



2nd Global Supply Chain Forum 2026

RIYADH ➤ 29 November
to 1 December

CONCEPT
NOTE

1 December 2026

King Abdulaziz International Conference Center (KAICC)

11:00 – 12:00pm (60 minutes)

PANEL DISCUSSION

Future-Ready Ports, Part I – Energy Transition & Digital Transformation

Description

Ports are critical nodes in global supply chains, handling more than 80 per cent of world merchandise trade by volume. Yet they are operating in an increasingly complex environment shaped by geopolitical disruptions, changing trade patterns, climate pressures, and rapid technological change. The Review of Maritime Transport 2025 highlights this changing landscape and the need for ports to strengthen their resilience and adapt to an evolving maritime environment.

Against this backdrop, preparing ports for the future requires rethinking how they operate, use energy, and harness technology. The transition towards cleaner energy, alongside the growing use of digital technologies, automation, and artificial intelligence, offers opportunities to improve efficiency, reduce environmental impacts and enable faster, more informed decision-making.

These transformations, however, do not take place under the same conditions everywhere. Ports differ significantly in their infrastructure,



CONCEPT NOTE

resources, capacities, skills, and technological readiness. For ports in developing countries in particular, ensuring that these transitions are inclusive and adapted to local realities will be essential.

This session will explore practical approaches, emerging technologies, and enabling conditions that can support greener, smarter, and more resilient ports, while facilitating the exchange of experiences and good practices.

Questions for discussion

- What challenges do the energy and digital transitions create for ports?
- What should ports prioritise when short-term efficiency and long-term resilience compete?
- How can better data sharing and coordination across the port community improve efficiency and decision-making?
- What cybersecurity risks should ports consider as they accelerate digitalisation and the adoption of AI?
- What role can government policies and international frameworks play in supporting port modernization and decarbonization?



Programme

Opening remarks: SG request,

backup (Mr. Mark Assaf, Chief, TrainForTrade, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD)

Followed by a panel with the participation of:

- Ms. Nieves Roqueñí, President, Port Authority of Gijón - tbc
- Ms. Nazlı Selek, WISTA - tbc
- Mr. Rudy Pimentel Pimentel, Executive Director, Port Authority of Santo Domingo - tbc
- Mr. Kevin Allen, President, International Harbour Masters Association (IHMA) - tbc
- Ms. Mar Chao, President, Port Authority of Valencia - tbc

Interactive discussion

Moderator:

Mr. Mark Assaf, Chief, TrainForTrade, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD

Isha Abbasi, Associate Expert, TrainForTrade, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD

Availability of interpretation

English, French, Spanish, Arabic

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