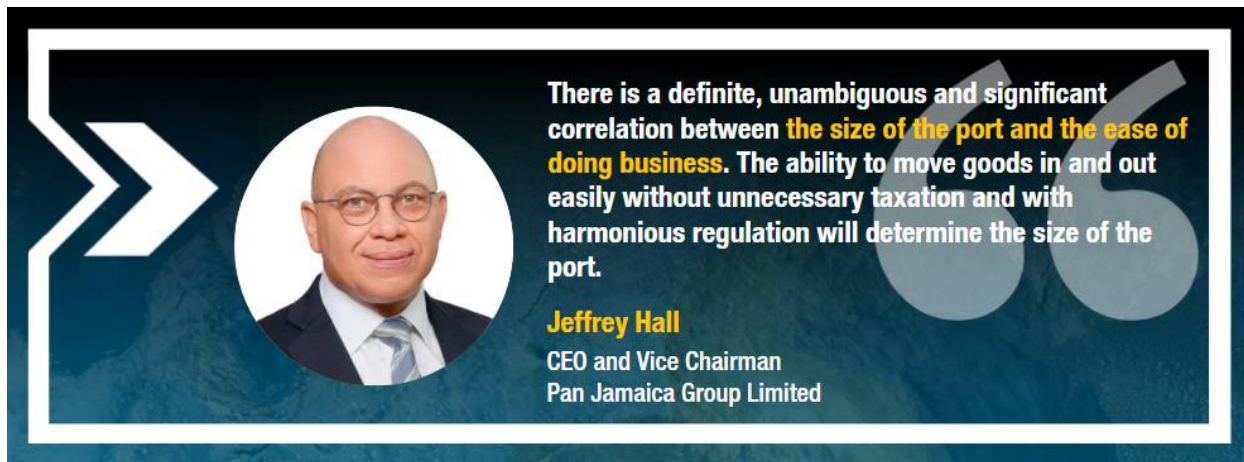
The session comprehensively discussed the critical transport and logistical challenges and opportunities faced by SIDS. Ambassador Mr. Matthew Wilson moderated the session, which featured insights from ministers and representatives from Barbados, Curaçao, Guyana, Seychelles, Marshall Islands, Tuvalu, Fiji, and Martinique, alongside private sector leaders and regional organization representatives. The dialogue revealed similar experiences on the challenges faced by the SIDS panellists and the impact on their economies, mainly due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ongoing global supply chain disruptions.

Figure 22. Quote by Matthew Wilson during the GSCF



In his opening remarks, Mr. Jeffrey Hall, representing the CPSO, emphasized the need for regional integration and the importance of making ports attractive for maritime transport by enhancing the ease of doing business and tax regulations. He highlighted the creation of cargo systems with nearshore logistics and free economic zones as critical opportunities, noting cargo volume's importance for attracting maritime transport.

Figure 23. Quote by Jeffrey Hall during the GSCF



Mr. Kerrie Symmonds, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados, detailed the impact of COVID-19 on transport and trade, leading to sharp increases in container freight rates and the cost of living. He explained Barbados' measures, including capping prices of imported fuel and household energy costs and collaborating with the private sector to limit price markups on essential goods and ensure access to an essential goods basket (through a social compact between the government, private sector, and labour movement). He emphasized that the attractiveness of a port, rather than its size, is crucial for its success, highlighting the importance of efficient operations and favourable business conditions.

Figure 24. Quote by Kerrie Symmonds during the GSCF



Mr. Charles Cooper, Minister of Transport and Urban Planning of Curaçao, discussed the compounded effects of supply chain disruptions and sanctions on Venezuela, necessitating alternative sourcing from closer partners. He noted ongoing initiatives to digitalize port processes and assess bottlenecks to improve efficiency and reduce costs. He emphasized the importance of not importing more than necessary and suggested regional collaboration through sourcing from closer partners and utilizing free zones to enhance regional trade and transport.

Figure 25. Quote by Charles Cooper during the GSCF



Mr. Juan Edghill, Minister of Public Works of Guyana, shared policies to alleviate disruption impacts, such as working with the private sector to stabilize prices and supporting agriculture to reduce import bills. He emphasized the necessity of regional transportation hubs for agriculture and advocated for greater CARICOM engagement to address these challenges collectively.

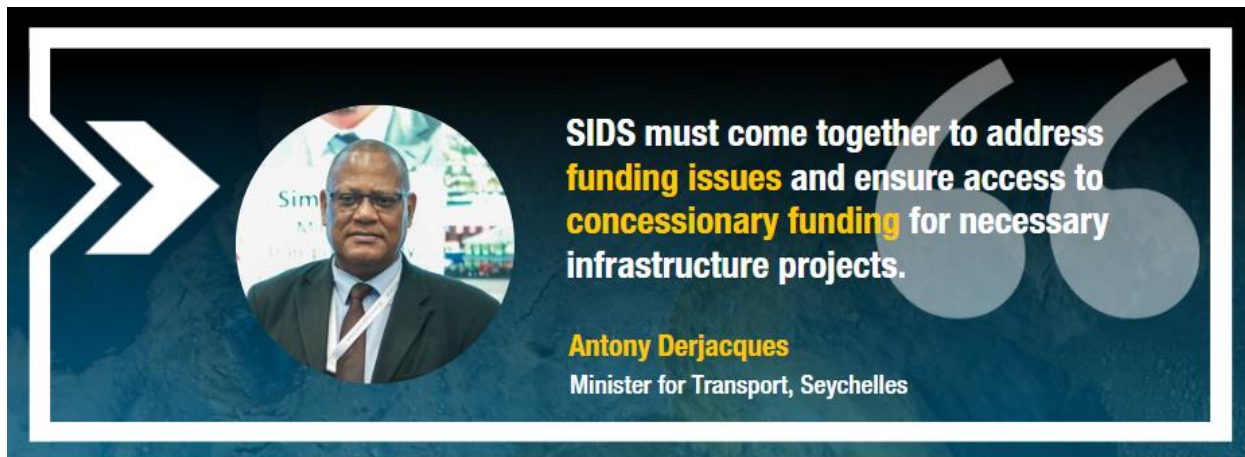
Figure 26. Quote by Juan Edghill during the GSCF



Mr. Antony Derjacques, Minister for Transport of Seychelles, called for reconsidering the use of GDP per capita for concessional funding eligibility, advocating for a Multidimensional Vulnerability Index to address the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS. He highlighted Seychelles' need for infrastructure upgrades to attract larger shipping vessels and mitigate the impacts of isolation.



Figure 27. Quote by Antony Derjacques during the GSCF



Mr. Hilton Kendall, Minister of Transportation, Communication and Information Technology of the Marshall Islands, underscored the critical reliance on maritime transport for essential goods and highlighted measures to reduce diesel dependency and emissions. He also emphasized the impact of climate change on infrastructure, with rising sea levels threatening ports and other vital facilities.

Figure 28. Quote by Hilton Kendall during the GSCF



Mr. Simon Kofe, Minister of Transport, Energy, Communication, and Innovation of Tuvalu, pointed out the vulnerabilities in the global economic order and called for stronger climate action and a value-based approach to international trade that considers the collective well-being. He stressed the need for a more conscious global approach to the interconnectedness of economies and the impacts of climate change.

Figure 29. Quote by Simon Kofe during the GSCF



Mr. George Tavo, Deputy Secretary for the Ministry of Public Works, Meteorological Services & Transport of Fiji, highlighted the high shipping costs and the need for port modernization to address logistical challenges exacerbated by climate change. He discussed ongoing policies to decarbonize the transport sector and initiatives to develop regional green shipping corridors.

Figure 30. Quote by George Tavo during the GSCF



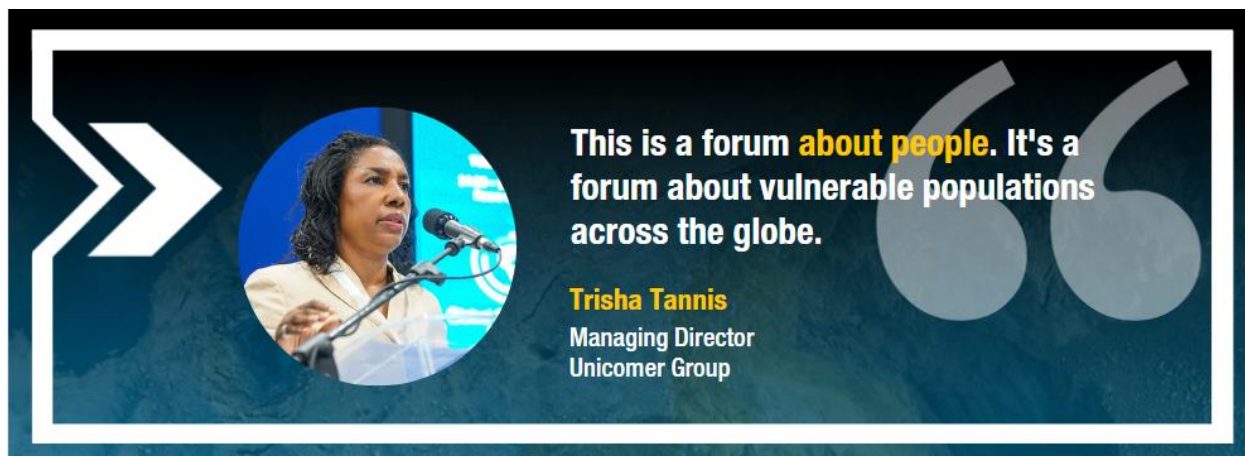
Ms. Sandra Casanova, Présidente de la Commission Stratégies Logistiques du territoire of Martinique, emphasized the island's potential for innovation and economic growth, highlighting projects to enhance connectivity and establish free zones to boost inter-regional trade. She advocated for a holistic and integrated logistics and supply chain management approach.

Figure 31. Quote by Sandra Casanova during the GSCF



The private sector response by Ms. Trisha Tannis from the Barbados Private Sector Association, Managing Director of the Unicomer Group, emphasized the role of the private sector in cushioning the impact of crises and called for a global social compact to regulate freight rates and ensure food security. She emphasized the collaborative efforts between the private sector and the government in Barbados during the pandemic, which included waiving port fees and negotiating fairer freight rates and the local social compact/partnership (a collaboration between the private sector, trade unions, and the government), a contract highly promoted by the ILO. She also stressed that a global trade crisis can quickly become a humanitarian crisis when people cannot access food, underscoring the need for international cooperation.

Figure 32. Quote by Trisha Tannis during the GSCF



The session underscored the importance of regional collaboration and innovative solutions, such as digitalizing processes and greening ports, developing regional green shipping corridors, promoting regional value chains and transport networks, incorporating social dimensions into strategies, advancing green transition, mitigation, and climate adaptation measures. International support, access to finance, and public and private-sector cooperation are also crucial to building more resilient and sustainable transport and logistics networks for SIDS.

The session concluded with launching the Ministerial Statement for Enhancing Transport and Logistics in SIDS, representing a collective commitment to addressing these challenges and leveraging opportunities.



Building and Financing Resilient and Sustainable Global Supply Chains and the Role of the Private Sector

1. Supply Chain Solutions and Public-Private Cooperation

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 1 \(21 May 2024\) \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UN-Global-Supply-Chain-Forum-Day-1-21-May-2024)

GSCF website: [High-level session: Building and financing resilient and sustainable global supply chains and the role of the private sector | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/en/press-releases/2024/05/high-level-session-building-and-financing-resilient-and-sustainable-global-supply-chains-and-the-role-of-the-private-sector)

Organizers: UNCTAD and Government of Barbados

Speakers:

- Moderator – Leo Naut, Deputy Executive Director, Caribbean Export Development Agency
- Johannah Christensen, CEO, Global Maritime Forum (GMF)
- Patrick Antoine, CEO and Technical Officer, CARICOM Private Sector Organization (CPSO)
- Bud Darr, Executive Vice President, Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC)
- Ramón Cruz, Special Advisor, The Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport (SLOCAT)
- Maximo Quibranza Mejia, President, World Maritime University (WMU)

The high-level session held two-panel discussions to debate the private sector and financing and academic institutions' perspectives in implementing innovative solutions to challenges encountered in global supply chains. The first panel featured representatives from the following entities: Caribbean Development Agency; Global Maritime Forum; CPSO; MSC; SLOCAT; and WMU. The moderator Mr. Leo Naut, Deputy Executive Director of the Caribbean Export Development Agency, emphasized the importance of collaboration amongst stakeholders to overcome supply chain challenges and build a resilient future.

Figure 33. Quote by Leo Naut during the GSCF



Ms. Johannah Christensen, CEO of the GMF, explained that the energy transition to net zero emissions is costly but also entails big opportunities. Production of net zero-emission fuels and renewable energy will be a great opportunity for developing countries. Green shipping corridors can help unlock this opportunity by signaling demand to overcome the high cost of capital. Another opportunity is the carbon levy being



discussed in the IMO and its distribution for investment in port and logistics infrastructures in developing countries.

Figure 34. Quote by Johannah Christensen during the GSCF



Mr. Patrick Antoine, CEO and Technical Officer for CPSO, shared CPSO's experience during the COVID-19 pandemic and stressed the importance of economic incentives to diversify sourcing and purchasing patterns and expand intra-regional production and inter-regional trade, mainly through small producers, who contribute between 60 and 70 per cent of GDP and 50 per cent of employment.

Figure 35. Quote by Patrick Antoine during the GSCF



Mr. Bud Darr, Executive Vice President of MSC, stressed the importance of proper regulatory frameworks for decarbonizing shipping and fuel choices and highlighted the opportunity for developing countries to produce renewable energies. It is reasonable to allocate revenues from carbon levies to developing countries, but the amount needs to be rational. He also stressed the holistic nature of a liner shipping network, its vulnerability to failure in one part of the network (e.g., choke points), and the importance of flexibility in modifying the network. Mr. Darr underscored the benefits of shipping alliances, including optimizing the use of available resources and providing more services. The moderator added that shipping decarbonization also requires countries to collaborate to move clean energy by sea.

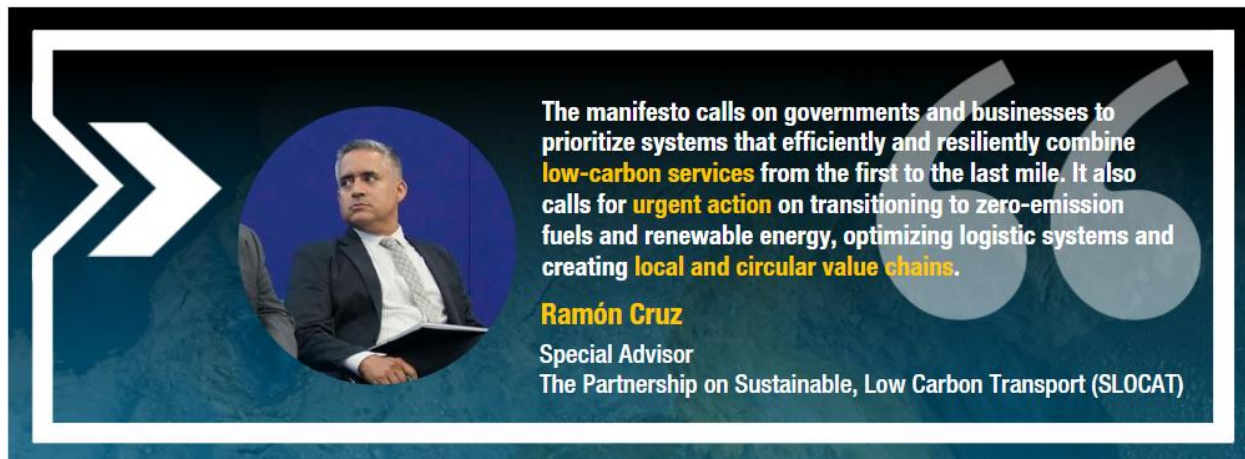


Figure 36. Quote by Bud Darr during the GSCF



Mr. Ramón Cruz, Special Advisor for SLOCAT, highlighted the importance of resilience in addressing the vulnerability of freight systems and the negative impacts caused by climate change. To accelerate the sector's transformation towards a low-carbon economy, SLOCAT collaborated with other organizations and co-initiated a manifesto for an international low-carbon, efficient, and resilient freight system. The manifesto aims to combine low-carbon services for first and last-mile transport, promote zero-emission fuels and a circular value chain, optimize the logistics system, set science-based targets, and establish policy and standards. It received many signatories, and the panellist called for countries to join the manifest.

Figure 37. Quote by Ramón Cruz during the GSCF



Mr. Maximo Mejia Quibranza, President of the WMU, stressed the importance of global efforts in building resilient and sustainable global supply chains. WMU facilitates the uniform implementation of international maritime regulatory frameworks, such as maritime safety and security, protection of the marine environment, and efficiency of shipping, through several capacity development programs, such as Master of Science, PhD programs, and LLMS.

Figure 38. Quote by Maximo Quibranza Mejia during the GSCF



2. Finance Solutions

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 1 \(21 May 2024\) \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [High-level session: Building and financing resilient and sustainable global supply chains and the role of the private sector | UNCTAD](https://unctad.org/en/press/2024/05/24052024-high-level-session-building-and-financing-resilient-and-sustainable-global-supply-chains-and-the-role-of-the-private-sector)

Organizers: UNCTAD and Government of Barbados

Speakers:

- Moderator – Jan Hoffmann, Head, Trade Logistics Branch, Division on Technology and Logistics, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Lisa Harding, Private Sector Development Specialist, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)
- Stacy Richards Kennedy, Regional Manager for the Caribbean, Corporación Andina de Fomento (CAF)
- Alicia Taylor, Investment Management Lead Officer, Infrastructure and Energy division, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- Okechukwu Ihejirka, Ag. Chief Operating Officer (COO), Caribbean Office, African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank)
- Andrés Pizarro, Head of Transport Sector, Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)
- Avinash Persaud, Special Advisor on Climate Change to the President, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

The second panel featured representatives from CDB, CAF, IDB, Afreximbank, and AIIB.

Ms. Lisa Harding, Private Sector Development Specialist for the CDB, stressed that the supply chain is unreliable for SIDS and that their heavy reliance on Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) creates stagnation and crisis. The private sector is not only a beneficiary but also a development partner that can invest in supply chains, and particularly in their traceability, analytics, and risk assessment. Innovative mechanisms



are required to get affordable finance for the sector, including credit guarantee, insurance mechanisms particularly for agriculture, and Private Public Partnerships (PPPs).

Figure 39. Quote by Lisa Harding during the GSCF



Ms. Stacy Richards-Kennedy, Regional Manager for the Caribbean at CAF, introduced an innovative financing instrument created by CAF, providing technical assistance to countries that are not members yet. Partnerships with different financial institutions are required to combine resources and achieve the level of financing needed for the region to unlock opportunities. She stressed the importance of knowledge sharing and data gathering in nurturing an environment that can strengthen global value chains.

Figure 40. Quote by Stacy Richards Kennedy during the GSCF



Ms. Alicia Taylor, Investment Management Lead Officer at the IDB, highlighted that addressing regional supply chain challenges is a high priority in the Caribbean. The IDB's focus is to collaborate with other financial institutions and educate businesses about the available trade finance solutions. The IDB is introducing gender elements into its financing programs.

Figure 41. Quote by Alicia Taylor during the GSCF



Mr. Okechukwu Ihejirka, Ag. COO for Afreximbank highlighted that Afreximbank focuses on enhancing inter-African and Africa-South trade, and that it has extended its financing solutions to the Caribbean. It fosters partnerships to surmount huge gaps in financing needs. To support SMEs within supply chains, Afreximbank provides trade financing products such as trade receivables finance.

Figure 42. Quote by Okechukwu Ihejirka during the GSCF



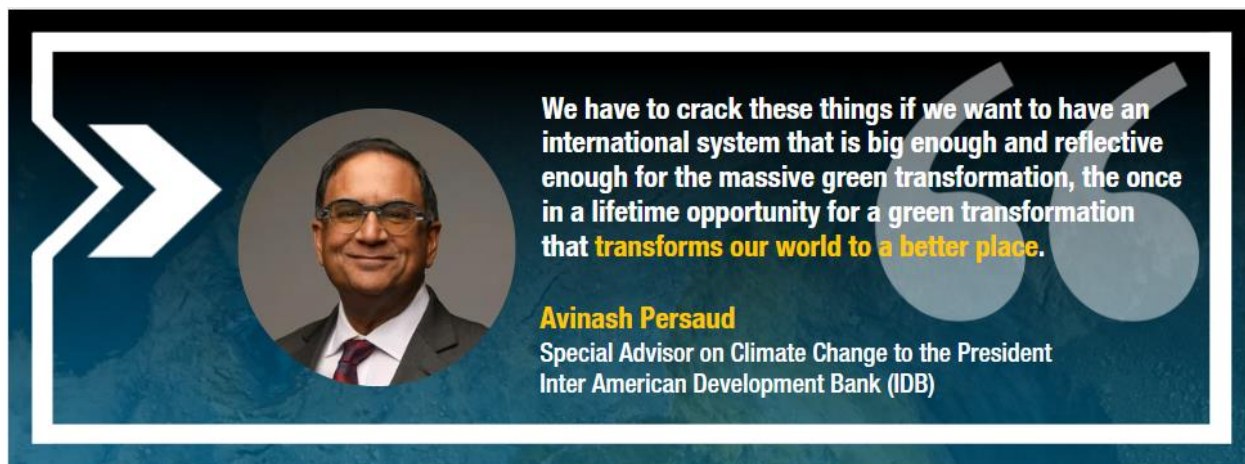
Mr. Andrés Pizarro, Head of Transport Sector at the AIIB, explained that the AIIB specialized in infrastructure financing, including transport infrastructure. He highlighted its unique governance structure, with 100 member countries beyond Asia and most voting shares from the Global South. He stressed the importance of cooperation and private-sector capital mobilization. The AIIB is committed to the Paris Agreement and requires additional work in developing a methodology to screen projects and ensure they align with the Paris Agreement.

Figure 43. Quote by Andrés Pizarro during the GSCF



In his closing remarks, Mr. Avinash Persaud, Special Advisor on Climate Change to the President at IDB, highlighted three potential solutions to support the green transition of global supply chains, i.e., adjustment mechanisms such as carbon taxation in the supply chain, export taxation on critical materials to ensure producing more added value in developing countries, and the creation of a new mechanism to reduce foreign exchange risks and high premiums imposed by investors on developing countries.

Figure 44. Quote by Avinash Persaud during the GSCF



Charting a New Path: Gender Equality in Supply Chains – Challenges and Opportunities

Streaming link: [\(72\) UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 4 \(24 May 2024\) - YouTube](#)

GSCF website: [Charting a new path: Gender equality in supply Chains - challenges and opportunities | UNCTAD](#)

Organizers: UNCTAD and Government of Barbados

Speakers:

- Moderator – Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Gilbert F. Hounbo, Director-General, International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General, UNCTAD
- Natalie Sandiford, President, Women in Maritime Association Caribbean Barbados Chapter Inc. (WiMAC)
- Anne Marie Van den Berg, Assistant Secretary-General for Supply Chain Management, Office of Supply Chain Management (OSCM)
- Naa Densua Aryeetey, Chair, Trade and Gender Subcommittee, Ghana's National Trade Facilitation Committee
- Milaika Capella-Ras, General Manager, Caribbean Shipping Association (CSA)

This panel discussion, moderated by Ms. Shamika Sirimanne, gave an overview of women's role in supply chains and the challenges they must face today in male-dominated sectors such as transport and ports. The objective was to explore the untapped opportunities and solutions that could be implemented to ensure gender equality in supply chains, leading to growth in industry and international trade.

Figure 45. Quote by Shamika N. Sirimanne during the GSCF



Mr. Hounbo, Director-General of ILO, initiated the conversation by providing some critical figures of female representation in the maritime and supply chain sectors. 1 in 5 people in the global workforce are



employed presently in the growing sector of “supply chains.” Women represent 40 per cent of these workers. However, despite increasing female representation, constraining bottlenecks remain, limiting women’s roles and contributions, which impacts the industry negatively.

Figure 46. Quote by Gilbert Hounbo during the GSCF



Indeed, women are disproportionately affected by inequalities: temporary contracts, non-managerial positions, a pay gap of around 20 per cent in comparison to men, less career development, low-skilled supply chain positions, etc. In the maritime sector, for instance, women represent only 1 per cent of the workforce because of these inequalities.

To change this reality, several steps were proposed by the panellists:

Firstly, it is crucial to prepare women to integrate the work of supply chains seamlessly (e.g., education, digitalization) and transform the supply chain sector to facilitate their inclusion (e.g., conventions that prohibit harassment, better social coverage, and fairer recruitment policies). Ms. Grynspan mentioned that special attention should be given to informal cross-border traders (80 per cent of whom are female in Africa).

Figure 47. Quote by Rebeca Grynspan during the GSCF



Furthermore, policymaking should put women at the center and not be added on as an afterthought. This would show that women are agents of transformation and only a vulnerable group because of the unequal

treatment that they receive. To achieve this, it is crucial to create gender data for trade that measures the contribution of women to trade.

