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PANORAMA OF TRANSPORT IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN IN 2003

MARITIME AND PORT SECTOR: THE GENERALIZED RISE IN FREIGHT RATES, CHARTER COSTS AND THE PRICE OF SHIPS

Increases in the maritime and port sector in 2003 reflected the general performance of the economy in Latin America and the Caribbean, the main features being the generalized rise in freight rates, charter costs and the price of ships – which was recorded in almost all markets – and the discussion of measures for maritime and port security introduced by the developed countries following the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.

Routes and regular fleets serving the region. The TEU capacity (TEU = twenty foot equivalent unit corresponding to the nominal static capacity of a twenty-foot container) established by the regular shipping lines for routes to and from Latin America and the Caribbean in 2003 expanded by 6% to almost 2.6 million TEUs while in terms of the number of ships, the increase was 6.5%.

Along the routes where the greatest supply of regular services is concentrated, the increase in supply measured in TEU capacity was 8.2% and the annualized static total, almost 2.2 million TEUs. On those routes (Latin American and the Caribbean to/from North America, Europe, the Mediterranean and the Far East), there was a 7.7% increase in the number of vessels.

Within the above-mentioned group, there have been reductions in supply from the countries of the Caribbean and Central America to the east and west coasts of North America. There has also been a substantial decline (8%) in TEU supply for service between the Caribbean and Central America and a 46.7% fall between Central America and Europe, although this could be due to restructuring of the lines. The routes that include Caribbean/Central America-to the Far East and Caribbean/Central America to the East Coast of North America saw decreases of 2.1% and 13%, respectively, in the number of ships, while their capacity varied by +1.9% and –12% respectively.

The route Western Africa to the east coast of South America has experienced spectacular growth, both in terms of the number of vessels (+200%) and in their TEU capacity (+613.5%). The greatest reduction was observed on the routes Australia- East coast of South America and Australia-west coast of South America (with 50% and 62.5% declines, respectively, for the number

of vessels and capacity). In any event, in both cases, the services are limited.

Port activity in Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2003, activity at container ports is estimated to have totalled 19.77 million TEUs or 9.3% more than in the previous year. This growth came mainly from the increase recorded in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, El Salvador, Mexico, Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, and Uruguay, which in varying degrees showed the highest rates of relative increase. This conclusion is based on information obtained from the main ports in the region in a sample that covered 82.5% of port movements in the previous year, with figures effective at September or October 2003 and other projected figures for the different port authorities.

The port area of Colón in Panama, with all its terminals, will certainly maintain the leading position in the region with more than 1.6 million TEUs, a position that it has held for several years. The Brazilian port of Santos in South America is expected to occupy second place with more than 1.5 million units. Next come the Caribbean ports of San Juan, Kingston and Freeport (1.4, 1.1 and 0.87 million TEUs respectively). Manzanillo will again hold the leading position in Mexico with more than 680 000 TEUs mobilized. The port of Buenos Aires, even with its significant recovery over 2002 will lag far behind its historic record of 1998. The Chilean ports of Valparaíso and San Antonio are expected to end the year with 310,000 and 530,000 units mobilized respectively. In terms of relative increases, although the traffic is much more limited, mention should be made of the growth of Acajutla in El Salvador with just over 57,000 TEUs, 33% more than in 2002.

Freight rates and chartering costs. On general lines, up to 2002, international ocean freight rates trended downwards or had touched bottom on some of the main east-west routes. For mid-2003, the average from Europe and Asia for import into Latin America was some US\$ 600 per TEU and rates from North America to South America had also declined as well as those from Asia to both coasts of South America. Charters were also lower.

Moreover, the imbalance between import and export traffic, in particular on the east coast of South America, led to important surcharges which penalized Latin American exports and since 2000 export freight rates have tended to rise, albeit at a moderate rate with a subsequent slight dip in mid-2002. Conversely, freight rates for imports have followed a downward trend since 1999, which only changed in 2003. On the trans-Pacific route, rates for TEU showed a decline in both directions, with a rebound in 2003.

In short, having bottomed out in most cases during 2003, especially since the end of the first quarter, freight rates then began to climb sharply. This trend is visible for liner freight rates, but is more pronounced in the case of solid bulk carriers and time-charters. At the end of 2003, freight rates were at a record high for the last few years. These hikes were due to the following factors: (1) the high positioning of ships in the Far East, especially China; (2) growth in the demand for commodities and transport ships for the war and reconstruction effort in Iraq; (3) the shortage of vessels caused by the above-mentioned factors together with an increase in the vessels scrapped in previous periods and the decline/delay in new vessels; (4) expectations that tend to push up prices; (5) the use of older vessels due to the lack of other newer ones, implying higher costs owing, inter alia, to the need for additional crew, higher consumption of fuels and lubricants, and greater maintenance requirements.

