

UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD) contribution to Part II of the Report of the Secretary-General on Oceans and the Law of the Sea 2026

Developments related to the implementation of General Assembly resolution 80/110, 9 December 2025

Reference period September 2025-August 2026

1. United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) contribution to the implementation of trade-related aspects of SDG 14, building of capacities and strengthening international cooperation

Responding to paragraphs 3, 21, 51, 181, 183-184, 209–215, 221, 224-225, 248 and 339 of General Assembly resolution [80/110](#), UNCTAD contributed to trade-related aspects of SDG 14 through policy-relevant analysis, data tools, targeted capacity-building and multi-stakeholder engagement, with particular attention to developing coastal States and small island developing States (SIDS).

UNCTAD strengthened international cooperation and contributed to the implementation of other relevant Sustainable Development Goals such as 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 17.

a. UNCTAD16 (Geneva, October 2025) and the Geneva Consensus: renewed mandate on the sustainably harness the ocean economy

[During the 16th session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development \(UNCTAD16\)](#), held in Geneva, Switzerland, from 20 to 23 October 2025, UNCTAD member States adopted the [Geneva Consensus](#). The Geneva Consensus reaffirms UNCTAD's role as the focal point within the United Nations system for the integrated treatment of trade and development and interrelated issues and sets out the organization's priorities for the next quadrennial. In particular, the Geneva Consensus provides a renewed mandate for UNCTAD's work on oceans by stating that

*“UNCTAD should continue to support developing countries to **sustainably harness the ocean economy** and the **effective implementation of relevant international commitments on maritime transport and ocean governance** as well as in the design and implementation of economic development strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources.”* (Geneva Consensus – Shaping the future: Driving economic transformation for equitable, inclusive and sustainable development, [TD/561/Add.2, 2025](#), para. 80.52).

This [renewed mandate](#) underpins UNCTAD's ongoing work across research and analysis, policy advice, intergovernmental dialogue and technical cooperation on trade-related aspects of SDG 14 and maritime transport, including support to developing coastal States and small island developing States (SIDS) in advancing sustainable ocean-based economies, addressing marine pollution challenges, implementing relevant legal instruments and promoting sustainable and climate-resilient maritime transport and ports for the ultimate purpose of supporting conservation and sustainable use of the oceans and their resources.

Also worth highlighting in this context is the [Ministerial Declaration of the SIDS to UNCTAD16](#), which highlights the importance of sustainable ocean economies and ocean-based industries, sustainable and climate-resilient transport systems, and sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and coastal tourism, as well as the need for UNCTAD's related support. It also reflects a commitment to align national and regional ocean-related policies with the priorities of the Nice Ocean Action Plan, adopted at the 3rd UN Ocean Conference in 2025, particularly by accelerating action to conserve and sustainably use the ocean, supporting the BBNJ Agreement and advancing ocean-based climate solutions.

b. Advancing implementation of trade-related aspects of SDG14 through the UN Global Seaweed Initiative and Follow-up actions

UNCTAD supported the launch and early operationalization of the [United Nations Global Seaweed Initiative \(UNGSI\)](#) as a platform to advance sustainable, inclusive and science-based development of the global seaweed sector and related marine-based value chains. [UNGSI was officially launched at the 2025 United Nations General Assembly](#) by France, Indonesia and Madagascar, in collaboration with FAO, UNIDO, UNESCO-IOC and the UN Global Compact (Global Seaweed Coalition). By UNFCCC COP30, Brazil and Chile had joined the initiative, and a [COP30 Plan of Action for the Multiple Benefits of Algae Aquaculture](#) was presented as part of the outcome of the [Global Climate Action Agenda at UNFCCC COP 30](#). Belize and the Republic of Korea have also recently joined the initiative. UNCTAD also produced a technical cooperation outcome publication on [“Seaweed for development: Trade, regulations and standards for inclusive growth”](#).

