Moving Forward Network

INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING & OCEAN-GOING VESSELS COUNTRY PROFILE

COLOMBIA

PRODUCED IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Opportunity Green

Moving Forward Network

The **Moving Forward Network (MFN)** is a national network of over 50 member organizations that centers grassroots, frontline-community knowledge, expertise and engagement from communities across the US that bear the negative impacts of the global freight transportation system. MFN builds partnerships between these community leaders, academia, labor, big green organizations and others to protect communities from the impacts of freight. Its diverse membership facilitates an integrated and geographically dispersed advocacy strategy that incorporates organizing, communications, research, legal and technical assistance, leadership development and movement building. This strategy respects multiple forms of expertise and builds collective power.

MFN advocates for effective rulemaking on global and local levels as necessary to maximize zero-emission requirements for marine engines. Regulation and technological development that center zero emissions while prioritizing environmental justice are not just feasible; it is deadly to continue to delay action.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE VISIT: MOVINGFORWARDNETWORK.COM

IMPACTS OF MARITIME SHIPPING
Environmental and Public Health

Maritime shipping is responsible for about 3% of all greenhouse gas (GHGs) emissions worldwide every year.[1] GHGs are the atmospheric gasses responsible for causing global warming and climatic change. The main emissions from shipping are CO_2, nitrogen oxide (NOx), sulfur oxide (SOx), methane (CH_4), black carbon (BC) and particulate matter or particles (PM), all known to be harmful to human health.[2] In addition, the sector contributes significantly to other environmental problems, such as the spread of invasive species, whale strikes, ocean noise pollution, and pollution discharges at sea and in delicate marine ecosystems.

There is a substantial amount of evidence on the wide range of health effects of air pollution, which include respiratory, cardiovascular, and metabolic diseases, stroke, lung cancer, impaired fertility outcomes, preterm birth, reduced birth weight and premature mortality.[3] According to the State of Global Air, air pollution was attributable to 15,700 deaths in Colombia in 2019 alone.[4] Additionally, according to 2019 figures, Colombian residents face high exposure to PM 2.5.[5] Health effects attributable to PM include heart attacks, strokes, asthma, cancer, exacerbation of obesity and diabetes, and it contributes to cognitive challenges, including Alzheimer's, dementia, and mental health disorders.[6]

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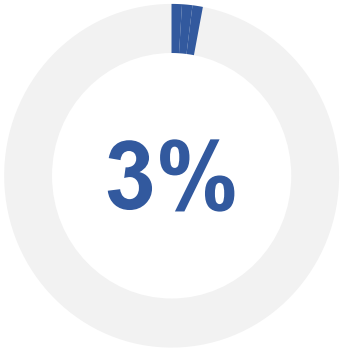
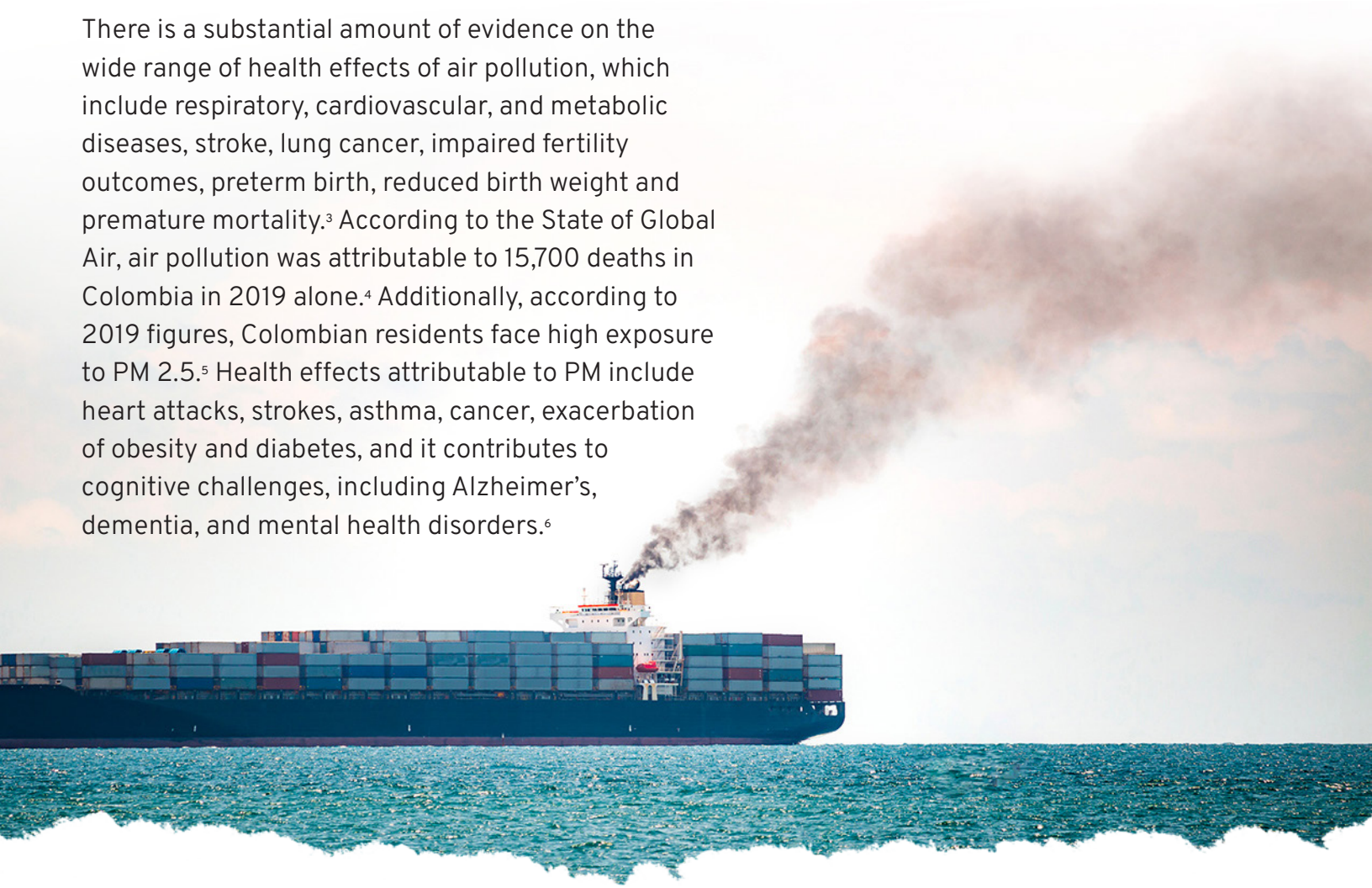


OF WORLDWIDE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS ARE DUE TO MARITIME SHIPPING



In Colombia, the transport sector was responsible for a total emissions of 34 $MtCO_2$ in 2019, (36% of all energy emissions in the country).[7] Road transport was responsible for the vast majority of these emissions, followed by aviation, while shipping and rail transport contributed negligible shares. Nevertheless, global maritime emissions continue to soar and air pollution does not stop at national borders. Transboundary flows of pollutants occur locally and regionally, and even globally.[8] Within the Latin American and Caribbean region, Panama, Colombia's close neighbor, consistently places among the flag state fleets emitting the most CO_2 per year (although the country of the flag is not necessarily connected to the location of emissions).[9]

Global maritime emissions continue to soar and air pollution does not stop at national borders.

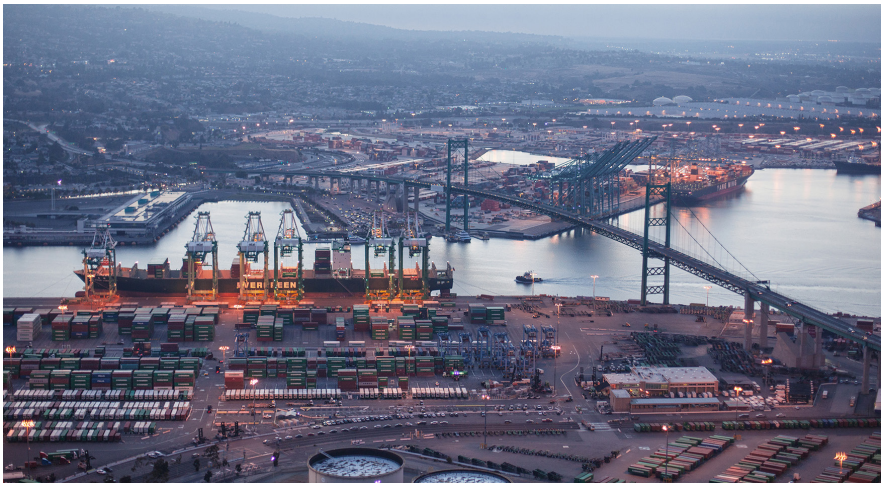
Shipping-sourced emissions, while limited in Colombia relative to emissions from other sources in the domestic transport sector, should not be underestimated. Globally, 'shipping-sourced emissions' were projected to account for around 265,000 premature deaths in 2020 (accounting for ~0.5% of global mortality).[10] Populations closest to ports and high traffic shipping routes are burdened with highest air pollution concentrations and thus the most significant health burdens. However, as most research on health impacts of global shipping is concentrated in the European geographic region and on European populations,[11] the majority of the world's population is inadequately represented in current analysis.

WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The International Maritime Organization (IMO) is the United Nations specialized agency with responsibility for the safety and security of shipping and the prevention of marine and atmospheric pollution by ships.[12] The IMO sets global standards for international shipping through the creation of universally applicable laws, regulations and policy programmes.

NAVIGATING THE FUTURE: SAFETY FIRST!

Representatives from member countries come together in various committees, subcommittees and working groups in order to make decisions at the IMO.[13] There are currently 175 countries that are members of the IMO.[14] This makes the IMO a key forum through which countries can ensure that the shipping industry takes meaningful action on climate change and other matters that have serious consequences for environmental justice communities worldwide.



Buenaventura, Colombia

RELEVANCE OF INLAND & MARITIME SHIPPING IN COLOMBIA

Maritime Shipping: Global & Regional Relevance of Colombian Ports

Seaport facilities are key for the Colombian economy and international trade. Colombia has several major commercial ports, including:

PORT OF BUENAVENTURA

Located on Colombia's Pacific west coast, the port of Buenaventura plays an important role in Colombia's international trade. It is the country's primary port in the Pacific and handles a significant amount of its international maritime commerce. In the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean's (CEPAL) ranking of port and port areas according to throughput in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Port of Buenaventura ranks 16th by 2020 data and 18th by 2021 data.[15] In the World Bank's Container Port Performance Index (CPPI) 2022, which compares operational performance across ports according to vessel time in port, Buenaventura was one of two Colombian ports ranking in the top 25 (ranking 21st).[16] Within Central America, South America, and the Caribbean Region, Buenaventura ranked 3rd in the World Bank's ranking.

The Port of Buenaventura has been at the center of several protests and blockades in the past decade, in particular due to the port's role in criminal activity in the area,[17] and the broader tensions surrounding structural racism and economic marginalization of the majority Afro-Colombian population in Buenaventura.[18]

Skyline of Cartagena de Indias, Colombia.

PORT OF BARRANQUILLA

The Port of Barranquilla is situated on Colombia's Caribbean coastline, close to the Magdalena river. The Port ranked 4th in Colombia in terms of throughput according to CEPAL's ranking, placing 53rd in 2020 and 47th in 2021 overall.[19] In 2021, the Port of Barranquilla mobilized 5,522,312 tons of cargo, a record number in the history of the terminal. There is continued infrastructural and technological development at the port, for example, in 2022, a bulk storage warehouse with capacity for 35,000 tons and fully mechanized system for loading and emptying cargo was completed, costing $4.8 million.[20]

PORT OF SANTA MARTA

Located on the Caribbean Sea, the Port of Santa Marta is also a major commercial port. The port ranks 3rd in Colombia in terms of throughput according to CEPAL's report, placing 39th in the Latin American and Caribbean region as a whole both 2020 and 2021.[21]

PORT OF CARTAGENA

Located in the north-western part of Colombia, the Port of Cartagena is the largest port on the Caribbean coast. It is very close to the major transoceanic routes through the Panama Canal. In CEPAL's ranking of port and port areas according to throughput in Latin America and the Caribbean, Bahia de Cartagena ranks fourth by 2020 and 2021 data, placing it above Buenaventura.[22] In the World Bank's CPPI 2022, which compares operational performance across ports according to vessel time in port, Cartagena ranked fifth.[23] Within Central America, South America, and the Caribbean Region, Cartagena ranked 1st in the World Bank's ranking.