Compared with the situation in 2002, the increase in freight charges on regular liners in Latin America – mainly serving general cargoes – up to the end of 2003 show the following variations: Atlantic coast: increases between 20% and 30%; Pacific coast: increases between 10% and 20%.

The charter rates for containerships experienced increases in line with the Hamburg Index for Containerships (HIC) – constructed by the German Shipbrokers' Association on information from 30 brokers based in Hamburg – which represent the cost of time charter per TEU per day. With respect to the average for the year 2002, the increases in the charter costs of ships in 2003 ranged from 27% to 121%. The main increases occurred in the case of cellular containerships of 22 or more knots with a capacity for 2000 to 2299 TEUs, which went up from US\$ 5.90 per day at the end of November 2002 to US\$ 10.84 in November 2003, with an average for the entire year 2002 of US\$ 4.90.

Tramp ships showed very significant increases in freight and hiring rates. This can be seen in the rates published in the *Baltic Dry Index* (BDI), an index calculated by *The Baltic Exchange* on the basis of information for freight contracts taken from the main maritime navigation routes for three types of carriers which operate dry cargoes: the Capesize, Panamax and Handy. It should be noted that these three are very important in Latin America's dry cargo shipping trade. The BDI is made up of the weighted average of freight rates calculated for each type of carrier for each of the important routes plied by these carriers.

The average value of the BDI index between 1985 and 2002 was 1289; for 2003, it was 2739. Graphs produced throughout the history of the series show the existence of a ceiling of 2,400 towards the end of the first quarter of 1995. But the BDI skyrocketed in 2003. At the beginning of the year, the index showed a value of 1530, rising to 2,142 in April; thereafter it maintained a gentle upward trend until the end of August. The sharpest rise took place after this, with unprecedented figures since the inception of the index being recorded in October. By year-end it had reached 4765, 211% higher than in January.

The trend for the segment of bulk carriers was the same as for freight rates with increases in 2003 both for charters and for the construction of new vessels. The price of a Handymax type dry bulk carrier increased from US\$ 18.5 million in 2002 to US\$ 21 million in November 2003 (+13.5%), while a Panamax rose from US\$ 20.5 million to US\$ 25 million (+22%). Charter costs soared by 234% on average. In both types of operation, the values recorded in November 2003 are the highest in the historic series and represent a leap with respect to a previously depressed situation. The increases observed are growing with the size of the ships; thus the greatest increase applied to the Capesize and the smallest to the Handysize.

Shipbuilding. The following shipbuilding information concerns all categories of ships in 2003: Worldwide, 2,822 vessels are currently under construction. The leaders in shipbuilding are builders in the Far East: Japan, Korea and China. Oil tankers and containerships account for the majority (60%), followed by bulk carriers. Of the new fleet under construction, 36.1% (1019 ships) are intended for open registry.

The Panama Canal. Canal activity in terms of the total number of transits showed a slight decrease compared with the previous year, with 13,154 transits compared with 13,183 in the previous year. The amount of cargo transported (188.3 million tons) showed very little variation, however (+0.2%). Containerized cargo increased steadily and was the most important category. The volume transiting through the canal stood at 47.0 million tons (+19%) and accounted for 24.9% of total cargo.

Grains were in second position, with a total of 35.7 million tons or 18.9% of total canal cargo. Oil and oil products were the third category of Canal cargo standing at 16.2 million tons or 8.6% of total. Transport of carbon and coke increased by 17.2% to total 6.7 million tons. Similarly,

refrigerated products, chemicals and petrochemicals, cars, trucks, accessories and parts showed a positive result in 2003 in comparison with the previous fiscal year.

PHYSICAL REGIONAL INTEGRATION: THE NEED FOR INNOVATIVE PROJECT FINANCE MECHANISMS.

The two principal activities being undertaken to further the physical integration of Latin American countries are the Puebla-Panama Plan (PPP), which includes Mexico and the Central American countries, as well as Panama, and the Initiative for Regional Infrastructure Integration in South America (IIRSA), which embraces all South American countries, including the Guyanas.