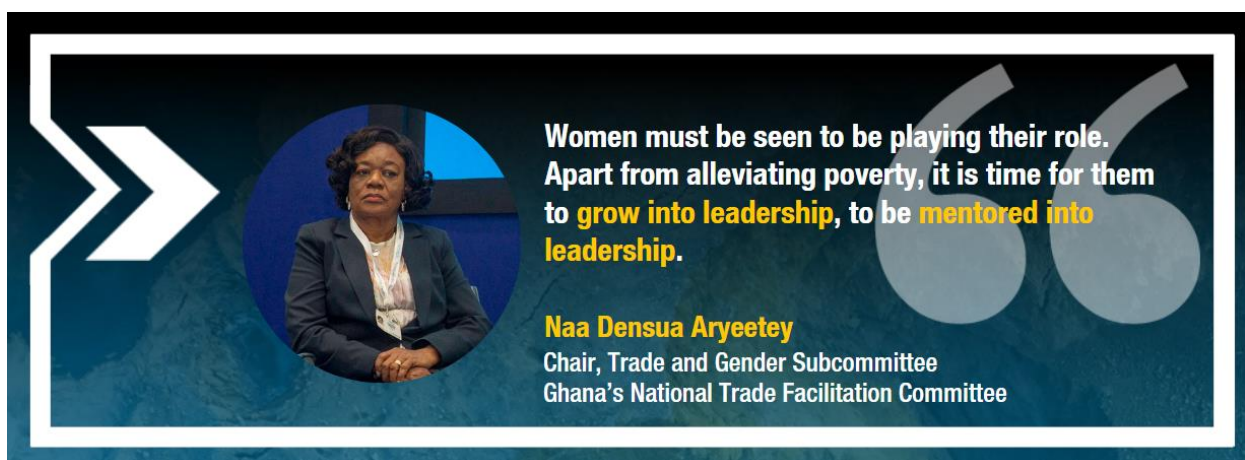
Secondly, the measures implemented should be both at the ground level and on an international scale: conventions, international agreements, capacity building, etc., explained Ms. Sandiford, president of the WIMAC Barbados Chapter. Governments should also help implement these measures. Such a holistic approach would increase the number of women seafarers from its current standing of only 7.5 per cent.

Figure 48. Quote by Natalie Sandiford during the GSCF



Thirdly, women should benefit from innovative mentorship and leadership programs, port training, digitalization training, and policy developments that would allow for barriers to be broken down and put women on an equal footing with men, underscored Ms. Naa Densua Aryeetey, Chair of the Trade and Gender Subcommittee in Ghana's NTFC. These efforts would increase the public knowledge of what "trade" is and would, therefore, encourage women to become part of the sector. Creating such opportunities for women through education and inspiring them to become innovators increases the level of female representation.

Figure 49. Quote by Naa Densua Aryeetey during the GSCF



According to Ms. Anne Marie Van den Berg, Assistant Secretary-General for Supply Chain Management at the United Nations, women-led businesses should be promoted through UN procurement processes. Women should also be more present in bidding and procurement activities. She gave an example of how



the number of women in peacekeeping has increased because the environment changed and became more adapted to women's needs: the creation of medical facilities, recreational facilities, increased communication, etc. The same efforts should be implemented to achieve the same increase in the maritime sector.

Figure 50. Quote by Anne Marie Van den Berg during the GSCF



Ms. Milaika Capella Ras, General Manager for CSA also added that companies must create a transparent environment where recruitment processes are conducted clearly, allowing women to reach managerial positions. The Diversity Tracker implemented by the International Chamber of Shipping has proven that only 30 per cent of companies are actively surveying that they are hiring women in influential positions like board positions, proving that there are still ways to go.

Figure 51. Quote by Milaika Capella Ras during the GSCF



The panel ended with a discussion on social contracts and how these can only change at a national level. Nevertheless, international efforts can help create the proper environment to foster this change, for example, through a financing system that would support inclusivity, sustainability, and prosperity. A final point was mentioned on the role of digital tools and how they can close gaps, but it is vital to ensure that tools such as AI can guarantee that they are equally beneficial to men and women.



Presentation of the Outcomes to the Plenary

Streaming link: [\(72\) UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 4 \(24 May 2024\) - YouTube](#)

GSCF website: [Presentation of outcomes to the Plenary and Closing Ceremony | UNCTAD](#)

Organizers: UNCTAD and Government of Barbados

- Moderator – Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Frida Youssef, Chief, Transport Section, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD
- Jaime Mendoza, Regional Coordinator for Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA), Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD
- Mark Assaf, Chief, Human Resources Development Section, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD
- Poul Hansen, Chief, Trade Facilitation Section, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD
- Regina Asariotis, Chief, Policy and Legislation Section, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD
- Jan Hoffmann, Head, Trade Logistics Branch, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD

This session gave an overview of the entire 4-day Forum. The stream organizers presented the primary outcomes that were tackled throughout their sessions.

Ms. Frida Youssef focused on the impacts that disruptions have on SIDS. Firstly, she stressed that SIDS are negatively affected by one-size-fits-all international policies. Secondly, she highlighted that international policies should have a human-centric approach to ensure more resilient and sustainable transport. She then expanded on the various elements required to achieve resilient and sustainable trade and logistics, a matter of survival for some countries. This requires a diversification of supply chains, which comes hand in hand with stronger cooperation, coordination, and the creation of regional value chains. By aiming to achieve this, synergies can be created between sustainability and resilience. Enabling factors that allow these elements to be reached are digitalization, technology, capacity building, partnerships and finance. And to become resilient, it is crucial to look for opportunities in the gaps.



Figure 52. Quote by Frida Youssef during the GSCF



Mr. Jaime Mendoza focused on the crucial role of digitalization, automation, and cutting-edge technologies in shaping trade and developing countries' economies. These services must be provided to governments and the private sector to reshape global trade. Implementing single windows and port community solutions can enhance connectivity and accessibility for those stakeholders that need interoperability and data exchange. He adds that roadmaps to building single windows created by ASYCUDA or the WCO Compendium are good sources to assist countries starting their digitalization journey and hoping to create a more integrated environment. Furthermore, digital ecosystems must grow to provide better options and solutions for SMEs to facilitate E-Commerce and digital corridors. Notably, these innovations are not limited to big ports; they can and have been implemented by small ports in SIDS, such as Jamaica and Vanuatu. However, achieving this objective is only possible through political will, sponsorship, and support.

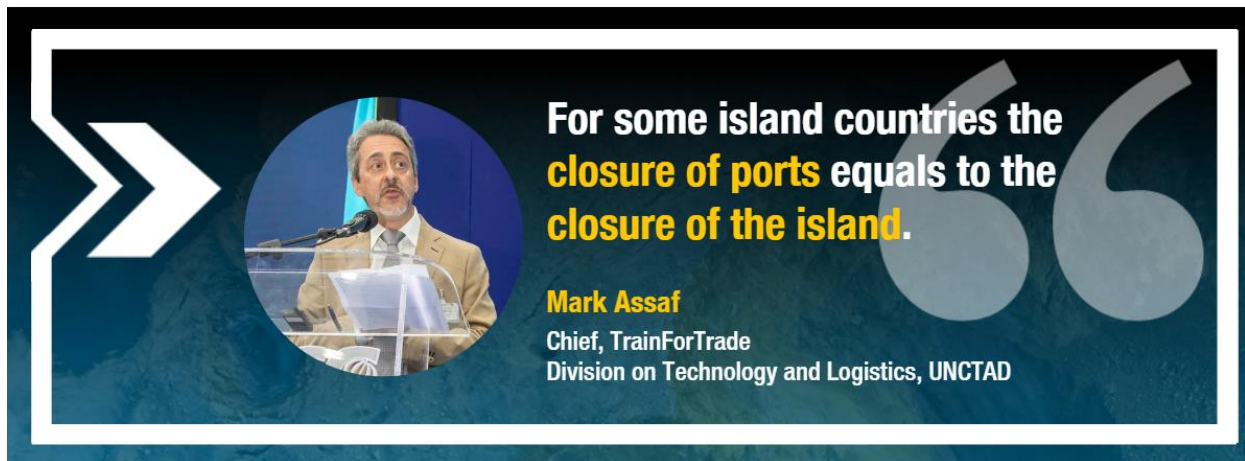
Figure 53. Quote by Jaime Mendoza during the GSCF



Mr. Mark Assaf concentrated on ports' role in supply chains and the need for modernization and digitalization. Indeed, the pandemic showed that ports in SIDS are their lifelines: if they close, the island shuts down. Port management is evolving drastically, and to follow suit, it is crucial to invest in port capacity building and offer port leaders the analytical skills, data analysis knowledge, and digital tools they require to develop their ports further. Achieving this forward-looking vision requires PPPs. Currently, the port industry is highly concentrated, and the top 10 terminals operating control 70 per cent of the market. This entails that SIDS have difficulties in being profitable and competitive, have smaller bargaining power, and

are disproportionately affected by the consequences of climate change. Initiatives like the Port Endeavor Game or the World Port Sustainable Programme aim to show that even small ports can partake in the transition towards a greener and more digitalized way of functioning. Mr. Assaf's intervention concluded by mentioning the request voiced by port representatives to build stronger partnerships and promote women to leadership roles.

Figure 54. Quote by Mark Assaf during the GSCF



Mr. Poul Hansen gave an overview of the discussions held during the Third National Trade Facilitation Committee Forum. Spanning over 12 sessions, discussions focused on sharing good practices, implementation of trade facilitation reforms, and the role of customs and border agency coordination. Furthermore, stakeholders shared information, tools and solutions aiming to make NTFCs work more efficiently. Discussions went beyond the WTO TFA and included TFA+ topics such as supply chain disruptions. Mr. Hansen pointed out that for these TFA+ discussions, NTFCs are the right place to conduct them since these committees bring together all relevant stakeholders. For such reasons, issues such as humanitarian relief are tackled in NTFCs to increase countries' levels of preparedness. Various other crucial topics were broached such as resource mobilization to implement trade facilitation agreements, capacity building and new emerging topics such as gender mainstreaming, inclusivity, and green and climate-smart trade facilitation policies that require additional skills for NTFCs. The main takeaways were that: NTFCs need to continuously adapt, acquire new skills and include new partners; coordination and digitalization are key drivers in achieving trade facilitation reforms both nationally and regionally; reforms will happen only in the framework of a public-private partnership; and trade facilitation should contribute to a reduction of transactions costs and environmental impacts of international cross-border trade.



Figure 55. Quote by Poul Hansen during the GSCF



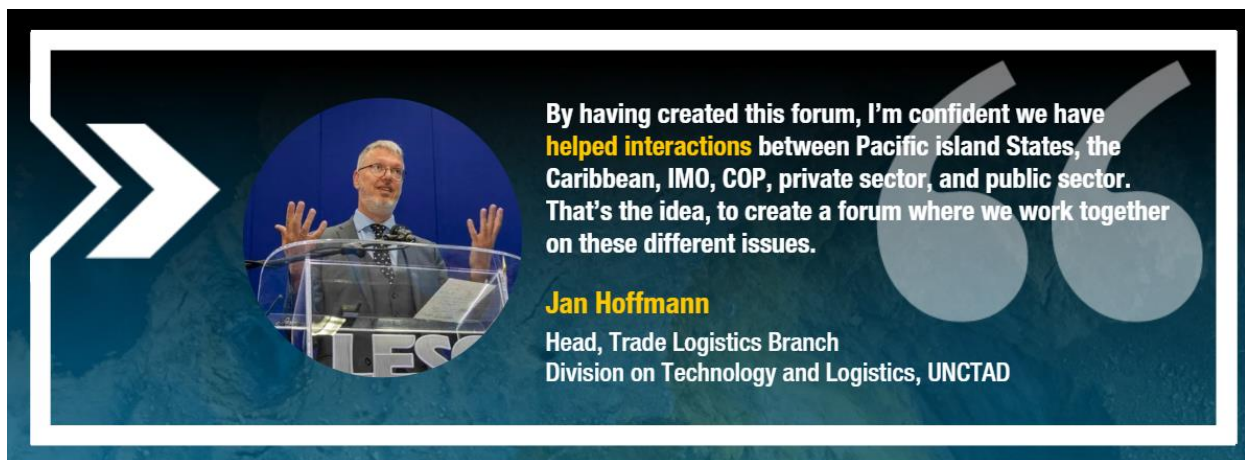
Ms. Regina Asariotis presented the outcome of three technical sessions with focus on climate change adaptation and DRR for ports. Discussions highlighted the key role of ports as enablers of global trade and sustainable development and the urgency of timely and effective action on port adaptation, especially in the light of the growing risks of impacts and the extensive economic costs of climate-related damage, operational disruptions and delay across supply chains, with implications for global trade and the sustainable development of the most vulnerable, including SIDS. Discussions emphasized the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS, their dependence on transportation links for economic activities, as well as in the context of disaster response and recovery, and the disproportionate impact of extreme weather events, which can cause loss and damage amounting to a multiple of annual GDP, obliterating years of economic output. In the light of growing hazards, long infrastructure lifespans and the extensive cost of inaction, effective action was a matter of increasing urgency and strategic economic importance. Ms. Asariotis also highlighted the outcomes of discussions at two other sessions. One focused on the major role that fishing plays in SIDS, both as an economic sector and in terms of biodiversity, and the need for a just energy transition in this sector. The second session focused on strengthening service quality and connectivity in maritime transport to foster global trade and development, bringing together representatives of global shippers, carriers and freight forwarders for discussions on the need to ensure that contractual terms remain appropriate at time of an evolving 'new normal', characterized by disruptions from a number of causes.

Figure 56. Quote by Regina Asariotis during the GSCF



Mr. Jan Hoffmann concluded this session by highlighting that while the challenges presented during the 2024 Global Supply Chain Forum will not disappear by 2026, future sessions of the GSCF will offer an important platform for discussions on how best to tackle global supply chain challenges and will hopefully prove to become one of UNCTAD's established fora, like the World Investment Forum and E-Week.

Figure 57. Quote by Jan Hoffmann during the GSCF



Closing Ceremony

Streaming link: [\(72\) UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 4 \(24 May 2024\) - YouTube](#)

GSCF website: [Presentation of outcomes to the Plenary and Closing Ceremony | UNCTAD](#)

Organizers: UNCTAD and Government of Barbados

- Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Kerrie Symmonds, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade, Barbados



Ms. Rebeca Grynspan gave the initial remarks at this closing ceremony. She started by highlighting how this Forum has become a testament to collaboration and unwavering commitment, allowing stakeholders to share inspiring stories of resilience, climate change adaptation, and technology. She added that the discussions presented during the Forum will feed into the work of various other Conferences such as SIDS4, LLDCs Conference, Summit of the Future, UN Oceans Conference 2025, UNCTAD 16, UNCTAD 60th Anniversary, COP in Azerbaijan, the UNDRR and Climate Action Conference, and the WTO TFA implementation process.

Mr. Kerrie Symmonds made the closing remarks of the Global Supply Chain Forum. He echoed the need for political will and expressed Barbados' unwavering support in achieving what the Forum set out to do. He reminded the audience of the lasting adverse effects that supply chain disruptions have on businesses and how they must navigate the turmoil. Solutions cannot be found unilaterally but can only flourish through a multinational platform like the United Nations. This Forum gave a voice and agency to the issue at hand, and through dialogue, essential actors were brought together to find solutions.



VIII. Technical sessions summaries

Session A1: Supply Chains, the Geography of Trade and Maritime Logistics

GSCF website: [Supply chains, the geography of trade and maritime logistics | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: UNCTAD

Speakers:

- Moderator – John Manners-Bell, CEO, Transport Intelligence (Ti) Insight and Foundation for Future Supply Chain
- Jeffrey Condon, Senior Expert, McKinsey Global Institute, McKinsey & Company
- Helio Vicente, Director, Employment Affairs, International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)
- Safiya Reid, Officer-in-Charge and Adviser, Directorate for Transport, Trade and Sustainable Development, Association of Caribbean States (ACS)
- Diane Edwards, Director, Professional Services Unit, Mona School of Business and Management

The session underscored the importance of improved logistics and transport links for economic development in SIDS and emphasized the need to leverage opportunities presented by transforming global supply chains while mitigating the risks. A set of priority actions have been put forward to promote sustainable and resilient supply chains in SIDS and the Caribbean region.

Moderated by Mr. John Manners-Bell (Ti Insight), the session fostered an insightful discussion that benefited from the expert views shared by panellists from McKinsey Global Institute (Mr. Jeffrey Condon); International Chamber of Shipping (Mr. Helio Vicente); Jamaica's Mona School of Business and Management (Ms. Diane Edwards); and the Association of Caribbean States (Ms. Safiya Reid).

At the outset, the audience was asked whether the transformation of the global supply chain environment presented more risks or opportunities to SIDS, including the Caribbean region. The vast majority felt that there were more opportunities, while a significant minority argued that the risks outweighed the benefits.

It was observed that the long-term dynamics of global trade and investment flows were shifting. Overserved trends signal a deceleration in the globalization rate and, more recently, a decline in geopolitical distance of international trade due to friend shoring.

As to whether nearshoring would be a driver for future economic growth, there was a unanimous 'no' from the audience. The view of the panel was, however, more nuanced. Panellists noted that there would be opportunities accruing to SIDS in the Caribbean, but these would not be as great as in countries with established manufacturing eco-systems, such as Mexico. The biggest opportunities would be in ancillary services. One panellist commented that it was all about 'getting the right pieces in place'.

The panel echoed this view. There was a mention of being 'guardedly optimistic' although greater levels of coordination across the region were required. It was also noted that consolidation in the shipping industry was a real threat for smaller countries like SIDS. It was further remarked that the human side of shipping



was critical, with seafarers enabling shipping to occur and yet facing difficulties (e.g., disembarking from ships during the pandemic).

In conclusion and going forward, there is a need to:

1. Promote public-private collaboration, investment, and the removal of unnecessary trade rules.
2. Develop logistics hubs and improved freight services, including cold chains, to facilitate the growth of the manufacturing sector and allow regional self-sufficiency.
3. Prioritize trade facilitation with one system across the entire region.
4. Establish one regional platform for the Greater Caribbean to exchange goods and services with a single document.
5. Create a shipping centre of excellence that puts logistics worker training at the heart of any development plans.
6. Standardize regional rules, reducing the administrative burden on shippers and logistics providers.
7. Remove obstacles, empower special economic zones, and develop data and statistics in the Caribbean.
8. Harmonize the Caribbean system with its two major trading partners, the United States and the European Union.
9. Strengthen local cooperation within CARICOM, CARICOM's economic integration with other regions and global integration through services.

Session A2: Climate Change Mitigation and Energy Transition

GSCF website: [Climate change mitigation and energy transition | UNCTAD](#)

Organizers: UNCTAD, International Maritime Organization (IMO) and International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Ramón Pichs-Madruga, Vice-Chair for Working Group III, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- Avinash Persaud, Special Advisor on Climate Change to the President of Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- George Tavo, Deputy Secretary for the Ministry of Public Works, Meteorological Services and Transport, Fiji
- Kjersti Aass, Lead, Maritime Just Transition Task Force, UN Global Compact



This session, moderated by Ms. Shamika N. Sirimanne, examined greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) attributed to maritime shipping and strategies for reducing these GHG emissions, mitigating climate change, and transitioning to sustainable energy sources.

Ms. Sirimanne emphasized the urgent need to reduce carbon emissions from maritime shipping, which accounts for over 80 per cent of global trade and 3 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. The rising shipping emissions are cause for concern. The moderator emphasized that decarbonizing shipping is a challenge but also presents opportunities, especially for finance.

Mr. Ramón Pichs-Madruga stressed that recent climate changes have become more rapid, widespread, intense, and unprecedented. Limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius would be out of reach unless there are immediate and deep reductions in emissions across all sectors. To achieve the mitigation goal of 1.5 degrees Celsius, global GHG emissions need to be net zero by the early 2050s. Alternative fuels, including advanced biofuels and low-emission hydrogen, are potentially viable options for shipping. The vital role of finance, technology, and cooperation as crucial enablers for climate action was underscored.

Mr. George Tavo shared the experience of Fiji and the Pacific region, highlighting Fiji's pivotal role in global supply chains, especially in the Pacific, as a regional maritime transport hub. The significant impact of climate change, including cyclones and other climate-related disasters, on cargo movement across the region was underscored. The whole supply chain is impacted when transport infrastructure is affected. Emphasizing the importance of awareness and considering climate change when formulating policy policies and regulations was also stressed.

Ms. Kjersti Aass discussed the social dimension of the energy transition in the shipping sector, underscoring that a people-centered approach would be key to helping achieve a just transition where seafarers and the maritime workforce are not left behind. Ms. Kjersti Aass shared insights from a report launched by the Maritime Just Transition Task Force on how to support the marine workforce in shifting to a decarbonized shipping industry. She highlighted the need to accelerate training for seafarers to adopt alternative fuels and emphasized that 800,000 seafarers and key shore-based personnel would need additional training by the mid-2030s.

Mr. Avinash Persaud stressed the pressing need for financial resources in the energy transition, especially in developing countries, which would require \$2.4 trillion annually to build clean energy economies and be climate resilient by 2030. By emphasizing the importance of lowering the cost of capital needed to allow funds to flow to developing countries, a call was made for a just international financial system to allow the energy transition to be profitable in developing countries.

Session A3: Climate Change Mitigation and Energy Transition (Part 2)

GSCF website: [Climate change mitigation and energy transition \(continued\) | UNCTAD](#)

Organizers: UNCTAD and International Maritime Organization (IMO)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Roel Hoenders, Head, Climate Action and Clean Air, International Maritime Organization (IMO)



- Harry Conway, Chair, IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC), Liberia
- Miryam Saade Hazin, Officer in charge of Infrastructure and Logistics, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC)
- Desmond Tay, Regional Director (Americas), Maritime and Port Authority (MPA) of Singapore
- Vivian Rambarath-Parasram, Head, Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre (MTCC) Caribbean

This session, moderated by Mr. Roel Hoenders focused on the 2023 IMO GHG Strategy with the pathway to reach net-zero GHG emissions from international shipping close to 2050. Panellists discussed the opportunities and challenges for green shipping in the Caribbean region and SIDS in general. The moderator stressed that the Strategy also promotes a just and equitable transition, considering the special needs of SIDS and LDCs.

Mr. Harry Conway highlighted the improvements in the 2023 Strategy compared to the initial Strategy adopted in 2018, including unanimous adoption and short—and mid-term measures under MARPOL Annex VI. He emphasized that IMO's decisions are evidence-based and made in collaboration with representatives from member states, intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations. The moderator added that the IMO established a trust fund to provide financial support to SIDS and LDCs government representatives to participate in the negotiations in person.

Mr. Desmond Tay shared experience with green and digital shipping corridors as platforms to undertake studies and pilot projects for zero or near-zero GHG emission fuels and technologies. He informed that Singapore is working on promoting its role as a global bunkering hub and focusing on training seafarers to operate new vessels and equipment and handle fuels safely.

Ms. Vivian Rambarath-Parasram indicated that formulating and implementing national legislation after the ratification of MARPOL Annex VI was crucial. She identified that administrative and staffing challenges and a lack of technology often hinder the implementation of maritime conventions. She identified that the Caribbean region could work in the short term to improve ship performance with wind assistance and just-in-time arrival and, in the mid-term, build a relationship with donors to unlock finance for producing and bunkering cleaner fuels and port digitalization.

Ms. Miryam Saade Hazin emphasized the need for capital in the Global South to shift away from fossil fuels. However, excessive debt in many countries makes investments difficult as the estimated annual investment needed to meet adaptation and mitigation targets in nationally determined contributions (NDCs) for the Caribbean is extraordinary. The need for the shipping industry to invest in land-based infrastructure for energy transition was highlighted, including investments in cleaner fuel production, land-based storage, bunker infrastructure, engine upgrades, energy-efficient technologies, and operational improvements.

Panellists acknowledged that the mitigation measures being discussed at the IMO provide regulatory certainty that drives innovation and provides incentives for the adoption of cleaner fuels and that active participation of SIDS in IMO climate discussions is crucial to ensure their voices continue to be heard when formulating mitigation measures. Panellists agreed that it is important to explore financing mechanisms such as public-private partnerships (PPPs) and facilitate technology transfer and knowledge sharing to bridge the financial and technological gaps for maritime decarbonization.



Session A4: Leading the Way to Sustainable Ports Through Ports' Energy Transition

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 2 \(22 May 2024\) – Afternoon \(youtube.com\)](#)

GSCF website: [Leading the way to sustainable ports through energy transition | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: UNCTAD

Speakers:

- Moderator – Ines Nastali, Senior Maritime Data Expert, S&P Global Market Intelligence, S&P Global
- Antonis Michail, Technical Director, International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH) and World Port Sustainability Program (WPSP)
- Gordon Wilmsmeier, Kühne Professorial Chair in Logistics, Universidad de Los Andes, School of Management, Colombia
- Sam Cho, Commissioner, Port of Seattle
- Mikael Lind, Professor of Maritime Informatics, Chalmers and Research Institutes of Sweden (RISE)

This session, moderated by Ms. Ines Nastali revolved around the role of ports in decarbonization and contributing to sustainable energy transitions. The moderator provided context by highlighting the importance of ports as energy hubs and facilitators for alternative fuel adoption. She shared data on the propulsion types of future ships, indicating that a majority will still run on very low sulfur fuel, with a significant portion on Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG), methanol, ammonia, and batteries.

