

18 de diciembre de 2025

**CIRCULAR: PRESS RELEASE\_UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY ADOPTS LANDMARK NCD CONVENTION  
(R,EMP.-F- 48/25)**

Para su información, facilitamos la comunicación de FIATA en la que se informa de que Naciones Unidas ha adoptado la Convención sobre Documentos de Carga Negociables, que, se prevé, sea firmada durante la segunda mitad de 2026 y entre en vigor una vez que diez estados lo ratifiquen.

Atentamente,

Martín Fernández  
Secretario Técnico



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## PRESS RELEASE

### UN General Assembly Adopts Landmark Convention Shaping the Future of Negotiable Cargo Documents

***Geneva, 16 December 2025*** – The United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention on Negotiable Cargo Documents (NCD Convention) yesterday, marking a significant milestone for international trade, multimodal transport and the digitalisation of global supply chains. FIATA, as the global representative body of freight forwarders and logistics providers and a long standing participant in the work on the Convention since its inception under the auspices of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Working Group VI, welcomes this landmark development. The NCD Convention, which reflects the long established role of freight forwarders and logistics providers in organising end-to-end multimodal transport, is expected to be a key enabler of innovation, digital trade and new market opportunities in regions all over the world. A formal signature ceremony for the Convention is expected to take place in Accra, Ghana, in the second half of 2026

The NCD Convention establishes, for the first time at the international level, a clear, harmonised and technology neutral legal framework to support the negotiability of cargo documents, such as the FIATA Multimodal Transport Bill of Lading (FBL), across all modes of transport and in both paper and electronic form in line with the principles of the United Nations Model Law on Electronic Transferable Records (MLETR). This closes a long standing legal gap for multimodal transport and provides legal certainty for the use of negotiable documents across all modes of transport beyond the maritime context, where such instruments have predominantly been recognised.

### Unlocking Digital Trade and Multimodal Transport

This is a substantial advancement for global trade, providing an opt-in solution that complements existing international transport liability regimes and mandatory national laws. It supports freight forwarders and logistics providers acting as multimodal transport operators to organise end-to-end transportation with agility and flexibility in response to evolving market conditions and disrupted transport environments. Crucially, the Convention aligns legal frameworks with operational realities, facilitates

access to trade finance, including in landlocked and emerging economies, and provides legal clarity for electronic negotiable cargo records, such as the electronic FIATA Multimodal Transport Bill of Lading (eFBL).

Importantly, the Convention can be applied without changing existing documentary or operational processes, requiring only a simple notation on the bill of lading indicating that it is subject to the NCD Convention.

Key benefits include:

- Legal recognition of the negotiability of multimodal transport documents, including electronic forms such as the electronic FIATA Multimodal Transport Bill of Lading (eFBL)
- Opt-In Flexibility, allowing commercial parties to decide whether to apply its provisions. This ensures flexibility and responsiveness to market needs
- A harmonised and technology-neutral legal framework for use across jurisdictions and transport modes
- Explicit recognition of electronic negotiable transport records, supporting digital trade and legal equivalence between electronic and paper NCDs across all transport modes
- Preservation of existing transport liability regimes ensuring continuity and legal clarity for freight forwarders and their clients.

These developments strengthen the legal foundations for multimodal transport and access to trade finance, which are essential to the efficient movement of global trade today. As an enabler of digital trade, the Convention supports greater efficiency, transparency and security in the issuance, transfer and use of negotiable transport documents.

### **A Major Step Forward for Freight Forwarders and SMEs**

Freight forwarders acting as multimodal transport operators or contractual carriers will benefit significantly from the legal certainty introduced by the Convention. The framework supports the issuance and use of multimodal negotiable cargo documents in both paper and electronic form, such as the negotiable FIATA Multimodal Transport Bill of Lading (FBL and eFBL), strengthening forwarders' ability to serve exporters and importers efficiently and competitively.

Importantly, the Convention is designed to be accessible and practical, delivering tangible benefits for micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) by lowering transaction costs, reducing reliance on paper, and facilitating access to trade finance.

FIATA stands ready to operationalise the Convention in practice through its FIATA Multimodal Transport Bill of Lading (FBL) as soon as the Convention enters into force, enabling freight forwarders to immediately benefit from the new legal framework.

FIATA's Director General, Dr Stéphane Graber, welcomed the adoption of the NCD Convention:

*"The NCD Convention is a major milestone for global logistics and digital trade. FIATA, through its Advisory Body Legal Matters, is proud to have contributed its long standing expertise as the global representative body of freight forwarders, including offering practical insights drawn from freight forwarders' commercial practices, market needs, and its long standing experience of the negotiable FIATA Multimodal Transport Bill of Lading (FBL), which has been in existence since 1968. These contributions helped the UNCITRAL Working Group VI to ensure that the final instrument is both operationally sound, legally robust and future-ready. We look forward to supporting our members and partners as States move towards signature, ratification and implementation, so that this Convention can become a key enabler to facilitate complex multimodal transport corridors and digital trade worldwide."*

FIATA's role as the global voice of the freight forwarding and logistics industry

The NCD Convention is the result of years of work under the auspices of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Working Group VI, following a proposal by the People's Republic of China at the fifty-second session of the UNCITRAL Commission, aimed at facilitating multimodal carriage of goods and trade financing, particularly in the Europe-Asia trade routes. The NCD Convention was developed with the active engagement of governments, international organisations, industry associations and financial stakeholders. It draws on FIATA's pioneering work in multimodal documentation, reflecting the robust, time-tested principles long embedded in the FBL and eFBL. FIATA's operational and legal expertise, representing freight forwarders in more than 150 territories worldwide for almost 100 years, helped inform several structural and functional elements now reflected in the text.

The Convention will enter into force once ten States deposit their instruments of ratification. FIATA encourages governments and industry stakeholders to familiarise themselves with the Convention's provisions and to support early ratification so that businesses can begin to realise the benefits of this modern legal framework without delay. In parallel, FIATA is ready to help the industry to operationalise the FBL upon the Convention's entry into force, ensuring a swift and practical transition from legal adoption to operational use. FIATA will continue to engage with UNCITRAL and

collaborate with partner organisations representing shipper and banking communities to develop guidance, tools and capacity building resources for industry and governments. In addition, FIATA encourages its members to conduct pilots, using for example the FBL and eFBL, and to operate accordingly to demonstrate the NCD Convention in practice.

The draft text of the Convention, as transmitted for adoption, is available [here](#). For more information on the NCD Convention, please see the past communications by FIATA ([here](#) and [here](#)).

#### About FIATA

FIATA International Federation of Freight Forwarders Associations is a non-governmental, membership-based organisation representing freight forwarders in some 150 territories. FIATA's membership is composed of 104 Associations Members and more than 4,700 Individual Members, overall representing an industry of 50,000 freight forwarding and logistics firms worldwide. Based in Geneva, FIATA is 'the global voice of freight logistics'.

[www.fiata.org](http://www.fiata.org)

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