

Part II: Report of the Secretary-General on Oceans and the Law of the Sea 2017

Contribution of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

Developments related to sections of General Assembly resolution 71/257

Capacity-building

In paragraph 31 of resolution 71/257, the General Assembly “acknowledges the importance of capacity-building for developing States, in particular the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States, as well as coastal African States, for the protection of the marine environment and the conservation and sustainable use of marine resources”. In addition, in paragraph 39, the General Assembly “welcomes the role of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, within its mandate, reiterated by member States at its fourteenth session, held in Nairobi from 17 to 22 July 2016, to continue to assist developing countries, upon request, in enhancing the sustainability and climate resilience of their transport systems and infrastructure, including coastal transport infrastructure”.

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) continued to contribute to capacity-building efforts through the implementation of a technical assistance project, funded from the United Nations Development Account, entitled “Climate change impacts on coastal transport infrastructure in the Caribbean: enhancing the adaptive capacity of small island developing States”. The project draws on earlier related research and analytical work as well as on the outcome of a number of intergovernmental expert meetings on climate change adaptation for ports and other coastal infrastructure. The project aims in particular at enhanced understanding/technical knowledge among policymakers, transport planners and transport infrastructure managers from small island developing States of the impacts of climate change on coastal transport infrastructure, in particular seaports and airports, and at building their capacity to develop adequate adaptation response measures. As project outputs, case studies on Jamaica and Saint Lucia and a methodology for assessing climate-related impacts and adaptation options were prepared.

Work under the project was selected for inclusion in the report of the United Nations Secretary-General’s High-level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport, *Mobilizing Sustainable Transport for Development*, published in October 2016. Project implementation activities in 2016 included site visits to Jamaica and Saint Lucia, which provided opportunities to meet with key national stakeholders in relevant administrations and enlist their support for the project, collect relevant data and information, and carry out field visits to key transport facilities. UNCTAD also organized a technical expert meeting on climate change impacts and adaptation for coastal transport infrastructure in Caribbean small island developing States, held in Geneva from 29 June to 1 July 2016, bringing together leading experts from international and regional agencies, academics, researchers and private sector representatives to discuss and refine the draft case study reports and draft methodology. The meeting also facilitated discussions on potential collaboration on climate change and coastal erosion in small island developing States, leading to joint research activities among participating experts that could feed, in turn, into the project and build the capacity of small island developing States to address climate change impacts on their coastal transport infrastructure.

Another project, on building the capacities of developing countries to shift towards sustainable freight transport, aims at strengthening the capacity of policymakers (in transport, infrastructure and finance), transport operators, including in the maritime transport sector, and key financial institutions in sub-

Saharan Africa, in particular East Africa, and in small island developing States to promote and finance sustainable freight transport systems through sound transport policy measures and adequate financing actions and mechanisms. Deliverables under the programme include a training toolkit on sustainable freight transport and its financing and a web platform and portal (<http://unctadsftportal.org/>), with online training modules, case studies and various sustainable freight transport initiatives. One specific module entitled “Transitioning to low-carbon shipping: sustainable sea transport solutions for small island developing States: Pacific island country case studies” was developed in collaboration with the University of the South Pacific/Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (<https://unctadsftportal.org/sftftoolkit/transitioningtolowcarbonshippingmodule/>).

In addition, UNCTAD contributed actively to transport-related activities carried out under the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held from 7 to 18 November 2016 in Marrakesh. Through its contributions, UNCTAD helped translate the political consensus of twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties into tangible steps towards implementation of the Paris Agreement as well as enhance the visibility of the freight transport sector and strengthen its position as a key thematic area requiring action for effective implementation of the Paris Agreement. Panellists and speakers from Governments (Bangladesh, Chile, Morocco and the Philippines), the International Maritime Organization, International Civil Aviation Organization, East Africa’s Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority, Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport and academia shared their perspectives with representatives from Government, industry, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, financing institutions, academia, civil society and other parties involved or interested in freight transport and its sustainability. UNCTAD also organized a side event on the theme of strengthening the focus on freight transport in the climate agenda, as well as a breakout session on making freight transport fit for a low carbon future, in collaboration with the Climate and Clean Air Coalition under the United Nations Environment Programme in the context of the Transport Day coordinated by the Partnership on Sustainable, Low Carbon Transport. In addition, UNCTAD contributed to a joint side event, with the International Civil Aviation Organization and International Maritime Organization, on Sustainable Development Goal 9 (build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation), which entails international maritime and air transport, as well as a UN-Oceans side event focused on Sustainable Development Goal 14 (conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development), which involves science-based solutions for achieving adaptation and mitigation goals.

