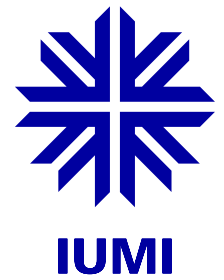


Asia and China dominate the commercial maritime world, UN study finds



By Insurance Marine News, 16th August 2019

China and Asia utterly dominate the commercial maritime world, according to a UN report. A 14-year study by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) ranked 1,249 ports by how well they were connected to other ports.



Of the top 20 ports, 15 were in Asia (11 of those in China). Of the non-Asian ports in the top 20, two were in Europe, one is in the Middle East (Jebel Ali) and one in Sri Lanka (Colombo).

UNCTAD's port Liner Shipping Connectivity Index took into account:

- the number of scheduled ship calls per week in the port;
- the deployed annual capacity in teu;
- the total deployed capacity offered at the port;
- the number of regular liner shipping services from and to the port;
- the number of liner shipping companies that provide services from and to the port.

It also took into account the average size in teu of ships deployed by the scheduled service, with the largest average vessel size and the number of other ports that were connected to the port through direct liner shipping services.

Shanghai, China was the world's most connected. It handled 21.5m teus in H1 2019, according to China's Ministry of Transport data. Singapore came second. It handled just over 18.0m teus in H1.

South Korea's Busan was third on the list, narrowly ahead of Ningbo-Zhoushan in China in fourth. Ningbo is part of the combined port complex of Ningbo-Zhoushan and it handled 13.9m teus in H1 2019.

According to China's Ministry of Transport Ningbo-Zhoushan also handles the most "foreign" goods, with just under 254.6m mt, equal to nearly 46% of the total.

Hong Kong is the fifth most connected port in the world.

Elsewhere on the list

The highest North American port is New York/New Jersey at number 36, with a connectivity index of less than half that of any of the top five.

China's busiest ports were Shanghai, Ningbo-Zhoushan, Hong Kong, Qingdao, Xiamen, Xingang, Shekou, Yantian and Nansha. The top non-Chinese ports not so far mentioned were Port Klang Malaysia; Kaohsiung Taiwan; and Tanjung Pelepas Malaysia.

UNCTAD observed that connectivity in Kobe and Nagoya (Japan) declined over the past decade, reflecting slower economic growth in Japan and the fact that its ports were "less competitive as transshipment centres".

South Pacific island nations have some of the lowest port connectivity in the world, which UNCTAD said helped lock those countries into lower levels of investment and a higher cost of trade. "Port Vila (Vanuatu) receives about one container ship every three days, and there are only four companies providing any regular shipping services to the country. In Kiribati, only one operator is offering regular liner shipping services, with one ship arriving about every 10 days. Many are confronted with a vicious cycle where low trade volumes discourage investments that would improve maritime transport connectivity. At the same time, low connectivity also translates into more costly and less competitive trade."

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