The Initiative for Regional Infrastructure Integration in South America, (IIRSA). IIRSA grew out of a proposal made by the President of Brazil in a meeting of Presidents convened in Brasilia at the end of August 2000, and has been supported by three regional finance organizations, namely, the Inter- American Development Bank (IDB), the Andean Development Corporation (CAF) and the Financial Fund for the Development of the River Plate Basin (FONPLATA). In 2003, the Initiative demonstrated a new dynamism, following a period in which little progress was made owing to the suspension of an inter-ministerial meeting originally planned for Caracas in the second half of 2002 and a hiatus during which a Strategic Vision of continental development to 2020 was formulated.

In 2003, the Technical Executive Groups (GTE) meeting in Quito and Santa Cruz de la Sierra selected a key project to serve as an anchor for the other activities relating to each of the ten main integration and development clusters, which had been previously identified by representatives of the participating countries. Project selection proceeded by consensus rather than being based on a formal evaluation process.

The chairmanship of the IIRSA Executive Management Committee rotates, and until 2003, was held for a six-month period by a country, during which period there is one meeting of the Committee. At the end of the year, the meeting held under Chile's chairmanship took place in Santiago; at the suggestion of this country, it was accepted that the chairmanship should be extended to a year. Thus, for 2004, Peru will retain the chair. As yet, there are various matters to be resolved within IIRSA, one of the most important being project financing, especially in the most heavily indebted countries. In some cases, the principal beneficiaries of a project could be residents of countries distant from where it is implemented. It is recognized that the financing of some projects would require innovative mechanisms.

The Puebla-Panama Plan (PPP): the PPP is an initiative launched in June 2001 by eight Meso-American countries to strengthen regional integration and promote social and economic development projects in the south-south-east of Mexico and the Central American Isthmus. Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and the nine states of the south-east of Mexico, participate. The Meso-American region covers more than a million square kms with a population of 64 million inhabitants.

In terms of physical infrastructure, progress has been made with the Meso-American Transport Initiative, previously known as the Initiative for Highway Integration, and which now includes maritime and air transport; 54% of the financing required to complete the International Network of Meso-American Roads has already been secured. In the case of the Pacific Corridor, by June 2003, 81 % of the funds needed to repair the system of roads that makes up the region's main integration

route had been obtained. The projects are basically financed by IDB and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration.

From June 2002, the PPP has been undertaking a series of consultations with Meso-American civil society, expecting them to assume a more active role in the different areas of the Plan, so contributing to their sustainability. The results and other advances of the PPP will be presented at the VI Summit of the Heads of State and Government of the Tuxtla Dialogue which will take place in Managua, Nicaragua, from 22 to 25 March.

URBAN TRANSPORT: USERS SEEK FRIENDLY, AUTHORITIES OFFER ORGANIZED SERVICES

The mass bus transport system, known as the *Transmilenio*, launched in Bogota in 2000, commenced its second phase in November 2003 and is becoming a model for other cities in the region. In the *Transmilenio*, the principal corridors are constructed as exclusive routes for trunk lines, operating large capacity buses, and which are integrated, physically and by fare, with feeder routes, serviced by smaller vehicles bringing a series of advantages such as a better balance between bus size and transport demand; improved productivity of large vehicles separated from automobile congestion; less inconvenience for transfer passengers because of integration; an increase in transport capacity at a far lower investment cost than for railway alternatives; In 2003, Guayaquil, Lima, Santiago and other cities in Colombia decided to set up systems based on the *Transmilenio*.

The model's overall benefits are greater in large, densely populated cities like Bogota, and, from the user's point of view, it is not clear whether it would be appropriate to adopt it in smaller or more spread out cities, where segregated routes will bring fewer benefits and where the model's disadvantages, such as an increase in the distance of an average journey, are evident. An increase in the number of transfers diminishes *Transmilenio*'s attraction for users, and the theoretical advantage of facilitating reduced per journey costs is not always put into practice. In Chile, in the case of the *TransSantiago* project, planning for which continued during 2003, and which should be inaugurated in May 2005, no fare reduction is expected; the hope is that there will be no increase. If the fare value does not decline and the percentage of transfers increases, the model's advantage would not be so obvious for users, with their reduced incomes, for it is important to address their concerns, in order to have the possibility of arresting the flight from public to private transport, and on which the long term sustainability of cities depends.