Inland Shipping: Commerce & Connectivity

Colombia historically depended on inland shipping for freight transport. However this is no longer the case since a major shift to road transport in the mid-20th century. Nevertheless, inland shipping played an important role in the connectivity and economic development of Colombia.[24]

Today, the more sparsely populated western and eastern lowlands face serious connectivity issues, with few all-season road links to the interior and poor connections within the region. Rural residents of large parts of the Amazon, Llano, Pacific and Caribbean interior lack all-season roads and therefore depend on river boats for travel and freight transport. According to a 2021 publication by Colombia's Ministry of Transport's, river transport moves between 2 to 5 million passengers a year.[25] Nevertheless, there is relatively limited technological development in vessels and their associated infrastructure, as well as high fuel consumption and poor safety standards.

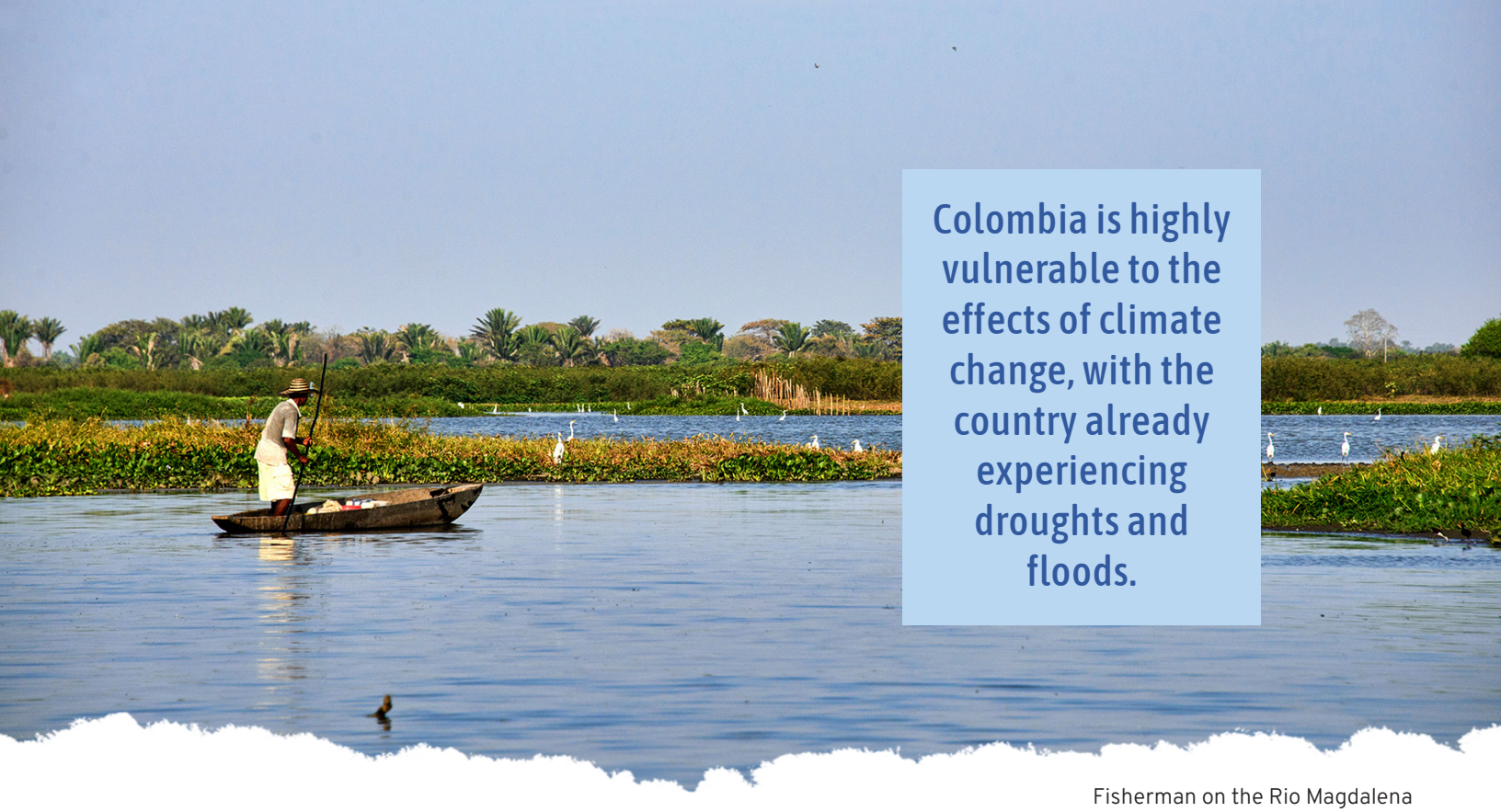
Metica River, Colombia

A Changing Transport System

Colombia is highly dependent on road freight, however, the sector is characterized by high emissions, high transport costs and low efficiency. To address its dependency on an aging, inefficient road fleet, and further a sustainable transport system, Colombia launched a series of regulatory and economic initiatives, including measures to recover the use of inland shipping and rail transportation. For example, in November 2021, the government published the Guidelines for the Development of Sustainable Transport Infrastructure Projects for the Fifth Generation of Concessions, which encouraged the development of infrastructure in river transport.[26]


Amazon River

In the last 10 years, shipping on the Magdalena river has increased.[27] Improved infrastructure and continued maintenance is key to furthering the viability of this freight route. With support from the national government, recent private-sector investments in ports, shipping canals and railways have sought to improve the capacity and efficiency of these infrastructures.[28] The resurgence of interest in the shipping sector presents an opportunity to prioritize zero emissions fuels and technology, as well as maritime safety standards, to build a sustainable, inclusive, efficient transportation system.

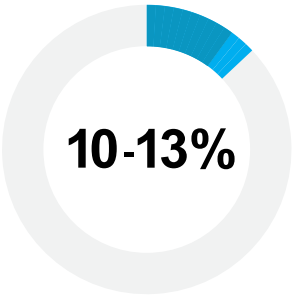


Colombia is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, with the country already experiencing droughts and floods.

Fisherman on the Rio Magdalena

Importance of Mitigating International Shipping's Contribution to Climate Change For Colombia