Marine environment and marine resources

In paragraph 202 of resolution 71/257, the General Assembly “recognizes the importance of improving understanding of the impact of climate change on oceans and seas, and recalls that in ‘The future we want’, States noted that sea-level rise and coastal erosion are serious threats for many coastal regions and islands, particularly in developing countries, and in this regard called upon the international community to enhance its efforts to address these challenges”. In paragraph 203, the General Assembly “notes with concern the severe impacts on coastal communities of extreme weather events, such as tropical cyclones and associated storm surges, and encourages cooperative actions by relevant United Nations bodies and organizations, including the World Meteorological Organization, to assist States in improving forecasting of such events and its application in multi-hazard early warning systems and risk management”.

UNCTAD has been working since 2008, as part of its work on transport policy and legislation, on the implications of climate change for maritime transportation.¹ This work focuses on impacts and adaptation

¹ For further information, see <http://unctad.org/ttl/legal>. References to UNCTAD work include the report on impacts and adaptation of Working Group II for the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (2014), as well as the climate change policy framework for Jamaica (2015).

needs of seaports and other coastal transport infrastructure. Ongoing UNCTAD work in the field builds on its earlier research and the outcomes of a series of expert meetings; it includes in particular the above-mentioned technical assistance project on climate change impacts on coastal transport infrastructure in the Caribbean.

Ports are likely to be affected directly and indirectly by climatic changes, such as rising sea levels, extreme weather events and rising temperatures, with broader implications for international trade and for the development prospects of the most vulnerable nations, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States. Given their strategic role as part of the globalized trading system, adapting ports in different parts of the world to the impacts of climate change and enhancing their climate-resilience is of considerable importance. UNCTAD research and analytical work in the field as well as relevant consensus-building activities have significantly helped to raise awareness and advance the international debate.² Important synergies are created through excellent inter-agency cooperation and the establishment of a committed multidisciplinary network of experts.

UNCTAD has also furthered its collaboration with relevant intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, with a view to ensuring that the special needs and capacity requirements of developing countries are taken into consideration. In this respect, UNCTAD continued its collaboration with the Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations and its Expert Group on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for International Transport Networks,³ which was established following a joint Economic Commission for Europe-UNCTAD workshop on the subject. In addition, UNCTAD continued its participation in the Working Group on Climate Change Adaptation for Maritime and Inland Port and Navigation Infrastructure established in 2015 under the World Association for Waterborne Transport Infrastructure (PIANC). The collaboration is expected to provide important synergies with related UNCTAD work, in particular its technical assistance in the field, which focuses on climate change impacts and adaptation for critical transport infrastructure in Caribbean small island developing States. UNCTAD has also participated in the Advisory Panel for the peer review of the Regional Framework for Adaptation to Climate Change in Coastal and Marine Areas in the Mediterranean. The Regional Framework was developed under the auspices of the Mediterranean Action Plan of the United Nations Environment Programme and endorsed by the Contracting Parties to the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment and the Coastal Region of the Mediterranean (known as the Barcelona Convention), at their nineteenth meeting in 2016.

Coordination and cooperation

In paragraph 340 of resolution 71/257, the General Assembly “encourages States to work closely with and through international organizations, funds and programmes, as well as the specialized agencies of the United Nations system and relevant international conventions, to identify emerging areas of focus for improved coordination and cooperation and how best to address these issues”. In paragraph 344, the General Assembly “welcomes the work done by the secretariats of relevant United Nations specialized agencies, programmes, funds and bodies and the secretariats of related organizations and conventions to enhance inter-agency coordination and cooperation on ocean issues, including, where appropriate, through UN-Oceans, the inter-agency coordination mechanism on ocean and coastal issues within the United Nations system”.

UNCTAD is committed to cooperating with a wide range of intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia and civil society with a view to building synergies. For instance, in

² Ibid.

³ See Economic Commission for Europe, Inland Transport Committee, 2013, *Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for International Transport Networks, Expert Group Report* (ECE/TRANS/238). Available at http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/trans/main/wp5/publications/climate_change_2014.pdf (accessed 8 June 2017).

the context of its technical assistance project on climate change impacts on coastal transport infrastructure in the Caribbean, UNCTAD participates proactively in many relevant collaborative initiatives, namely (a) the Expert Group on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for International Transport Networks of the Economic Commission for Europe; (b) the industry-led PIANC Working Group on Climate Change Adaptation for Maritime and Inland Port and Navigation Infrastructure; (c) the Advisory Panel to the Regional Framework for Adaptation to Climate Change in Coastal and Marine Areas in the Mediterranean (United Nations Environment Programme/Mediterranean Action Plan); (d) the Technical Working Group on Transport supporting the United Nations Secretary-General High-level Advisory Group on Sustainable Transport; and (e) the inter-agency UN-Oceans initiative.

In addition, in the context of the project on building the capacities of developing countries to shift towards sustainable freight transport, UNCTAD is cooperating with the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa, the East African Community, the Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority and the Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency.