

Shaping the Future: The Impact of Negotiable Cargo Documents on Trade Finance, Regional Connectivity and Digital Evolution

Short Bios of Moderators and Speakers



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Welcome Remarks



Anna Joubin-Bret
Secretariat of UNCITRAL

Ms. Anna Joubin-Bret is the Secretary of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) and the Director of the International Trade Law Division in the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations, which functions as the substantive secretariat for UNCITRAL. She is the ninth Secretary of the Commission since it was established by the General Assembly in 1966. Prior to her appointment on 24 November 2017, Ms. Joubin-Bret practiced law in Paris, specializing in International Investment Law and Investment Dispute Resolution. She focused on serving as counsel, arbitrator, mediator and conciliator in international investment disputes. She served as arbitrator in several ICSID, UNCITRAL and ICC disputes. Prior to 2011 and for 15 years, Ms. Joubin-Bret was the Senior Legal Adviser for the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). She edited and authored seminal research and publications on international investment law, notably the Sequels to UNCTAD IIA Series and co-edited with Jean Kalicki a book on Reform of Investor-State Dispute Settlement in 2015. Ms. Joubin-Bret holds a post-graduate degree (DEA) in Private International Law from the University of Paris I, Panthéon-Sorbonne, a Masters Degree in International Economic Law from University Paris I and in Political Science from Institut d'Etudes Politiques. She was Legal Counsel in the legal department of the Schneider Group, General Counsel of the KIS Group and Director-Export of Pomagalski S.A. She was appointed judge at the Commercial Court in Grenoble (France) and was elected Regional Counsellor of the Rhône-Alpes Region in 1998.

Keynote Address



H.E. Mr. Maurice Makoloo
Ambassador, Permanent Representative of Kenya, Chairperson of
the G-77 Vienna Chapter for 2025 (TBD)

Amb. Maurice Makoloo is the Ambassador of Kenya to Austria and Permanent Representative to the UNOV. Previously, Ambassador Makoloo chaired the Africa Group of Ambassadors, from August 2024 till 23rd January, 2025. Effective 4th February, 2025, Ambassador Makoloo has assumed the Chairmanship of the G-77 Vienna Chapter. Prior to his appointment as Ambassador, he served as the Vice President for the Africa Area Office- Habitat for Humanity International. He joined Habitat on 1st February 2021 with over 20 years' experience as a strategic global nonprofit executive leader who had developed and led successful organizations in Africa. As Africa Area Vice President, Amb. Makoloo led the development and execution of a regional strategy to support the Habitat's Global Impact 2025(GI-25) goal of tripling Habitat's impact. He also provided representation with key donor, government, and development partners in Africa. For nine years prior to Habitat for Humanity International, he served as the East Africa Regional Director for the Ford Foundation. Amb. Maurice holds Bachelors and Master's degrees in law from the University of Nairobi. He is a PhD candidate at the University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. He is also a certified Leadership Coach (Georgetown University, USA). He also served in several boards including the International Board of the Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO)- London; the MicroBuild Fund Board (Atlanta-USA); the University of Nairobi Foundation; PS Kenya; Habitat for Humanity Boards in Kenya, Zambia, Malawi and South Africa respectively among others.

Session 1. Understanding Negotiable Cargo Documents



Beate Czerwenka
 Chair of UNCITRAL Working Group VI
 (Negotiable Cargo Documents)

Prof. Dr. Czerwenka has been working for more than 36 years in the German Federal Ministry of Justice. As head of the division “Commercial Transactions, Transport Law” she was respon-sible for a comprehensive reform of German transport law in 1998 and of German maritime law in 2013. Also, she was involved in numerous international negotiations on commercial law matters. As such, she negotiated – amongst others - the UN Convention on Contracts for the International Carriage of Goods Wholly or Partly by Sea, the so-called Rotterdam Rules, the Budapest Convention on the Contract for the Carriage of Goods by Inland Waterways (CMNI), the revision of the Uniform Rules concerning the Contract of International Carriage of Goods by Rail (CIM) and the Additional Protocol to the Convention on the Contract for the International Carriage of Goods by Road (CMR) concerning the electronic consignment note. Most recently she has chaired the UNCITRAL Working Group VI, which elaborated the draft convention on the international effects of judicial sales of ships as well as the draft convention on negotiable cargo documents.

Prof. Czerwenka has published widely in the field of trade law, in particular transport and mar-itime law, and is co-editor of the journals “Transportrecht” (Transport Law) and “Internationales Handelsrecht” (International Commercial Law). Moreover, she teaches at Humboldt University, Berlin.





Yanying Li
 Legal Officer, UNCITRAL Secretariat

Yanying Li is a legal officer at the International Trade Law Division (ITLD), Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations, which serves as the secretariat to the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law. Since 2019, Yanying has been involved in the exploratory and preparatory work for the development of a legal instrument on negotiable cargo documents. The project was assigned to UNCITRAL Working Group VI in 2022. Currently, Yanying is the Secretary of UNCITRAL Working Group VI (Negotiable Cargo Documents) and also supports the organization of the annual sessions of the Commission.

Before joining the ITLD, she worked in the field of banking and international arbitration at the Asian Development Bank (Manila), Clifford Chance LLP (London) and the Permanent Court of Arbitration (the Hague).

Session 2. Unlocking Growth: How could Negotiable Cargo Documents Help Bridge the Trade Finance Gap for Small Businesses

Moderator	
	<p>Eleonore Juliane Treu Legal & Director of Trade Finance Week, ICC Austria</p>
<p>Eleonore Juliane Treu is a German-qualified lawyer and serves as Legal Counsel and Director of Trade Finance Week at ICC Austria. She focuses on capacity building, business development, and project management in Trade Finance, Letters of Credit, and Bank Guarantees.</p>	
Speakers	
	<p>Tomasz Kubiak Policy Manager, ICC Banking Commission</p>
<p>Mr. Tomasz Kubiak, ICC Policy Manager, International Chamber of Commerce Global Banking Commission.</p> <p>Mr. Kubiak graduated of a double degree master's in European politics specialised in International Relations from the Jagiellonian University of Krakow and Science Po Strasbourg. Currently managing the ICC Banking Commission, the leading standard setting body for international trade finance, leading the various initiatives linked with Trade Finance, in sustainability, digitalisation, financial crimes and risks & advocacy.</p>	



Gwen Mwaba
 Director and Global Head of Trade Finance
 African Export- Import Bank

Gwen Mwaba joined Afreximbank in May 2015. In her role as Managing Director, Trade Finance & Correspondent Banking, she heads the Trade Finance business for Afreximbank and leads a team executing transactions in all Afreximbank member states across Africa.

Her expertise cuts across Receivables Financing, Pre-export and Pre-payment financing, Structured Trade and Commodity Financing and lending to Financial Institutions and Sovereigns. Gwen has 26 years of banking experience in Oil & Gas, Telecoms, Hospitality, Mining, Health, Manufacturing and agri-business. During the Covid-19 pandemic, she led the multi-disciplinary technical coordination team of the Africa Vaccine Acquisition Trust and structured the financing and co-led negotiations with covid-19 vaccine manufacturers. Gwen is also a member of the International Trade & Forfaiting Association (ITFA) Multilaterals Advisory Panel. Before joining Afreximbank, she worked for Standard Bank Plc in London.



Oswald Kuyler
 Senior Digital Trade Advisor, Asian Development Bank

Oswald Kuyler is the Senior Digital Trade Advisor at the Asian Development Bank, where he supports governments and businesses in advancing digital trade standards harmonization across the world. With a career spanning global trade and emerging technologies, Oswald brings deep expertise at the intersection of trade, technology, and international trade standards. Prior to joining ADB, COO of MonetaGo, driving secure digital infrastructure for financial institutions, and as Managing Director of the ICC Digital Standards Initiative (DSI), where he championed global interoperability in digital trade. He also held the role of Global Head of Data Strategy at BHP, one of the world's leading resource companies. Oswald is recognized for his ability to navigate complex trade ecosystems and implement scalable digital solutions that foster transparency, resilience, and economic growth.

Session 3. Enhancing Regional Connectivity: The Role of Transport Corridors and Negotiable Cargo Documents in Boosting Trade

Moderator



Alexander Kunzelmann
Legal Officer, UNCITRAL Secretariat

Alexander Kunzelmann is a legal officer with the UNCITRAL secretariat, where he serves as secretary of Working Group IV on electronic commerce, in addition to servicing Working Group VI in its work on NCDs, especially eNCDs.

Before joining the United Nations in 2018, Alex worked as a legal adviser with the Attorney-General's Department of Australia dealing with constitutional law and public international law matters. Prior to that, he worked in private practice and as a legal officer with the Permanent Bureau of the Hague Conference on Private International Law in the Netherlands, where he focused on cross-border judicial cooperation.

Alex holds a bachelor of arts and a bachelor of laws from the Australian National University and a master of laws specializing in international law from Leiden University in the Netherlands.

Speakers



Adel Abdallah Alghaberi
Economic Affairs Officer, ESCWA

An Economic Affairs Officer in Economic Development and Integration with more than twenty years of experience in private sector development, investment promotion and regulations, multilateral trade rules, trade diplomacy and WTO negotiations, as well as the design and implementation of development projects aiming at enhancing competitiveness and integration of developing countries in the global economy.



Fedor Kormilitsyn
Economic Affairs Officer, ESCAP

Mr. Fedor Kormilitsyn is an Economic Affairs Officer in the ESCAP Transport Division. Since his appointment he has been working on matters related to transport and border crossing facilitation, including support to formulation and implementation of legal instruments. He also takes the lead in ESCAP's activities on development of multimodal transport operations, transport corridors and dry ports, and serves as the secretary of the Working Group on Dry Ports. Mr. Kormilitsyn holds a degree in civil law from Kutafin Moscow State Law University.



Alexander Plekhanov
Director for Transition Impact and Global Economics, European Bank
for Reconstruction and Development

Alexander Plekhanov is Director, Transition Impact and Global Economics, at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in London. He edits the Transition Report, the annual economic report of the EBRD, and the Regional Economic Prospects. His responsibilities also include trade policy and analysis of development impact of EBRD projects. Previously Alexander covered economic developments Russia, Belarus, Mongolia, Central Asia and a number of other economies. Alexander joined the Bank in October 2007. Prior to that, he worked as an economist at the International Monetary Fund in Washington, DC. Alexander holds a Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Cambridge.



Pierre Bonthonneau
Senior Trade Facilitation Adviser
International Trade Centre

Pierre Bonthonneau leads the trade facilitation team at the International Trade Centre (ITC), with over 15 years of experience in international trade and logistics. His expertise spans roles in logistics service providers, strategy consulting, and United Nations organizations. Pierre previously managed clearing and forwarding operations for a company active along Africa's main transport corridors and worked with the Boston Consulting Group, where he contributed to export strategy design for developing countries and supply chain development in Africa. Since joining ITC, Pierre has supported over 40 countries in implementing WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement obligations, managing +30M\$ global project portfolio. His work focuses on customs reforms, including Advance Rulings, Authorized Economic Operator programs, Risk-Management, Time Release Studies, and the digitalization of border procedures. Notable projects include the establishment of a Single Window in Guatemala, advancing risk management practices in East Africa, and operationalizing the trans-Caspian corridor in Central Asia.

Session 4. Transforming Supply Chains: The Impact of Negotiable Cargo Documents on Multimodal Transport

Speakers	
	<p>Andrea Tang Legal Services Director, International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations</p>
<p>Andrea Tang is the Legal Services Director at FIATA, the International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations, which represents the freight forwarding and logistics industry worldwide. She is responsible for legal matters across the Federation, including the legal aspects of the FIATA Digital Strategy. She also oversees the Federation's work across the various modes of transport (air, maritime, rail, road), as well as trade facilitation and customs. Prior to FIATA, she held roles in the Swiss industry association for the commodity trading and shipping sector, and in regulatory affairs for the Lloyd's of London insurance market.</p> <p>Andrea is a qualified lawyer and was admitted to the Bar of England and Wales. She holds a Master degree in International Law and a Certificate in Insurance (CII) from the Chartered Insurance Institute.</p> <p>She is a member of the Womens' International Shipping and Trading Association (WISTA) and is the representative for Switzerland to the WISTA International Trade Committee.</p>	
	<p>James Hookham MSc BTech (Hons) Director, Global Shippers Forum</p>
<p>James Hookham is Secretary General and a Director of the Global Shippers Forum (GSF), the voice of cargo owners in international supply chains, based in London. He is a graduate in Environmental Science from the University of Bradford and completed a master's degree in the safe transport of dangerous goods at the University of Manchester. James early career was spent with Exis Technologies (now part of National Cargo Bureau) developing the world's first remotely accessible computerised dangerous goods database. He later served as deputy editor of Hazardous Cargo Bulletin. Until 2020 James was also Deputy Chief Executive of the Freight Transport Association (now Logistics UK) serving the needs of transport users and providers in the United Kingdom and served on numerous UK, EU and global transport and logistics advisory bodies.</p>	



Regina Asariotis
Chief, Policy and Legislation Section, Division on Technology and
Logistics, UNCTAD

Regina Asariotis is Head (a.i.) of the Trade Logistics Branch and Chief of the Policy and Legislation Section in the Division on Technology and Logistics of UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), where she is responsible for the Secretariat's mandated work in the field of trade logistics, including transport law and policy, covering a wide range of substantive issues. Before joining UNCTAD in 2001, Regina was a Senior Lecturer in Maritime Law at the University of Southampton, UK. She holds advanced degrees in maritime law from Universities in the UK (LL.M) and Germany (Dr. jur.) and is a Barrister (England & Wales), Attorney at Law (Greece) and Member of the Chartered Institute of Arbitrators (CIArb).



Alison Wixley
Senior Claims Executive, TT Club

Alison is a South African qualified attorney, Corporate General Counsel, Chartered Corporate Governance Professional and Certified Director. She has more than 18 years' experience in the freight and logistics industry. She previously worked as the Head of Legal and Risk for Bidvest Freight in South Africa, with responsibility for the insurance portfolio, client contracts, legal advice, risk management and ESG reporting. She joined the TT Club, a mutual marine liability insurer, in March 2023 as a Senior Claims Executive.