Mr. Antonis Michail outlined IAPH's initiatives on decarbonization, emphasizing the role of ports in facilitating a multi-fuel environment, particularly in ensuring the safe and efficient bunkering of new fuels. He mentioned an IMO resolution, which encourages voluntary cooperation between ships and ports to cut GHG emissions. Mr. Antonis Michail also talked about the Environmental Ship Index, a global standard for evaluating vessel performance and providing incentives for cleaner ships.

Mr. Mikael Lind brought up the importance of collaboration and digitalization in driving innovation within the port sector. He emphasized the need for ports to be recognized as intermodal hubs and to be at the forefront of decarbonization efforts. Given the essential role of ports in the production, storage, and provision of sustainable alternative fuels to visitors, ports are encouraged to develop an energy strategy. Mr. Mikael Lind also advocated for transparency, new collaborative models and cross-value chain collaboration as groups of actors engaged in port operations are expanding.

Mr. Gordon Wilmsmeier highlighted the importance of measuring energy consumption and emissions in ports for competitiveness and risk management. He stressed that understanding the energy demand in the port is crucial, which is a fundamental prerequisite for discussions with the energy sector about ensuring capacity and managing peaks in demand. He highlighted the need for transparency, accountability, and responsibility in port operations to focus on energy consumption and emission improvements.

Mr. Sam Cho shared the Port of Seattle's regional approach to decarbonisation, with regional ports agreeing on the same standards of GHG emission reductions and thus ensuring a level playing field. Mr.



Sam Cho emphasized the port's role as an aggregator of demand for alternative fuels. He discussed the importance of collaboration across the supply chain and the need for international partnerships to decarbonize shipping lanes. As the physical ecosystem of ports and shipping companies is highly distributed, Mr. Sam Cho advocated for a common objective of interest to be defined by engaged stakeholders.

The panellists agreed on the importance of collaboration, data collection, concrete policy measures and taking a holistic approach to decarbonization. They highlighted the need for ports to work with various stakeholders, including shippers, terminal operators, and governments, to drive change. The panel concluded with each member suggesting concrete measures for the next five years, such as adopting economic instruments to support new fuels, focusing on reducing scope 1 and 2 emissions, and conducting studies to understand energy demands across different sectors. Overall, this session underscored the critical role ports play in the global effort to decarbonize and the need for collaborative action and strategic planning to achieve sustainable energy transition.

Session A5: Achieving Sustainable and Resilient Transport and Logistics including in SIDS

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 2 \(22 May 2024\) – Afternoon \(youtube.com\)](#)

GSCF website: [Achieving sustainable and resilient transport and logistics in Small Island Developing States | UNCTAD](#)

Organizers: UNCTAD and Kühne Foundation

Speakers:

- Moderator – Alan McKinnon, Professor of Logistics, Kühne Logistics University (KLU)
- John Manners-Bell, CEO, Transport Intelligence (Ti) Insight and Foundation for Future Supply Chain
- Zera Zheng, Global Head of Business Resilience Consulting, Maersk
- Darwin Telemaque, CEO, Antigua Port Authority and Chairman of the Port Management Association of the Caribbean (PMAC)
- Miryam Saade Hazin, Officer in charge of Infrastructure and Logistics, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC)

The session focused on the supply chain sustainability and resilience imperative amid growing disruptions and heightened global climate action.

In his introductory remarks, the moderator, Mr. Alan McKinnon, explored the relationship between sustainability and resilience, concluding that it comprises a mix of synergies and trade-offs. Increasing supply chain visibility and collaboration can unequivocally yield both sustainability and resilience benefits. In the case of measures such as the localization of sourcing and relaxation of Just-in-Time replenishment, the relationship is more complex and uncertain. In SIDS, high exposure to global supply chain disruptions and natural hazards can make it harder to reconcile sustainability and resilience objectives.

Mr. John Manners-Bell argued that the social and ethical dimensions of sustainability needed more attention, especially as a recent survey suggested that a high proportion of managers suspected human



rights violations in their companies' upstream supply chains. There is a danger that legislation requiring businesses to conduct due diligence analyses of these chains may have unintended consequences in discouraging sourcing from some less developed regions.

Ms. Zera Zheng highlighted how Maersk pursues both sustainability and resilience objectives by ensuring the decarbonization of its operations while providing advice to cargo owners on business continuity. This can improve both the environmental sustainability and resilience of their global supply chains. Maersk's supply chain resilience module helps customers identify vulnerabilities and dependencies in their supply chain and develop contingency plans.

Mr. Darwin Telemaque emphasized that ports in the Caribbean faced challenges inhibiting their development in sustainable and resilient ways. These include those arising from limited access to funding in the case of SIDS that have a high income per capita. Regulations such as the IMO's Carbon Intensity Indicator (CII) entail additional challenges for Caribbean ports, and IMO should consider a waiver for vessels calling at these ports. A clearer direction and more support are needed for ports in SIDS.

Ms. Miryam Saade Hazin noted the achievements of the UN-wide technical assistance project implemented during the pandemic, which aimed to build capacity to enhance the resilience of transport and logistics in the face of disruptions. A new project promoting sustainable and resilient food supply chains in the Caribbean and the Arab region is underway and will be jointly implemented by UNCTAD, UNECLAC, and UNESCA.

Going forward, there is a need to:

1. Ensure a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between sustainability and resilience, and the role of technology, legislation, and international cooperation in shaping the future of global supply chains.
2. Promote collaborative efforts to support vulnerable regions such as the Caribbean SIDS.
3. Explore how regional integration can help mitigate the negative impact of geopolitical disruptions.
4. Adopt more appropriate development models for ports in SIDS.
5. Reduce the negative impact of some global shipping rules on SIDS ports.
6. Promote technologies that enhance supply chain visibility and assist regulatory compliance.

Session A6: How Can Ports Catalyze Clean Energy Investments?

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 2 \(22 May 2024\) – Afternoon \(youtube.com\)](#)

GSCF website: [How can ports catalyze clean energy investments? | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: World Bank Group

Speakers:

- Moderator – Gordon Wilmsmeier, Director, Hapag-Lloyd Centre for Shipping and Global Logistics and Professor, Kühne Logistics University (KLU)
- Dominik Englert, Senior Economist, World Bank Group (WBG)



- Katharine Palmer, Shipping Lead, UN Climate Change High-Level Champions (HLCs)
- Sam Cho, Commissioner, Port of Seattle
- Namrata Nadkarni, Founder and CEO, Intent Communications Ltd.

Ports around the world are expected to take on new, additional roles in the global energy transition. These roles will go beyond their traditional function of allowing ships to berth. Specifically, in the early years, ports can catalyze clean energy investments. For instance, they will be expected to import wind power equipment, export hydrogen-based fuels, and supply green energy to transport and industrial consumers on a large scale.

This session gathered maritime transport experts to shed light on the vital role of ports in shipping and the world economy's wider efforts to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions. In its opening, the moderator, Mr. Gordon Wilmsmeier highlighted two crucial questions: How can ports enable energy transition? How can we enable ports to enable energy transition?

Building on these, Mr. Dominik Englert showed in an expert presentation how the World Bank has been engaging in various pilot countries around the world, e.g., Brazil, Colombia, India, Morocco, Panama, South Africa, or Türkiye, to support the development of a global green hydrogen economy from a shipping and port perspective. While ships and ports will need fuels based on green hydrogen, e.g., green ammonia or methanol, to decarbonize, other sectors will need ships and ports to effectively link the low-cost production centers in Africa, Latin America, South Asia, and Oceania with the high-demand consumption centers in Europe and East Asia.

The following discussion involving Ms. Katharine Palmer, Mr. Sam Cho, and Ms. Namrata Nadkarni, stressed the unique opportunity for ports around the world to co-shape the global hydrogen economy. The experts referred to the need for a strategic vision among port authorities in facilitating the related infrastructure upgrades, attracting private sector investments, and leveraging public subsidies.

Coming from the practitioner's side, Mr. Sam Cho explained that the future multi-fuel landscape for ships will change the bunkering landscape in shipping and thereby enhance a port's traditional functions. Ms. Katharine Palmer of the UN High-Level Climate Champion team shared insights on the significant - though still insufficient progress - made at the IMO's climate negotiations over the past five years and urged for further alignment of IMO member states and industry to jointly increase ambition. Ms. Namrata Nadkarni emphasized the importance of transparent communication and collaboration among stakeholders to avoid duplicating efforts and to share successes and failures for collective learning.

The panel concluded that the decarbonization of shipping was a complex challenge that, at the same time, offered unique business and development opportunities, especially for those developing countries with abundant renewable energy resources like wind, solar, or geothermal. Stringent policy measures such as a meaningful carbon price on fossil fuels or an ambitious green fuel standard were deemed essential for a rapid energy transition. Ports could and should play a central role in facilitating collaboration across the fuel value chain and in connecting key stakeholders such as shipping companies, fuel producers, and other industries needing the same green fuels, such as iron and steel, fertilizers, or aviation.



Session A7: Climate Change Adaptation, Resilience-Building, and DRR for Ports – Part 1

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 3 \(23 May 2024\) \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [Climate change adaptation, resilience-building and disaster risk reduction for ports \(Part 1\) | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/en/gscf/climate-change-adaptation-resilience-building-and-disaster-risk-reduction-for-ports-part-1)

Organizers: UNCTAD

Speakers:

- Regina Asariotis, Chief, Policy and Legislation Section, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Willard Phillips, Economic Affairs Officer, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC), Trinidad and Tobago
- Miguel Esteban, Professor, Faculty of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Waseda University, Japan
- David A.Y. Smith, Co-Founder and Director of Quality and Innovation, Smith Warner International, Jamaica

In her opening presentation, Ms. Regina Asariotis highlighted the key role of ports as enablers of global trade and sustainable development. She stressed the urgency of timely and effective action on port adaptation, especially in the light of the growing risks of impacts and the extensive economic costs of climate-related damage, operational disruptions and delay across supply chains, with implications for global trade and the sustainable development of the most vulnerable, including SIDS. She emphasized the unique vulnerabilities of SIDS, their dependence on transportation links for economic activities and the disproportionate impact of extreme weather events, which can cause economic loss and damage, obliterating years of economic output.

Mr. Willard Philips underscored the critical role of transportation infrastructure in the region and its importance in connecting to global supply chains. He pointed out the economic burdens and lost economic flows resulting from disruptions caused by natural disasters and emphasized the need to integrate climate risks and adaptation into port management. He also highlighted the importance of adopting a systems/network approach and strengthening redundancies and regional connectivity to ensure climate resilience and DRR across transport networks for the overall sustainable development of SIDS.

Mr. Miguel Esteban provided a range of practical examples of port adaptation, discussing the challenges faced by ports in adapting to sea-level rise and land subsidence. He highlighted ongoing adaptation measures in ports like Jakarta, where sections are raised to combat land subsidence. Port areas may need to be elevated, and breakwaters and other infrastructure strengthened to cope with stronger tropical cyclones and sea-level rise, which may cause inundation, increased downtime, and bottlenecks.

Mr. David A.Y. Smith discussed the need for rethinking marine infrastructure design in light of climate change, presenting a case study of a winter swell event in Jamaica that caused significant damage to the Ocho Rios cruise terminal. He suggested that winter swell events could be as destructive as hurricanes and should therefore be included in future design criteria.



The session concluded with a consensus on the urgent need for action to adapt ports and other critical transport infrastructure to the impacts of climate change. It called for collaborative multidisciplinary action involving all public and private stakeholders to address the challenges effectively. The session underscored the need for multifaceted approaches to adaptation, including high-quality risk assessments to guide the development of effective and innovative technical measures, avoid maladaptation and prioritize resources; mainstreaming of climate-risk considerations into port infrastructure planning/operations; and strong policy and legal frameworks, standards, technical guidance, and methodologies. The urgent and important need for increased capacity building and better access to affordable port adaptation finance for vulnerable developing countries, including SIDS, was also highlighted.

Noteworthy observations from the session included the recognition of the economic implications of climate change impacts on ports, the urgent need for adaptation in light of infrastructure planning horizons and lifespans, and the potentially devastating cost of inaction.

Session A8: Climate Change Adaptation, Resilience-Building, and DRR for Ports – Part 2

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 3 \(23 May 2024\) \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [Climate change adaptation, resilience-building and disaster risk reduction for ports \(Part 2\) | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/en/gscf/...)

Organizer: UNCTAD

Speakers:

- Austin Becker, Professor and Director of Graduate Programs, Department of Marine Affairs, University of Rhode Island (URI), USA
- Giuseppe Mancinelli, Deputy Director, Latin America and the Caribbean, United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)
- Jennifer Doherty-Bigara Rodriguez, Senior Climate Change Specialist, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

Remarks from the floor:

- Kana Mutombo, Senior Strategy Specialist, Houston Sustainability Center, American Bureau of Shipping (ABS)

During the second session, discussions continued to focus on challenges and strategies for enhancing the resilience of ports and coastal infrastructure in the face of climate change.

Mr. Austin Becker highlighted the critical nature of ports as economic engines and their inherent complexity due to the multitude of stakeholders involved. He underscored the constraints ports face, such as their fixed locations and ecological sensitivity and noted that climate change posed a growing threat for port-dependent economies, especially SIDS. Mr. Becker presented alarming data showing that a significant



number of the world's ports are already within the range of tropical storms, emphasizing the compounded risks posed by climate change, including more intense storms, sea-level rise, and increased precipitation. He stressed the importance of resilience planning to reduce economic impacts and human suffering and the need for deep engagement and collaboration across various sectors to overcome institutional barriers and make informed decisions for the future.

Mr. Giuseppe Mancinelli emphasized the need for a holistic approach to climate-adaptive infrastructure, including serious planning exercises considering long-term design, funding, and construction. He mentioned the importance of integrating other critical sectors, such as energy, water, and communication, into this approach. Mr. Mancinelli shared examples from UNOPS's work in Saint Lucia and Curaçao, highlighting the use of Building Information Modeling (BIM) as a critical tool for efficient and sustainable infrastructure development. He called for capacity building, investment in advanced technology, and partnerships to address the challenges of climate change and foster sustainable development.

Ms. Jennifer Doherty-Bigara Rodriguez shared insights into the IDB's efforts to build resilience in Barbados, challenging the narrative that making infrastructure resilient is, in all cases, prohibitively expensive. She presented evidence that investing in adaptation today can lead to significant future savings. Ms. Rodriguez emphasized the need for increased investment in adaptation, as current funding is insufficient. She discussed IDB's support for governments in establishing legal and regulatory frameworks, promoting stakeholder engagement, and strengthening institutional capacity. Ms. Rodriguez also highlighted innovative financial solutions like debt-for-nature swaps to create fiscal space for resilience investments.

The session also touched on the adaptation finance gap, with Ms. Asariotis noting the need for better access to affordable port adaptation finance, especially for SIDS. The upcoming SIDS 4 conference in Antigua and Barbuda, where the next 10-year agenda for SIDS would be adopted, was mentioned as a critical event, focusing on resilient prosperity.

Mr. Kana Mutombo highlighted the importance of data-sharing challenges between ports due to commercial sensitivities and security concerns and the need to shift from competition to complementarity.'

Noteworthy observations from the session included the recognition of the need for capacity building in climate expertise, technology, and investment, collaboration among stakeholders, overcoming institutional barriers, and the importance of long-term planning for infrastructure resilience. The session concluded with a call for a paradigm shift in how long-term planning and investment in resilience can be approached, highlighting the role of good planning and collaborative engagement in making sound decisions for the future.

Session A9: Climate Change Adaptation, Resilience-Building, and DRR for Ports – Part 3

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 3 \(23 May 2024\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

GSCF website: [Climate change adaptation, resilience-building and disaster risk reduction for ports \(Part 3\) | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: UNCTAD

Speakers:



- Elizabeth Riley, Executive Director, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)
- Darwin Telemaque, CEO, Antigua Port Authority and Chairman of the Port Management Association of the Caribbean (PMAC)
- Sean Rafter, Managing Director, HELP Logistics AG
- Jair Torres, Programme Management Officer, Regional Office for the Americas and the Caribbean, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)

The third of three consecutive sessions centred on disaster risk reduction, management, response, and recovery (DRR), with special focus on the critical role of ports.

Ms. Elizabeth Riley underscored the Caribbean as the second-most disaster-prone region globally, with an increasing occurrence of concurrent and cascading disasters; and highlighted the importance of ports for every aspect of the disaster risk management cycle, including preparedness, response, mitigation, and recovery. She stressed the importance of understanding the multi-hazard environment, which includes climatic events as well as geological, biological, and technological hazards; as well as the need for informed decision-making and for leadership that embraces the importance of disaster risk considerations as a priority and develops strategic foresight that integrates projections and future scenarios for better preparedness.

Mr. Darwin Telemaque shared practical lessons from dealing with hurricanes in Antigua and Barbuda, illustrating the importance of pre-disaster planning and post-disaster coordination. He discussed innovative solutions such as the rapid construction of facilities from containers and creating a port auxiliary force. These initiatives demonstrated the necessity of adaptability and creativity in disaster response and the value of engaging local resources and expertise. He also praised the active engagement of CDEMA with port logistics stakeholders. He made a passionate appeal for the agency's proactive and sustained funding, highlighting that it cannot adequately support Caribbean nations in times of need without consistent investment.

Mr. Sean Rafter highlighted lessons learned from humanitarian supply chain assessments in different contexts, emphasizing islands and ports. Key takeaways include the importance of a holistic approach to preparedness investment and strengthening resilience through systems thinking, as well as the need for developing infrastructure and connectivity, localized capacity and information exchange, and a mind shift to collaborative leadership.

Mr. Jair Torres presented the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction as a pathway to building resilient societies and highlighted the need for integrated approaches to addressing the interconnected, interdependent, and increasingly complex nature of hazards, exposure, vulnerability, and supply chains. He emphasized the critical importance of understanding risk, strengthening disaster risk governance, ensuring disaster risk reduction financing, and building back better. He also tackled the need for mainstreaming disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation in an integrated fashion across sectors and policy domains as a priority for sustainable development and resilient prosperity.

The discussion emphasized the importance of understanding risks, fostering partnerships, and integrating disaster risk reduction proactively into broader policy frameworks to mitigate the impacts of disasters and ensure sustainable development. The panellists called for action to prioritize disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation to avoid the unfathomable social, economic, and developmental costs of inaction. They advocated for well-funded regional entities like CDEMA and the importance of collective



efforts among island nations to support each other in times of crisis. In conclusion, the panel discussion served as a call to action for all stakeholders to recognize disaster preparedness's urgency and work collaboratively towards a more resilient future.

Session A10: Strengthening Service Quality and Connectivity in Maritime Transport to Foster Global Trade and Development

GSCF website: [Strengthening service quality and connectivity in maritime transport to foster global trade and development | UNCTAD](#)

Organizers: International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA), Global Shippers' Alliance (GSA) and UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Regina Asariotis, Chief, Policy and Legislation Section, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Andrea Tang, Director, Legal Services, International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA)
- Denis Choumert, Chairman, Global Shippers' Alliance (GSA)
- James Hookham, Secretary General and Director, Global Shippers Forum (GSF)
- Joe Kramek, Director of U.S. Government Relations, President and CEO designate, World Shipping Council (WSC)

This session brought together major industry leaders in the maritime transport supply chain, representing shippers, freight forwarders and shipping lines, for a unique roundtable discussion. The discussion took stock of the significant evolutions in the market environment, which faces new and emerging risks in today's turbulent world. Complex global maritime supply chain networks must increasingly grapple with increasing disruptions spurred by geopolitical, economic, and environmental events whilst simultaneously working to meet significant zero-emission targets. Response measures often bring additional challenges, costs, and delays. Such events, together with the implementation of decarbonization measures, have the potential to impact shippers and consumers most severely in LDCs and SIDS. Meanwhile, changing world trade patterns have widespread effects on today's interconnected trade routes, whilst larger vessel sizes necessitate a higher minimum number of container transfers to make port calls viable, impacting port operations and logistics.

There is an urgent need for all supply chain actors to work together to build a more resilient maritime supply chain and collaboratively explore balanced practices that account for emerging risks to ensure trade connectivity and maritime performance, and shelter trade-intensive economies and micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) worldwide. An important step for all stakeholders would be to adopt a greater sense of collective ownership towards managing future disruptions, rather than simple self-preservation. The maritime supply chain plays a central role in the global economy, and all stakeholders are responsible for it. It is vitally important that carriers, freight forwarders and shippers have conversations early and often to raise awareness of supply chain disruptions and possible impacts, and coordinate responses. Open communication and greater transparency amongst stakeholders are crucial to restoring trust in the industry and building greater resilience. Establishing dedicated 'Resilience Teams' by some



shipping lines to communicate risks and responses internally and to customers was noted as a positive development.

Besides managing unpredictable high-impact events (Black Swans), stakeholders should proactively address known issues like climate change and the goal of near-zero emissions by 2050. Ignoring these "Pink Flamingos" until forced to act will lead to significant disruptions. This transition necessitates a comprehensive approach by engaging all stakeholders, particularly MSMEs in LDCs and SIDS. Continuous dialogue and proactive measures are essential to integrate these considerations into ongoing supply chain strategies. The International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations, the Global Shippers' Alliance, the Global Shippers Forum, and the World Shipping Council will continue the dialogue to accelerate and support decarbonization efforts and foster resilience in the maritime supply chain to benefit economies worldwide.

Session A11: Port Infrastructure Sufficiency Index

GSCF website: [Port Infrastructure Sufficiency Index | UNCTAD](#)

Organizers: Korea Maritime Institute (KMI), Gyeongsang National University (GNU) and UNCTAD

- Moderator – Jan Hoffmann, Head, Trade Logistics Branch, DTL, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Ju Dong Park, Professor of Marine Science College, Gyeongsang National University (GNU)
- Seokwoo Jake Choi, Director, Port Demand Analysis Research Division, Port Research Development, Korea Maritime Institute (KMI)

The session focused on the progress and challenges of developing the port infrastructure index of 47 leading world container ports, focusing on three main components: Punctuality, Safety and Security, and Digitalization. The discussion emphasized the importance of establishing trust and engaging stakeholders to share confidential data and provide feedback, enabling ports to compare their performance with others and offering essential guidelines for policymaking.

Key achievements included enhancing port performance measurement for a more sustainable and resilient maritime supply chain, establishing a reliable global metric to assess port infrastructure sufficiency, and promoting increased research and collaboration among governments, the port industry, research institutions, academia, and maritime development partners.

The effectiveness of the survey questions was demonstrated, with Safety, Security, and Digitalization providing valuable insights for KMI and UNCTAD. The survey's feasibility for data collection and the effectiveness of the questions were assessed. Despite the user-friendly and easy survey, it remains unclear whether the responses accurately reflect the actual levels of safety, security, and digitalization in ports.

The panellist highlighted that despite efforts by UNCTAD, KMI, and partners, the low response rate indicates a need to reconsider the approach or simplify the questionnaire, potentially by identifying champions among port and terminal operators to encourage participation. Additionally, issues regarding response format, IT literacy of port workers, and the differing technological requirements of various ports were addressed. The panellist also emphasized the need for continuous improvement. The third phase aims to refine the functionality measurement algorithm, enhance the objectivity and reliability of the PISI



questionnaire, and expand the survey target ports. The algorithm now considers the anchorage area to provide a more accurate vessel waiting time.

In conclusion, the panellists agreed that a collaborative, inclusive, and action-oriented approach to obtaining data is vital for successfully developing and refining the port performance index. They stressed the importance of improving the index's accuracy and reliability, which would provide ports with valuable insights into their performance and areas for improvement. The session underscored that collaboration among international organizations and feedback from various stakeholders is crucial for the success and continuous enhancement of the PISI.

Session A12: Zero Emissions Shipping: Global Policies and Economic Opportunities

GSCF website: [Zero emissions shipping: Global policies and economic opportunities | UNCTAD](#)

Organizers: UN Foundation, World Bank Group (WBG) and High-Level Climate Champions (HLCs)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Kerlene Wills, Director for Ocean and Climate, UN Foundation
- Katharine Palmer, Shipping Lead, UN Climate Change High-Level Champions (HLCs)
- Rico Salgmann, Transport Specialist, World Bank Group (WBG)
- Onno Hoffmeister, Project Officer, Transport Section, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Darlin Gaitan, CEO and Ports Commissioner, Belize Port Authority (BPA)
- Philip Julien, CEO and Chairman, Kenesjay Green
- Vivian Rambarath-Parasram, Director, Maritime Technology Cooperation Centre (MTCC) Caribbean

This panel session, organized by the UN Foundation, UN High-Level Climate Champions, and The World Bank, gathered maritime industry experts from the Caribbean to discuss the challenges and opportunities in decarbonizing the shipping sector.