In these cities and others, transport planners attempt to structure public transport, although, notably in a number of Brazilian cities, like Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, the organization of public transport is being hindered by the wave of informal transport units, known there as *vans*. The van phenomenon did not begin and neither was it resolved in 2003. Van competition reduced the index per passenger/km or IPK, and which is vital for formal transport's profitability, which has fallen from 2.4 around the mid-1990s to 1.6 today. Lower profitability translates into poorer service quality and/or higher fares, each of which gives a renewed spur to greater transport informalization. In the Rio de Janeiro metropolitan area, vans, some of which are legalized, transport more people than the metro, the suburban trains, and the Rio Niteroi ferry—all huge systems— put together.

The vans constitute a market response that offers convenient service to the user, although disorganized from a planning point of view. Meanwhile, planners attempt to impose a structured

system, which, while it can reduce congestion and environmental pollution, is not always preferred by users.

An issue which received a great deal of attention in 2003, again especially in Brazil, was the habit of many city authorities in the region of demanding that the bus companies offer lower or free places to special user groups such as students, retirees, physically challenged people, war veterans, police, postmen, etc. Few doubt the justice of conceding discounts to such groups, which happens not only in Latin America, but developed countries. In at least some of these, however, the government compensates transportation companies for the reduced receipts, produced by the discounts. The situation in the region is different, and in fact, it is the other passengers who pay higher fares to compensate for the loss of income suffered by the transport companies for the offered discounts, and the financial situation of the other passengers is not always better than that of the beneficiaries. In the case of the inter-municipal routes from Gran Rio de Janeiro, 36 per cent of the trips are taken by people that not only have reduced but free travel, and here, in 2003, bus owners complained. Firms are penalized less than those of their clients who pay full fare but on these few occasions can count on an association or federation to defend their interests.

RAILWAY TRANSPORT; A RETURN TRIP FOR PASSENGERS

Latin America's geography does not lend itself to non urban passenger trains for many reasons, namely a topography frequently interrupted by geographic obstacles; the distances between large cities; and single track, often narrow gauge, with predominantly slow cargo traffic. So, in the last forty years, with competition from buses and aeroplanes competition, the Latin American passenger train has become an endangered species. Nevertheless, in 2003, it made a comeback, launching a new offensive, principally in Argentina and Chile. Until then these two countries had adopted very divergent policies.

In Argentina, the withdrawal of federal support from passenger trains, in 1993, resulted in their suppression, except in provinces where national financial support was replaced by subsidies from the corresponding provincial government. Ten years later, the national government formulated investment plans for passenger train infrastructure and equipment and service franchises, while, in 2003, the companies with the suburban service franchise for Gran Buenos Aires, launched long distance services to Santa Fe and General Alvear, characterized by low speeds, frequencies, fares and number of passengers carried. Later, the government of the Corrientes province in the north-east promoted the reintroduction, through a franchise holder, of a similar service from Posados, 1,200 km., from the Federal Capital. These services can scarcely be profitable as private ventures, without strong injections of federal state subsidies, which will be difficult to secure because of the country's delicate economic situation, and it is equally difficult to think of what the magazine Latin Tracks calls "passenger train fever" as just a transitory phenomenon.

In Chile, a political decision has been taken to introduce relatively high quality passenger trains into the transport market, and in 2003, important injections of government resources allowed the completion of infrastructure upgrading from Santiago to the south, up to Temuco (700km) in order to facilitate the new passenger services inaugurated at the end of 2003, using rehabilitated second-hand rolling stock, imported from Europe. At least the comfortable Chilean trains are twice as efficient as the Argentinian in terms of speed, frequency and fares. Given the investment provided, service continuity is assured in the medium term and in 2003 the reinvestment in regional trains with a social purpose is planned, to serve the local market between Victoria (625 km from

Santiago), Temuco and Puerto Montt (1,100 Km).

Peru, in 2003, clearly demonstrates one of the intrinsic failings of the privatization model adopted by almost all Latin America, by which the infrastructure administration, in a defined geographic area, and service operations (normally cargo transport) were awarded to a single franchise holder. In the exceptional case of Peru, it was recognized that this principle would confer anti-competitive powers to the concession holder and, the variant of the model applied in this country therefore allowed, in theory, the entrance of third parties to operate services in competition with the principle concession holder. Nevertheless this is only possible in theory, since if the franchise holder does not concede the necessary resources to the potential competitor, particularly the track occupancy rights during commercially useful hours, he will be frustrated; this is what occurred in the case of the Machu Picchu Inca Sanctuary Railway, which was expecting to compete with the franchise holder, PeruRail, in the market to transport tourists between Cusco and the legendary Inca city, With the Sanctuary Railway misadventure, excluding truck or helicopter options, PeruRail trains continue to be the only way that a tourist can visit the greatest tourist attraction in the Andean chain. On the other hand, in 2003, PeruRail increased its rail travel options with the introduction of the luxury train, "Hiram Bingham", a journey which costs US\$ 420, return, with complementary services such as meals, transfers, etc., including a train journey of 100 km between Poroy and the ruins. The regular ticket cost for their trains from Cusco, with a slightly longer journey, is between US\$ 60 and US\$90 which the frustrated new competitor hoped to reduce by 10%.

