Global maritime transport developments 2018-2019

Maritime transport sails challenging seas...
Over four fifths of world merchandise trade by volume was carried by sea in 2018.

However, it lost momentum in 2018.

Slower maritime trade growth

International maritime trade volumes

Containerized trade growth

Container port throughput growth

2017 2018

4.1% 2.7%

6% 2.6%

6.7% 4.7%
Drivers of uncertainty are manifold

- Accelerated environmental agenda
- Trade policy crosscurrents
- Shifts in globalization patterns
- 2020 IMO Sulphur cap and fuel economics
- Geopolitics
- Trends in China’s economy
- Climate change impacts and adaptation
- Technological disruptions
Maritime trade projected to grow in 2019-2024 period, amid uncertainty

On the upside

- **Belt & Road Initiative**: Potential to generate trade volumes and improve connectivity
- **Growth in developing economies**: New demand patterns and consumption needs
- **Energy transition and shift in mix**: Potential new cargoes and shift in trade patterns
- **Trade deals**: New deals and those in the pipeline

**Average annual growth**

- 2017: +4.1%
- 2018: +2.7%
- 2019: +2.6%
- 2019-2024: +3.4%
The maritime transport landscape is changing and shifting towards a new normal. The effects of the changing course permeate all aspects of shipping: demand (maritime trade), supply (ships and ports), markets (rates) and the relevant regulatory and legal frameworks.

- **Shift in globalization patterns**: Regionalization of trade flows & supply chains, greater role of services and technology in manufacturing and production processes.
- **Moderated economic & merchandise trade growth**: Compared with growth rates seen prior to 2009.
- **Changes in China’s economy**: And its role in driving international maritime trade growth.
- **Accelerated environmental agenda, Energy transition and Climate risks**: And disruptions to transport networks.
- **Greater role of next generation technologies**: In maritime transport. Scale is not the only driver of value (technologies and intangibles).
Greater interlinkages between oceans, climate change and sustainable development

- Reducing global emissions from shipping
  - 4th IMO Greenhouse Gas emissions study (2020)
  - IMO strategy on the reduction of GHG from ships

- Climate-risk assessment, adaptation and resilience building of coastal transport infrastructure
  - An emerging policy concern
A larger role played by technology and services

Autonomous ships may soon become a reality

- Changes in skills’ requirements for jobs
- Potential increase in shore-based jobs and reductions in the number of crew on board vessels
- Requirement for seafarers to have new/different skills and knowledge (safety, efficiency)
- Women may enjoy increased opportunities to pursue a maritime career.
5 of the top 10 most connected economies are in Asia, 4 are in Europe and 1 is in North America.

Since 2006, the most connected country – China – has improved its index by 51%.

The average index increased by 24%.

The lowest index value recorded in 2019 was below the lowest index value recorded in 2006.

Growing connectivity divide: least connected countries including several SIDS, saw very little improvement over 2006-2019.

Countries’ geographical position is a given, but connectivity is not.

Port and shipping operations can improve shipping connectivity by leveraging, for example, digitalization and next generation technologies for efficiency and productivity gains.
Reducing port waiting time may involve a portfolio of measures, including call optimization solutions, trade and transport facilitation, and improved cargo handling services.
• UNCTAD Review of Maritime Transport:
  • http://unctad.org/rmt
  • rmt@unctad.org

• Maritime Statistics:
  • http://stats.unctad.org/Maritime
  • Maritime transport profiles

• UNCTAD Trade Logistics Branch
  • Twitter: http://twitter.com/UNCTAD_TLB
  • News: http://unctad.org/TransportNews
  • Web: http://unctad.org/TLB