No. 1

SEA BRIEF

BY BIGOT CONSULTING INTERNATIONAL

Week 43 | 16 to 23 October 2026

Global shipping, read from West Africa

MARKET NOTE FROM OUR PARTNER

Fusan International Marine Agency Ltd.

BCI's shipping partner and relay in Asia (Zhoushan)
Weekly report by Fusan, with BCI commentary

THE ESSENTIALS

The week in 30 seconds

RAW MATERIALS (DRY BULK)

BDI 2,660

▲ **+149 points over the week**

The BDI tracks the cost of shipping bulk raw materials by sea. It is up, but ships remain scarce in the South Atlantic.

SOURCE: FUSAN MARINE | CROSS-CHECKED BY BCI

CONTAINERS

+20.9%

▲ **China to South Africa**

The container price China - South Africa (NCFI index) rose for the second week running: congested ports and peak-season surcharges.

SOURCE: FUSAN MARINE

BUNKER FUEL

USD 960/t

▲ **VLSFO in Singapore, approx.**

Marine gasoil (MGO) is above USD 1,300/t. Fuel costs weigh on freight rates.

SOURCE: FUSAN MARINE | CROSS-CHECKED BY BCI

FEEDER SHIPS

USD 33,750/day

▲ **1,700-container ship, +19% in a year**

A "feeder" links major ports to smaller ones. In high demand, it will stay scarce until new deliveries in 2027.

SOURCE: FUSAN MARINE

Source: Fusan Marine

BCI READING

What this means for West Africa

1. Dry bulk (timber, bauxite, minerals): higher freight, scarce ships

The BDI stands at 2,660 points (+149 over the week). Few ships are available on the South Atlantic side, which limits room to negotiate.

Impact: **Exporters of timber, bauxite and other minerals**: freight weighs on your selling price or on your buyer's, and those who book late negotiate from a weaker position.

Action: Book the vessel as early as possible and fix loading dates with your charterer.

2. Containers: prices are rising out of China

According to the NCFI index relayed by Fusan, the price of a container from China to South Africa is up 20.9%, after a first rise the previous week. This is admittedly not a West African route, but it is a signal.

Impact: **Ivorian importers**: rate increases and surcharges can spread from one trade lane to another. With congested ports, the risk of demurrage (penalties for exceeding free time) also grows. Orders placed before year-end may cost more.

Action: Ask your freight forwarder for a firm rate, surcharges included, and the free days before demurrage, before confirming your orders.

Source: Fusan Marine

BCI READING

What this means for West Africa

3. Fuel: a cost that ends up in tariffs

VLSFO, the standard marine fuel, is around USD 960 a tonne in Singapore. Marine gasoil is above USD 1,300 a tonne.

Impact: **Shipowners, forwarders and port service providers**: fuel is one of a vessel's main cost items. A quote built on old figures may now be too low.

Action: Review your current transport and port service offers, and state a validity period on every quote.

4. Feeder ships: costly and scarce until 2027

Chartering a 1,700-container feeder costs around USD 33,750 a day (+19% in a year), with contracts stretching to 24 months. New ships arrive in 2027 and the normalization of Suez should ease the market.

Impact: **Coastal trade and port-to-port operators in West Africa**: ships are costly and hard to secure, which can lengthen lead times and raise the price of transshipped goods.

Action: Favor flexible commitments until then and allow longer lead times in your planning.

Source: Fusan Marine

TAKING ACTION

Three questions to ask yourself this week

1

Is my freight at a firm or an adjustable price?

If a surcharge or a fuel clause can apply, ask your forwarder or shipowner to quantify it now.

2

Are my year-end shipments booked?

Ships are scarce: the earlier you book, the more choice you keep on dates and prices.

3

Do my selling prices allow for costlier freight?

Check the margin on your current offers and quotes, especially those issued before the rise.

Source: Fusan Marine

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Opening the right doors.

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The full Fusan report

Fusan Marine's complete weekly report (16 pages, charts and tables) is available on request.
Write to us.

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