There was little new, with reference to the privatization of Latin American rail services, in 2003, basically because almost all had been transferred to the private sector. One exception was Uruguay, where a free entrance model was introduced whereby any operator wishing to use federal state track, could do so by paying the corresponding toll. In Paraguay, the concessionary process remained dormant as the line, inundated by the Yacaretá Binational Hydroelectric artificial lake, continued without the hope of being relocated in the short term. In Argentina, the national government considered ways to restrengthen, possibly through a new auction, the Belgrano Cargas Railway, the administration of which had been placed in the hands of the Unión Ferroviaria, a worker's trade union.

The Administrator of the Arica to La Paz Railway, (AFCALP), wished to renegotiate the terms of their concession with Chilean State Railways, in the same way as had Pacific Railways; nevertheless, this could result in legal objections. By the end of 2003, the AFCALP had rebounded to carry around 10,000 tons a month, the highest volume since the line was paralysed by infrastructure damage, caused by adverse weather, at the beginning of 2001. Political support in Argentina and Chile resulted in competitive bidding for the repair of the old Transandean Railway, whose promoter, the Argentine company Tecnicagua, projects the operation of trains with 430 gross tons roadholding, pulled by three locomotives on gradients of up to 8%; and now concessions with subsidies are being discussed, which previously would not have been contemplated.

ROAD TRANSPORT AND THEIR MAINTENANCE; NEW BREEZE IN ROAD FRANCHISES

Only three new concessions were awarded in 2003 but events in different countries, presaged a revitalisation of the concessionary process, following various years of limited activity.

One concession was awarded in Chile –the north-east access to Santiago (21km)– and the other two, in Mexico (137km). In Costa Rica, formalities relating to a concession of 78 km granted in

mid-2001 were completed; more than one year's delay was due to a dispute between the two companies that had agreed to form a joint venture to implement the contract.

The news is that various countries have formulated and commenced bidding programmes. Chile has launched an invitation to tender for the bridge between the continent and Chiloé island and is considering various other projects, although it is difficult to identify new ones that do not need a subsidy. In Colombia, competitive bidding is taking place for two concessions (127km).

In Peru, after various years of studies and reformulation, the continent's most ambitious plan is now in process. It consists of about five invitations to tender covering 3,200 km. They comprise three sections of the Pan American Highway, complemented by transverse roads and two international routes to Brazil and the Amazon basin; to be viable, these will require subsidies.

The two concessions awarded in Mexico signalled a relaunch of the idea, after the 1995 crisis. The programme comprises another seven concessions (677 km), which will be subsidized by an initial state contribution and support for debt servicing, awarding the contract to the company that asks for the least amount, measured as present net value. Another modality studied is to pay the concession holder by virtual or shadow tolls without actually collecting tolls from users. Ten contracts, which cover 604 km, are anticipated.

There was a dramatic change in Argentina: the contract periods of 17 of the 18 concessions so called road corridors had elapsed (the other does not expire until 2018) and were resubmitted. These were reorganized into six corridors or concessions with a total distance of 7,951 km.

The new concessions are for five years only and their scope is limited to routine maintenance and toll collection, deposited daily in the regulator's bank account. Periodic maintenance and the other necessary road works to be financed are contracted directly by the state. The toll values are set by the State, initially maintaining those in force at the time of the award; their dollar value is relatively less because of the 2002 devaluation and the toll reductions agreed for heavy trucks. Five packages were awarded to the companies which offered to pay the highest royalty to the State, (fluctuating between 4.2% and 32% per cent of income) and the remainder, to those that proposed the least subsidy (US\$ 8 million over 5 years). The net outcome is that in five years the equivalent of US\$ 33 million will have been collected. The amount for each concession holder, equal to the difference between the collections and subsidy or royalty, will be settled monthly.