In June 2026, the United Nations Global Seaweed Initiative (UNGSI) will convene its first annual meeting in Geneva, bringing together its Members and Observers. The meeting will provide a platform to review progress in the implementation of defined priority actions, ongoing activities, assess recent developments in the global seaweed sector and exchange most recent experiences at the multilateral, regional and national level.

c. UNCTAD Review of Maritime Transport 2025: Staying the course in turbulent waters

UNCTAD launched the 2025 edition of its annual flagship report [Review of Maritime Transport](#) in September 2025, providing timely, policy-relevant insights on global maritime trade data and trends, supply chain disruptions, and an evolving operating and regulatory landscape under geopolitical and economic pressures. The report also highlights and considers longer-term shifts that are transforming the sector, including transitions to zero carbon, digital systems and new trade routes that pose challenges but also offer potential opportunities. It highlights 10 priority action areas for maritime transport stakeholders and governments, supported by UNCTAD with a view to achieving well-managed and inclusive transitions, including mainstreaming sustainability and resilience-building, managing and mitigating rising maritime transport costs, strengthening port performance, advancing trade facilitation, preparing for the use and carriage of alternative fuels, as well as strengthening effective protection of seafarer and enhancing international cooperation.

d. Intergovernmental deliberations on maritime transport and supply chain disruptions

Related issues were also considered in some depth at the [12th session of the Multiyear Expert Meeting on Transport Trade Logistics and Trade Facilitation](#), held on 13-14 April 2026, among others with a view to informing UNCTAD's related work as well as collective actions as part of the

UN Decade of Sustainable Transport 2026-2035, as well as discussions at the upcoming [2nd UNCTAD Global Supply Chain Forum](#), to be held in Riyadh on 29 November to 1 December 2026.

Concerns arising in connection with increasing disruptions to supply chains and implications, with implications for among others transport costs, as well as food and energy security were also considered by an [UNCTAD16 ministerial roundtable: Towards resilient, sustainable and inclusive supply chains and trade logistics](#).

e. Rapid assessment on Strait of Hormuz disruptions

With reference to paragraphs 142-144 of General Assembly resolution 80/110 and following the severe disruptions to shipping in the Strait of Hormuz, UNCTAD issued a quick assessment report in March 2026 entitled [“Strait of Hormuz disruptions: Implications for global trade and development”](#). The assessment underscored the vulnerability of critical maritime chokepoints to disruptions and related negative implications for supply chains and markets, global trade, environmental, seafarers, as well as key infrastructural assets such as ports and other socio-economic indicators, including energy prices, transport costs and food prices. In April 2026, UNCTAD issued a second assessment report entitled [“Disruptions: Growth and financial implications”](#) which provided an update of the situation in the Strait of Hormuz, addressed broader economic and financial implications of the disruption and set out priority action measures for managing the impacts. UNCTAD continues to carefully monitor ongoing developments in the Strait of Hormuz and their impact on global shipping, food, energy, and finance, including through a [Strait of Hormuz dashboard](#), which provides updated information.

f. Maritime trade data

UNCTAD produces, compiles and publishes extensive datasets covering various aspects and sub-sectors of shipping and ports. Together, these statistical resources and their visualization help to deepen analytical understanding and inform policies on sustainable, inclusive and resilience maritime transport. These are published on [UNCTAD’s Data Hub](#),¹ and in the [annual Review of Maritime Transport](#). They include data on the global shipping fleet ownership and registration, shipbuilding, ship recycling, port calls, port waiting time, world container port throughput, liner shipping connectivity, supply of seafarers, transport costs. In 2025, UNCTAD published for the first time its [country-level maritime trade data](#)², allowing for more granular insights to be derived. Together these key performance indicators are used to track the efficiency, sustainability and maritime transportation systems with a focus on developing countries, including SIDS, LDCs and LLDCs. These indicators are also presented in [maritime country profiles](#)³, allowing for quick relevant policy insights to be quickly generated. UNCTAD also produces the [Sustainable Freight Transport Index](#),⁴ benchmarking countries’ performance in a standardized and internationally comparable manner through integrated visual dashboards.

g. BBNJ Agreement and implications for maritime transport

UNCTAD is preparing an analytical document A brief on the implications of the new Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) for maritime transport. In this context, consideration is given to (i)

¹ See, <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/>.

