

The global maritime community is setting its sights on London as the International Association of Ports and Harbors (IAPH) officially announces the UK capital as the host for its 2026 World Ports Conference. Scheduled to take place from November 3rd to 5th, 2026, this edition marks a historic homecoming, arriving nearly 60 years after the city hosted the association's pivotal 1965 gathering.

As Patrick Verhoeven, IAPH Managing Director, noted, if the 1965 edition symbolized the global "coming of age" for the association, the 2026 conference aims to set a new global benchmark. The focus is clear: showcasing how ports are no longer just transit hubs, but proactive leaders across six strategic pillars, that underpin the IAPH World Ports Sustainability Program (WPSP):

Digitalization & Smart Operations: Aligning with IAPH's global call to action, the conference will highlight innovative digital applications for optimize port calls and streamline the maritime transport chain through data collaboration.

Resilient Infrastructure: Addressing the physical challenges of modern trade, discussions will cover sustainable port development, climate adaptation projects, and the optimization of existing capacity to handle increasing ship sizes, including sustainable dredging and beneficial reuse of materials.

Climate and Energy Transition: Ports are at the heart of the global shift toward CO2-neutrality. The program will explore energy efficiency, the circular economy, and the deployment of low-carbon bunkering infrastructure to support the maritime industry's energy transition.

Environmental Care & Biodiversity: Beyond carbon, the event will tackle the broader environmental impact on air, water, and soil. Key topics include waste recycling, marine litter initiatives, and projects dedicated to protecting natural habitats and enhancing biodiversity within port areas.

Community Building & Governance: A major focus will be on the societal integration of ports. This includes community engagement, education and employment initiatives, and a strong commitment to transparency, gender equality, and business ethics within the supply

chain.

Health, Safety, and Security: Ensuring efficient operations means maintaining high standards in safety culture. The 2026 agenda will dive into cybersecurity measures, innovation in cargo inspections, and the management of safe, accessible port areas in increasingly automated environments.

The choice of venue reflects this forward-thinking ambition. The conference will be held at the iconic Olympia in Kensington – currently undergoing a massive £1.3 billion transformation – a world-class cultural hub featuring a brand-new International Convention Centre, premium hotels (including Hyatt Regency), and a stunning rooftop garden. This modern setting will provide the perfect backdrop for high-level plenary sessions, technical demonstrations, and the prestigious IAPH Sustainability Awards.

The IAPH, with Mercator Media, is also planning a series of lead-up webinars to ensure that the dialogue on decarbonization and smart port technology begins long before the doors open in Kensington.

For Port Authority CEOs, policy makers, and maritime innovators, London 2026 will offer a unique blend of “big picture” strategy and practical interaction. From technical site visits to cross-industry networking, the event promises to redefine how the maritime world addresses the challenges of tomorrow.

More Information

<https://sustainableworldports.org/iaph-announces-london-as-venue-for-its-2026-world-ports-conference/>

