

UNCTAD contribution to Part II of the Report of the Secretary-General on Oceans and the Law of the Sea 2023

I. Developments related to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 77/248, 30 December 2022

1. Conservation and sustainable use of living marine resources

Responding to paragraphs 50, 164, 173, 178, 208, 217, 218, 237, 238, 243, 294, and 300 of the General Assembly resolution 77/248, UNCTAD has continued its contribution to the implementation of trade-related aspects of SDG 14 on biodiversity, sustainable ocean economy sectors development and response measures to the marine plastics pollution challenge, sustainable maritime transport and resilience ports in particular with reference to coastal developing countries and small island developing States (SIDS); as well as on strengthening international cooperation in these areas. Relevant work, including research, technical assistance, intergovernmental dialogue, and related capacity building activities, as detailed further below, also contributes to implementation of other relevant of Sustainable Development Goals such as 2, 3, 8, 10, 12, 13 and 17.

a. [The Bridgetown Covenant \(2021\) and the role of UNCTAD on ocean-based capacity building](#)

The [Bridgetown Covenant](#) calls for a continued support, through policy dialogue and cooperation mechanisms, international and regional transport networks, ensuring their sustainability and resilience, and promote the conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources, and to support small island developing States, most notably in addressing their specific vulnerabilities, build resilience and promote structural economic transformation and productive capacities. UNCTAD also received a new mandate to address the discharge of plastic litter and other waste in oceans and significantly reducing marine pollution of all kinds and ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns.

b. [TDB event \(decarbonisation\) Governing board GA](#)

The high-level segment of the Trade and Development Board of UNCTAD, to be held on 19 June 2023, will examine the [Decarbonization opportunities and challenges in the Blue Economy](#). The segment will examine the central role of decarbonization for the sustainability of the ocean economy. Expert panellists will address opportunities and challenges, good practices and lessons learned in selected sectors of export interest to developing countries namely: sustainable fisheries, sustainable maritime transport, sustainable coastal and marine tourism, and ocean energy production.

c. Oceans Economy and Trade Strategies (OETS)

During the reporting period UNCTAD continued the implementation of In the context of the [UNCTAD-DOALOS Development Account project on oceans economy and trade strategies](#). In November 2022, UNCTAD launched the publication "[Swordfish Market Analysis Report Barbados](#)" (UNCTAD/DITC/TED/2022/3). The need for a market analysis was identified in the [OETS Barbados](#) and was selected by this country as a priority for implementation. The report documents the outcomes of the investigation of the market potential (both local and export) for swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*). The objective of this preliminary study is to expand sustainable production opportunities available within the Barbados quota allocations for swordfish under the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT). The OETS project, aimed at building capacity in identifying oceans-based products and services in light of SDG 14 was finalised in 2022.

d. Blue BIOTRADE

UNCTAD completed the implementation of the [Blue BioTrade initiative](#) in January 2023. The project aims to promote trade and investment in marine biological resources in line with social, economic and environmental sustainability criteria, known as the BioTrade Principles and Criteria (2017 and revised in 2020). In that framework, in 2021 UNCTAD started the implementation of a regional Blue BioTrade project "[Seizing the trade and business potential of Blue BioTrade products for promoting sustainable livelihoods and conservation of marine diversity in selected OECS countries \(Blue BioTrade project\)](#)," which is conducted in cooperation with the Organization of East Caribbean States (OECS) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), and with the financial support of the European Union through the Regional Integration through Growth, Harmonisation and Technology (RIGHT) Programme. The project's overall objective is to empower small-

[alternatives for plastics](#) in December 2022. The potential trade related measures to address plastic pollution was presented to UN Member States in a [UNCTAD submission](#) to the Second Session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee on Plastic Pollution (IN-2) in January 2023. UNCTAD has also organised side events on the implementation of the so-

garner the potential of this industry to contribute to the livelihood of coastal communities while improving the food security of the Haitian population and generating export earnings.

In Angola, fisheries and aquaculture are seen as a sector of major potential for sustainable diversification of the economy and exports for the country, especially through increased value addition. The potential was highlighted in a National Green Export baseline study on various green sectors of Angola in 2018. To promote the Blue Economy's potential in Angola, in October 2022, UNCTAD organized a [Training workshop on the Blue Economy, with a focus on fisheries sector development and meeting international standards for fisheries exports](#) training workshop for over 100 Angolan fisheries and aquaculture sector stakeholders, basing on the [UNCTAD Training Manual: Building capacity in the LDCs to fully harness the potential of fisheries and aquaculture](#), which was adapted to the Angolan context and translated into Portuguese, and provides key tools for the further development of fisheries and aquaculture in Angola. The training included ahead-of-the curve capacity building in fisheries and aquaculture development, with experts coming from UNCTAD, UNCTAD's Center of Excellence Nha Trang University in Viet Nam, ISO, Marine Stewardship Council and FAO. During the workshop, dedicated working groups discussed the key topics to allow for better value addition in the Angolan fisheries sector and came up with detailed recommendations for next steps in the areas of (i) Conducive Environment for Fisheries and Aquaculture Development and Exports; (ii) National Quality Infrastructure (including SPS, Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), and food safety); (iii) Marine Spatial Planning as a tool to manage the Blue Economy; as well as (iv) International Sustainability Standards and Certification.