Ms. Katharine Palmer opened the session by emphasizing the urgency of transitioning to zero-emissions shipping. She highlighted the revised 2023 IMO GHG Strategy, which aims for net-zero emissions by 2050, and discussed the importance of a global fuel standard and an emissions pricing mechanism. Ms. Palmer underscored that the transition to zero-emissions shipping is not just an environmental necessity but also an economic opportunity for the global maritime industry. She stressed the need for a united approach, leveraging the strengths and resources of all stakeholders in the maritime industry.

Mr. Rico Salgmann framed the discussion by underscoring the critical need for shipping decarbonization. He pointed out that the shipping industry contributes to 3 per cent of global GHG emissions and highlighted the importance of aligning policy and technology to drive this transformation. Mr. Salgmann noted that the proposed emissions pricing mechanism would set a global price on GHG emissions, providing financial support for developing countries to transition to greener technologies.

Ms. Darlin Gaitan discussed SIDS's unique challenges in implementing GHG reduction measures. She emphasized the need for just and equitable transition policies, international collaboration, and capacity



building. Ms. Gaitan stressed that equitable and just transition policies are critical for Belize and other SIDS to ensure they are not left behind in the global shift to green shipping. She highlighted the importance of policies that support economic resilience while promoting sustainable practices in the shipping sector and noted that international collaboration can help navigate the economic impacts of decarbonizing the shipping industry.

Mr. Philip Julien spoke about the potential of green hydrogen in the Caribbean's energy transition. He highlighted the need for supportive policies to scale up green hydrogen production and its role in driving green energy demand in the maritime sector. Mr. Julien emphasized that green hydrogen has the potential to revolutionize the Caribbean's maritime sector, providing a sustainable and scalable solution for decarbonization. He stressed the importance of transferring aspirational demand for green fuels into bankable demand and committed to promoting the development of sustainable hydrogen technologies to drive the Caribbean's transition to a low-carbon economy, creating new economic opportunities and enhancing energy security.

Ms. Vivian Rambarath-Parasram highlighted the importance of capacity building and regional collaboration. She outlined MTCC Caribbean's role in supporting countries in adopting IMO regulations and providing technical assistance. Ms. Rambarath-Parasram emphasized that MTCC Caribbean is committed to supporting SIDS through technical assistance and capacity-building initiatives to promote sustainable maritime practices. She highlighted that their initiatives aim to equip the Caribbean with the knowledge and skills needed to implement sustainable maritime practices effectively and that they collaborate with international partners to expand their impact and promote inclusivity in the maritime sector.

Mr. Onno Hoffmeister presented the UNCTAD-World Bank global transport cost database, which offers a comprehensive view of the costs and efforts associated with global trade transport. This dataset, covering over 170 economies from 2016 to 2021, highlights that developing countries exert twice the transport effort per dollar of trade compared to developed economies, with SIDS facing the highest transport and insurance costs. Mr. Hoffmeister noted that this data underscores the unique challenges faced by SIDS, including their geographic isolation, trade imbalances, and diseconomies of scale, which result in higher shipping costs. The database, available via UNCTADstat, provides critical insights for policymakers and businesses to understand trade logistics costs, identify efficiency improvements, and support implementing the IMO's GHG reduction strategy.

Moderated by Ms. Kerlene Wills the panel discussion focused on achieving the objectives of the IMO GHG Strategy and included contributions from all speakers. Key points included:

1. The need for tailored policies for SIDS to ensure a just and equitable transition.
2. The potential of green hydrogen and renewable energy sources in reducing the shipping industry's carbon footprint.
3. The importance of international cooperation and supportive policies in driving the transition to greener shipping practices.
4. The role of capacity building and regional collaboration in promoting sustainable maritime practices.
5. The role of the UNCTAD-World Bank global transport cost database in providing critical data to inform policy decisions and highlight the possible economic challenges and opportunities in decarbonizing the shipping industry.



Session B1: Strengthening Caribbean Small Island States' Supply Chain Resilience

Recording link: [Empowering Small Island Developing States in the Caribbean \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [Empowering Small Island States in the Caribbean: Leveraging pooled procurement and innovative technologies for supply chain resilience | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/en/news-events/news/2024/empowering-small-island-developing-states-in-the-caribbean-leveraging-pooled-procurement-and-innovative-technologies-for-supply-chain-resilience)

Organizer: Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Jean-Jacques Verdeaux, Procurement Manager, Latin America and Caribbean, World Bank Group (WBG)
- Roselyn Opel, Head, Pooled Procurement Services (PPS), Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission
- Douglas Fraser, Head of Procurement, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)
- Felix Ohnmacht, Co-founder and Chief Commercial Officer (CCO), Axmed PBC

The OECS panel highlighted the importance of connectivity and economic interdependence of global supply chain management.

This aimed to raise awareness of procurement and supply chain challenges in the Caribbean small island states, share the success of the pooled procurement (PPS) initiatives and discuss how technology can be employed for effective supply chain/procurement management.

The panel focused on the following: a) the benefits of pooled procurement as a strategic tool to enhance competitiveness and bargaining power for the small islands and the way forward to positioning the region as a supply chain hub; and b) existing supply chain challenges and an overview of how technology and capacity building can be used to manage the supply chain effectively.

The panel provided an interactive opportunity to exchange the latest developments and knowledge and showcase the power of collaboration to streamline supply chain operations in the OECS region. Additionally, the discussion panel presented innovative approaches the partner organizations use to enhance supply chain resilience and competitiveness in the OECS region.

The panel shed light on and generated awareness of the recent supply chain optimization initiative in the OECS region. Following on from and drawing on the ongoing CDB, WBG, and OECS partnership, the panel showcased how a regional approach could potentially support building resilient supply chains in the OECS region.

The panel discussion noted that there have been concerted efforts in the recent two years towards developing the Supply Chain systems within the OECS Region to support Public Procurement and for governments to deliver this to their citizens with the support of various multilateral donors. It was agreed that some of the initiatives currently being undertaken included:

1. Operationalization of new procurement frameworks; professionalization of public procurement staff/practitioners; building relationships with academic institutions to undertake research that supports



the development of public procurement in the small state Caribbean context; development of a Supply Chain framework; and surge capacity for natural disasters.

2. Harmonization of procurement Standards. Development and enactment of required legislation to support Public Procurement and Pooled Procurement of public projects to negotiate for competitive harmonized prices and standards across the region, given the difference in population and GDP of small islands so that all benefit from the Pooling Mechanism.
3. Sensitization of Member States to adopt agile procurement systems that actively tackle unnecessary administrative requirements, as seen in other larger markets (e.g., late payments that create bottlenecks in the public procurement ecosystem), and work towards being an open, attractive government market.
4. Establishment of a strategy to build strong digital procurement practices, leverage innovative financing and collaborate with impact-oriented private sector and multilateral partners to strengthen the Supply Chain ecosystem in our Islands.

The recommendations emitted were the following:

1. Undertake analysis to drive procurement consolidation at the national, sub-regional, and regional levels, which requires leveraging technology more widely and effectively. Consider developing policies and strategies that drive pooled procurement at the OECS and regional levels.
2. SIDS in the Caribbean should consider passing a framework to support more collaboration in Public Procurement and the Private sector and enhance capacity building in the implementation of public procurement projects.
3. Focus on specific, targeted actions that are often more effective than larger reforms by reinforcing and extending the scope of the OECS's pooled procurement services, which already serve countries in the Caribbean.
4. OECS learnings and best practices will be taken to CARICOM and the larger Global Supply Chain community as the region considers establishing an OECS Health commodity "hub and spoke" model to optimize the supply chain and reduce prices.
5. Organize Regional Thematic sessions to articulate the uniqueness of Supply Chains within the Caribbean States that rely on the Global Supply Chain networks for economic survival.

Commitments and Actions:

1. OECS-Commission through the OECS-PPS is putting together a Regional Pooled Procurement framework to support pooled procurement of regional projects across different areas of development and is requesting support of the Global Community to establish the Centre of Procurement Excellence for Public Procurement for the region.
2. The international financial community must take action and provide immediate support in integrating procurement of supplies and goods in the region. The World Bank and CDB are committed to this.
3. Collaboration is key across governments, regional entities, including OECS, and the financing partners, such as the Caribbean Development Bank.
4. As a Public Benefit Corporation, Axmed stands steadfast in its commitment to providing free access to its platform and aiming to deliver high-quality health commodities at highly competitive prices.



Session B2: Approaching Food Insecurity in Small Economies – Focus on Trade Policy and Facilitation

Recording link: [Approaching food insecurity in small economies – trade policy and facilitation \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [Food insecurity in small economies - Focus on trade policy and facilitation | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/...)

Organizer: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Jaime Granados, Chief, Trade and Investment Division, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- Anton E. Edmunds, General Manager, Caribbean Country Development, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- Edna Ramírez, Founder and CEO, GoBizGlobal
- Roble Sabrie, Economist, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

This session aimed to show the linkages that exist between the implementation of trade policies and food security issues.

Mr. Jaime Granados explained that trade impacts food security's four aspects: availability, access, utilization and stabilization.

Mr. Anton E. Edmunds pointed out that food security is not limited to availability but that it is crucial to consider the nutritional aspect of the goods that enter a country as well as their cost. He stressed that there is a focus on exchanges between the North and the South but not within the region. He finally expressed that to reduce volatility in terms of availability and access to food products, it is fundamental to invest in new technologies, have a stronger public sector investing in efficiency, and a private sector not left on the sidelines because it is industries that trade. In battling food insecurity, he presented a new initiative within the IDB called ONE Caribbean to achieve citizen security, climate resilience, an enabling environment for SMEs, and food security. This initiative would represent a way of testing the efficiency of all the stakeholders involved in trade.

Ms. Edna Ramírez focused on the methods that can be implemented to secure healthy diets through trade policies: food security and nutrition go hand in hand. The action plan is divided into five action points: identifying healthy foods and their supply chains; examining the market access tools available to facilitate their movement; revising existing trade remedies measures; using regulatory measures to create consciousness and allowing these conversations to be featured at different committees at the WTO or regional fora. Some of the trade tools that can be beneficial include and are not limited to reducing and eliminating charges on a national level for nutrient-rich foods (tariffs, SPS measures), implementing trade facilitation measures, creating tariff preference programs, etc. She also explained that if there is a necessity for countries to block exports on a national level to ensure food security, this should be done transparently and by informing the WTO of how long this measure would take to avoid food insecurity spreading into importing countries. Last but certainly not least, learning from other countries and their successful experiences in finding alternative ways to ensure their food security.



Mr. Roble Sabrie pointed out that when it comes to food, all countries import and export, leading to interconnection. More than 60 per cent of the food that is consumed in the CARICOM region is imported and despite the efforts made at the regional level, there are still opportunities to seize (e.g. 25 by 25 aiming to reduce dependency and produce more regionally). FAO and CDB are running, for this reason, a 4-pilot project in Trinidad, Guyana, Barbados, and Grenada. He also focused on the crucial aspect of physical and digital infrastructures that can increase exports and imports (e.g. CARICOM's wharves, which specialize in moving goods and are reserved for smaller vessels), and on the importance of finding creative solutions to have critical mass and containers that are not necessarily full but are still price competitive and adequately insured. His final word focused on the importance of digital portals and e-phytos to meet standards, market access and mitigate risks.

The panel concluded by mentioning that trade policy and trade responses are crucial in achieving food security, that multilateral outcomes (WTO and regional trade agreements) impact the regional scene and should be enhanced, and finally, that donors have a role to play in leveraging a response and mitigating the negative externalities.

Session B3: ONE Caribbean: A Strategy for Approaching Food Insecurity – Focus on Sustainable Freight Logistics and Trade

Recording link: [ONE Caribbean: A strategy for approaching food insecurity – sustainable freight logistics and trade \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [ONE Caribbean: A strategy for approaching food insecurity - focus on sustainable freight logistics and trade | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/...)

Organizer: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

- Moderator – Christopher Persaud, Transport Specialist, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- Andrew Jackson, Regional Head of Supply Chain, United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)
- Zera Zheng, Global Head of Business Resilience Consulting, Maersk
- James Hookham, Secretary General and Director, Global Shippers Forum (GSF)
- Patrick Antoine, CEO and Technical Officer, CARICOM Private Sector Organization (CPSO)
- Rodrigo Rupérez, Consultant, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

This session aimed to tackle food insecurity in the Caribbean region by focusing on sustainable freight and logistics trade.

Mr. Andrew Jackson highlighted four key areas to enhance the resilience of supply chain logistics: upgrading port infrastructure, implementing temperature-sensitive logistics for perishables, increasing information visibility for stakeholders, and prioritizing human development to nurture new talent. He also introduced the Connect Caribé initiative, which involves three ferries connecting several Caribbean countries, enabling the transportation of cargo, goods, and passengers. In his second address, he emphasized that food security is a major concern for the WFP, as 43% of people in the Caribbean are food insecure, and the organization is committed to assisting those affected.



Ms. Zera Zheng highlighted strategies to strengthen the resilience of food supply chains through a multi-tier approach. Key strategies include establishing distribution and deconsolidation centers near major ocean ports for faster cargo unloading and improved efficiency, as well as maximizing container loads to reduce unit costs. In her second intervention, she identified three areas where digitization and artificial intelligence can boost supply chain efficiency: enhancing visibility for better inventory management, collaborating with universities to predict weather patterns, and using twin technologies to create virtual simulations for testing solutions.

Mr. James Hookham focused on the day-to-day obstacles shippers face. First, variabilities and fluctuations that occur in sailing schedules and sailing patterns. Optimizations that can be done by carriers (e.g. skipping a port) entail higher costs for shippers, a delay in schedule also makes exports or imports more expensive. Secondly, non-tariff barriers represent additional compliance costs that can get in the way of a smooth uninterrupted supply chain. Thirdly and most importantly, shippers are strongly affected by surcharges. While surcharges allow carriers to recover unexpected costs that can come with crises such as the Suez Canal, Covid, etc. this leads to a loss of profit and creates tensions for the shippers. When asked how better resilience can be achieved, Mr. Hookham answered that it can be achieved via skills development, knowledge transfers, and opportunities for women in the sector.

Mr. Patrick Antoine discussed how CARICOM countries are tackling food insecurity through a resilient and sustainable framework. He highlighted that while some Caribbean markets show improved agricultural performance, others still depend on imports. Effective data analysis can help identify opportunities between these countries. Mr. Antoine pointed out that customer complaints about agricultural products often arise from scalability issues. To address this, he proposed two main solutions: first, increasing private sector access to research and development (R&D) to enhance competitiveness; second, improving port efficiency across the region through public-private collaboration and policy changes. He identified four key areas for private sector involvement: i) eliminating non-tariff barriers to boost interregional trade by 15% in five years; ii) creating a certification mechanism for exporters; iii) avoiding a return to protectionist policies while pursuing growth; and iv) These strategies could significantly improve food security in the Caribbean.

Mr. Rodrigo Rupérez presented the UNCTAD interregional project in the Caribbean, which aims to educate producers about certifications like the Voluntary Sustainability Standards (VSS) to enhance their businesses. Certifications promote trust by providing traceability and transparency. Without them, producers face administrative challenges and increased costs, which weaken their competitiveness. Additionally, these certifications improve farmers' livelihoods, reduce chemical use, and foster social benefits. The project also shares best practices, offers training, and engages relevant stakeholders to create a sustainable and resilient supply chain.

Session B4: Building Resilient Supply Chain Modalities – A Business Perspective

Recording link: [Building resilient supply chain modalities: A business perspective \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [Building resilient supply chain modalities - A business perspective | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/gscf/building-resilient-supply-chain-modalities-a-business-perspective)

Organizer: Caribbean Export Development Agency

Speakers:



- Moderator – Damie Sinanan, Manager Competitiveness and Export Promotion, Caribbean Export Development Agency
- Darwin Telemaque, CEO, Antigua Port Authority and Chairman of the Port Management Association of the Caribbean (PMAC)
- Michelle Belgrave, Customs and Trade Compliance Director for the Caribbean, DHL Express
- Tamara Gibson, Founder and Managing Director, Native Caribbean Limited
- Nicholas Bynoe, Owner, Old Duppy Foods Inc.

Overview Logistics and transportation are essential for the Caribbean's economic growth and job security. From a business perspective, this panel discussed the strategic investments and technological innovations needed to enhance infrastructure efficiency and sustainability. Addressing global disruptions and geopolitical tensions, the discussion focused on building a resilient logistics framework to support economic stability. Advancements in logistics can lead the Caribbean into a new era of economic prosperity and significant growth potential, benefiting businesses across the region.

The panel also highlighted the significant role of SMEs in the Caribbean economy and the critical challenges they face in exporting. Indeed, SMEs represent 99.5 per cent of businesses, but only 10 per cent export their products. The discussion also emphasized the importance of involving SMEs and micro businesses in policy making to address their unique needs.

The panellists tackled the topic of recognizing port inefficiencies: port insights underscored the urgent need for modernization and efficiency improvements. Outdated infrastructure, inadequate equipment, and bureaucratic hurdles were identified as key issues.

Finally, the panellists and audience highlighted the need for regional collaboration to consolidate resources, improve manufacturing and enhance export competitiveness. Strategies such as creating regional hubs and updating port equipment to meet new environmental standards were discussed.

The recommendations that emerged from the discussions were the following:

1. Enhance Export Support for SMEs: provide comprehensive training and resources to SMEs on export regulations, HS codes and customs compliance to facilitate smoother international trade. DHL's efforts to facilitate export processes for SMEs through comprehensive policy frameworks and stakeholder participation were highlighted.
2. Modernize Port Infrastructure: invest in modernizing port facilities and equipment to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and comply with international environmental regulations. Facilitate Bulk Shipping for SMEs: encourage collaboration among SMEs to consolidate shipments and reduce individual shipping costs.
3. Create Larger Market Opportunities: develop larger opportunities for SMEs by aggregating smaller transactions such as bulk shipping, into significant export numbers and facilitating entry into international markets.
4. Promote Local Products in Tourism: work with the hospitality and cruise ship industries to feature more local products, enhancing the authenticity of the Caribbean experience for tourists. This would drive demand for local products and create cultural connections for tourists.



5. Establish Regional Hubs: consider designing regional hubs to streamline shipping routes and reduce inefficiencies. This would address the challenges posed by the IMO's new regulations on carbon output.
6. Strengthen Public-Private Partnerships: foster stronger collaborations between governments and the private sector to address systemic issues in the supply chain and enhance overall economic resilience.

Session B5: Energy Transition of Fishing Fleets: Opportunities and Challenges for Developing Countries

Recording link: [Energy transition of fishing fleets: Opportunities and challenges for developing countries \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [Energy transition of fishing fleets: Opportunities and challenges for developing countries | UNCTAD](https://unctad.org/en/...)

Organizers: UNCTAD, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and Barbados Fisheries Division, Ministry of Environment and National Beautification, Green and Blue Economy

Speakers:

- Moderator – Nikola Simpson, Founder and Director, Sustainable Caribbean
- Adrian R. Forde, Minister of Environment and National Beautification, Green and Blue Economy, Barbados
- David Vivas Eugui, Chief OF Section (a.i.), Trade, Environment, Climate Change and Sustainable Development Branch, DITC, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Regina Asariotis, Chief, Policy and Legislation Section, UNCTAD
- Yvette Diei-Ouadi, Fisheries Industry Officer and WECAFC Secretary, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)
- Shelly-Ann Cox, Chief Fisheries Officer, Fisheries Division, Ministry of Environment and National Beautification, Green and Blue Economy

At the UN Global Supply Chain Forum, a session dedicated to the energy transition of fishing fleets for developing countries was convened to discuss the transition's challenges and opportunities and define preliminary elements of a roadmap for a global greenhouse gas (GHG) emission target for the fisheries sector.

Ms. Nikola Simpson chaired the panel, which UNCTAD organized in partnership with the Fisheries Division of the Ministry of Environment and National Beautification, Green and Blue Economy, Government of Barbados, and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations.

Mr. Adrian Forde provided the keynote address, which presented the reality of the Barbadian context, touching on challenges such as access to technology to support a just energy transition while also noting that although SIDS such as Barbados' contributions to global GHG are low, the country continues to make progress toward becoming fossil fuel-free by 2030 and carbon neutral by 2035.



Mr. David Vivas Eugui shared that fisheries capture production is at its' limit as well as underscored the fact that there currently is no global plan nor targets for GHG emission reduction in the fisheries sector. He touched on the importance of fulfilling international commitments such as Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement. On technological considerations, he highlighted that technological solutions exist, such as biodiesel and biogas, other alternative fuels, and wind propulsion, but that many are not at mature stages yet.

Regarding the regulatory regime, Ms. Regina Asariotis highlighted the need to strengthen the development of targeted legal and regulatory measures to reduce GHG emissions from fishing vessels and enhance the climate resilience of fishing ports.

Ms. Yvette Diei-Ouadi provided data on the number and size of fishing fleets and focused on the importance of greening the entire fisheries and seafood value chain as an essential move towards net-zero emissions.

For a deeper dive into the Barbados country perspective, Ms. Shelly Ann Cox shared progress that the Barbados Fisheries Division is making in collaboration with partners to install vessel monitoring systems, experiment with biofuels, PV panel charging batteries, and vessel design, and have a dedicated section in the draft legislation on energy and fisheries.

In summary, the session provided a brief mapping of the challenges and opportunities of the energy transition of fishing fleets for developing countries and touched upon some potential elements that could form a development-friendly global roadmap for GHG emissions reductions, starting right here in Barbados at the Global Supply Chain Forum.

Session B6: Greening the Health Supply Chain: How to Build a More Sustainable, Resilient and Cost-Efficient Logistics to Deliver Vaccines and Medicines in Latin America and the Caribbean?

Recording link: [Greening the health supply chain: How to build a sustainable, resilient and cost-efficient logistics? \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [Greening the health supply chain: How to build a more sustainable, resilient and cost-efficient logistics? | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/gscf)

Organizer: Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Daniel Rodríguez, Director, Procurement and Supply Management, The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO)
- Kent Edwards, Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Health, Wellness and Social Services, Dominica
- Carsten Hansen, Executive Managing Director, SourcingHaus Research and Consulting Group
- Enrique Romero, Logistics Optimization Specialist, Decisiones Logísticas Consulting Group

During the discussion, the panellists outlined some of the current supply chain's main challenges, such as logistical bottlenecks, natural disasters, environmental impacts, including carbon footprint, and high



transportation costs in the Caribbean region. Innovative and collaborative approaches were presented to reduce the emissions footprint and achieve a more cost-effective regional supply chain, leveraging the PAHO Regional Revolving Funds.

The panel started by reviewing the linkages that exist between health supply chains and climate change. Every year PAHO protects 40 million people in the Americas with vaccination and medicine. The organization aims to deliver quality and low-priced vaccines in a timely fashion. However, various challenges impact their work: 93 per cent of the vaccines procured come from overseas, which entails high emissions and high costs; they must assist hard-to-reach destinations, and with the onset of climate change, new illnesses are spreading and appearing in new regions. With the health sector usually using air shipments, 4 to 10 per cent of CO₂ emissions from a country are linked to the health system; countries are trying to establish baselines and reduce those emissions.

The discussion showed, therefore, the critical linkages between climate change and public health, the integration of sustainability within supply chain operations, and concrete strategies to achieve PAHO's 50 per cent emission reduction target by 2030.

The solutions offered to increase efficiency, sustainability, and people's well-being were to: consolidate shipments (PAHO currently does one shipment for one country, which is not very efficient), consolidate packaging at the origin (which would optimize cost), establish local or regional hubs (creation of market that is closer geographically), leverage regional supply (creating linkages with other countries that are in the region and could produce the vaccines). These various strategies and initiatives would assist in building a more resilient and cost-effective logistics system for delivering vaccines and medicines. Collaboration, innovation, and being ready to break out of the paradigms that have been created would only further enhance logistics.

PAHO shared their experience measuring their GHG emission baseline across their supply chain and setting concrete emission reduction targets. Once PAHO had calculated its carbon footprint, it became aware that 95 per cent of its emissions were due to transportation between the port of origin and the port of destination. They were then able to create a comprehensive and concrete supply chain emissions reduction strategy, which consists of five strategic entry points for emissions reduction:

1. Encouraging supplier sustainability actions.
2. Promoting a modal shift to low-emission transportation options (if PAHO transitioned fully from air cargo to ship cargo, its emissions would be reduced by 98.6 per cent).
3. Reducing packaging and promoting the use of sustainable materials.
4. Enhancing shipping consolidation.
5. Leveraging low-emission transportation solutions.

Panellists agreed that building digitalization infrastructure and pooled procurement would further reduce GHG emissions and cut costs.

A key message from the discussion was: "By fostering innovation and collaboration, we can ensure that vaccines and medicines are delivered efficiently and effectively while also minimizing our environmental impact."



