

## SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT TRANSPORT

SUPPORTING DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, INCLUDING LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES AND SMALL ISLAND DEVELOPING STATES, IN PROMOTING AND IMPLEMENTING SUSTAINABLE FREIGHT TRANSPORT SYSTEMS



### GLOBAL CONTEXT

The importance of freight transport as a trade enabler, engine of growth and driver of social development cannot be overemphasized. However, the adverse impacts of freight transport activity on human health, the environment and climate are a cause for concern, as are the potential impacts of climate variability and change on seaports and other coastal transport infrastructure. If left unchecked, unsustainable freight transport patterns are likely to undermine effective achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement. With the sustainable and resilient freight transport agenda gaining further momentum in recent years – at the thirteenth and fourteenth sessions of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development in 2012 and 2016, the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in 2012 and the United Nations Global Sustainable Transport Conference in 2016 – UNCTAD has intensified its efforts to mainstream sustainability and climate resilience considerations into its work programme on transport and trade logistics. The overall objective is to assist the effective integration of developing countries into global and/or regional trading networks and transport systems and participation in relevant value chains through, among others, efficient, reliable, cost-effective, well-connected, socially inclusive, environmentally sustainable and climate resilient freight transport systems. With over 80 per cent of world merchandise trade by volume and over 70 per cent by value carried by sea, sustainable and climate resilient maritime transport is a sustainable development catalyst.



### HOW DOES THE SUSTAINABLE AND RESILIENT TRANSPORT PROGRAMME WORK?

The Sustainable and Resilient Transport Programme consists of several components, as follows:

- *Promoting a supportive legal framework to facilitate transport and trade, through advisory services on transport law and policy.*

UNCTAD has been extensively involved in rule-making and standard-setting in the field of maritime transport law, with an emphasis on the economic and commercial aspects of shipping. Relevant international conventions and model rules cover the economic aspects of shipping, liability for carriage of goods by sea and



### PROGRAMME FACTS AND FIGURES

**Scope:** All regions, including East Africa and the Caribbean (Jamaica, Saint Lucia and other small island developing States)

**Start date:** 2014

**Projects:** 2 technical cooperation projects

**Summary of success:**  
160+ persons trained

**Website:** [unctad.org/ttl/legal](http://unctad.org/ttl/legal);  
[unctad.org/ttl/transport-infrastructure-services](http://unctad.org/ttl/transport-infrastructure-services);  
[unctadsftportal.org](http://unctadsftportal.org);  
[sft-framework.org](http://sft-framework.org)

**Sustainable Development Goals addressed:**

**Directly:** 8 and 9  
**Indirectly:** 16 and 17



multimodal transport, as well as the enforcement of maritime claims. In addition to providing legal advice upon request, UNCTAD prepares analytical studies and reports on transport law and policy, aimed at assisting developing countries in assessing the merits of ratification of the relevant international legal instruments and/or in their national implementation. Relevant studies cover a range of topics, including the carriage of goods by sea and air, multimodal transport, ship-source oil pollution and maritime and supply-chain security.

- *Climate change impacts and adaptation for seaports and other key coastal transport infrastructure.*

UNCTAD activities include research and analytical work, as well as a series of intergovernmental expert meetings focusing on the implications of climate change for maritime transport, with a special emphasis on climate change impacts and adaptation for global seaports and other key transport infrastructure. For example, a technical assistance project with a focus on seaports and airports in small island developing States in the Caribbean aims to enhance the knowledge and understanding of climate change impacts among policymakers, transport planners and operators in small island developing States, and to strengthen their capacity to effectively plan and develop the requisite adaptation measures to enhance the resilience of their key coastal transport infrastructure.

- *Promoting efficient multimodal and transit transport networks and transport corridor development.*

Well-functioning transport networks and corridors are essential for countries' trade, economic development and social progress. They are also critical for regional and global integration, in particular of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States. Relevant work by UNCTAD in this regard includes a capacity-building and institution-building programme aimed at supporting efficient transit and/or multimodal transport corridor management systems, as well as a cluster approach that promotes collaborative structures and/or mechanisms between public and private sector stakeholders. A cluster approach integrates transport infrastructure and logistics services with economic activities within the corridor.

- *Promoting sustainable freight transport systems (road, rail, maritime and ports, urban, etc.) and freight transport finance.*

To support developing countries in developing and implementing sustainable freight transport systems that are efficient, safe, socially inclusive, accessible, reliable and environmentally friendly, while being resilient to disruptions, including those caused by climate change and natural disasters, UNCTAD has developed a sustainable freight transport toolkit that includes the following: sustainable freight transport portal; sustainable freight transport and green freight transport training programme (15 modules), which can be tailored to meet the needs and requirements of countries and regions; and the Framework for Sustainable Freight Transport, which sets out a methodology for sustainable freight transport strategy development and implementation. These tools aim to build and strengthen the capacity of key freight transport

stakeholders, including government authorities, policymakers, transport infrastructure managers, freight transport and logistics service providers and shippers, to effectively plan, design, develop and implement sustainable freight transport strategies.



## RESULTS AND IMPACT AT A GLANCE

- A technical assistance project is being implemented on building the capacities of developing countries to shift towards sustainable freight transport, funded by the United Nations Development Account. Phase 1 of the project focuses on the two main transit transport corridors in East Africa, namely the Northern and Central corridors that bring together Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania. Phase 2 focuses on the sustainable freight transport challenges faced by selected small island developing States in the Caribbean, and aims to devise workable sustainable maritime transport solutions and response mechanisms.
- In collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme, UNCTAD supported the Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority in developing a green freight programme.
- Under the project entitled “Climate change impacts on coastal transport infrastructure in the Caribbean: enhancing the adaptive capacity of small island developing States”, funded by the United Nations Development Account, case studies are carried out to assess the climate-related risk and vulnerability of seaports and airports in Jamaica and Saint Lucia and develop a transferable methodology to assist in developing adaptation options for seaports and airports in small island developing States. Successful national capacity-building workshops were held in Jamaica and Saint Lucia in May 2017 and a regional capacity-building workshop was held in Barbados in December 2017. Results of the case studies suggest that key international transport assets in both countries are at high risk of marine inundation under different climate scenarios.



## DONORS/ FUNDING SOURCE

Current: United Nations  
Development Account