The rapid and comprehensive strengthening of the Angolan National Quality Infrastructure (NQI) to allow for improved food safety, quality and value addition in fisheries emerged as a major recommendation of the October 2022 training workshop. To help implement the recommendation, UNCTAD organized a [Joint UNCTAD-ISO training workshop on National Quality Infrastructure for the Angolan agrifood sector, with a focus on fisheries, tropical fruits and coffee](#) in May 2023. In addition to providing hands-on training and capacity building on the topic to the Angolan fisheries sector authorities, private sector entities, universities, industry associations and cooperatives, the workshop helped the participants to develop a SWOT analysis and a rapid assessment of the Angolan NQI focusing on the agrifood sector, as well as to prepare an action plan on how to strengthen the system such that safe and high quality fisheries products can be produced for the national market and for exports from Angola. These outcome documents will provide essential, substantive input to the ongoing process of developing a National Quality Policy for Angola. An article was produced to provide visibility for the Blue Economy support work done by UNCTAD in Angola, entitled [Angola casts net wider to scale up fish exports](#).

In Haiti, UNCTAD prepared two studies focusing on the potential of the fisheries and aquaculture sector to generate revenues for SDG financing, once the sector's productive capacities have first been upgraded. UNCTAD also prepared a detailed gaps assessment of the gaps and potential in the policies, legal frameworks, institutions and productive capacities in three priority zones for fisheries development in Haiti. Based on this, a budgeted needs assessment was drafted, to provide the basis for the development of a comprehensive fisheries and aquaculture support programme in Haiti, in line with

sector coordination mechanism involving the key partners of the Government, private sector, universities and higher education institutes, as well as the civil society. In addition, a study on "*International fisheries access agreements: challenges and opportunities*" was prepared, showing that past and ongoing fisheries access agreements are very diverse, with modalities and outcomes that vary from case to case, depending on the parties to the agreement, their political and economic relations, the fish species, the fishery, and gear type. The study recommended ensuring that fisheries access agreements respect conservation and management measures; e

value of assets exposed to episodic coastal flooding could increase to 12 – 20 % of the global GDP, if no adaptation measures are taken ([Kirezci et al., 2020](#)).

In the light of long infrastructure lifespans and the cost of inaction, the need for effective response measures is becoming increasingly urgent; for developing countries - often at the frontline of impacts but with low adaptive capacity and facing a worsening debt crisis - better availability and access to infrastructure adaptation finance, including in the form of grants rather than loans will be critical. This issue has been highlighted by UNCTAD member States in the [Bridgetown Covenant](#) (at para. 87) and was the subject of a recent [UNCTAD policy brief](#) with a focus on ports and other key transport infrastructure assets.

With estimated adaptation costs in developing countries five to ten times greater than current public adaptation finance flows ([UNEP, 2022](#)),³ ensuring related investment and funding is adequate will require a major collaborative effort by policymakers and development partners and a shift in focus. According to [OECD, 2022](#), in 2020, total climate finance provided and mobilised by developed countries for developing countries amounted to US\$ 83.3 billion in 2020, over 70% of which in the form of loans. Of this total, just US\$ 28.6 billion (34%) was for adaptation, and only a fraction of this amount will have been targeting climate change adaptation for ports and other critical coastal infrastructure. In the light of what is at stake, resilience-building, adaptation and DRR for ports and other critical transport infrastructure assets should be considered a most valuable investment for a sustainable future. According to WB estimates ([Hallegatte et al., 2019](#)), overall net benefits of investing in resilient infrastructure in developing countries could amount to US\$ 4.2 trillion over the lifetime of new infrastructure – a US\$4 benefit for each dollar invested in resilience.

Related issues were also discussed at UNCTAD's [Multiyear Expert Meeting on Transport, Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation](#) in July 2022, as part of a dedicated session focusing on Strengthening legal, policy and collaborative approaches to keep trade flowing during the pandemic and beyond, where a number of important technical guidance by the European Commission, as well as by the World Association for Waterborne Infrastructure (PIANC) and the recent OECS CCASAP were presented and discussed. In response to a request by the OECS Commission, reiterated at this meeting for technical assistance based on earlier project on [Climate change impacts on coastal transport infrastructure in the Caribbean: enhancing the adaptive capacity of Small Is](#)

b. Strengthening international cooperation

UNCTAD work on issues related to climate change adaptation, resilience building and DRR for transport infrastructure, benefits from close cooperation and synergies with a wide range of partners, and with a multidisciplinary network of collaborators, including international and regional academic experts, among others (see e.g. <https://SIDSport-ClimateAdapt.unctad.org>).