² See, <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/datacentre/dataviewer/us.seabornetrade>. See also, <https://unctad.org/news/shipping-data-unctad-releases-new-seaborne-trade-statistics>.

³ See, <https://unctadstat.unctad.org/CountryProfile/en-GB/index.html>.

⁴ See, <https://sft-framework.unctad.org/about-sft-index>. See also, <https://sft-framework.unctad.org/what-is-sustainable-freight-transport>.

interaction of the BBNJ Agreement with the existing international legal framework governing maritime transport, including the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships' Ballast Water and Sediments, 2004 which seeks to reduce the transfer of invasive aquatic species, as well as (ii) emerging shipping practices that might pose a danger to biodiversity, and (iii) already established Area Management Tools developed under the auspices of the IMO. ;

h. Knowledge products and data for sustainable ocean-based economies

Ocean trade data, data visualisations and research

In addition to research on seaweed and related value chain, the research undertaken by UNCTAD includes the update and expansion of its [unique databases on trade in ocean goods and services](#) by creating indicators and updating data up to 2024, as well as developing '[Data Insights](#)' [visualisations](#).

Global trade analysis

Notably, the '[Global Trade Update – June edition](#)' launched ahead of the 3rd UN Ocean Conference (UNOC3) analysed the opportunities and challenges of trade in ocean goods and services considering tariff disruptions and the triple planetary crisis. It also examined emerging governance and sustainability risks linked to renewed interest in deep-sea mining for critical minerals, highlighting potential environmental impacts and the importance of a precautionary, well-regulated approach.

UNCTAD research featured prominently at UNOC-3, including in the [Ocean Action Panel 6 concept](#) note on sustainable ocean economies. As part of its knowledge dissemination and advocacy, UNCTAD published a [news item](#) (16 September 2025) highlighting the entry into force of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies and its implications for protecting fish stocks, curbing illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing, and safeguarding livelihoods and jobs in coastal communities.

E-training

To further disseminate its research and build policy capacity, UNCTAD delivered an online e-training course entitled "[Emerging issues at the interplay between trade and sustainable development](#)" (9–18 December 2025). The course strengthened participants' understanding of how trade policy interacts with climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution, and supported capacity-building for evidence-based policymaking relevant to SDGs 9, 12, 13 and 14.

It included dedicated modules on emerging ocean governance developments, notably the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (including key obligations and implementation challenges) and the Agreement on Marine Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), covering its main obligations and selected trade-related aspects, including marine genetic resources and access and benefit-sharing, as well as implications for shipping. The course attracted more than 120 global participants, reflecting strong interest across stakeholder groups.

Increasing visibility through social media

UNCTAD disseminates knowledge on the sustainable ocean economy and blue economy through its [social media platforms](#), thereby enhancing outreach and stakeholder engagement across regions. Since September 2025, its online presence in this thematic area has expanded significantly, with a 25 per cent increase in followers.

i. Technical cooperation in support of sustainable marine-based economies and productive capacities in coastal states and Small-Island Developing States (SIDS)

Mainstreaming climate-resilient blue economy in the BCLME Region (BCLME IV) Project (Angola, Namibia, South Africa): UNCTAD participates in the implementation of the [Mainstreaming climate-resilient blue economy in the BCLME Region](#) (BCLME IV) Project to enhance Blue Economy opportunities and mitigate related challenges, in collaboration with the Benguela Current Commission (BCC) Secretariat, with funding from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and monitoring and evaluation support from the UNDP.

The Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem (BCLME region) is a highly productive marine area in the southeast Atlantic Ocean that spans the coasts of Angola, Namibia, and South Africa. It is one of the world's significant coastal upwelling ecosystems, recognized for its rich biodiversity and abundant fisheries, which are vital to the economies of these three nations. The countries within the BCLME region rely heavily on their marine and non-marine resources for socio-economic development. Despite ongoing management efforts at both regional and national levels, the marine environment and living resources of the BCLME continue to be significantly affected by human activities and climate change. These combined pressures have led to drastic and, in some cases, irreversible changes. Key issues include the depletion of fish stocks, degradation of critical coastal habitats, and loss of marine biodiversity, all of which threaten the ecosystem's ability to provide essential goods and services.