Colombia is categorized as a 'megadiverse' country with a diverse range of ecosystems, such as paramos, mangroves, wetlands, coral reefs, glaciers, oceans, and tropical forests, as well as significant biodiversity and water resources.[29] Environmental conservationism and responsiveness to the impacts of climate change are important themes for Colombia. Colombia is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, with the country already experiencing droughts and floods.[30] Heavy rain in past years has caused significant damage to crops and infrastructure, and displaced many people. The coffee industry, an important part of Colombia's economy, is also highly vulnerable to rising temperatures and hydrologic events.



IF NO ACTION IS TAKEN INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING MAY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR 10–13% OF GLOBAL EMISSIONS IN COMING DECADES

Estimates indicate that if GHG emissions from ocean-going vessels are not more stringently regulated on a global scale, international shipping may be responsible for 10–13% of global emissions in the coming decades.[31] Using available international processes, including negotiations on GHG emissions reductions at the IMO, to abate the industry's climate impact is thus very relevant to Colombia.

COLOMBIA'S PARTICIPATION AT THE IMO

Colombia joined the IMO in 1974. Colombia has ratified many Conventions and Protocols which have been created under the auspices of the IMO–an overview of ratifications per country is available on the IMO's website.[32]

REPRESENTATION

Captain Darío Eduardo Sanabria Gaitán is the current (Spring 2024) Permanent Representative of Colombia to the IMO.[33]

LOCAL GROUPS & OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There are many organizations and citizen's movements which do or may be interested in getting involved with the work of the IMO or MFN.

The Global Commission and Expert Task Force on Nature-Positive Cities

The Global Commission on Nature-Positive Cities, aided by its Expert Task Force, is convened by the World Economic Forum and brings together mayors, business leaders and world-renowned urban planners and practitioners who will raise awareness of the role that healthy ecosystems play in building more liveable and resilient cities. The Commission includes City Mayor, Barranquilla, Colombia and the Expert Task Force includes Former Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Colombia.

The Regional Marine Pollution Emergency, Information and Training Centre–Caribe (RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe)

RAC/REMPEITC-Caribe is designed to promote and facilitate international cooperation and regional assistance to states for the development and maintenance of their capability to respond to marine pollution incidents involving oil, hazardous and noxious substances, and other marine environmental threats from ships.

WWF Colombia

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) works directly with communities throughout Colombia, providing advice and technical support in order to contribute to effective ecosystem governance, including ocean governance and marine biodiversity protection.

ENDNOTES

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