Session B7 - B8: Efficient and Competitive Port Management (Part 1 and 2)

GSCF website: [Efficient and competitive port management | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: UNCTAD

Speakers:

- Moderator – Namrata Nadkarni, Founder and CEO, Intent Communications Ltd.
- Moderator – Mark Assaf, Chief, TrainForTrade, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Ian Stewart, Manager, Divisional Operations, Barbados Port Inc. (BPI)
- Eranda Kotelawala, CEO, Solomon Islands Ports Authority (SIPA)
- Antonis Michail, Technical Director, International Association of Ports and Harbours (IAPH) and World Port Sustainability Program (WPSP)
- Ancor Suárez Alemán, Operations Senior Specialist, Public Private Partnership, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- Monique Bidia Duncan, Deputy Director of HR, Port Authority of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire and Permanent Secretary of the French-speaking Network of the TrainForTrade Port Management Programme
- Jorge Durán, Secretariat Chief, Inter-American Committee on Ports (CIP)
- Francisco Javier Trujillo Ramírez, Director-General, Port Authority of Las Palmas, Gran Canaria, Spain
- Ricardo Sánchez, Head, Caribbean Research Institute
- Bismark Rosales Rojas, General Manager, Jennefer International Port, Bolivia

This two-hour panel discussion brought together senior-level port professionals for a fruitful discussion on how ports may work to safeguard themselves from future shocks. The Covid-19 pandemic has tested ports' resilience, underscoring their crucial role in international trade and global supply chains. Ports must now focus on adaptability, preparedness, modernization, and economic inclusivity both locally and globally. The conversation was broken down into two one-hour sessions, the first hour focused on port efficiency and sustainability and the second on supply chain resilience in ports, allowing speakers adequate time to present their thoughts while also leaving space for Q&A as well as an open group discussion.

Resilience is inherent for ports located at maritime crossroads, capable of managing crises and seizing opportunities. During the discussion, it was underscored that for island countries, port closure equates to the island's closure. Research from Latin America and the Caribbean reveals that port capacity building has evolved significantly over the past 20 years. Port managers must now navigate volatility and uncertainty as part of their regular routine. There is a pressing need to equip port leaders with analytical skills to embrace digitalization and develop a forward-looking vision.

Digitalization initiatives, such as Maritime or Port Single Window systems, begin with the capacity to design clear strategies. BPI exemplified the importance of internal solution development. Similarly, members of



the CIP have shown a strong commitment to resilience and disaster risk management by leveraging technology.

The Inter-American Development Bank advocates for greater private sector involvement through public-private partnerships (PPPs) and the adoption of the landlord port model to enhance performance. The port industry is highly concentrated, with the top 10 terminal operators controlling 70 per cent of the market. Collaborative solutions can yield sustainable and resilient benefits for all parties.

The session emphasized SIDS, specifically those in the Pacific, which face significant challenges, particularly from climate change. Port competitiveness issues also reduce bargaining power for smaller ports, necessitating support to maintain operations. SIDS needs help to achieve economies of scale to stay competitive.

Panellists from landlocked countries, like Bolivia, spoke about adapting to new supply chain constraints. Bolivian river ports, for instance, are reducing transport costs by connecting to the Atlantic Ocean despite climate-related water level challenges. Maximizing resources and designing commercially viable alternatives is critical for these economies.

The World Port Sustainability Program (WPSP), led by the IAPH, highlighted its mission of advancing sustainable and resilient port services. The Port Endeavor initiative promotes the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) across port communities in multiple languages, demonstrating that efficiency and sustainability are not exclusive to large ports.

Efficient and competitive port management facilitates international trade, promotes economic growth, and ensures smooth cargo operations. Comprehensive port networks fostering collaboration among public, private, and global entities are vital for unlocking the potential of international trade, driving economic growth, and ensuring the seamless flow of goods. Representatives from the TrainForTrade port networks emphasized the importance of strategic partnerships, effective governance, and optimized operational practices. These networks are engines of economic development, connecting nations, stimulating trade, and enhancing societal well-being. Capacity building at the middle and senior levels of port managers across the different department ports and port communities work to strengthen transparency and the overall efficiency of ports. TrainForTrade's longstanding Port Management Programme helps ports evolve into durable, efficient, and resilient hubs of global trade by fostering knowledge sharing in support of long-term economic development.

Key observations from the panel included the need for continued investment in human capital to remain cutting-edge and vigilant, the ever-increasing threat of climate change, which is affecting us all but will continue to disproportionately affect SIDS before others, and the overall need to become equipped and prepared for the continued digitalization of ports.

In conclusion, the session underscored ports' critical role in keeping economies alive. Changes to port environments, whether from natural causes or brought on through regulations such as the Maritime Single Window, will only continue to emerge at an ever-accelerating pace. The session called for continued work on promoting human capacities in ports to establish long-term reliable means towards adapting to rapidly changing conditions.



Session B9: Promoting Responsible Business Conduct for Decent Work in Supply Chains: A Focus on the Transport Sector

Recording link: [Promoting responsible business conduct for decent work in supply chains: The transport sector \(youtube.com\)](#)

GSCF website: [Promoting responsible business conduct for decent work in supply chains: A focus on the transport sector | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: International Labour Organization (ILO)

Speakers:

- Moderator – John Blik, Enterprise Specialist, Sustainable Enterprise Development and Job Creation, International Labour Organization (ILO) Office for the Caribbean
- Joni Musabayana, Director, Decent Work Team and Office for the Caribbean, ILO Caribbean Office
- Sanella Sanford, BEC Council Member and Trade Group Representative for Transport and Logistics, Head of Human Resources – Caribbean Markets, Inchcape
- Fabrizio Barcellona, Coordinator, Seafarers and Inland Navigation Section, International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)
- Martin Lugmayr, Industrial Development Expert, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)

Experts convened for this session to address responsible business conduct in the Caribbean. The session highlighted the importance of global instruments like the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, the ILO Tripartite Declaration, and the OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises.

Mr. Joni Musabayana highlighted the importance of the ILO's historic Maritime Labour Convention, the first legally enforceable international law with an eye toward seafarers' welfare that came into effect in August 2013. He highlighted that the convention has been signed by countries including the Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica, Saint Kitts and Nevis, and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

Ms. Sanella Sanford emphasized the importance of diversity, inclusion, and workplace safety. Ms. Sanford discussed practical measures such as mandatory unconscious bias training for leaders and colleagues, inclusive hiring practices, and ensuring diverse candidate shortlists and women representation in leadership programs. Ms. Sanford pointed out that tools for responsible business conduct can increase company performance and enable businesses to comply with legislation. She also spoke on Barbados' "Mission Barbados" campaign, which outlines six objectives to reach by 2030 on topics linked to the climate crisis, food and water, culture and crime, health and well-being, poverty, and empowerment.

Mr. Fabrizio Barcellona highlighted the challenges transport workers face in securing decent work. He underscored that transport workers frequently receive less attention compared to those in manufacturing, which was evident during the pandemic. Mr. Barcellona stressed the essential role transport workers play in the supply chain and pointed out that their international workforce often lacks jurisdictional protection and access to social security. He advocated implementing soft and hard laws, treaties, and conventions and cooperative efforts to establish and enforce standards across all transportation sectors. Mr. Barcellona



also noted the need for global framework agreements applicable to seafarers worldwide, addressing issues such as infrastructure changes to support women in the profession, retention of seafarers, and ensuring workers' well-being and benefits.

Mr. Martin Lugmayr discussed UNIDO's white paper on skill development for fair production and sustainable supply chains. He highlighted that UNIDO has created a flexible curriculum covering social, economic, and environmental aspects and sector-specific needs. Mr. Lugmayr emphasized the need to train several stakeholders to develop environmentally friendly supply chains that minimize negative impacts. Among the difficulties, Mr. Lugmayr noted in skill development was the complexity of integrating multiple stakeholders and building platforms involving public sector companies and upstream and downstream businesses. He highlighted the importance of green skills, new technologies for sustainable businesses, and the need for flexible frameworks for countries, particularly SIDS and LDCs.

Mr. Joni Musabayana highlighted the importance of dialogue among employers, workers, and governments on worker well-being. He advocated new regulations for assessing the effectiveness of responsible business conduct, including social and environmental well-being, beyond financial measures.

Session B10: Preparing Disaster Response Supply Chains in Small Island Developing States (SIDS): The Role of Data-Driven Supply Chains

Recording link: [Preparing data-driven disaster response supply chains in Small Island Developing States \(SIDS\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

GSCF website: [Preparing disaster response supply chains in Small Island Developing States: The role of data-driven supply chains | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: World Food Programme (WFP)

Speakers:

- Regis Chapman, Representative and Country Director, World Food Programme (WFP) Caribbean Multi-Country Office
- Michelle Forbes, Director, National Emergency Management Organization (NEMO), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.
- Jane Han, Humanitarian Logistics and Supply Chain Specialist, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)
- Elizabeth Riley, Executive Director, Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)

The session focused on the critical importance of efficient supply chains for disaster response in SIDS, which face unique challenges due to their isolation, limited infrastructure, and heightened climate risks. Organized by the WFP and CDEMA, the panel brought together key stakeholders to discuss the transformative potential of data-driven strategies in enhancing disaster preparedness and response capabilities.



The panel emphasized the necessity of incorporating data analytics into supply chain management to ensure the timely and efficient delivery of goods and services during disasters. Real-time data can significantly improve decision-making processes, enabling quicker and more targeted responses to crises.

Representatives from NEMO, CDEMA and WFP shared practical cases where technology-led initiatives have improved disaster response. These examples illustrated the benefits of data visibility and data sharing among stakeholders involved in disaster preparedness and response.

The session highlighted the importance of collaboration between international organizations, local governments, and other stakeholders. Strengthening partnerships can lead to more cohesive disaster response strategies, leveraging each entity's strengths and resources.

Investing in capacity building and training for local disaster management teams was identified as crucial. Equipping local teams with the necessary skills and knowledge to utilize data-driven tools enhances disaster response capabilities in SIDS.

The panel discussed a framework for states to improve their disaster preparedness and response through enhanced supply chain data visibility through CLS. This includes setting up robust data collection and management systems, ensuring data interoperability among agencies, and developing standard operating procedures for data usage in disaster scenarios.

Recommendations:

1. SIDS should invest in integrated data systems that can aggregate information from multiple sources, providing a comprehensive view of supply chain operations during disasters. CLS is a key enabler of this objective.
2. Encourage regional cooperation among Caribbean states to share best practices, resources, and data, creating a unified approach to disaster management and working with different actors across the supply chain to understand the unique data needs at multiple levels.
3. Establish continuous learning programs and workshops for disaster response teams focused on the latest supply chain technologies and data management techniques.
4. Seek support from international organizations to access technical expertise, funding, and innovative solutions for improving disaster response supply chains.
5. Create and regularly update contingency plans incorporating data-driven insights, ensuring readiness for various disaster scenarios.

By focusing on these outcomes and recommendations, the session aimed to inspire actionable steps towards more resilient and responsive disaster management systems in SIDS, leveraging the power of data to save lives and reduce the impact of disasters.

Session B11: Implementing Emerging Technologies in Global Supply Chains

Recording link: [Implementing emerging technologies in global supply chains \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [Implementing emerging technologies in global supply chains | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/gscf)



Organizer: UNCTAD

Speakers:

- Moderator – Arántzazu Sánchez, Economic Affairs Officer, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Cristina Martín, Founder and CEO, USYNCRO
- Khalid Hasan Ali Al Marzooqi, Director, Development and Strategic Planning Division, United Arab Emirates (UAE) Customs, Abu Dhabi
- Rommel Edwards, Manager, Digital Innovation and Development Department, Barbados Port Inc. (BPI)

Moderator Ms. Arántzazu Sánchez opened the session by promising the large audience a hands-on inspirational demonstration of tangible supply chain-related tools, built on emerging technologies. She explained that she had been chosen to organize this session because earlier in 2024, she had organized and delivered the first UN course on [The Use of Blockchain for Trade Facilitation](#).

In her opening statement, she highlighted that the need for efficient, cost-effective delivery of goods across the globe has never been greater. Before giving the floor to the first speaker, she asserted that digitalization, automation and the use of emerging technologies such as blockchain, Artificial Intelligence and the Internet of Things offer promising solutions to enhance global value chain efficiency.

Ms. Cristina Martín, awarded with UNCTAD's Supply Chain Innovation Award 2024 (Private Sector Award), presented how USYNCRO has leveraged blockchain and artificial intelligence to create digital corridors and provide visibility and trust to those involved in international trade. USYNCRO is a multimodal solution (land, sea, air, and space) to coordinate all actors in the supply chain and digitize the documentation and data associated with a shipment of goods. Authorities, carriers, shippers, freight forwarders, and other agents and services come together in an interoperable environment with a commitment to collaboration and transparency that achieves a more agile and sustainable logistics management.

The tool is being used within European countries and between Europe and Latin America and is looking to expand to other regions.

Mr. Khalid Hasan Ali Al Marzooqi presented the [Abu Dhabi Customs Smart Classification Tool](#). Launched in October 2023, this tool is an advanced AI-powered search engine designed to help users accurately and efficiently determine the correct HS code for goods they wish to import or export. This tool supports searches by commercial description, GTIN, and CAS Number, and provides details on applicable duties, taxes, explanatory notes, and restrictions. It aims to reduce classification errors, enhance revenue collection, improve the quality of foreign trade statistics, and build trust with the trading community. Customers can access the tool through Abu Dhabi Government digital services platform (TAMM) or via its Single Window for trade (ATLP).

Mr. Rommel Edwards presented the first version of the nationally developed Barbados Port Community System, set to be completed by the end of 2024. The tool enables online payments and cargo tracking, with the standout feature being the Maritime Single Window (MSW). Guided by IMO standards, the MSW revolutionizes ship arrival, stay, and departure by eliminating paperwork. This digital hub streamlines data submission, allowing vessels to be cleared 24 hours in advance for swift cargo and passenger handling. Utilizing emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, Blockchain, Internet of Things, and Data



Analytics, the MSW ensures seamless, informed decision-making and transforms virtual clearance into a practical reality.

The tools ignited the interest of the audience who raised several follow up questions. In fact, several users were eager to even find out if the tools were available for sale.

Session B12: Supply Chain Innovation Challenge – What comes next for Supply Chains?

Recording link: [Supply Chain Innovation Challenge: What next for supply chains? \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [Supply Chain Innovation Challenge: What next for supply chains? | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/gscf/...)

Organizer: UNCTAD

Speakers:

- Moderator – Maria Bolotnikov, Trade Facilitation Consultant, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Pamela Ugaz, Economic Affairs Officer, UNCTAD
- Millie Ogden, Founder and CEO, 3Link
- Stefanie Sohm, Advisor, Transport and Climate, Kuehne Climate Center (KCC)
- Tadiwanashe Mutibura, Winner of the First Innovation Challenge
- Cristina Martín, Founder and CEO, USYNCRO and Winner of the First Innovation Challenge – Private Sector Award
- Eranda Kotelawala, CEO, Solomon Islands Port Authority (SIPA)
- Ines Nastali, Senior Maritime Data Expert, S&P Global Market Intelligence, S&P Global

Online presentation of the six finalists:

[Millie Ogden: Smart Ports 5G Technology and Renewal Energy - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

[Cristina Martín: USYNCRO, a Blockchain & AI platform to impulse Digital Logistics Corridors \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

[Tadiwanashe Mutibura: Solar-powered locker-sized booths for small-scale cross-border traders - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

[Sophie Punte - LifeLines: Empowering local communities through supply chain resilience - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

[Johannes Bochdalofsky: Alternative fuels for the maritime sector based on desert-land farmed seaweed \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

[Gadi Benmoshe and Marianna Levtoy: Smart containers supporting supply chain sustainability efforts \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

This session gave 4 of the 6 finalists of the first Supply Chain Innovation Challenge organized by UNCTAD a platform to present their innovations aimed at making supply chains greener, more resilient, and more



efficient. Sector experts accompanied the four finalists to help them further enhance and develop their projects.

Ms. Millie Ogden presented her proposal: “Smart Ports 5G Technology and Renewable Energy”. She mentioned that Vanuatu has the potential to become the first Small Island Developing State to implement 5G Digitalization in its ports and produce renewable geothermal energy, allowing the region to reach a net-zero capacity. The problems are global, but the solutions are local. Her proposal aims to bring 5G Digitalization to ports in Vanuatu by 2025: this is low latency, Open RAN technology that was not available in the region before and is less expensive than a 4G system update.

Ms. Stefanie Sohm presented Ms. Sophie Punte’s project, “Life-Links,” aimed at empowering local communities through supply chain resilience and ensuring stakeholders don’t drop out of international value chains. The realization is that trade represents 62 per cent of the world’s GDP, and climate change has enormous disruptive effects on supply chain resilience. To ensure resilience, Ms. Sophie Punte offers to leverage the interests of all the various stakeholders participating in these long and fragmented supply chains to ensure that they keep running. The idea is to assess the climate risk on the supply chain, identify the weakest links and which responses can make it stronger, and create links with partners to share costs and benefits in implementing new solutions. This solution benefits all stakeholders as it takes everyone’s interests into account, which is what ensures supply chain resilience.

Ms. Tadiwanashe Mutibura, the winner of UNCTAD’s Innovation Challenge, presented a solution to make trade seamless for small cross-border traders. Her vision is to create solar-powered booth lockers situated at the border between Zimbabwe and South Africa to reduce the level of discrimination that women face when they trade goods. On average, 70 per cent of women facilitate transactions with goods such as clothing, snacks, fruits, vegetables, etc. Creating 1x1 meter lockers would allow small-cross border traders to deposit their goods and have them scanned for data collection. An ATM-like screen on the side would avoid literacy issues and allow small-cross border traders to select icons of what they are transporting, allowing duty costs to be calculated, creating predictability, reducing corruption, and facilitating the transport of goods. These lockers would be solar powered, reducing the burden on the electric national grids, and the lockers would be produced from ex-Japanese vehicles that can be remolded to reduce carbon emissions. This innovation encourages and empowers the local population.

Ms. Cristina Martín, winner of UNCTAD’s Innovation Challenge (private sector award), reviewed her firm USYNCR0’s role in synchronizing the information from various stakeholders working in the logistics sector, curtailing the inefficiencies that plague supply chains today. She mentioned that 20 per cent of trade costs are due to this lack of synchronicity. Her Blockchain platform aims to reduce the costs of transactions, the time spent per shipment, and the quantity of paper used and can be implemented by both the private and the public sectors. Blockchain and its features ensure transparency, traceability, and automatization, allowing interoperability between existing platforms. She offered various examples of how her company’s digital corridors have been successfully implemented on projects such as humanitarian digital corridors during the Turkish earthquake in 2023, pharma products corridors, Cargo X, etc. Her main objective is to achieve greater sustainability through digitalization and by including all stakeholders.

All four speakers acknowledged, however, that their innovative solutions require funds to be properly implemented. Indeed, digitalization and great ideas can only be fully achieved through a collaborative approach. The panel concluded with a brainstorming session on what topic the next Supply Chain Innovation Challenge could focus on. Some proposals were offered that were linked to labor conditions in supply chains.



Session C1: Towards Adaptable Single Windows for International Trade – A SIDS Perspective

Recording link: [\(72\) Towards adaptable Single Windows for international trade: Small Island Developing States perspective - YouTube](#)

GSCF website: [Towards adaptable Single Windows for international trade - A SIDS perspective | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: UNCTAD

Speakers:

- Moderator – Patricia Francis, Chairperson, Trade Facilitation Task Force (TF2), Jamaica
- Ryan Straughn, Minister of Finance, Barbados
- Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Owen Holder, Comptroller of Customs, Customs and Excise Department, Barbados

This session looked at the digital transformation efforts of SIDS in establishing a single window environment for international trade as mandated by the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation. The session provided an insightful overview and perspective on the pragmatic approach utilized to simplify requirements, providing a more transparent and predictable environment, and reducing overall time and costs.

Mr. Ryan Straughn described how the Barbados Ministry of Finance provided essential support and sponsorship to the Customs and Excise Department to advance the customs automation agenda. The initiative aimed to reduce critical inefficiencies and minimize reliance on paper-driven processes. This timely decision enabled Barbados to navigate the pandemic by offering online tools to facilitate trade during that challenging period. Although Barbados is in the early stages of setting up the Single Window for Trade, the Government of Barbados expects the same level of digital transformation to occur in other participating government agencies responsible for regulating the importation and exportation of goods.

Ms. Shamika Sirimanne provided insights into current and future initiatives planned by UNCTAD for member states. She emphasized the importance of leadership in implementing complex reforms such as the Single Window, which necessitates a Whole-of-Government approach. Such an approach is difficult. Coordination efforts and collaboration require commitment and political will under strong leadership.

Ms. Sirimanne highlighted that the ASYCUDA Programme, a technology transfer initiative, partners with countries to support their reform and modernization efforts to digitalize international trade. This program has acted as a catalyst for compliance, assisting over 100 countries in their customs automation initiatives by providing digital solutions. ASYCUDA has so far helped 13 member States with the establishment of trade single windows. One of UNCTAD's most recent publications provides a comprehensive roadmap to building a single window that is aligned with international standards and best practices that countries can use to plan/design these reform endeavours.

Mr. Owen Holder emphasized the importance of digitalization in achieving the desired level of trade facilitation for the trading community. Mr. Holder outlined the strategic actions taken by the Department to advance this goal. A key initiative was partnering with BPI to develop an integrated electronic – end-to-



end process, linking the ASYCUDA and BPI systems for paperless and contactless goods clearance. Another significant policy decision involved engaging other relevant government agencies at the operational level, ensuring their active participation in the ASYCUDA system for the release of goods. This approach was complemented by enforcement and risk management actions to maintain appropriate controls and reduce bottlenecks. As a result of these policies and procedural changes, Barbados Customs now delivers 80 per cent of cargo through a green lane without pre-clearance intervention.

All panellists agreed that e-commerce is a rapidly growing business. The increase in volume presents additional challenges and threats to customs and regulatory agencies that require attention and adequate automation. However, this situation also provides an opportunity for MSMEs to contribute to the economy, leverage e-commerce capabilities, and empower regional participants to use the global supply chain effectively. By leveraging the strategic advantage of data intelligence, countries can improve their understanding of trade patterns, enhance their export potential, and become more competitive.

The panel also acknowledged the importance of private sector support and active participation in advancing initiatives and ensuring their voices are heard. SIDS need to build economic resilience within their communities and households. There is significant potential for building partnerships and enhancing both intra- and inter-regional cooperation.

During the Q&A session, audience members raised questions about the boundaries of various digital solutions implemented by countries, such as customs systems, maritime single windows, port community systems, and trade single windows. Additionally, there was a question regarding UNCTAD's efforts to maintain the integrity and security of the ASYCUDA source code provided to member states.

Session C2: Towards Adaptable Single Windows for International Trade – A SIDS Perspective

Recording link: [\(72\) Towards adaptable Single Windows for international trade: Small Island Developing States perspective - YouTube](#)

GSCF website: [Towards adaptable Single Windows for international trade - A SIDS perspective | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: UNCTAD

Speakers:

- Moderator – Patricia Francis, Chairperson, Trade Facilitation Task Force (TF2), Jamaica
- Andre Williams, Chief Information Officer, Jamaica Customs Agency
- José Luis Maradiaga, Deputy Director-General of Customs, Government of El Salvador
- Stanley Trief, Manager, Vanuatu Electronic Single Window (VeSW), Vanuatu Department of Customs and Inland Revenue
- Özlem Soysanli, Senior Technical Officer, World Customs Organization (WCO)
- Javier Garcia, Customs Programme Manager, Universal Postal Union (UPU)

Practitioners from various countries shared their experiences in establishing a single-window environment



for international trade. Additionally, experts from intergovernmental organizations involved in similar initiatives provided advice and recommendations.

The Deputy Director General of El Salvador Customs shared the initiatives the Government of El Salvador (GoES) has been working on to enhance trade facilitation. A key priority of the reform has been significant investments in physical infrastructure and technology to ensure adequate service at various border crossings. As part of El Salvador's integration efforts with neighbouring countries, customs procedures were improved by introducing additional digital services in ASYCUDA and launching pre-clearance of shipments at all ports of entry, aiming to reduce costs and expedite cargo delivery. The trade single window, operated by the Central Bank, besides automating regulatory requirements, paved the way for greater inter-governmental cooperation. Further enhancements and integration within Customs are expected.

Mr. Andre Williams shared the key attributes employed in building and deploying the digital services of the Jamaica Single Window for Trade. This system now offers digitalization for 12 government agencies, covering 80 per cent of regulatory approvals for imports and exports. Mr. Williams highlighted the tangible benefits and results achieved due to the policy changes in automating customs and extending these efforts to cross-border agencies. Similarly, integration with terminal operators has extended services to port logistics. As a result, customs revenue collection has increased by approximately 200 per cent, and costs have significantly decreased by eliminating six forms previously used by customs. The cost savings have sufficiently covered the investment in the technology implemented by Jamaica Customs. Mr. Williams noted that the simplicity of trade, accurate information for all partners, increased compliance, and a transparent and predictable environment summarize the positive impact of Jamaica's digital transformation in partnership with the ASYCUDA Programme.

