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UN Global Supply Chain Forum 2026 set to take place in Saudi Arabia

The biennial forum will chart paths to more sustainable and resilient supply chains – a key step to ensuring that global trade fosters prosperity for everyone, everywhere.

Geneva, 22 October 2025 - Announced by Secretary-General [Rebeca Grynspan](#) at the 16th United Nations Conference on Trade and Development ([UNCTAD16](#)) in Geneva, Switzerland, the second edition of the UN Global Supply Chain Forum (GSCF) will take place in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in November 2026, in partnership with the Saudi Ports Authority (MAWANI).

The event will bring together governments, business leaders and experts worldwide to strengthen global trade resilience and promote sustainable logistics systems.

Held every two years by UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the UN Global Supply Chain Forum serves as a platform to address disruptions caused by geopolitical tensions, climate impacts and shifting trade patterns, aiming to identify actionable solutions that make international supply chains more sustainable, inclusive and resilient.



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The 2026 forum will confront the most pressing challenges facing international supply chains at a time of rising geopolitical instability, shifting [tariffs](#) and mounting [economic uncertainty](#).

The outlook for global shipping, which carries over 80% of the world's merchandise trade, remains fragile. UNCTAD [analysis](#) has shown that seaborne trade, which grew by 2.2% in 2024, is projected to slow to just 0.5% in 2025 before stabilizing at around 2% annually through 2030.

Meanwhile, long-distance detours resulted in record ton-miles in 2024, leading to increased emissions and transport costs. Average port waiting times have also grown, especially in developing countries.

"We must ensure the triple transition to zero-carbon shipping, digital systems and resilient reconfigured trade routes are just transitions," says UNCTAD Secretary-General Rebeca Grynspan.

"This forthcoming Forum will exemplify how sustained collective commitment and meaningful international cooperation can drive the creation of resilient, sustainable, and inclusive global supply chains — a goal that lies at the heart of our shared development agenda."

Priorities at the high-stakes forum

The 2026 forum will build on deliberations from the inaugural GSCF held in Bridgetown, Barbados, and the outcome of an [UNCTAD16 ministerial roundtable](#) dedicated to supply chain issues.

The forum will promote concerted efforts to mitigate, respond and adapt to supply chain disruptions, while accelerating targeted collaboration on policy and regulatory issues, sustainable and resilient infrastructure investment, as well as coordinated crisis-response mechanisms to ensure that essential goods continue to flow even in emergencies.

It will also shore up support for economies disproportionately hit by supply chain disruptions, particularly least developed countries and small island developing states, as well as landlocked developing countries that are grappling with freight costs up to three times higher than the global average.

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Main policy priorities at the forum include:

- Strengthen critical infrastructure including ports, corridors and inland transport nodes.
- Accelerate digital trade systems to boost efficiency and address cybersecurity risks.
- Support small businesses and vulnerable economies with improved trade facilitation, simplified trade regimes, affordable finance and targeted technical assistance.
- Modernize fleets and promote sustainable maritime practices to reduce costs, improve efficiency and decarbonize shipping.
- Protect and upskill the maritime and transport workforce, ensuring operational safety, inclusiveness and decent work.

Longstanding partnership for inclusive development

As the host of the 2026 forum, Saudi Arabia reaffirms its commitment to advancing multilateral cooperation and supporting efforts to make global trade a catalyst for shared prosperity.

"We are excited in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to host the UN Global Supply Chain Forum 2026. This gathering reflects our commitment to building resilient, human-centered, environmentally responsible and economically vibrant supply chains," says Saleh bin Nasser Al-Jasser, Minister of Transport and Logistics Services of Saudi Arabia.

"As a global hub connecting three continents, Saudi Arabia is dedicated to fostering innovation and global cooperation that protect people, preserve our planet, and power sustainable prosperity for generations to come," the minister adds.

As part of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030, a long-term strategy for economic diversification and development, the country's continued partnership with UNCTAD will be vital to enhancing supply chain sustainability and resilience, including through capacity building on [transport, logistics and trade facilitation](#).

About UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

UNCTAD is the UN's leading body on trade and development. Founded in 1964, it supports 195 member states with expert analysis, technical assistance, and serves as a platform for intergovernmental dialogue.

UNCTAD helps developing countries make trade, finance, investment, and the digital economy work for inclusive and sustainable development.