Against this background, the objective of the project is to promote the development of a climate-resilient Blue Economy within the framework of the updated Strategic Action Programme (SAP) for the Benguela Current Large Marine Ecosystem. In the long term, this will contribute to the restoration of depleted marine resources and degraded habitats, enhance livelihood opportunities for coastal communities, and increase the resilience of marine ecosystems and these communities to the impacts of climate change.

By strengthening policy and regulatory frameworks, enhancing institutional and private sector capacities, developing viable financing mechanisms for investment in Blue Economy initiatives, and promoting blue carbon finance, the project aims to establish regional and national frameworks that will facilitate the transition to a Blue Economy in the BCLME region.

UNCTAD's role in the comprehensive five-component project focuses on enhancing sustainable and climate-resilient marine living resources (component 2) and promoting regional and national frameworks for innovative Blue Economy financing and investment (component 4). In the first two quarters of project implementation, UNCTAD has focused on conducting stakeholder mapping and capacity assessments as well as initiating comprehensive market research and export market mapping for climate resilient Blue Economy products from the region with potential for value-addition, inclusion and exports.

UNDA project Stronger & Greener Productive Capacities for Just Transitions in Caribbean Small Island Developing States: In response to resolution A/RES/74/217 of the General Assembly and in line with the most relevant SDG: 8 "Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all", UNCTAD has developed a project titled: ["Stronger and greener productive capacities for just transitions in Caribbean Small Island Developing States"](#). The project aligns with the Antigua and Barbuda Agenda for SIDS (ABAS), which emphasizes the importance of productive capacities in advancing sustainable development, as highlighted in paragraphs 7, 21, 23, and 25. It is also designed to

operationalize the UNCTAD's Strategy to support SIDS, particularly pillar 6.1, which focuses on identifying and addressing gaps in productive capacities, fostering economic diversification, and enhancing resilience. It promotes holistic policy programs, capacity-building for key stakeholders, and improved statistical data collection.

In 2025, the project advanced significantly through three key meetings and major analytical outputs. The kick-off meeting set timelines, coordination mechanisms, and the Terms of Reference for the "Committee of Focal Points." A June technical meeting under the STAG validated the methodology and introduced the "SIDS Satellite Productive Capacities Index (PCI)." A July brainstorming session further refined the approach in preparation for a regional expert meeting. In parallel, UNCTAD developed country dashboards, collected key national data, and finalized draft versions of the methodological paper and dataset. The scope of the SIDS Satellite PCI covers all 39 SIDS.

The implementation of the project continued in 2026 with a regional expert meeting on SIDS' Satellite PCI and (back to back) national events for the Dominican Republic and Jamaica in February 2026 with the policy-level sensitization and statistical capacity building training on the statistical and methodological aspect of the Productive Capacities Index (PCI), including SIDS' Satellite PCI, as well as its application in policy formulation and implementation. Consultations are being held to launch the process in Antigua and Barbuda, and Trinidad and Tobago towards the end of the current year.

The overall objective is to strengthen green productive capacities in selected Caribbean SIDS, with the goal of boosting just transitions that align with the needs of SIDS and advancing economic transformation. The national and regional events also generated expert insights to enhance the methodological soundness and policy relevance of the SIDS satellite PCI and its use in policy formulation and implementation.

Under the [UNDA 2427C technical assistance project on "Harnessing trade policy and transport and logistics to build sustainable and resilient food supply chains in the Caribbean and the Arab region"](#),⁵ UNCTAD jointly with UNECLAC and in collaboration with UNESCWA, is implementing activities to strengthen the capacities of Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Lebanon and Morocco to leverage trade policy measures and harness transport and logistics to be better prepared for and respond to disruptions affecting food supply chains. This includes conducting four national and two regional (Caribbean and Arab region) assessments establishing the levels of efficiency, sustainability and resilience of shipping and ports. Capacity building and regional cooperation are key outcomes under the project and will be implemented in 2026-2027.