Mr. Stanley Trief provided a synopsis of their digital transformation journey, which followed a three-phase approach. Initially, it focused on automating customs procedures with ASYCUDA World, followed by setting up a trade single window with an initial group of seven cross-border agencies. Mr. Trief explained that they are now in the third phase, incorporating five more government agencies into their single window. He highlighted that managing change has been challenging, especially since digitalization was not a priority for the onboard government agencies. Nevertheless, Vanuatu has experienced positive results, including reduced clearance times and an impressive 300 per cent increase in revenue collection. Given these results, it is anticipated that agencies will be more supportive and cooperative in joining the trade single window at this stage.

Ms. Ozlem Soysanli shared the WCO's experience and the support they provide members to implement single window environments. She elaborated on the definition of a single window and introduced the cornerstone tool provided by the organization, the WCO Single Window Compendium. This practical guide outlines best practices and recommendations for practitioners, including strategic considerations and an in-depth exploration of the standards and practices. Since its publication in 2017, the Compendium is now being updated to reflect technological advancements and the evolving landscape of global trade, emphasizing interoperability and data harmonization for seamless data exchange. Ms. Soysanli concluded by highlighting critical success factors, main challenges, and other recommendations for this complex solution. She recognized the ongoing cooperation between WCO and UNCTAD, which leverages the strengths and expertise of each organization to create a powerful synergy that benefits member states.

The final panellist, Mr. Javier Garcia, described the efforts to assist countries with present challenges in e-commerce through the postal stream. He emphasized the benefits of interfacing ASYCUDA with UPU's Customs Declaration System as part of the single-window environment. Mr. Garcia underscored the



advantages of this automated data exchange, utilizing postal supply chain data, and pre-arrival processing capabilities. These efforts offer customs a simplified declaration process for postal items, allowing for pre-categorization and expedited release upon arrival. He also stressed the importance of having an adequate regulatory framework in place, including a data-sharing agreement, established data exchange protocols, and agreed-upon operating procedures to achieve the expected benefits.

Session C3: Towards Sustainable, Intelligent, and Connected Single Windows

Recording link: [Towards sustainable, intelligent and connected Single Windows \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [Towards sustainable, intelligent, and connected Single Windows | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/gscf/towards-sustainable-intelligent-and-connected-single-windows)

Organizer: Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Krista Lucenti, Regional Coordinator, Caribbean, Trade and Investment Division, Inter-American Development Bank (IDB)
- Joseph Nehme, International consultant, IDB
- Teresa Mera, Vice-Minister of Trade, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (MINCETUR), Peru
- Stephen Rodríguez, Single Window Coordinator, Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI), Trinidad and Tobago

This session brought together experts to discuss the transformative impact of trade single windows on regional trade efficiency and economic growth in the Caribbean. The speakers shared experiences from their countries, providing concrete data and highlighting achievements in implementing single windows.

Ms. Krista Lucenti noted the significant cost and time savings associated with trade single windows, citing Peru, Uruguay, and Costa Rica. The Peruvian government estimates a \$40 million annual savings, Uruguay saves \$18 per process, and Costa Rica saves \$10 million annually. She stated that in Peru, the time needed for approvals dropped from 20 hours in 2014 to 10 hours in 2024. Ms. Lucenti noted that while platforms have innovated and added services, they face financial and human resource constraints and tensions.

Mr. Joseph Nehme talked about the increased complexity of trade rules, higher operational costs for countries, and the challenges posed by new technologies. He pointed out that SMEs in Latin America and the Caribbean have more difficulties exporting while maintaining operations. Mr. Nehme said that technologies can enable single windows by automating data collecting and enhancing openness, which helps fight corruption. He highlighted how artificial intelligence forecasts demand and helps supply chains allocate resources most effectively. Mr. Nehme also stressed the importance of creating future-oriented single-window projects and supporting public-private partnerships (PPPs). He stated the need to harmonize data, increase systems' resilience, promote user-centric designs, and ensure private sector representatives' participation in governance bodies. Mr. Nehme concluded by advocating for regional cooperation and continuous development of digital talent.



Ms. Teresa Mera discussed Peru's experience with its trade single window, which has been operational for 13 years. She stated that Peru's exports increased from \$7 billion in 2001 to \$64 billion in 2023, requiring further tools to streamline trade operations. Ms. Mera highlighted significant developments such as the e-phyto platform for digital phytosanitary certificates, paperless trade interoperability with the Pacific Alliance, and the Peru Marketplace, which enables MSMEs to showcase their products and connect with foreign buyers. She presented Peru's single window risk-management system, which uses artificial intelligence to identify patterns and manage authorizations expediting procedures. Ms. Mera noted that the single window is an ongoing process meant to improve trade operations' transparency and efficiency through constant improvement.

Mr. Stephen Rodríguez spoke on Trinidad and Tobago's single window, TTBizLink, launched in 2009, which currently spans more than 40 trade and business services across several ministries and agencies. He emphasized recent improvements in agility, harmonization, user ease, and processing efficiency. Mr. Rodríguez highlighted the importance of reducing information gaps and enhancing system navigation, citing the difficulties of transitioning from paper-based to electronic systems. In addition, he suggested the integration of secure electronic documents and online payment options to resolve manual processing and fraud issues. Mr. Rodríguez outlined future ideas like integrated checklists and real-time processing to improve user experience.

The session concluded with an emphasis on the importance of trade single windows in improving regional connectivity and economic growth. The importance of public-private collaboration, continuous innovation, and incorporating new technologies to improve trade efficiency and transparency was stressed. The session underscored the importance of ongoing investment in infrastructure, policy reform, and digital talent development to ensure the success and sustainability of single window systems in the Caribbean region.

Session C4: What Would the World Be Like Without Shipping?

Recording link: [What would the world be like without shipping? \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [What would the world be like without shipping? | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/gscf/...)

Organizers: UNCTAD and World Maritime University (WMU)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Jan Hoffmann, Head, Trade Logistics Branch, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- George Theocharidis, Professor of Maritime Law and Policy, World Maritime University (WMU)
- Onno Hoffmeister, Project Officer, Transport Section, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Rohan Masakarola, Founder and CEO, Shippers' Academy International (SAC)
- Nigel Pusey, CEO, Container Trade Statistics Ltd. (CTS)
- Helio Vicente, Director, Employment Affairs, International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)
- Gina Panayiotou, Founder and CEO, Oceans Arena
- Maximilian Weidenhammer, Consultant, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)



How would our world be like if all commercial ships would, in the twinkling of an eye, stop to operate? This thrilling question was discussed during this session, co-hosted by UNCTAD and the World Maritime University. The moderator, Mr. Jan Hoffmann lead the discussion amongst the panellists, which included speakers from academia, shipping and container trade experts, shipowner representatives, and ESG leaders. The discussion was later joined by the attendees from the expert audience of about 45 professionals.

The session started with two keynote presentations, which pointed out the importance of containerized goods in trade and the overall global dependence on ship trade. It was highlighted that with the absence of container trade alone, 8.5 per cent of the world trade would stop. Particularly, the importance of maritime shipping to the global economy was emphasized, but the public often overlooked it. Supported by a visualization of the vast network of seaports connected through shipping lanes, it was showcased how integral shipping is to global supply chains and the transportation of goods worldwide. A significant majority of goods, i.e., 70 per cent by value and 80 per cent by volume, are transported by sea.

With these figures in mind, it became obvious that an unexpected stoppage of global maritime trade would cause severe trade implications globally. The session underscored the critical reliance of the Global South on maritime trade, with a substantial portion of their exports and imports being conducted by sea, particularly in Asia. This finding got support from the Trade and Transport Dataset, jointly developed by UNCTAD and the World Bank and launched during the Global Supply Chain Forum. Additional references to UNCTAD data were used to illustrate the dominance of maritime shipping in global food imports, noting that more than half of these imports arrive by sea, with some regions like Oceania being especially dependent on this mode of transport.

Moreover, the session highlighted the specific vulnerabilities of developing countries. Predominantly low-income, islanded, and landlocked nations would face immediate challenges without maritime trade due to the lack of affordable alternatives or alternatives at all. Particularly today, when energy security is a challenge alone, the strategic importance of maritime shipping for fuel imports needs to be put more in the foreground. Most global fuel imports are arriving by sea (89 per cent). The panellists agreed that trade disruptions, in this case the hypothetical stoppage of all ships, would put fuel supply chains at risk of collapsing.

Mr. Maximilian Weidenhammer addressed the environmental impact of shipping by mentioning the IMO's commitment to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. This transition to cleaner energy sources, including the transportation of green fuels like methanol and ammonia, positions shipping as a crucial player in the global energy transition. Without maritime shipping, the transition away from fossil-based fuels would be significantly delayed, and meeting the 2050 Paris climate goal would likely become impossible.

The session concluded by pointing out the trade disruptions that only happened in the last decade, including the Suez Canal blockage by the Ever Given, the Panama Canal drought, and the COVID-19 crisis. All these came with implications for the shipping trade and provided a foretaste of what would be to come if global shipping came to a halt. Mr. Rohan Masakarola mentioned that, in Sri Lanka particularly, the effects of no ships arriving in ports led to social unrest and a significant rise in poverty. Ms. Gina Panayiotou, supported by Mr. Nigel Pusey, added that the ripple effects from such events would affect every industry (auto, pharma, chemicals, e-commerce, etc.) and cause severe supply shortages. Finally, the risk of a potential CO₂ emission increase induced by the potential modal shift was discussed, which would have the worst climate effects.



Eventually, Mr. Jan Hoffmann ended the session by concluding that the world as we know it today would simply not work without shipping – but added that a world that is a little less shipping-dependent could be a more sustainable way for all of us towards the future.

Session C5: Trade in Services for Economic Diversification: Opportunities and Challenges for the Caribbean Community Region

Recording link: [Trade in services for economic diversification: The Caribbean Community region \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [Trade in services for economic diversification: Opportunities and challenges for the Caribbean Community region | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/en/press/2024/04/Trade-in-services-for-economic-diversification-Opportunities-and-challenges-for-the-Caribbean-Community-region)

Organizers: UNCTAD, Caribbean Community (CARICOM), Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) and United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Jan Yves Rémy, Director, Shridath Ramphal Centre for International Trade Law, Policy and Services, University of West Indies (UWI)
- Rebeca Grynspan, Secretary-General, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Chad Blackman, Minister of Economic Affairs and Investment, Barbados
- Chantal Ononaiwu, Director, External Trade, Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Secretariat
- Ricardo James, Head, Trade Policy Unit, Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) Commission
- Sheldon Mc Lean, Coordinator, Economic Development Unit, Sub-Regional Headquarters for the Caribbean, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC)

The session aimed to identify opportunities and challenges in leveraging trade in services, particularly knowledge-intensive ones, to transform economies through diversification.

Services are integral to various sectors, providing essential inputs and value. They are crucial for physical and digital infrastructure, thereby facilitating trade and economic transformation. Knowledge-intensive services—such as financial services, telecommunications, and information services—are critical for economic diversification. They drive innovation and growth.

Services trade has outpaced goods trade, particularly in developing countries. Digitalization has significantly enhanced the tradability of services, opening new opportunities. There are encouraging examples where Caribbean nations, despite their geographical challenges, have leveraged digitalization to excel in creative services, notably music, contributing significantly to their economies. Digitally deliverable services account for a considerably smaller share of regional services exports. There is significant scope to harness the opportunities brought about by digitalization. To do so would require bridging the digital infrastructure and skills gap, innovative financing, and improving the regulatory framework, regional and international cooperation.



The CARICOM Treaty Framework emphasizes the essential role of the services sector in economic development in CARICOM member states. It emphasizes increasing the volume, value, and diversity of traded services, prioritizing infrastructural, capacity-enhancing, competitiveness-boosting, and knowledge-based services. In this context, CARICOM has prioritized seven services sub-sectors, namely, professional services, postal and courier services, tourism, cultural and entertainment, sports, education, and health and wellness. While these strategies are being developed and implemented, there is a strong focus on ICT and financial services due to their critical importance for economic development. Under way are efforts to create a single Caribbean ICT space and develop a financial services market, addressing regulatory harmonization, and improving data collection and statistical systems to support evidence-based policymaking and economic transformation. A good practice example is the efforts to facilitate the efficient movement of professionals within the region through a single registration system, aiming to simplify and harmonize regulatory and administrative procedures across member states.

To support policy making in the area of trade in services, the UNCTAD launched a project, on the margins of the Global Supply Chain Forum, in collaboration with ECLAC, CARICOM, and OECS, to enhance data collection and policymaking capacities in the Caribbean. Seven countries are involved in this initiative, which builds on ongoing efforts by CARICOM and OECS.

The Caribbean's services sector, particularly tourism, plays a crucial role in the economy. Diversification into ICT, financial services, and other knowledge-based sectors is vital for sustainable growth. The ongoing efforts to implement regional strategies and develop priority sub-sectors are essential steps toward a more resilient and diversified economy.

Session C6: First China Council for the Promotion of International Trade Supply Chain Promotion Report Release

Recording link: [First China Council for the promotion of international trade supply chain promotion report release \(youtube.com\)](#)

GSCF website: [First China Council for the promotion of international trade supply chain promotion report release | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT)

Speakers:

- Ren Hongbin, Chairman, China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT)
- Yan Xiusheng, Ambassador of China to Barbados
- Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Zhao Ping, President, CCPIT Academy
- Ma Li, Vice President, China International Exhibition Center Group (CIEC)
- Yu Huijiao, Founder and Chairman, YTO Express Group



Global supply chains increasingly assume the attributes of a public good. The CCPIT drafted the *Global Supply Chain Promotion Report*, which was the flagship report for the first China International Supply Chain Expo in late 2023 and was launched in English during the Global Supply Chain Forum.

Mr. Ren Hongbin stated that maintaining the resilience and stability of the global industrial and global supply chains is an important safeguard for promoting global economic growth. Consolidating and strengthening global supply chain cooperation is a matter of interest and urgent expectation for all parties. China's innovative initiative to hold the CISCE is to respond to the call of the times and create an international platform that promotes communication, deepens cooperation, and seeks common development.

Mr. Yan Xiusheng stated that the CISCE has provided a high-end platform for promoting trade and investment cooperation between Chinese and Barbados enterprises. China will further promote a series of diversified projects to enhance China-Barbados cooperation, setting a new benchmark for the friendship between the two countries.

Ms. Shamika N. Sirimanne explained that while trade has grown four-fold in the past 23 years with a bigger integration of developing countries on the international scene, huge technological advances (e.g., e-commerce), and important innovations (e.g., containerships), there was no collective effort to make supply chains more resilient. It is after COVID-19 and with the onset of various other disruptions that the international community realized that to ensure that trade keeps on growing, more attention should be given to supply chains. She mentioned five concrete actions of what needs to be done and promoted: embrace digitalization and automation in a fast-paced world; invest in infrastructures such as ports; foster diversification of supply chains and reinforce trade agreements to mitigate risks and reduce dependencies (e.g. 10 per cent in resilience can lead to a 30 per cent reduction in disruptions); invest in green and alternative fuels; and encourage international cooperation among countries and the private sector which has been a success during the first CISCE.

Ms. Zhao Ping introduced the first Global Supply Chain Promotion Report. The report surveyed over 526 enterprises from China and abroad, features the opinions of scholars, experts, international and local trends in a quantitative and analytical way. The chapters focus on the importance of global supply chain promotion; the trend that supply chains are moving towards regionalization, diversification, digitalization, and sustainability; that constructing resilient supply chains requires five aspects: infrastructure connectivity, multilateral and bilateral rules, relevant policies of major economies, technological advances, and proper financial services; two other chapters focus on a Chinese study case and policy recommendations for safety, stability and smoothness of supply chains.

Mr. Ma Li gave an overview of the 2nd edition of the CISCE that will be held in Beijing between 26th-30th November 2024. The added value of this Expo is that companies can enter the supply chains of other companies or find better suppliers instead of only focusing on making a trade value. The Expo in 2024 will focus on manufacturing, clean energy, smart vehicles, digital technologies, healthy life, green agriculture and supply chain services area. All these streams will feature a lineup of multinationals, SMEs and other stakeholders that play a key role in supply chains.

The final speaker, Mr. Yu Huijiao reminded that China is a participant, beneficiary, builder and defender of the global supply chain. His intervention focused on three points: the main objective in supply chain management is to establish efficiency to ensure people's livelihoods; supply chains must take into consideration the trade flow, capital flow, information flow and customer flow, which can be obtained by



establishing unified process and standards, integration information systems, data sharing and customs clearance; and finally in an era where supply chains are becoming intelligent, companies require to be more technologically integrated which allows to improve inventory turnover, reduce inventory backlog, create differentiation in marketing and efficiency.

Session C7-C8: Regional Connectivity and Services (Including Maritime and Air)

Recording link: [Caribbean Regional connectivity and services including maritime and air \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [Regional connectivity and services: Including maritime and air | UNCTAD](https://unctad.org/en/publications-and-publications/gscf-regional-connectivity-and-services-including-maritime-and-air.aspx)

Organizers: CARICOM Private Sector Organization (CARICOM) and Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Ian Durant, Director, Economics Department, Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)
- Anthony Ali, CEO, Goddard Entreprises Ltd.
- Garvin Medera, CEO, Caribbean Airlines
- Diane Edwards, Director, Professional Services Unit, Mona School of Business and Management
- Gavin Bovell, Lecturer, Logistics and Supply Chain Management, University of West Indies (UWI)

In this session, industry professionals identified challenges and explored potential solutions for improving regional maritime and air connectivity in the Caribbean region.

Mr. Anthony Ali emphasized the significance of reaching the 25 by 25 goal to produce 25 per cent of the food locally by 2025. Given that half of the CARICOM Single Market and the Economy (CSME) states score low on the Liner Connectivity Index (LCI), he stressed the need to invest in infrastructure. He pointed out challenges, including declining LCI in some member states, reliance on limited liner services, and inadequate break bulk capability among schooners. Mr. Ali emphasized that excess container capacities create opportunities for purpose-specific interventions. He pointed out prospects in the agro-processing and agrifood sectors, particularly in instances requiring cold chain solutions. Creating a Less-than-Containerable Service (LCL) is essential for addressing short- and medium-term maritime challenges. Mr. Ali discussed that developing an LCL service will help solve regional volume challenges. Mr. Ali also emphasized the importance of enhanced coordination among non-vessel operating companies, freight forwarders, brokers, and shippers to facilitate easier trade, particularly in digital connectivity.

Mr. Garvin Medera emphasized the importance of intra-regional connectivity. Mr. Medera pointed out Caribbean Airlines' focus on investing in smaller aircraft to increase connectivity and offer seamless travel and the rollout of a jetpack door-to-door courier service to improve logistics. He identified operational, commercial, airport, and regulatory challenges, such as ground transfers, customs processes, and the need for 24-hour operations. He emphasized the importance of collaborating with governments and private institutions to optimize taxing structures, minimum revenue guarantees, and duties, acknowledging the importance of digitalization, data collection, and streamlined regulatory frameworks. Mr. Medera recommended focusing on operational, commercial, airport, and regulatory domains to develop reliable facilities and improve connectivity. Mr. Medera also noted the need to address customs operations, improve border protection processes for cargo flow, and integrate digitalization. He touched on the need



for minimum revenue guarantees for companies investing in various member states and the need for cooperation with governments and private organizations to maximize taxing structures and duties.

Ms. Diane Edwards outlined the region's economic development possibilities and public-private collaborations. She highlighted how Jamaica's effective PPP-based port and airport privatization under concessions led to significant investments. Ms. Edwards addressed the importance of assessing standardization and regional standards, including phytosanitary standards, to facilitate trade. She emphasized the need for maritime and aircraft services training, the significance of Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for regulatory efficiency, and the potential of air cargo services and e-commerce growth as enablers for SMEs to export. Ms. Edwards also recommended the establishment of a public-private sector council to create a regional action plan for logistics as a focus of economic development. She underlined the importance of trade facilitation using special economic zones and the value of allowing easier regional mobility.

Mr. Gavin Bovell highlighted the importance of private sector participation in policy development and using resources collaboratively. The challenges of the region's dependence on imports and the absence of large-scale production were emphasized. Mr. Bovell noted the need for a collective effort to overcome challenges such as inconsistent customs and border control systems and varying sanitary and phytosanitary regulations. Mr. Bovell underlined the need for technical competency development in maritime services and data-driven development. He further emphasized the importance of incorporating technology into processes and addressing regulatory restrictions on movement. Mr. Bovell also emphasized the importance of developing competencies while capitalizing on international opportunities and urged governments to cooperate and enforce commercial viability and sustainability policies.

Session C9: The Role of Young people in Supply Chains

Recording link: [\(72\) The role of young people in supply chains - YouTube](#)

GSCF website: [The role of young people in supply chains | UNCTAD](#)

Organizers: UNCTAD, University of West Indies (UWI) and LEARN Logistics gGmbH by Kühne Foundation

Speakers:

- Moderator – Ramatu Abdulkadir, Senior Research Associate, LEARN Logistics gGmbH by Kühne Foundation
- Ade O'Neal, University of West Indies Alumnus and Assistant Manager Business Development, Barbados Port Inc. (BPI)
- Maria Bolotnikov, Trade Facilitation Consultant, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Juan Salamanca Lopez, Master's student, Supply Chain Management, Universidad de Los Andes, Colombia
- Natnael Getachew Muluye, Student, Logistics and Supply Chain Management, Addis Ababa University, Ethiopia



Experts:

- Jan Yves Rémy, Director, Shridath Ramphal Centre for International Trade Law, Policy and Services, University of West Indies (UWI)
- Lazar Ristic, Trade Facilitation Consultant, UNCTAD
- Namrata Nadkarni, Founder and CEO, Intent Communications Ltd.
- Miriama Latianara, Legal Officer, Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji

The panel discussion underscored the significance of technology, private sector engagement, supply chain education, and worker rights in fostering the participation of young people in supply chains. The session featured a diverse group of young individuals, including undergraduate and postgraduate students, public sector representatives, and private sector professionals.

The session aimed to address the obstacles impeding youth participation in supply chains. Speakers emphasized the importance of financing and technology to enhance youth engagement and highlighted the need for broader stakeholder involvement and public-private partnerships to tackle youth inclusion challenges in supply chains.

The panellists emphasized the advantages of employing technology platforms to improve young professionals' access to opportunities, foster connections with industry stakeholders, and enhance their skills. These platforms promote inclusivity by eliminating geographical barriers, ensuring equal access to information, and creating a fair playing field for young people to succeed in the supply chain industry.

The challenges young people face in integrating technology and innovation in supply chains were addressed, including limited access to technology and digital literacy gaps. The need for investment in digital skills training, infrastructure development, and fostering an enabling environment for innovation and collaboration was emphasized. The importance of involving young people by establishing idea banks and feasibility laboratories to identify and address problems, and collaborating to develop solutions was stressed. The session emphasized the need for young people to establish a network of professionals for knowledge-sharing, connecting local initiatives to achieve global impact, and creating youth representation boards for inclusive decision-making. Some of the challenges highlighted include climate change, limited access to quality education, lack of access to technology, and resistance to change. The panellists stressed shifting the academic paradigm from theory to a practical, multidisciplinary approach.

Collaboration between businesses, the government, and academia is essential in addressing complex issues. Partnerships between the public and private sectors provide job prospects, internships, mentorship, and training programmes for young workers. Enhancing logistics and supply chain management education in universities prepares students for the workforce. Specialized training courses in niche areas also engage young professionals in the industry.

The session's expert recommendations propose a collaborative, comprehensive, and proactive approach among governments, the private sector, and academia to nurture innovation and sustainability in the supply chain industry.



Session C10: Advancing Economic Resilience for Caribbean Developing States – Innovating the Port Community System

GSCF website: [Advancing economic resilience for Caribbean Developing States — Innovating the Port Community System | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: Barbados Port Inc.

Speakers:

- Karl Branch, Divisional Manager, Innovation and Corporate Services, Barbados Port Inc. (BPI)

Mr. Karl Branch delivered the session. The presentation highlighted BPI's transformative journey since the change in its Board of Directors in 2018, following a new government administration. This change saw the retirement of its original vision statement and ushered in a new one: "To be the most innovative green maritime hub in the world by 2030." The session presented how this vision set the stage for a focused drive toward digital innovation and environmental stewardship.

The presentation indicated that BPI's innovative efforts have received international acclaim, winning the Navis World Innovation Inspire Awards 2022 and the 2023 American Association of Port Authorities Award of Excellence in Innovation and Technology for its in-house developed digital systems. The presentation detailed how these integrated systems are poised to significantly impact supply chain logistics and national security, emphasizing the critical role of efficient logistics in Barbados. With over 90 per cent of all consumables and raw materials entering the island via the seaport, the port's operations support both direct and indirect employment and entrepreneurial initiatives in Barbados. The cruise industry, a major revenue earner for Barbados, benefits from these innovations, enhancing visitor experience by eliminating frustrations caused by delayed disembarkation, which results from manual information capture and clearance procedures that can only commence after the vessel is berthed, owing to the reliance on physical information capture using manual forms. The session explained how the new Maritime Single Window (MSW) would facilitate the concept of pre-clearances in a multi-purpose Port, which simultaneously caters to cruise and cargo operations.