Session 5. From Paper to Bytes: The Digital Shift in Negotiable Cargo Documents and the Role of Global Standards

Moderator	
	<p>Kamola Khusnutdinova Economic Affairs Officer, UNECE</p>
<p>Kamola Khusnutdinova is Economic Affairs Officer, and Secretary to UN/CEFACT, at the Economic Cooperation and Trade Division of UNECE.</p> <p>Since 2011, she has been focusing on trade and transport facilitation as well as standard-setting and normative work at the UNECE, where she currently leads the Secretariat supporting the work of UN Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT). In this role, she supports UN Member States in advancing trade policies, facilitating import and export operations as well as enhancing institutional capacity.</p> <p>Trained in Public Administration and International Relations, Kamola previously worked in the International Financial Institutions, such as the World Bank and the Global Fund, where she contributed to operations and grant management in developing countries.</p>	
Speakers	
	<p>Nogaye Diop Regional Rapporteur for Africa and project lead, UN/CEFACT</p>
<p>Nogaye is a Programme Coordinator at the African Alliance for Ecommerce, a pan-African non-profit Organization dedicated to the promotion of digital technology through the implementation of performant single Window for External Trade. She capitalises more than 12 years of experience in the digital field with a particular focus on dematerialization and trade facilitation.</p> <p>She has worked on many projects on Trade facilitation across Africa supported by UN/ECA, WAEMU, African Development Bank especially on the dematerialization of Trade documents. Currently, she is UNCEFACT Rapporteur for Africa since 2023 and Project lead on a Toolbox for enhancing digital and sustainable trade facilitation along transit trade and transport corridors</p>	



Pamela Mar
Managing Partner, ICC DSI

Pamela Mar is the Managing Director of the Digital Standards Initiative (DSI) of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), based in Singapore. The DSI is a public private partnership backed by the ICC, the Singapore government, Asian Development Bank, World Trade Organization and World Customs Organization, that aims to digitalise global trade by harmonising and digitalising supply chain standards, and by building digital readiness across the global trade ecosystem. She was previously the Executive Vice President – Knowledge and Applications at the Fung Group, a Hong Kong based multinational supply chain manager. She brings over 20 years of experience working across global supply chains and industry on sustainability, technology, and global policy issues — having held roles based in Hong Kong, Shenzhen and Geneva. Ms Mar was named in the Eco-Business Sustainability A-List in 2019 and has published and spoken widely on corporate sustainability and supply-chain issues.



Juan Diego Chavarria
Technical Officer, WCO

Mr. Juan Diego Chavarría is a Technical Officer in the Compliance and Facilitation Directorate of the World Customs Organization (WCO), where he specializes in leveraging data and technology to enhance global trade processes. His work focuses on initiatives such as the WCO Data Model and Single Window Environment. Prior to joining the WCO, Mr. Chavarría worked for seven years in Single Window projects, with a particular emphasis on process optimization and digital transformation. Designing and reengineering procedures for Licenses, Permits, Certificates, and Other Documents (LPCOs), overseeing interoperability and regulatory processes in areas such as health, agriculture, sanitary and phytosanitary controls, and wildlife management.



Luca Castellani
Legal Officer, UNCITRAL secretariat

Luca Castellani is a legal officer in the Secretariat of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). As secretary of UNCITRAL Working Group IV (Electronic Commerce), he oversaw the preparation of the UNCITRAL Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records and of the UNCITRAL Model Law on the Use and Cross-border Recognition of Identity Management and Trust Services. In the field of sales law, he actively promotes participation in the UN Convention on Contracts for International Sale of Goods (CISG) and has coordinated the preparation of the UNCITRAL – HCCH – Unidroit Legal Guide to Uniform Instruments in the Area of International Commercial Contracts, with a Focus on Sales. He has published several articles on international business transactions law and comparative law, namely sale of goods, electronic commerce and trade law reform in developing countries.

Closing Remarks



Samira Musayeva
Senior Legal Officer, UNCITRAL Secretariat

Senior Legal Officer in the International Trade Law Division of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs (ITLD), which functions as the substantive secretariat of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL). She has worked in the areas of public procurement, public-private partnerships, electronic commerce, security interests and negotiable cargo documents, handled general UNCITRAL and related United Nations General Assembly matters, and is currently the Secretary of UNCITRAL Working Group V (Insolvency Law). She is the Head of the Non-Legislative Section of ITLD, overseeing work on technical assistance, capacity-building, uniform interpretation and application, promotion and dissemination activities of ITLD. Before joining the UN, she practiced commercial law in an international law firm. Before joining ITLD, she worked in the Codification Division of the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs, servicing United Nations bodies on public international law issues.