2. United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD) contribution to the implementation of climate change-related aspects of GA resolution 80/110 and related SDGs

Responding to paragraphs 22, 191–206 (particularly paras 195, 197 and 201), 227 and 346-7 of General Assembly resolution 80/110, UNCTAD continued work on climate change impacts on the ocean economy and on response measures for maritime transport and ports, including adaptation and resilience-building for critical coastal infrastructure and support for decarbonization pathways in ocean-based sectors.

⁵ For additional information, see, <https://unctad.org/project/sustainable-and-resilient-food-supply-chains>.

a. Work with focus on climate adaptation and resilience for port infrastructure

UNCTAD has been working on implications of climate change for maritime transport since 2008, with increasing focus on [climate change adaptation](#) and resilience-building for seaports and other key coastal transport infrastructure, including in [SIDS](#). UNCTAD's related mandate under the [Maafikiano](#) (paras. 55 (l) and (k)) as reconfirmed in the [Bridgetown Covenant](#) (paras. 5 and 127 (v)(iii)) was further reconfirmed and strengthened in the [Geneva Consensus](#) in 2025 (paras. 80.53, 80.73 and 80.74), including with reference to LLDCs and SIDS.

During the reference period, a range of activities focused on climate change adaptation, responding to the increasing impacts of climate change and extreme weather events on transport systems, particularly seaports and other critical coastal infrastructure. Through knowledge generation, policy exchange and targeted capacity-building, UNCTAD supported the development of adaptation measures, with particular attention to the needs of small island developing States (SIDS) and to strengthening cooperation across disaster risk reduction (DRR), climate adaptation and development.

UNCTAD continued to advance its related work through active engagement in a series of high-level international events and targeted capacity-building activities. The urgency of enhancing the climate-resilience of maritime infrastructure was also highlighted by the UNCTAD Secretary-General at the UNOC3 in Nice, as part of her [Ocean Action Panel 6](#) intervention and UNCTAD statement, and at an UNCTAD-organized side event on [Sustainable and climate-resilient ports for food security](#).

As part of its technical cooperation, UNCTAD participated in the Latin America Regional Workshop on Building Resilience of Transportation Infrastructure, organized in Brasília by the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) together with national authorities. This milestone event brought together over 200 participants from across the region and focused on enhancing resilience and climate- and disaster-risk-informed planning across multiple transport modes—including ports and coastal infrastructure.

Related research and analysis is reflected in a chapter prepared by UNCTAD as part of the forthcoming final report of the UNECE Group of Experts on Assessment of Climate Change Impacts and Adaptation for Inland Transport. The chapter, entitled *Policies and legislation for acting on adaptation of climate change in transport*, focuses on the important role of policies and legislation in reducing vulnerability and, ultimately, climate risk for critical transport infrastructure assets and provides an analytical overview of pertinent policy and legal instruments at international and EU level⁶. The [UNCTAD SDG Pulse 2025](#) annual statistics publication report on Transport Sustainability and Resilience underlined the escalating risks faced by ports and coastal infrastructure related to climate and weather extremes, including sea level rise, extreme winds and waves, extreme heat, heavy precipitation and flash floods.

b. Work with focus on issues related to decarbonization and reduction of emissions from shipping

In parallel, UNCTAD work also focused on efforts to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from shipping and other ocean-based sectors and the sustainable energy transition. To this end, [Chapter 5 of the Review](#) of Maritime Transport provided an analytical overview of proposed

⁶ Final report in press for publication. A draft version of the chapter is available at <https://unece.org/sites/default/files/2025-06/ECE-TRANS-WP5-GE3-2025-12e.pdf>

amendments to Annex VI of MARPOL aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions from international shipping, also known as the draft Net-Zero Framework, with particular attention to considerations for developing States, especially regarding potential funding opportunities under the Net-Zero Fund. It also highlighted the important role of private-sector initiatives in promoting green and sustainable investment in the maritime sector. Furthermore, the Chapter underscored the risks associated with the use and carriage of alternative fuels for coastal States and emphasized the need for further assessment of whether existing liability and compensation regimes are adequate for addressing incidents involving such fuels.