A key highlight was the demonstration of the MSW within the ongoing development of the Port Community System (PCS). In addition to cruise and cargo support, the MSW also provides valuable data to local law enforcement through a dedicated portal, supporting national security efforts. Unlike typical PCS systems, the Barbados PCS will include features for cruise management, law enforcement intelligence, and environmental controls such as vessel emissions calculations. The PCS boasts the broadest stakeholder steering committee, integrating interests from port operations, national security, financial intelligence, environmental controls, immigration, customs and both government and private sector business. This interconnected approach is designed to bolster national economic viability.

The session also demonstrated the integration of various advanced technologies such as Lloyds Maritime Intelligence, the Satellite-enabled vessel Automated Identification System (AIS), and a geographical information system (GIS) for real-time information and predictive analytics of the MSW and PCS. Efficiency is further enhanced by leveraging data from ASYCUDA (customs information) and the Joint Regional Communications Centre (regional vessel information and law enforcement intelligence).

The Barbados experience in implementing the PCS was reviewed, covering:



1. Development of the national Trade Single Window in tandem with the MSW-based PCS.
2. Implementation of supportive legislation aligning with the IMO Convention for the Facilitation of International Maritime Traffic (FAL).
3. Business process reengineering, focusing on change management and interagency collaboration.
4. Process automation and analytics derived from Big Data.
5. Integration of cybersecurity from the design phase of the PCS as opposed to the typical application of security at the end.

The presentation concluded by exploring the limitless potential for digital transformation and the creation of new business opportunities to enhance revenue generation for both government and private sectors. This drive towards innovation fosters a culture of creativity and establishes a national competitive advantage, ultimately enhancing the economic resilience of SIDS in the Caribbean. The digital innovation of the new PCS model serves as a force multiplier, helping smaller economies overcome financial constraints and minimal global consideration by larger players in the Global Supply Chain thus bolstering economic resilience by positioning them to better navigate the complexities of economies of scale.

Session C11: Pathways to Improving Intra-Regional Air Transport Connectivity in the Caribbean - Industry Perspectives

Recording link: [Improving intra-regional air transport connectivity in the Caribbean: An industry perspective \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [Pathways to improving intra-regional air transport connectivity in the Caribbean - industry perspective | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/...)

Organizer: U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Roger Nyhus, U.S. Ambassador to Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean
- Dona Regis-Prosper, Secretary-General and CEO, Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO)
- Lyndon Gardiner, Founder and Chairman, interCaribbean Airways
- Hannah Swift, Country Manager - Caribbean, Virgin Atlantic
- Isaac Solomon, President (Ag.), Caribbean Development Bank (CDB)
- Jenny Ann Urban, Managing Director, Air Charter and Maintenance, National Air Transportation Association (NATA)

This panel, organized by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), focused on the crucial role that the aviation industry plays in the Caribbean's economic development and the region's interconnectivity.

Firstly, panellists shared their perspectives on the aviation sector in the region. Ms. Dona-Regis Prosper focused on the positive outlook that by June 2024, the Caribbean would recover by 13 per cent over 2019, but that intra-regional movement was not at the origin of this recovery. Mr. Lyndon Gardiner and Ms. Hannah Swift concurred that strong connectivity exists between the Caribbean and the rest of the world



but that the regional connectivity requires more investment. Mr. Isaac Solomon stressed that air transport is a critical lever for the region's development but that it shouldn't be tackled in isolation but should be considered jointly with the digital and maritime sectors. Ms. Jenny Ann Urban explained that business aviation could increase connectivity in the region, but to allow this, it is crucial to have the required infrastructures (runways, fueling services, security facilities, etc.), relevant training, and collaboration amongst stakeholders.

Secondly, Mr. Roger Nyhus asked the panel how aviation could be enhanced. He stressed that airbridges are the lifeline of the region and address climate change issues, ensure regional security and foster economic prosperity. Ms. Prosper offered a twofold solution: that more thought-out public-private-partnerships should be created and that commercial decisions should be implemented while encouraging States to keep working on regulations and taxations to reduce prices. Mr. Solomon explained that businesses find themselves needing to build resilience and be efficient at the same time when facing inescapable issues, but that this can only be balanced if the private sector is seen as more than an equal partner and to be a trend setter. Mr. Gardiner stressed that additional airlines would increase competition and therefore positively impact the consumers. He also mentioned that certain routes are not profitable and would require more support from the government. Ms. Swift continued by explaining that despite the difficulties that airlines face, the regional scene offers fantastic opportunities for development if utilized correctly. For instance, Virgin Atlantic is aiming to achieve this through interline and cochair agreements, linking timetables with other airlines to increase flight frequency, amongst other solutions. Ms. Urban explained that one way to benefit from the opportunities is to implement harmonized regulatory schemes and to create hubs that can increase the flow in the region. Ms. Prosper concluded by explaining that to increase the influx of tourists, efforts such as multi-destination travel can be an ample opportunity if enough willpower exists to put all the sovereign countries of the region on board.

As concluding remarks, Ms. Urban mentioned that the solutions implemented must consider the advantages that businesses will have. Mr. Solomon underscored the governments' role to increase the Caribbean's interconnectivity through route rationalization and review of fiscal national policies. Ms. Swift focused on the importance of collaboration in achieving regional connectivity. She also underlined the paramount role of innovation and finding alternatives to fossil fuels which represent the main cost for airlines today. Mr. Gardiner focused on the fact that customer experience can be enhanced through innovation and technology. Ms. Prosper reminded the audience not to underestimate the power of demand and the benefits that come with it: more demand leads to more flights being served, which increases connectivity.

The panel ended with Mr. Nyhus announcing that an aviation working group had been created by the U.S. Embassy in Barbados to build relationships and continue finding solutions for the region.

Session C12: Decent work: Challenges and Opportunities Related to the Maritime Labour Convention, 2006

Recording link: [Decent work: Challenges and opportunities related to the Maritime Labour Convention of 2006 \(youtube.com\)](#)

GSCF website: [Decent work: Challenges and opportunities related to the Maritime Labour Convention of 2006 | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: International Labour Organization (ILO)



Speakers:

- Moderator – Shingo Miyake, Specialist, Labour Law and International Labour Standards, International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Fabrizio Barcellona, Coordinator, Seafarers and Inland Navigation Section, International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF)
- Helio Vicente, Director, Employment Affairs, International Chamber of Shipping (ICS)
- Gail Ann King, Director, Talent and Organization Development, Unicomer, Barbados
- Maximo Quibranza Mejia, President, World Maritime University (WMU)

This panel meeting, organized by the ILO, discussed challenges and opportunities for seafarers' living and working conditions related to the ILO's Maritime Labour Conventions, 2006 (MLC).

First, the panel discussed generally what value the MLC has added in better protecting seafarers' rights and ensuring a level playing field for shipowners worldwide. The panellists emphasized that unique features of the MLC contributed to collaboration between employers, workers, governments, and international organizations. For instance, the MLC was developed by consolidating, synthesizing, and modernizing the existing standards, and it includes a simplified amendment process based on a dedicated tripartite consultative body. These features make the MLC a dynamic instrument and enable it to meet the needs of the industry.

The panel then focused on COVID-19 and discussed challenges faced during that period and measures adopted to overcome them. The discussion highlighted the WMU's research on the impact of COVID-19 on seafarers, which identified mental health as one of the main challenges due to a prolonged period of uncertainty and fear spent onboard their ship. Other panellists shared human stories of seafarers rescuing and described how the industry and seafarers' organizations joined forces to work with the concerned government to carry out the rescue.

The panel then further focused on the cruise industry, especially in the Caribbean. Panellists noted that the Caribbean is a region with high MLC ratification in terms of the number of ratifications and gross tonnage those ratifying countries represent. It was also noted that the Caribbean is home to approximately 40 per cent of the passenger capacity of the cruise fleet worldwide. Against this background, the panel emphasized the need for serious conversation on seafarers' needs and contributions. Also emphasized was the need for stronger organization of Caribbean seafarers.

Another discussion point was women seafarers. The panel noted that while the situation has significantly improved, women seafarers represent 13.5 per cent of officers and 6.5 per cent of engineers. In this connection, the panel discussed platforms for networking offered by the IMO. The panellists also noted that the profiles of seafarers were changing, and that more exciting opportunities were available to women seafarers.

Reaction from the floor highlighted the setting of the recommended international minimum wage for seafarers, jointly set by shipowners' and seafarers' representatives at an ILO committee. It was noted as an achievement that other global industries had not yet seen. A participant also encouraged the ILO to examine and leverage opportunities the MLC would provide to strengthen gender equality.



Session D1: Third Global Forum for National Trade Facilitation Committees – Opening Session

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 2 \(22 May 2024\) – Morning \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [Third Global Forum for National Trade Facilitation Committees \(Opening Session\) | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/...)

Organizer: UNCTAD

Speakers:

- Moderator – Jan Hoffmann, Head, Trade Logistics Branch, DTL, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Lisa Cummins, Minister of Energy and Business, Barbados
- Ricardo Treviño Chapa, Deputy Secretary General, World Customs Organization (WCO)
- Jose Raúl Perales, Deputy Director, Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (GATF)
- Victoria Tuomisto, Trade Facilitation and Policy Adviser, International Trade Centre (ITC)
- Alina Monica Antoci, Senior Private Sector Specialist, World Bank Group (WBG)
- Mark Henderson, Project Manager and Trade Negotiator, World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (WTO TFAF)
- Poul Hansen, Chief, Trade Facilitation Section, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

The opening session of the third Global Forum for National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) highlighted NTFCs' crucial role in enhancing global trade facilitation, particularly in the post-COVID-19 era.

NTFCs' Vital Role: Mr. Jan Hoffmann of UNCTAD emphasized the importance of NTFCs. He highlighted that these institutional mechanisms are crucial for uniting stakeholders from customs, trade, transport, and both public and private sectors to collaborate on trade facilitation measures. Mr. Hoffmann also pointed out the importance of collaboration between organizations, as exemplified by the joint efforts of UNCTAD, the WTO, and other partners in trade facilitation.

Government's Role: Ms. Lisa Cummins from Barbados discussed the government's role as an enabler and facilitator of trade, rather than a direct trader. She stressed that government regulations should facilitate business, not hinder it, and highlighted the importance of collaboration between government, the private sector, and international agencies.

Digital innovation: Ms. Cummins also discussed Barbados' advancements in digital technology and innovation, such as the implementation of ASYCUDA World and maritime single windows, which can lead to efficiencies and new opportunities in markets like e-commerce. She called for the integration of green technology and innovation into trade processes to support the energy transition and tackle the climate crisis.

WCO's Contributions: Mr. Ricardo Treviño Chapa from the WCO underscored the organization's role in assisting members by harmonizing standards and providing capacity building. He highlighted the WCO's tools and initiatives, such as the revised Kyoto Convention and the Safe Framework of Standards, which



promote cooperation among customs, other border agencies, and the private sector. Mr. Chapa also emphasized the importance of private sector participation in trade facilitation efforts and the role of NTFCs as effective mechanisms for cooperation.

WTO's Support: Mr. Mark Henderson from the WTO shared insights on the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility's role in supporting the TFA implementation. He outlined the various panels he would be participating in during the Forum, which would explore challenges faced by NTFCs in areas such as donor coordination, humanitarian relief, and resource mobilization.

Private Sector Engagement: Mr. José Raúl Perales from GATF spoke as the voice of business and the private sector. He emphasized the shared responsibility between government authorities and the private sector in ensuring efficient and secure trade. Mr. Perales noted that the alliance works through NTFCs to bring agencies together and improve border management procedures.

Inclusive Trade Facilitation: Ms. Victoria Tuomisto from the ITC highlighted the need for trade facilitation solutions to serve not just the big players but also micro and small businesses, women traders, and small-scale traders to improve food security and engage in cross-border trade safely.

World Bank's Support: Ms. Alina Monica Antoci from the WBG discussed the Trade Facilitation Support Program, which provides technical assistance and capacity building to countries implementing the TFA. She underscored the World Bank's whole-of-government approach and the critical role of NTFCs in driving reforms at the national level.

In summary, the opening session of the third Global Forum for NTFCs underscored the pivotal role of NTFCs in trade facilitation, the necessity of collaboration among diverse stakeholders, the importance of digital innovation, and the challenges and opportunities faced by NTFCs in enhancing global supply chains.

Session D2: Successful NTFCs: Best Practices, Challenges and Opportunities

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 2 \(22 May 2024\) – Morning \(youtube.com\)](#)

GSCF website: [NTFC Session 2: Successful National Trade Facilitation Committees - Best practices, challenges and opportunities | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: Caribbean Community (CARICOM)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Michele Lowe, Senior Co-ordinator for Hemispheric and Bilateral Trade relations, Caribbean Community (CARICOM)
- Mark Henderson, Project Manager and Trade Negotiator, World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (WTO TFAF)
- Arántzazu Sánchez Belastegui, Economic Affairs Officer, Trade Facilitation Section, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Karen Mirtala Sosa Salgado, Trade Facilitation Coordinator and Negotiator of Customs Procedures and Trade Facilitation, Ministry of Economic Development, Honduras



- Alina Monica Antoci, Senior Private Sector Specialist, World Bank Group (WBG)

The session dedicated to National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) at the global Forum focused on their achievements, best practices, challenges, and opportunities.

Good Practices for NTFCs: Mr. Mark Henderson highlighted the significance of NTFCs in driving sustainable trade facilitation reforms. He outlined seven good practices identified by the WTO Committee, which are essential for the effective operation of NTFCs. These practices include high-level political support, broad participation from government ministries and the private sector, clear communication, defined goals and priorities, capacity building, and performance measurement.

Reform Tracker Tool: Ms. Arántzazu Sánchez introduced the Reform Tracker, a web-based tool designed to assist NTFCs in monitoring and managing trade facilitation reforms. The tool, launched in 2021 and enhanced in 2023, aims to improve communication and stakeholder engagement through features such as a dedicated NTFC website section, a resource page, and a monthly newsletter.

Honduras' Experience: Ms. Karen Mirtala Sosa Salgado shared Honduras' success with NTFCs, emphasizing the significant role of women and the challenges of involving the private sector. She stressed the importance of continuous training to address staff turnover and sustain trade facilitation reforms. Ms. Salgado also discussed the use of the Reform Tracker in Honduras, which has supported institutional coordination and enabled the country to achieve a 93.3 per cent implementation rate of the Trade Facilitation Agreement.

Private Sector Engagement: Ms. Alina Monica Antoci focused on the private sector's crucial role in NTFCs, the value of regional initiatives, and practical examples of NTFCs' work globally. She emphasized the need for early private sector involvement in discussions and representation from diverse interests, including SMEs and women-led firms. Ms. Antoci also addressed the challenges of building trust for data sharing among agencies, which is vital for coordinated border management.

Country-Driven Initiatives: The session underscored the importance of including gender and vulnerable groups in trade facilitation initiatives, with Eswatini's approach to drafting their Trade Facilitation Roadmap serving as a notable example.

In summary, the session provided a comprehensive overview of NTFCs' multifaceted role in trade facilitation, the challenges they encounter, and the tools and strategies that support their effectiveness. It also highlighted the ongoing need for collaboration, capacity building, and fostering trust among all stakeholders involved in trade facilitation.

Session D3: Supply Chain Disruptions – The Role and Response of NTFCs

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 2 \(22 May 2024\) – Morning \(youtube.com\)](#)

GSCF website: [NTFC Session 3: Supply chain disruptions - the role and response of National Trade Facilitation Committees | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC)

Speakers:



- Moderator – Poul Hansen, Chief, Trade Facilitation Section, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Victor Ban, Special Counsel, Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR)
- Andrea Tang, Director, Legal Services, International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations (FIATA)
- Ahmed Niyaz, Head, Strategic Management and International Relations, Maldives Customs Service (MCS)
- Patricia Francis, Chairperson, Trade Facilitation Task Force (TF2), Jamaica

The session on the role of National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) in supply chain resilience highlighted their critical function in addressing global supply chain disruptions caused by events such as the COVID-19 pandemic, armed conflicts, and geopolitical tensions.

Digitalization as a Key Response: The panellists agreed that digitalization was a pivotal response to the pandemic's challenges, facilitating trade despite many countries' ad hoc implementation approaches. The significance of national trade facilitation committees in devising effective responses to such disruptions was stressed.

Jamaica's Progress: Ms. Patricia Francis highlighted Jamaica's strides towards a paperless trade environment, especially through the implementation of a single window for transactions and the integration of port community systems. She noted that the pandemic had expedited the digitalization process, which, despite initial difficulties, proved to be advantageous. Ms. Francis also addressed the challenges of implementing trade facilitation reforms, such as overcoming corruption and fostering trust among stakeholders.

Principles of Trade Facilitation: Mr. Victor Ban emphasized the principles of cooperation, communication, and automation in trade facilitation reforms, referencing the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and its relevance to supply chain disruptions. Mr. Ban stressed that the work begins with the implementation of the TFA, especially those articles that deal with supply chain disruptions, such as 7, 8 and 10 of the TFA. He underscored the importance of focusing on the information needed by border authorities over the format it is presented in. Mr. Ban also shed light on the U.S. government's efforts to bolster supply chain resilience, particularly with developing countries, mentioning initiatives like the Americas Partnership for Economic Prosperity and the Central America Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement (CAFTA-DR).

Freight Forwarders' Experiences: Ms. Andrea Tang discussed the varied experiences of freight forwarders with National Trade Facilitation Committees during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting the necessity of inclusivity and meaningful private sector engagement to effectively address disruptions.

Maldives Experience: Mr. Ahmed Niyaz shared the unique challenges faced by the Maldives due to its geography and how digitalization and automation have been successfully implemented in trade processes. With an economy valued at 6.5 billion U.S. dollars, the enhancement of trade processes is critical for enduring economic expansion.

Maldives implementation score of the WTO TFA stands at 64.7 per cent in 2024. An increase from 30 per cent in 2019. He attributed political will and international support, such as the one offered by the Asia Development Bank and UNCTAD, as crucial to these reforms' success. Future plans include establishing a national single window and licensing the first authorized economic operator.



Humanitarian Sector Concerns: During the audience intervention, Mr. Jean Cedric Meeus, Senior Supply Chain Advisor, UNICEF highlighted the complexity of trade facilitation, pointing out the difficulties humanitarian organizations face in transporting supplies during crises. This highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach that considers the impact on all stakeholders.

Broader Engagement and Co-Ownership of Supply Chains: The session called for broader engagement and input from stakeholders on supply chain resilience, particularly regarding the role of developing countries and the move towards co-ownership of supply chains.

In summary, the panellists acknowledged the importance of national trade facilitation committees in coordinating responses to supply chain disruptions and the necessity of diverse perspectives for effectiveness. The session ended with an acknowledgment of the complexities surrounding issues like humanitarian aid within the context of trade facilitation and a recognition of the progress made in the face of challenges.

Session D4: Humanitarian Relief – The Role and Preparedness of the NTFC

GSCF website: [NTFC session 4: Humanitarian relief - The role and preparedness of NTFCs | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: World Trade Organization (WTO)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Mark Henderson, Economic Affairs Officer, World Trade Organization (WTO)
- Virginie Bohl, Coordinator of IMPACCT hosted by the Global Logistics Cluster, World Food Programme (WFP)
- Stanley Trief, Manager, Vanuatu Electronic Single Window (VeSW), Vanuatu Department of Customs and Inland Revenue
- Özlem Soysanli, Senior Technical Officer, World Customs Organization (WCO)
- Alina Antoci, Senior Private Sector Specialist, World Bank Group (WBG)
- Roxana Cortina, Economic Affairs Officer, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Jean Cedric Meeus, Senior Supply Chain Advisor, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

The panel created an opportunity to discuss the application of TFA principles to facilitate the movement of humanitarian relief consignments in the event of a sudden-onset natural disaster.

Preparedness and transparency are two critical elements of an adequate immediate emergency response. Speakers stressed the critical role NTFCs can play in preparing simplified emergency procedures, defining lists of essential goods, and publishing requirements and entry procedures that apply to those goods in case of a disaster.

WTO TFAF made reference G/TFA/W/94/Rev.3 that has been presented to the WTO Committee on Trade Facilitation and identifies the following four principles:



1. Simplification of Clearance Procedures
2. Border Agency Coordination
3. Clear Communication to Traders and Interested Parties
4. Digitalization

Representatives of National Trade Facilitation Committees in the audience were invited to engage with this document, both as an NTFC and via their Geneva Delegates participating in the WTO Committee on Trade Facilitation, especially as Members with direct perspectives on such disaster scenarios.

Session D5: Role of the NTFC in Pioneering Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation

GSCF website: [NTFC session 5: Role of the National Trade Facilitation Committees in pioneering digital and sustainable trade facilitation | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: UNCTAD

Speakers:

- Moderator – Pamela Ugaz, Economic Affairs Officer, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Noura Al Dhaheri, CEO, Digital Cluster, Maqta Gateway, AD Ports Group, Abu Dhabi
- Jane Musyoki, Principal officer, E-portal and Value Add services, Kenya Trade Network Agency (KenTrade)
- Kumar Kanishk, Assistant Director, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India
- Khetsiwe Dlamini, Senior Trade Policy Analyst, International Trade Department, Ministry of Commerce, Trade, and Industry, Eswatini

The UNCTAD Trade Facilitation Section organized a panel discussion. The moderator began by emphasizing the significant role of digitalization during and after the pandemic, as highlighted in the UN Global Survey for Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation. Nowadays, digitalization has been integrated into trade facilitation reforms.

Digitalization Initiatives:

Ms. Noura Al Dhaheri discussed Maqta Gateway's work in creating digital trade facilitation solutions, including electronic data submission and port community systems.

Ms. Jane Musyoki highlighted the important role of Kenya's Trade Information Portal in harmonizing and streamlining trade procedures by minimizing duplications, complexities, and redundancies through digitalization and or automation of processes. The best practice is to ensure the portal is implemented with traders' view as the consumers of the information, from the onset.

Ms. Khetsiwe Dlamini emphasized the significance of following a digitalization roadmap in Eswatini. Digitalization is crucial for monitoring and evaluation using tools like the UNCTAD Reform Tracker, which automates the monitoring and assessment of the WTO TFA implementation.



Mr. Kumar Kanishk mentioned new technological developments such as remote inspections, Single Window for Trade 2.0, a digitalization roadmap, and the use of AI in ICEGATE (automated clearance process) implemented in India.

Challenges in Implementing Digital Tools:

Ms. Noura Al Dhaheri mentioned that maintaining political will and implementing change management proved to be difficult in the long term.

Ms. Musyoki identified both human and financial resources as a challenge in keeping the Kenya Trade Portal updated and consistent.

Ms. Dlamini added that the engagement of the private sector was another challenge. Similarly, Mr. Kumar stressed that involving all public agencies is quite challenging. In India, for example, the implementation of the Single Window involves over 80 agencies. These challenges resulted in information asymmetries, non-standardized procedures, high costs, and more resistance to change.

Solutions in Implementing the Digital Tools:

Ms. Noura Al Dhaheri urged developing economies to adopt trade single windows faster, highlighting how trade single windows mark the beginning of endless opportunities for nations. She recommended stakeholders come together under the guidance of their government and collectively benefit from the trade single window implementation.

Ms. Musyoki recommended seeking symmetry of information, following a roadmap, and eliminating redundancies.

Ms. Dlamini called for NTFCs to collaborate with the private sector in various working groups and to track the reforms using tools such as the reform tracker.

Mr. Kumar suggested focusing on standards. For example, G20 countries are working on a 10-point plan that includes the UNCITRAL model law, Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records, voluntary standards, interoperability, and technology neutrality.

General Recommendations:

1. Implementing a Single Window system should mark the beginning of the digitalization journey, not the ending. NTFCs should aim to go further than the requirements of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.
2. The importance of political will and private sector engagement outweigh the significance of technology, and
3. Awareness and transparency are crucial components in the process of digitalization.

In summary, the session showcased the importance of digitalization in trade facilitation and the importance of political will, private sector engagement, and transparency in successfully implementing these digital reforms.



Session D6: The Role of Customs in NTFCs and the Link to Customs Consultative Committees

GSCF website: [NTFC Session 6: The role of customs in National Trade Facilitation Committees and the link to customs consultative committees | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: World Customs Organization (WCO)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Ricardo Treviño Chapa, Deputy Secretary General, World Customs Organization (WCO)
- Bibiana Das Chagas Meroni, Tax Auditor and Customs Officer, Federal Revenue of Brazil
- Surjit Bhujabal, Member (Customs), Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), Government of India
- Victoria Weyulu, Senior manager, Trade Facilitation and Customs Procedures, Department of Customs and Excise, Namibia Revenue Authority (NamRA)
- Fabián Villarroel, Regional Private Sector Group Representative, WCO Americas and Caribbean Region

This session highlighted that the proper functioning of NTFCs requires the involvement of all relevant government agencies, including the full and active participation of Customs administrations given the key role that Customs plays at borders in facilitating and securing global trade. Additionally, many countries highlight increased dialogue between public and private sectors as one of the benefits of NTFCs.