Earlier Argentine concession-holders were experiencing serious difficulties. The State remained indebted to concession-holders for various reasons, namely, the reduction in the value of the tolls decreed on various occasions since 1991, carrying out of works additional to those agreed, the serious economic difficulties and the recession at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Nothing new with road maintenance. Once again one calls attention to the habitual condition of road maintenance in the sense that the assigned resources were frankly inadequate. The position was less constrained in countries that have maintenance funds or that have a better understanding of the damage that the poor state of the roads make to the state of the economy. Nevertheless, not all the maintenance funds received the total amount that should have been deposited as stipulated by the law establishing them, making it more difficult for them to comply with their tasks.

The first congress of Central American Road Maintenance Funds met in July. It was a good moment to exchange opinions about their development. Special emphasis was placed on sensitive

areas, such as how to ensure sufficient and sustainable funding, support from users and politicians, management improvement, ways to rank investments, better and more efficient maintenance contracts, microenterprise employment and diverse topics on maintenance technology.

The meeting ended with the creation of the Central American Committee for Road Maintenance Funds, which, one hopes, will be a permanent forum for improving the performance of these funds.

TELEMATIC TECHNOLOGY APPLIED TO TRANSPORT SYSTEMS

In 2003, as noted, massive surface transport systems, originally developed for Curitiba (Brazil) and modified for the Transmilenio of Bogota, gained new followers. Other important initiatives include TransSantiago in Chile, ProTransporte, (Lima) and the transport system in Managua, Nicaragua, which marks the beginning of the improvement to the public transport system in Central America.

On completing its third year, Transmilenio invited second-phase bids and improved collection by introducing new contactless cards, eliminating ticket validation at station exits, limiting the number of journey renewals to 50 and issuing personal season tickets for specialized services, for example, those enabling the physically challenged to use elevators and preferential access points.

Having developed and designed a Public Transport System Model with a view to the next round of bids, TranSantiago overcame the payment problem by declaring that the Santiago Metro's Multivia card is the only payment method for the total system, which will ensure fare integration with main road bus routes, feeders, suburban trains and the network that will make up TranSantiago. At the same time, work proceeds on the foundations of the Information and Management Centre of TransSantiago for which competitive bidding will be held in 2004. The purpose of the Centre is to provide georeferenced information on the fleets to the authority for monitoring contracts as well as to transport operators to enable them to adjust their activities.

ProTransport is a project of the Metropolitan Municipality of Lima, which hopes it will become reality in 2007. The various studies required for its implementation were started in 2003; in the telematics area, these focused on the analysis of various technological alternatives for collection, ticketing, and operational management of the existing fleets to determine which of them are most suitable for Lima.

In Managua, an ambitious urban transport modernization project was launched with the participation of the central government, the mayor of Managua, the Managua Institute for Transport Regulation (RTRAMMA) and operators. The project includes bus imports, the application of an electronic fare payment system, for which a pilot project has commenced for some routes, to evaluate an electronic bar which would give better fare control on buses, improve services and introduce new payment systems.

Port Telematics: the Buenos Aires Port. In Argentina, during 2003, a number of interlinked and coordinated measures established a scenario propitious to telematic improvement. COLOBA, the Buenos Aires Logistic Community (see FAL, 202) was relaunched with a view to promoting the electronic implementation of the Docking and Preoperative Request/Manifest processes to enhance the integration of Argentina and the port of Buenos Aires in particular into the global network. In addition, the pilot plan developed at the port for evaluating the electronic customs seal for containers allows the container doors to close in the terminal and open with an official authorized deposit,

whereupon the staff responsible deactivate it using a computerized system. This was made possible in 2002 because Argentine customs modified federal norms allowing the transfer of containers with electronic security devices (DES) whenever their monitoring is possible and the computer systems are integrated into their MARIA Information system (SIM) which has national coverage and permits Customs to link with Airports and Port Terminals, Maritime Agents, Customs Dispatchers and other actors in the foreign trade sector (importers and exporters).

Integration and National Standards. As noted in FAL 198, national standards are fundamental for the proliferation and sustainability of ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems) To the second version of Arquitectura ITS of Chile should be added those of Mexico, which began development in September 2003, and signed an agreement with the Secretary of Communications and Transport, (SCT) of Mexico and the United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) which financed the study. This not only provides synergies between the Mexican private and public sectors but is a decisive step toward the telematic integration of ITS within the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA).

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