A TrainForTrade parallel event on [Future-ready ports](#) at UNCTAD 16 highlighted energy transition and digital transformation in the port industry. The event explored strategies to boost port resilience amid evolving energy and digital sectors, emphasizing the need to tailor solutions to local conditions. Speakers included senior port professionals from a wide range of state and industry actors.

UNCTAD's [UNDA Sustainable Smart Ports \(SSP\)](#) project, targeting energy efficiency and renewable energy adoption in ports continued. Pilot assessments were conducted in Port Louis (Mauritius), Tanger Med (Morocco), and Port of Tema (Ghana) to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, enhance low-carbon infrastructure, and support the energy transition. UNCTAD developed a dedicated [SSP assessment methodology](#) combining quantitative and qualitative data to assess port maturity in energy management, renewable energy potential (production, use and distribution within port ecosystems), energy efficiency, and technology-driven solutions. Training, workshops, and tailored assessments⁷ are provided to help port stakeholders transition toward cleaner energy solutions, including the use of ISO 50001 standards.

c. Support under UNCTAD's Sustainable Ocean and Blue Economy Programme: Capacity Building through data innovation for Caribbean SIDS

UNCTAD advanced the United Nations Development Account project "[Evidence-based climate action through artificial intelligence and data innovation for Caribbean SIDS](#)", implemented with UN DESA, to strengthen the statistical, data science and analytical capacities of Barbados, Belize, the Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago. The project supports national institutions to leverage Automatic Identification System (AIS) vessel data and national sources to compile and disseminate indicators on maritime transport, trade and fisheries, and to develop user-oriented data products that can inform national planning and international reporting. The first two national workshops under this project were conducted in [Barbados in December 2025](#), and in [Belize in March 2026](#).

d. Coordination and cooperation

UNCTAD work on climate change and related issues benefits from close cooperation and synergies with a wide range of partners and a multidisciplinary network of collaborators, including international and regional academic experts. Among others, UNCTAD collaborates with other UN agencies in the context of UN-OCEANS, UN Decade of Sustainable Transport, UN Ocean Conference as well as with UNFCCC and the CBD.

As a co-founder of the UN Global Seaweed Initiative, UNCTAD participated in the official launch of the UNGSI at the 80th session of the [UN General Assembly \(UNGA 80\) in September 2025](#).

⁷ <https://unctad.org/project/sustainable-smart-ports-african-countries-including-small-island-developing-states-recover>.

During the event, UNCTAD emphasized the initiative's critical role in bringing seaweed to the forefront of global sustainability, climate, and trade frameworks, advocating for inclusive development that directly benefits vulnerable coastal communities.

UNCTAD co-organised and participated in three official events⁸ at the UNFCCC COP30, showcasing the transformative potential of seaweed and sustainable aquaculture in advancing climate resilience, food security, and trade opportunities for developing nations. In addition, UNCTAD co-organized, with the IMO, a COP30 side event, with focus on achieving net-zero shipping, discussing regulatory measures, alternative fuels, supporting developing nations (SIDS/LDCs), and facilitating global trade during this transition, bringing together governments, industry, and civil society to shape future IMO rules and enable fair, affordable shipping⁹. Furthermore, UNCTAD co-organized and contributed to a UN-Oceans side event on the ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus, emphasizing the need to leverage synergies across multilateral frameworks to address the triple planetary crisis and foster a sustainable blue economy.

UNCTAD also provided substantial inputs in intergovernmental deliberations in various fora, including discussions under the auspices of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), in particular the implementation plan for the [United Nations Decade of Sustainable Transport \(2026–2035\)](#), launched in December 2025. UNCTAD's inputs highlighted the need for strengthening resilient, inclusive and low-carbon transport systems through climate adaptation and mitigation, innovation and digitalization, sustainable finance, legal and contractual frameworks.

