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Trade and Development Board
Trade and Development Commission
**Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics
and Trade Facilitation**
Twelfth session
Geneva, 13 and 14 April 2026
Item 2 of the provisional agenda
Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

Provisional agenda and annotations

I. Provisional agenda

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Global maritime transport: Staying the course in turbulent waters.
4. Adoption of the report of the meeting.

II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

Item 1

Election of officers

1. It is recommended that the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation elect a Chair and a Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur.

Item 2

Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

2. The provisional agenda for the twelfth session of the multi-year expert meeting is reproduced in chapter I above.
3. The topic of the twelfth session of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation was approved by the Trade and Development Board through a silence procedure that ended on 15 December 2025.¹ Participants at the twelfth session will have two days, 13 and 14 April 2026, to complete the work. A provisional schedule of meetings for the two days is provided in an annex to the present document.

¹ See also TD/B/EX(78)/2.



A detailed programme will be made available, at the latest, one week before the start of the meeting.

Documentation

TD/B/C.I/MEM.7/34 Provisional agenda and annotations

Item 3

Global maritime transport: Staying the course in turbulent waters

4. In recent years, disruptions to maritime transport and global supply chains have grown more frequent and consequential, with global trading and shipping patterns being redrawn. Disruptive factors, particularly geopolitical tensions, are spilling over and affect maritime chokepoints and trade routes, such as the Red Sea, the Suez Canal and the Black Sea. Climatic factors such as drought and reduced water levels have also constrained ship traffic in the Panama Canal, although, at present, activity has normalized. Risks to the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic route for global energy trade, have also increased with a flare-up in geopolitical tensions affecting the area in mid-2025. Starting in early 2025, maritime transport faced a rapidly shifting trade policy framework. Consequently, uncertainty and volatility soared, shifts in trading patterns deepened and reconfiguration of shipping networks continued, in tandem with vessel rerouting and trade diversion. With maritime trade travelling longer distances and disruptions on the increase, high and volatile freight rates are increasingly becoming the norm. Ports are under strain from rerouted traffic, resulting in congestion and longer waiting times. Persistent high transport costs often hit developing countries hardest, particularly small island developing States, least developed countries and landlocked developing countries.

5. Alongside immediate pressures, deeper shifts are transforming the sector. The transitions ahead – to zero carbon, to digital systems and to new trade routes – pose challenges, while also offering potential opportunities. Addressing the challenges and leveraging the opportunities requires a balancing act to ensure carefully managed, just and equitable transitions. Whether caused by sudden shocks or slow-moving structural shifts, disruptions to maritime transport and trade keep the operating landscape in flux and highly volatile. Action is necessary to control and mitigate cost increases, strengthen port performance, advance trade facilitation, mainstream sustainability and resilience building principles, address climatic risks and implement adaptation measures, enhance public–private partnerships, improve stability and predictability in the trade policy framework and achieve managed and inclusive transitions.

6. Informed by considerations and priorities on transport, trade logistics and trade facilitation reflected in the Geneva Consensus (TD/561/Add.2), and drawing on the *Review of Maritime Transport 2025*, participants at the session will explore key developments affecting global maritime transport and trade and provide expert insights into challenges, as well as opportunities, for the maritime transport industry and its stakeholders, as well as policymakers. Expert discussions are expected to inform the related UNCTAD programme of work, including the second UNCTAD Global Supply Chain Forum, to be held in late 2026, in collaboration with the Saudi Ports Authority, and could help identify thematic priorities and activities for enhanced collaborative action to advance sustainable, resilient and inclusive transport and trade facilitation, including as part of the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport 2026–2035, with a focus on key issues of relevance to developing countries.

Documentation

TD/B/C.I/MEM.7/35 Global maritime transport: Staying the course in turbulent waters

Item 4

Adoption of the report of the meeting

7. The report of the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation will be submitted to the Trade and Development Commission at its next session. Experts at the meeting may wish to authorize the Vice-Chair-cum-Rapporteur, under of the authority of the Chair, to prepare a final report after the conclusion of the meeting.

Input from experts

Experts nominated by member States are encouraged to submit brief papers (maximum, 10 pages) as contributions to the work of the meeting.

The papers should be submitted to the UNCTAD secretariat in advance of the meeting and will be made available at the meeting in the form and language in which they are received.

Papers should be submitted to the UNCTAD secretariat as soon as possible, addressed to the Trade Logistics Branch, UNCTAD Division on Technology and Logistics, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10; email: wendy.juan@unctad.org.

Annex

Provisional schedule of the meeting

	<i>Monday 13 April 2026</i>	<i>Tuesday 14 April 2026</i>
10 a.m.–1 p.m.	Opening plenary Opening statements Item 1 Election of officers Item 2 Adoption of the agenda and organization of work Item 3 Introduction of topic: Global maritime transport: Staying the course in turbulent waters Informal meetings Item 3 (continued) Global maritime transport: Staying the course in turbulent waters	Informal meetings Item 3 (continued) Global maritime transport: Staying the course in turbulent waters
3–6 p.m.	Informal meetings Item 3 (continued) Global maritime transport: Staying the course in turbulent waters	Informal meetings Consideration of the outcome of the meeting Closing plenary Item 4 Adoption of the report of the meeting
