UNCTAD NEWS

The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) has issued its Third Quarter 2016 Transport & Trade Facilitation newsletter, No71.

This 25-page document contains the usual wealth of sound information on trade and logistics. Africa is particularly well served with pages on activities in Nigeria, Ghana, Sudan, Liberia, Rwanda and elsewhere.

Of particular interest is a one page piece on seaborne trade in 2015 where it is reported that for the first time in UNCTAD’s record world seaborne trade exceeded 10 billion tons.

Another article outlines the underlying causes for the demise of Hanjin Shipping following its recent insolvency.


Trade-related freight transport is expected to grow by a factor of 4.3 between 2010 and 2050, but addressing climate change requires that it become more energy efficient, an UNCTAD official said earlier this month, outlining a series of solutions ahead of an UNCTAD meeting at COP 22* on freight efficiency.

This was reported in a press statement from Geneva on 3 November.

Freight transport – which includes road, rail, sea and air transport – accounts for roughly 7% of global greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), and emissions from trade-related sources are expected to increase by a factor of 3.9 between 2010 and 2050, Ms. Frida Youssef, head of UNCTAD’s transport section, said.

She added, ‘Freight transport is central to the goal of expanding trade and creating jobs, but we need to get emissions down. Developing countries which are investing in infrastructure may have an opportunity get their transport infrastructure right.’

Solutions to make freight transport more energy efficient include better use of technology and innovation, use of cleaner fuels and more efficient transport, regulations, and other measures too.

Several developing countries have begun to boost the efficiency of their freight transport. The 2012 China Green Freight Initiative aims to improve fuel
efficiency, reduce CO₂, and air pollutant emissions, by adopting cleaner technologies and smarter freight management practices.

It is understood that Indonesia has introduced comprehensive policies to promote sustainable freight transport systems by improving fuel efficiency and reducing the transport burden on roads, which currently account for about 70% of freight ton-kilometres.

Approaches in other countries, such as India, included dedicated freight corridors to shift freight traffic from roads to rail. Africa’s Northern Corridor links landlocked Uganda, Rwanda, Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Burundi with the Kenyan port of Mombasa, helping to boost trade while boosting the efficiency of freight transport. Since the route was re-established, freight costs have dropped from Mombasa to Nairobi by 56% and from Mombasa to Goma by 38%.

UNCTAD assists developing countries to make informed policy choices, addressing the emerging environmental and social challenges in relation to transport, and to provide the associated capacity-building needs.

* COP22 Marrakech Climate Change Conference, 7 to 18 November.