In the delivery of Blue Economy and productive capacities related technical cooperation in coastal developing states and SIDS, UNCTAD collaborates with its Regional Centers of Excellence, in particular the Nha Trang University of Viet Nam with globally leading expertise on sustainable fisheries and aquaculture development; the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and other partners focusing on sector-specific sustainability standards. In training delivery on the ground, work is undertaken in close collaboration with relevant UNRCOs and different UN agencies, including particularly FAO, UNDP and the ILO. In addition, projects are co-implemented with regional partners such as the BCC Secretariat.

In October 2025, UNCTAD co-organized a webinar in collaboration with the UN Council of Engineers for the Energy Transition (CEET), focusing on [waste-to-fuel pathways such as bio-LNG to leverage the IMO's Net-Zero Framework and Nationally Determined Contributions \(NDCs\)](#). This dialogue highlighted vital trade, investment, and policy recommendations to ensure a just, equitable, and low-emission energy transition for both the shipping and fisheries industries, particularly in developing countries.

UNCTAD also contributed to a high-level dialogue hosted by the Geneva Environment Network on the role of the International Seabed Authority (ISA) in regulating deep-sea mining. UNCTAD provided expert knowledge and analytical insights on the legal, economic, and environmental intersections between the ISA framework and the newly adopted Agreement on BBNJ.

In 2026, UNCTAD plans to:

⁸ [COP30 Action Agenda event: Seaweed and aquatic foods – blue solutions for climate resilience](#)
[COP30 roundtable: Trade, climate, food security and development potential of seaweed aquaculture](#)
[COP30 side event: Ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus – leveraging synergies across frameworks](#)

⁹ [COP30 side event: Charting the course of the energy transition in global shipping | UN Trade and Development \(UNCTAD\)](#)

- Support preparations on trade-related aspects of the BBNJ Agreement following the entry into force in January 2026, at its COP1 (January 2027);
- Integrate trade and sustainability dimensions of the ocean and blue economy into the biodiversity (CBD-17) and climate COPs (UNFCCC COP 31) in 2026;
- Support SIDS in measuring and reducing carbon emissions from maritime transport and fisheries through its UNDA project;
- Support the implementation plan for the [UN Decade of Sustainable Transport 2026 – 2035](#) led by UNDESA;
- Undertake research on trade regulatory and standards mapping of seaweed and trade in fisheries and aquaculture waste and circular economy;
- Continue to develop its databases and analyses [on trade in ocean goods and services](#) as well as maritime transport and trade, sustainable freight transport, and sustainable smart ports;
- Support the UN Global Seaweed Initiative, including by the preparation of a publication on seaweed trade regulations and standards and by hosting the first annual meeting of the UNGSI in July 2026 in Geneva.
- Continue targeted research to identify Blue Economy products with potential for value-addition, inclusion and exports for the BCC countries Angola, Namibia and South Africa; finalize stakeholder capacity assessments; and conduct preliminary research to identify relevant third-party sustainability certifications for the priority products as well as related Blue Economy finance and investment opportunities.
- Continue its work in support of climate adaptation of coastal transport infrastructure, including ports in developing countries and especially SIDS and LDCs, including through advice and assistance on the adoption of appropriate policy and legislation frameworks;
- Continue to work with States, including SIDS and LDCs to support their efforts to design, operate and implement sustainable and resilience maritime transport infrastructure and services. This includes supporting efforts to make their ports economically efficient, smart, low-carbon, disruption-ready and resilient, while being powered by cleaner and renewable fuels. In this respect, UNCTAD will also continue to support developing country ports to explore their potential to act as energy hubs, including production, use and distribution of alternative and renewable energy, drawing from lessons learned from the pilots carried out in the ports of Tanger Med in Morocco, Tema in Ghana and Port Louis in Mauritius.¹⁰
- Continue its research and analysis of key trends, developments and data on Maritime Transport as part of preparation of the Review of Maritime Transport 2026;
- Continue to support international and regional transport networks and resilient sustainable and inclusive supply chains, through policy dialogue and cooperation mechanisms, including the organization of the [UNCTAD 2nd Global Supply Chain Forum](#), which will take place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on 29 November-1 December 2026.

¹⁰ See <https://unctad.org/meeting/webinar-sustainable-smart-ports-africa-assessment-action>.