SUMMARY OF PRESENTATION

Port Connectivity

Jan Hoffmann

Chief, Trade Logistics Branch, Division on Technology and Logistics, UNCTAD

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Known as the "humble heroes" of globalization, containers are handled in hundreds of millions at container ports worldwide annually. Efficient and well-connected container ports enabled by frequent and regular shipping services are key to minimizing trade costs, including transport costs, linking supply chains and supporting international trade. Thus, port performance is a critical factor that can shape countries' trade competitiveness. Every hour of port time saved by ships translates into savings in port infrastructure expenditure for ports, ship capital costs for carriers, and inventory holding outlays for shippers.

Recognizing the importance of measuring container port performance, UNCTAD developed the Liner Shipping Connectivity Index (LSCI) in 2004 to determine countries' positions within global liner shipping networks; the latest country-level LSCI statistics were published in July 2019. Subsequently, on 7 August, UNCTAD launched two new datasets, The port LSCI, and a new comprehensive table that features port calls by country, the typical turnaround time as well as the average size and age of ships.

What can be done to improve a port's connectivity? The following seven policy measures are key to enhancing port connectivity: 1) Go digital, 2) Link domestic, regional and global networks. 3) Ensure competition. 4) Port modernization. 5) Widen the hinterland. 6) Promote sustainability, and 7) Monitor ports' connectivity.

What can be done to improve ships turnaround time? Three policy measures could help improve port performance:1) Port call optimization: Ships should only arrive at the right time, i.e., when they need to arrive, as arriving too early implies additional costs in ports, and sailing at unnecessarily high speeds would generate more air emissions including carbon dioxide (CO_2). To arrive on time rather than in time is the aim of port call optimization initiatives. Making use of digitalization means that data will need to be exchanged between shipping lines, ports, shippers and intermodal transport providers. 2) Facilitation: Once a ship arrives at a pier, operations should start immediately, without having to wait for authorities to clear paperwork. 3) Port operations: Fast and reliable loading and unloading operations require investment in infrastructure and superstructures, as well as technological and human capacities. Privatizing port operations and assets can help, but needs to be planned carefully with public and private sectors' roles clearly delineated. Total logistics costs need to be taken into account when considering such investments.