Key Outcomes:

1. The status of NTFCs varies greatly depending on the country.
2. A clear roadmap is essential for a well-functioning NTFC.
3. Communication and regular information exchange are important in the margins of NTFCs.
4. Coordination and cooperation are challenging, not only with the private sector but also between public sector agencies.
5. Harmonization of efforts is important.
6. Public-private sector partnership is key; a mindset change is needed on all sides.
7. The private sector should understand the norms applied by Customs.
8. Importance of Customs-to-Customs cooperation.
9. Global expectations should be understood along with what other stakeholders are doing.
10. Knowledge and trust are important in forging a relationship between the public and the private sectors: companies should be transparent.
11. A notification to the WTO does not represent reality and the role of the NTFCs goes beyond a simple notification mandate to the WTO, there is still a lot of work to be done.
12. There is no standard in terms of the number of agencies operating at the border or involved in NTFCs.
13. Not everything can be done in NTFCs.



Country case examples:

- Brazil:

Local Committees: Need for operational improvement across 29 ports, airports, and borders, which need consistent procedures.

Stakeholder Engagement: Engagement of all stakeholders is needed. This is a major challenge because no actor has the full picture. Engagement must be strategic and go beyond interest to ensure comprehensive participation.

- India:

Steering Committees and Working Groups: Frequent meetings with the steering committees and working groups under the NTFC are essential.

Innovative Approaches: Innovative and technology-driven approaches facilitate Customs and trade operations. Global expectations are converging with new ideas and synergies.

Multi-Tiered System: The structure of the NTFC in India is described as a multi-tiered system based on a three-year plan. The goal is to have seamless cross-border trade that benefits everyone.

High Digitalization: The key to India's success lies in a high rate of digitalization of its processes. The NTFC has merged top-down and bottom-up approaches to create synergies with national roles and enable the integration of global programmes and partners.

- Namibia:

Active Customs Participation: Customs is the Chair of the NTFC in Namibia which has led to prioritized reforms.

Identification of Bottlenecks: With customs as the NTFC's lead in Namibia, trade facilitation reforms have been prioritized. For example, they prioritized trade facilitation reforms through the first Time Release Study (TRS) in Walvis Bay, which led to the identification of bottlenecks.

Information Sharing: Sharing information is key. Inviting businesses for close collaboration has led to a positive impact on NTFC.

Increased TFA Implementation: The implementation score of Namibia for the Trade Facilitation Agreement has improved from 7 per cent in 2021 to 51 per cent as of 2024. The implementation score can identify weaknesses that can be addressed without delay to harmonize collective efforts.

In summary, the session underscored the diverse experiences and best practices of NTFCs in different regions, and how Customs within NTFCs can contribute to strengthening dialogue between the public and private sectors. Emphasizing the need for clear communication, cooperation, and stakeholder engagement. While the role of Customs is pivotal, the success of NTFCs hinges on a collaborative approach that includes public and private sectors, with a focus on digitalization and continuous improvement of processes.



Session D7: Border Agency Cooperation and Regional Trade Facilitation: Contributions of the NTFCs

GSCF website: [NTFC Session 7: Border agency cooperation and regional trade facilitation - Contribution of the National Trade Facilitation Committees | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Jane Korinek, Senior Economist and Senior Trade Policy Analyst, Trade and Agriculture Directorate, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)
- Özlem Soysanli, Senior Technical Officer, World Customs Organization (WCO)
- Michelle Belgrave, Customs and Trade Compliance Director for the Caribbean, DHL Express
- Eduardo José Espinoza Valverde, Director General of Economic Integration, Trade Facilitation and Transport, Secretariat for Central American Economic Integration (SIECA)
- Ruari Bride, Senior Policy Advisor, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), UK

This session explored how NTFCs could contribute to improving coordination between Customs and other border agencies and thus enhance global and regional trade facilitation.

Improvement in Border Agency Cooperation: Ms. Jane Korinek opened the session by highlighting the OECD's work on Trade Facilitation Indicators, which shows that cooperation between agencies at the border is one of the trade facilitation areas that has improved most since the COVID-19 pandemic, but challenges remain. These relate to using harmonized systems to manage documents, inspections, risk management, and sharing and exchanging data. Border agency cooperation is among the top areas for action across all regions covered by the TFIs: Asia-Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, MENA, and Sub-Saharan Africa. The OECD policy toolkit [4 Keys to Resilient Supply Chains](#) also emphasizes trade facilitation policies as a critical area of international cooperation and as enablers of economic resilience and diversification along supply chains.

Coordinated Border Management (CBM): Ms. Özlem Soysanli highlighted that CBM is not a new concept and has been around for almost two decades. She emphasized how CBM is embedded in the work of the WCO, which has been actively supporting its implementation in Customs administrations worldwide. Going forward, the Customs Community can actively promote partnerships with other cross-border regulatory agencies to improve and expedite border processing. This can help border agencies acquire a better knowledge and understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities.

Regional Cooperation in Central America: Mr. Eduardo José Espinoza Valverde presented the opportunities and challenges in bringing together NTFCs across multiple countries from Central America since they first convened in 2022. He highlighted for instance the Central American Digital Trade Platform, launched in 2023, to streamline trade processes within and outside the region and facilitate paperwork. This strategy can also provide important support to facilitating the necessary exchange of information and data between customs and other relevant border agencies, as well as operationalising the mechanisms of coordination on the ground between countries in the region.



National Perspective and Practical Implementation: Mr. Ruari Bride highlighted the opportunities and challenges from a national perspective, and the importance of ‘getting the right people in the room’, including experts and business representatives, and the benefits of closing gaps between policy and practice at borders. The UK has been setting up the 2025 Border Target Operating Model and implementing the Ecosystem of Trust pilots. In addition to continued challenges when bringing together the different processes and agencies in the Single Trade Window under development, the initial evaluation of Ecosystem of Trust pilots highlights that collaboration between government and industry is essential for driving innovation at the border, while interoperability proves to be the biggest barrier to scaling an EoT model. Border agency cooperation and increased collaboration with the private sector through digital tools requires thus a solid and holistic institutional, technical, and regulatory architecture.

Private Sector Engagement: Ms. Michelle Belgrave highlighted the desirability of ensuring NTFCs are operating, particularly in the Caribbean, and the importance of consistently engaging the private sector in NTFCs to incorporate feedback from businesses on the challenges faced during day-to-day operations. These perspectives can also provide essential insights into the specific challenges faced by SMEs and firms operating in different sectors which can involve dealing with different border agencies.

Recommendations:

Integration of Border Agencies: NTFCs should fully integrate border agencies other than Customs to improve coordination and efficiency.

Leveraging Technology: Utilize technology to enhance communication and data exchange between agencies.

Strengthening Partnerships: Strengthen partnerships between the public and the private sectors to foster innovation and effective trade facilitation.

Collaboration and Stakeholder Engagement: Maintain high levels of collaboration with stakeholders, including the private sector, to ensure practical implementation of policies and address operational challenges.

In summary, the session examined the gaps between the implementation of regulatory frameworks for trade facilitation and operational practices and the way these impact border agency cooperation mechanisms.

Session D8: Fostering Private Sector Engagement in NTFCs

GSCF website: [NTFC Session 8: Fostering private sector engagement in National Trade Facilitation Committees | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (GATF)

Speakers:

- Moderator – José Raúl Perales, Deputy Director, Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (GATF)
- Wendy Aydeé Torrejón Gómez, Supervisor of International Relations, Bolivia National Customs Office
- Edna Ramírez Robles, Founder and CEO, GoBizGlobal



- Michelle Belgrave, Customs and Trade Compliance Director for the Caribbean, DHL Express
- Nirad Tewarie, CEO, American Chamber of Commerce Trinidad and Tobago (AMCHAM T&T)
- Fabiola Gamboa Avalos, Trade Facilitation Advisor, Ministry of Foreign Trade (COMEX), Costa Rica

The session on private sector involvement in National Trade Facilitation Committees (NTFCs) highlighted the high interest of the private sector in NTFCs but noted that effective participation is inconsistent. Not all NTFCs welcome private sector participation or engagement, and when they do, it is often in an observer capacity and without some clear role or responsibility. NTFCs that have developed successful working relationships with their private sectors have done so through the following set of measures and best practices.

Embedding Private Sector Roles in NTFCs: The private sector's role should be integrated into the NTFC's foundational instrument, ideally through legislation. Being present together at the creation means governments and businesses develop a sense of shared responsibility for the output, and ideally success, of the committee.

Country case examples: Costa Rica and Honduras allow the private sector to vote on NTFC decisions, enhancing their involvement and accountability.

Clear Roles and Tasks for the Private Sector: Defined roles and tasks for private sector participants help stabilize expectations regarding outcomes.

Tiered or Functional NTFC Structure: A structured approach compels public-private interaction at different levels of policy discussion, evolution, and adoption. This commits parties, and especially the private sector, to accompany the decision-making process inside the NTFC rather than through outside channels. This behavior, in turn, strengthens the commitment of parties to the success of the NTFC.

Transparency and Communication: NTFC activities, rules, procedures, decisions, and measures should be publicly available and communicated to the entire private sector. This reduces potential conflicts or concerns about transparency and representation in the committee.

Challenges:

Engaging Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs): Effectively involving SMEs and addressing their specific concerns remains a challenge.

Policymaking vs. Problem-Solving: Differentiating between policy-making and problem-solving roles within the NTFC can be difficult, depending on whether there is information asymmetry or a broader environment of public-private relations in the country.

In summary, the session highlighted the importance of integrating the private sector into NTFCs through clear roles, legislative backing, and transparent processes. While some NTFCs have successfully developed collaborative relationships with the private sector, challenges remain in ensuring effective engagement, particularly for SMEs, and in balancing policy-making and problem-solving functions. These insights point to the need for structured, transparent, and inclusive approaches to enhance NTFC effectiveness and private sector participation.



Session D9: The Role of the NTFCs in Mobilizing Resources for Trade Facilitation Reforms: Bridging Opportunities and Challenges

GSCF website: [NTFC Session 9: Role of the National Trade Facilitation Committees in mobilizing resources | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: World Bank Group (WBG)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Alina Monica Antoci, Senior Private Sector Specialist, World Bank Group (WBG)
- Gabriela Cárdenas Rivadeneira, Technical Secretariat, National Trade Facilitation Committee, Ministry of Production, Foreign Trade, Investments, and Fisheries, Ecuador
- Bou Bunnara, Director, Legal Affairs and Public Relations Department, General Department of Customs and Excise, Cambodia
- Ruari Bride, Senior Policy Advisor, HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC), UK
- Mark Henderson, Project Manager and Trade Negotiator, World Trade Organization Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (WTO TFAF)

The session, organized by the World Bank Group, focused on providing the participants with a unique chance to gain insights from donor organizations, revealing the different forms of assistance available.

The session offered a space for an open discussion on the complexities and challenges of identifying and securing necessary funding for achieving successful trade facilitation reforms. It also allowed to tackle the proactive role NTFCs should play in bridging the opportunities and challenges in mobilizing resources and support from donors and international organizations. These stakeholders' dedication to bolstering trade facilitation efforts through a variety of assistance programmes is crucial.

Overview of TFSP: The session was moderated by Ms. Alina Monica Antoci who has an overview of the World Bank Group and the Trade Facilitation Support Program (TFSP). Launched in 2014, the TFSP was specifically designed as a global response to support developing countries in reforming and aligning their trade facilitation laws, procedures, processes, and systems with international best practices and standards for full and effective implementation of the WTO TFA. The TFSP is supported by 9 donor partners with projects implemented in over 70 countries.

Insights from the government representatives: The panel discussion featured insights from government representatives from Ecuador and Cambodia, including challenges faced by the NTFCs in obtaining funding, and added the perspective of trade and development experts including from HM Revenue and Customs, UK and WTO TFAF.

Ms. Rivadeneira spoke about the proactive experience in obtaining funding of the Technical Secretariat of the National Trade Facilitation Committee in Ecuador.

Mr. Bunnara spoke about leveraging strategic initiatives of the Department General Department of Customs and Excise in Cambodia to the NTFC level.



Mr. Bride brought in the perspective of HM Revenue and Customs, UK and Mr. Henderson gave critical insights from WTO TFAF.

Challenges: One of the main barriers raised by members was: “What is the best way to approach a donor partner? Who’s the right person? Where is the right location? Which is the right program?” Members also noted a gap between the language used in donors’ programs and projects – which don’t always have “trade facilitation” listed in their names – and the focus on general societal outcomes versus the country clients who have more technical and specific requests.

Communication and Outreach: Insights from the panel helped understand how to make communication and outreach more effective. Empowering NTFCs to better communicate with the donor community on their needs to better help them bridge the opportunities and challenges in leveraging financing support for trade facilitation, is key. It was also emphasized the importance of linking trade facilitation projects to broader themes such as job growth, private sector development and SME development.

5Cs for Successful Trade Facilitation Reform: The World Bank Group also emphasized the list of 5Cs for successful trade facilitation reform as part of the due diligence process in addressing requests for assistance. This guides the prioritization process on where the funding goes to achieve an increase in TFA alignment: Commitment, Coordination, Collaboration, Consistency and Communication. They hint on the need to have conversations with client governments and to see a demonstrated commitment to reform, and to also have a clear demonstration of private sector involvement.

Partnership and Coordination: The session called for continued partnership and coordination among governments, the private sector, and international organizations to support the trade facilitation reforms through the critical role of the NTFC.

The flagship TFSP program of the WBG is ideally placed to provide a rapid response, and TACB support to help identify the gaps in alignment, assist with the notification process and as needed, undertake a TRS to establish a baseline at the onset of the project. In addition to providing TACB, the WBG is also in a unique position to provide longer term assistance through a range of financing instruments which include investment project financing (IPF) and development policy operations (DPOs) where partnerships and collaboration with international partners such as the UNCTAD are key for implementation; financing through these instruments could include ASYCUDA or Risk Management modules implementation.

The session also recognized the significance of having a continuous and organized dialogue in reaching out to the donor community for TACB through the coordinating mechanism the NTFC provides and a need for a government coordinated approach.

Session D10: Inclusivity in Trade Facilitation – The role of NTFCs

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 3 \(23 May 2024\) \(youtube.com\)](#)

GSCF website: [NTFC Session 10: Inclusivity in trade facilitation - The role of National Trade Facilitation Committees | UNCTAD](#)

Organizer: International Trade Centre (ITC)

Speakers:



- Moderator – Victoria Tuomisto, Trade Facilitation and Policy Adviser, International Trade Centre (ITC)
- Tadiwanashe Mutibura, UNCTAD Supply chain Innovation Challenge Winner
- Jeffrey Maganya, Director, Program and Influencing, OXFAM in Africa
- Ingrid Huapaya, Customs and Trade Facilitation Coordinator, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism (MINCETUR), Peru
- Naa Densua Aryeetey, Chair, Trade and Gender Subcommittee, Ghana NTFC
- Houssein Gharbi, Expert in Trade Inclusion, Universal Postal Union (UPU)

The panel discussion focused on the complexities and challenges faced by small-scale cross-border traders (SSCBTs), with a special focus on the role and challenges faced by women and vulnerable groups in this sector.

Lack of Formal Recognition and Support: Ms. Tadiwanashe Mutibura highlighted that women contribute significantly to SSCBT in Zimbabwe, but these traders often operate without formal recognition or adequate support, which limits their ability to trade profitably.

Lack of Comprehensive Data on SSCBT: There is a significant lack of comprehensive data on SSCBT, which is necessary for creating informed policies and support systems.

Obstacles Encountered by Traders: Legal issues, harassment, xenophobia, and arbitrary confiscation of goods are common roadblocks that these traders face. Furthermore, economic instability, particularly currency volatility, affects their ability to maintain a stable income.

Proposed Solutions:

Government Involvement: Mr. Jeffrey Maganya emphasized the responsibility of governments to ensure legal protection and fair pricing for traders, advocating for trade policies that are grounded in human rights values. He highlighted Oxfam's initiatives to strengthen civil society, conduct research, and harmonize policies to support marginalized traders.

Improved Border Procedures: Panellists presented the importance of implementing transparent border scanning systems and establishing predictable customs charges. They also stressed the importance of education and professional support for SSCBT businesses, urging the privileged not to dismiss solutions that do not directly affect them.

Gender-Specific Initiatives: Ms. Ingrid Huapaya from Peru outlined her ministry's efforts to reduce gender disparities and promote the inclusion of women and SMEs in export initiatives. Ms. Naa Densua Aryeetey shared insights from Ghana, where a subcommittee on trade and gender was established to address women traders' issues, including the introduction of gender champions to assist women at borders.

Regional and International Collaboration: Mr. Houssein Gharbi discussed the postal sector's role in facilitating trade for SMEs and women. He presented initiatives like the Trade Post Project and the Postal Prosperity Zone, aimed at enhancing trade inclusion through postal networks.

Inclusivity in Trade: The session concluded with a call for action on inclusivity in trade, emphasizing the need for practical solutions and sharing best practices across regions and countries. The moderator, Ms. Victoria Tuomisto, encouraged ongoing dialogue and collaboration to promote inclusivity in trade.



In summary, critical observations from the discussion included the recognition of the digital divide as a barrier to trade for many small-scale traders and the potential for technology to bridge this gap. The conversation also highlighted the importance of understanding the lived experiences of traders to inform policy and decision-making effectively. The diverse backgrounds and experiences of the panellists provided a rich array of perspectives, underscoring the multifaceted nature of trade facilitation and the critical role of inclusivity in driving economic growth and development.

Session D11: NTFC Involvement in Pioneering Climate-Smart Trade Facilitation

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 3 \(23 May 2024\) \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [NTFC Session 11: National Trade Facilitation Committees' involvement in pioneering climate-smart trade facilitation | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/en/press/2024/05/ntfc-session-11-national-trade-facilitation-committees-involvement-in-pioneering-climate-smart-trade-facilitation)

Organizer: United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

Speakers:

- Moderator – Matthew Wilson, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Barbados to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva
- Ingrid Zabaleta Chaustre, Regional Executive Assistant, +Cotton Project, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Victoria Tuomisto, Trade Facilitation and Policy Adviser, International Trade Centre (ITC)
- Stanley Trief, Manager, Vanuatu Electronic Single Window (VeSW), Vanuatu Department of Customs and Inland Revenue
- Poul Hansen, Chief, Trade Facilitation Section, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Kevin Bishop, Associate Information Management Officer, UN-CEFACT, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)

The session, chaired by Ambassador Mr. Matthew Wilson, focused on integrating environmental sustainability into trade facilitation practices with an emphasis on digital innovation.

Digitalization and Sustainability in Trade: Mr. Poul Hansen spoke about the relevance of green trade facilitation and the significant contribution of trade and transport to global carbon emissions. He stressed the need for streamlined procedures and digital trade facilitation tools, which can lead to reductions in costs and CO₂ emissions. Mr. Hansen provided the example of Kenya, where digitalization and simplification of trade procedures led to a significant reduction in the time and cost required to obtain a plant health certificate, along with a decrease in CO₂ emissions.

Traceability and Certification: Ms. Ingrid Zabaleta Chaustre shared insights into digital innovations in the cotton sector, focusing on the importance of traceability and certification for connecting small actors to markets. She discussed the PLOS Cotton Project, which demonstrated the benefits of digital platforms in providing transparency and traceability, leading to better market access and premium prices for sustainable products.



Challenges and Solutions in Trade Facilitation: Ms. Victoria Tuomisto addressed the role of trade facilitation in the global response to climate change and environmental sustainability. She outlined challenges such as carbon emissions, paper usage, waste at border posts, and illegal trading. Ms. Tuomisto proposed solutions, including digitalization, virtual line management systems, carbon-neutral borders, and adherence to multilateral environmental agreements, emphasizing the need for measurable impacts.

Standardization and Interoperability: Mr. Kevin Bishop discussed the importance of standardization in supply chain due diligence, interoperability, and standardized data sets. He mentioned UNECE's role in developing standards and best practice recommendations for trade facilitation and electronic business, as well as promoting sustainable and digital trade practices.

Country-Specific Example:

Vanuatu: Mr. Stanley Trief shared the country's experience with the ASYCUDA-based single window system, which significantly reduced paper usage and trips to customs and biosecurity offices. He highlighted the system's role in enforcing environmental and climate change policies and contributing to disaster resilience.

Key Points and Proposals:

1. Green transition and sustainability must be put on the TF radar, especially given the carbon intensive role of trade.
2. Need to streamline regulations and invest in digital TF tools to measure carbon impact, reduce paper, physical trips to different agencies, monitoring climate impact of trade and reducing wastage like return of goods.
3. Traceability and certifications matter to track the sustainability of the value chain along the full product life cycle. Traceability of value chains can lead to premium prices for products.
4. Cutting back on paper, cutting back of waste at border posts, illegal trade- can all be addressed through enhancing digitalization - highlight success stories like that in Vanuatu.
5. Need to address fragmentation of tools that seek to do similar things.
6. Use digital tools and border agency coordination to cut down on congestion at the border.
7. Explore scaling up the assessments of Carbon neutral borders and other innovations that have been proven to cut down on emissions.
8. NTFCs can have a role to play in discussing and implementing the [World Trade Organization](#) TFA ++ and exploring the inclusion of environmental measures in their work.
9. Multifaceted use of the technology – positive benefits on efficiencies at border, sustainability and even on issues like providing humanitarian assistance.
10. Standardization of data, of risk analysis, of exchange of information matters.

In summary, the session underscored the importance of integrating sustainability into trade facilitation practices and the potential of digital innovation to advance climate action. The discussions highlighted the need for a collaborative approach to foster innovation and exchange best practices, ultimately paving the way for a sustainable trade agenda.



Session D12: 3rd NTFC Global Forum – Closing Ceremony

Streaming link: [UN Global Supply Chain Forum – Day 3 \(23 May 2024\) \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)

GSCF website: [Third NTFC Global Forum \(Closing Session\) | UNCTAD](https://www.unctad.org/...)

Organizers: UNCTAD

Speakers:

- Shamika N. Sirimanne, Director, Division on Technology and Logistics, UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)
- Lisa Cummins, Minister of Energy and Business, Barbados

The 3rd Forum on trade facilitation concluded with a session emphasizing the Barbadian government's commitment to the issues discussed. Ms. Lisa Cummins underscored the importance of the event, reflecting on the inclusive and productive discussions that brought together various stakeholders.

Government Commitment: The Barbadian government's prioritization of the Forum's agenda was highlighted by Minister Cummins, demonstrating strong political support.

Collaboration: Minister Cummins emphasized the necessity of collaboration among various stakeholders, including port communities, UNCTAD, multilateral development banks (MDBs), and the private sector, which was identified as a key takeaway.

Role of NTFCs and Customs Authorities: The critical role of customs authorities in facilitating trade was stressed, with a call for strengthened collaboration between NTFCs and customs administrations.

Digitalization and Technology: The future of trade facilitation is tied to advancements in technology and digitalization, including blockchain and artificial intelligence, for more transparent and efficient processes.

Private Sector Engagement: The private sector's role was acknowledged as vital, with public-private partnerships deemed essential for addressing challenges such as supply chain resilience and border compliance.

Resource Mobilization: Resource Mobilization was identified as a significant challenge and there was a call for more streamlined support from international partners.

Inclusivity and Sustainability: Discussions were had on empowering small traders, promoting gender mainstreaming, and pioneering climate-smart practices.

Emphasis on inclusivity in trade facilitation was highlighted to ensure that small traders and women, youth, and peoples with disabilities in trade are not overlooked.

Capacity Building and Communication: The Forum also recognized the need for strategic capacity building and clear communication with private sector entities, including port agents.

In her closing remarks, Ms. Shamika N. Sirimanne highlighted the following issues.



Political Will and Technology Leverage: Political will and leveraging technology are crucial for successful trade facilitation efforts.

Collaboration: Stakeholder collaboration is important for effective implementation.

Crisis Coordination: NTFCs' role in crisis coordination is increasingly important.

Focus on adaptation strategies to global shocks like supply chain disruptions and climate change.

Resource Mobilization: Long-term engagement with donors and development partners is necessary to support complex trade facilitation reforms.

Commitment to Ongoing Collaboration: Ms. Sirimanne affirmed the ongoing commitment to work together to address the challenges in trade facilitation.



IX. Acknowledgements for the 2024 Global Supply Chain Forum

The success of the Global Supply Chain Forum would not have been possible without the support of our 100+ partners from the public, private and governmental sectors. A special note of appreciation is due to the Government of Barbados, MAWANI - the Saudi Ports Authority, the IDB, the Canadian Government, CARICOM, Export Barbados and Invest Barbados.

UN Trade and Development and the Government of Barbados also wish to extend their deep appreciation to the 200+ exceptional speakers and 1000+ participants who have joined this event and have contributed to all the invigorating conversations.

We look forward to repeating this experience and count on your support at the next UN Global Supply Chain Forum in Saudi Arabia in 2026.

X. Acknowledgements for the 3rd National Trade Facilitation Forum

The success of the Third Global Forum for NTFC was made possible thanks to the close collaboration with our partners, including the Government of Barbados, the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN-ECLAC), Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation (GATF), International Trade Centre (ITC), Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), World Customs Organization (WCO), World Trade Organization (WTO), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Development Bank of Latin America and the Caribbean (CAF), and all the remarkable speakers and participants.