UNCTAD collaborates with other UN Agencies in the context of UN-OCEANS, UN-DRR (including in the development and implementation of recommendations of the SLG on DRR for Resilience), as well as in the context of the UNFCCC (eg contributions to the [6th Workshop, Glasgow Sharm el-Sheikh Work Programme on the Global Goal on Adaptation](#), and the 1st workshop on loss and damage) and the ongoing work of the Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action. Relevant engagement in support of dialogue and consensus building on oceans and climate action during the UNFCCC COP 27 in Sharm El Sheikh and SB 58 (Bonn) include contribution to and co-organization of a number of side events including:

- ◁ [The power of inter-agency cooperation to scale up ocean-climate action: Case studies, challenges and opportunities](#), organized by UN-Oceans Members including IOC-UNESCO, UN/DOALOS, UNEP, UNFCCC in partnership with IAEA, FAO, UNCTAD, UNESCAP and WMO, on 12 November 2022 (online and in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt);
- ◁ [Producing future marine fuels - Opportunities for scaling up renewable energy production in developing countries](#), organized by IMO, UNCTAD, IRENA and the World Bank, on 10 November 2022 (online and in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt);
- ◁ [Promoting resilience and sustainability of transport systems in Landlocked Developing Countries](#), organized by UNCTAD, UN-OHRLLS and the Republic of Botswana, on 9 November 2022 (online and in Sharm el Sheikh, Egypt)
- ◁ [How combatting plastic pollution and illegal traffic in plastic waste can help reduce carbon emissions?](#), organised by UNCTAD, BRS Conventions Secretariat, UNODC and UNEP on the 10 November 2022 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt.
- ◁ [A blue transformation to achieve Paris Agreement goals](#), organised by UNCTAD, FAO and AU-IBAR, at the virtual Ocean Pavilion 2022, live day on aquatic food on the 14 November 2022 (online and Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt)
- ◁ Cutting transport emissions and adapting to climate change with infrastructure: Insights from building the Trans-European Transport Network, EU Side event at COP 27, 17 November 2022, Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt
- ◁ [Bonn Climate Change Conference \(SB58\) side event: Options for Scaling Climate Finance – Exploring Article 2.1c, the NCOG and JETPs](#), 6 June 2023 - 6 June 2023

In addition, UNCTAD continues to collaborate extensively with the UNECE Group of Experts on Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation, which had first been established in 2011, following a joint UNCTAD-UNECE workshop on the issue.

Also, worth noting is UNCTAD's ongoing research and capacity-building on [legal and regulatory issues](#) including a recent report on [COVID-19 and International Sale of Goods: Contractual devices for](#)

UNCTAD is supporting with analysis on the implications and implementation challenges of the WTO fisheries subsidies agreement, particularly for developing countries in the [Trade and Environment Review \(TER 2023\)](#).

consisted of ships capable of running on one or more fuels. To scale up the use of alternative fuels, low-emission energy supply infrastructure will be required including at ports.

Shipping cannot decarbonize on its own. Action across an ecosystem involving shipping and the energy sector and bringing together the broader industry that includes not only carriers but also ports, manufacturers, and shippers, investors, energy producers and distributors is crucial. This is recognized in the Clydebank Declaration of COP26 pledging to establish green shipping corridors, i.e., routes that leverage collaboration across multiple stakeholders operating or involved in activity between two ports. The aim is to offer bunkering options for vessels running on low or zero-carbon fuels, test various solutions and support first movers in their efforts.

The outlook for maritime transport and trade is challenging as the sector remains at risk in a stressed economic and geopolitical climate with many risks interacting in complex ways and across different timeframes and horizons. Efforts to implement [sustainable, low-carbon, smart](#) and [resilient maritime logistics including shipping and ports](#) is of the essence. UNCTAD has a critical role to play in supporting countries to achieve their energy, decarbonization and digital

a. Capacity building and consensus building activities

UNCTAD is already carrying out a range of activities aiming at supporting developing countries address the many challenges hindering the sustainability and resilience of their maritime transportation systems including shipping and ports. Underpinned by its three pillars of work, namely Research and Analysis

these data especially for SIDS can enable better informed impact assessments and support the decision-making process at the IMO.

In 2022, a new joint UNCTAD-ESCAP project entitled "[Analysis of maritime connectivity in ASEAN and Pacific SIDS](#)" was launched with the objective of analysing global and regional trends in maritime connectivity with a view to providing valuable inputs to policy discussions at national and sub-regional levels. The ultimate goal is to improve maritime connectivity in ASEAN and Pacific SIDS. An [analytical paper](#) has been prepared and several meetings have been held, including for the [Pacific SIDS](#).

In 2023, UNCTAD continued its work with the IMO and carried out another assessment of the potential implications of the medium-long term decarbonization measures being negotiated at IMO. In 2020 and 2021, as mentioned earlier, UNCTAD contributed [expert advice and substantive input](#) into IMO's mandated assessment of the potential impact on States of the proposed short-term IMO GHG reduction measure. This entailed carrying out a thorough evaluation of the potential impact on States of the proposed IMO short-term GHG measure before the adoption of relevant amendments by the IMO Marine Environment Protection Committee (MEPC) in June 2021. Guidance and expert knowledge provided by UNCTAD has helped inform deliberations under the IMO MEPC which, in 2021, approved short-term measures aimed at curbing carbon emissions from shipping while bearing in mind the special needs of vulnerable economies in particular SIDS.