

**20 November 2024**

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. (EAT)

Online

**REVIEW OF MARITIME TRANSPORT 2024****Webinar on maritime transport and trade in Africa****Background**

Maritime trade, a cornerstone of the global economy, showed signs of recovery and grew by 2.4% in 2023, reaching a total of 12,292 million tons. This rebound followed a contraction in 2022, yet the outlook for the future remains precarious. Projections for 2024 suggest modest growth of 2%, driven largely by demand for bulk commodities such as iron ore, coal and grain, alongside containerized goods. However, these figures obscure deeper challenges facing the industry.

The maritime transport sector in Africa is experiencing significant developments despite facing challenges from the ongoing Red Sea shipping crisis. Africa witnessed remarkable growth in shipping activities between 2018 and 2023. Container ship port calls increased by 20%, while tanker calls surged by 38%, marking unprecedented growth for the continent. Notably, in 2023, Liberia continued to top the global ship registry by deadweight tonnage, having surpassed Panama for the first time in three decades in 2022, further solidifying Africa's presence in the maritime industry.

The Red Sea crisis, characterized by attacks on commercial vessels since November 2023, has compelled many ships to reroute away from the Suez Canal, leading to increased congestion in South African ports. This situation has inadvertently created opportunities for strategically located countries such as Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia and Tanzania, enhancing their roles in global maritime trade. However, the crisis has also disrupted East African nations, particularly Djibouti and Sudan, which heavily rely on the Suez Canal for their foreign trade, resulting in shortages of perishable goods and delays in cargo delivery.

Despite these challenges, Africa is seizing opportunities in the renewable energy sector. Several nations are beginning to leverage green hydrogen as part of their energy strategy, aiming to establish themselves as key players in the production, storage and transport of renewable energy resources. This transition presents a unique chance for Africa to enhance its maritime capabilities while contributing to the global shift towards sustainable energy solutions.





## Review of Maritime Transport 2024

The UNCTAD Review of Maritime Transport 2024 highlights the current multifaceted challenges facing maritime transport across the world. It provides insights into current trends and the outlook for maritime transport and trade, and discusses how maritime trade is being upended by disruptions, including in maritime chokepoints.

The report highlights several bright spots across Africa's shipping sector, evidenced by increases in port calls by both container ships and tankers in Africa. It also shows that while Africa bears the brunt of the Red Sea shipping crisis, the continent continues to make strides in port and vessel performance, trade facilitation and the clean energy transition.

### Objective

This webinar will bring together key stakeholders in the maritime industry in Africa and beyond to discuss and address the vulnerabilities faced by global supply chains, particularly at critical chokepoints. They will explore strategies for enhancing resilience against geopolitical tensions and climate-related disruptions, focusing on:

1. Identifying risks and challenges faced by key maritime routes and their impact on global trade.
2. Promoting collaboration and partnerships among governments, industry leaders, and NGOs to develop cohesive responses to disruptions.
3. Exploring solutions by sharing innovative practices and technologies for low-carbon shipping and efficient logistics that can adapt to changing circumstances.
4. Discussing workforce development and the infrastructure investments required to strengthen maritime operations in vulnerable regions, particularly small island developing states and least developed countries.
5. Examining the role of regulations in enhancing maritime safety, security and environmental standards.

### Target participants

The webinar is aimed at stakeholders in the maritime industry from Africa and beyond, including policymakers, representatives of international organizations, port management authorities, port operators, logistics and maritime service providers, shipowners and their associations, freight forwarders and other participants.

### Modalities

The webinar will be hosted virtually on zoom at this link: <https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJEod-6sqTwuH9M6qMWxocePtudqus5xHoYE>

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