



UN-ECE Inland Transport Committee

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LEVERAGING EXISTING INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY SOLUTIONS AS ENABLERS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT: WHAT ROOM FOR ENHANCED INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

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Mr. Chair, colleagues:

The COVID-19 pandemic has given a push to international transport connectivity solutions. In the United Nations, we, that is UNCTAD, ECE and the other regional commissions, are receiving more requests for support our members in this regard than before. Now, we must lock-in the progress made during lock-down.

To ensure the facilitation of trade and transport while at the same time protecting our populations from the pandemic, many existing UN solutions are being implemented. These include global standards such as those developed by UN/CEFACT, the TIR Convention, corridor solutions, ASYCUDA, Trade Information Portals, port reforms, and much more.

The movement of goods is less of a challenge than the movement of people. Let me give you one piece of latest data that illustrates this point. The number of passenger ship arrivals in the world's ports has gone down by 13.9% between 2019 and 2020, while the number of container ship arrivals has gone down by only 3.2%. Put differently, the passenger ship calls declined four times more than the container ship calls.¹

UNCTAD, together with the ECE and the other regional commissions, have embarked on a major joint project that builds on our existing successful programmes.² We address three priorities:

- First, contactless solutions that reduce physical contact among people in supply chains.
- Second, seamless connectivity that eliminates obstacles to cross-border trade and transport.
- And third collaborative solutions that strengthen regional and sectoral cooperation.

This project very much responds to the theme of this ITC session, and I want to thank the ECE team for both, the great collaboration under the project, and hosting this session.

Mr Chair, the international solutions that we are promoting help achieve both: they reduce trade friction, and they protect populations. It would be the wrong image to think of a "balance" or "trade-off", where it is claimed that you would either facilitate trade or protect the populations.

In conclusion, it is important to continue with trade and transport facilitation reforms and lock-in the progress made during lock-down.

Thank you

¹ Source: UNCTAD, based on data provided by MarineTraffic. For further information see <http://stats.unctad.org/maritime>

² For further information see <http://UNTTTC.org>