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Edina Moyo-Mudzingwa
**Informal Cross Border Traders and the
Simplified Trade Regime**



1. Overview

1. The important role played by Informal Cross Border Traders (ICBTs)
2. Challenges being faced by women informal cross border traders at the borders
3. Recommendations: What can be done to facilitate their trade
4. Simplified Trade Regime (STR) as a trade facilitation tool for ICBTs
5. Implementation of STR in EAC, COMESA and SADC

2. The important role played by informal cross border traders.

- Approximately 70-80 percent of informal cross border traders are women.
- Cross border trade is the only source of income for the majority of these women.
- Trade remains a tool to empower women and propel entire economies forward.
- Women traders face gender based barriers at borders, affecting potential for inclusive growth.

3. Challenges faced by women informal cross borders traders

- Lack access to information on trade rules and customs procedures
- Delays at the borders due to complex customs procedures and the presence of multiple border agencies
- Porous Borders
- Infrastructural challenges
- Borders are unfriendly environments for women traders due to work force gender imbalance
- The absence of information on appeals and review mechanism.

4. Measures that can be put in place to facilitate women ICBTs.

- Translation of trade regulations and procedures into local languages.
- Gender sensitive policies should be put in place, and setting up of the reporting mechanism on gender based discrimination at the borders
- Introduction of express lanes for the elderly and breastfeeding women
- Governments to invest in border infrastructure upgrades.
- Awareness workshops for ICBTs on trade related issues and education on use of simplified trade regime (STR) where this is available

5a. The Simplified Trade Regime (STR) as a trade facilitation measure

- (STR) is a special provision aimed specifically at ICBTs and small scale cross border traders (SSCBTs).
- The main objective of STR :
 - i. to benefit ICBTs and SSCBTs from enjoying regional preferential duty rates
 - ii. to help formalize and improve the performance of ICBTs and SSCBTs

5b. The STR as a trade arrangement

- Instruments used to simplify trade through use of STR
 - i. Common list of products
 - ii. Threshold for the value of consignment
 - iii. Simplified Certificate of Origin
 - iv. Simplified Customs Document
- Administrative Pillar for STR is the Trade Information Desk (TID)

6. Implementation of STR in SADC, COMESA and EAC

- Within the Tripartite Free Trade Area, COMESA and EAC have implemented STR, however SADC is yet to do so.
- In (SADC), (ICBT) accounts for between 30 to 40 per cent of total intra-SADC trade, with an estimated value of USD 17.6 billion.
- Approximately 70 per cent of ICBTs in SADC are women, who support their families through CBT income.
- SADC member countries should make use of the SADC STR Framework and enter into bilateral agreements to operationalise STR for the benefit of ICBTs.

THE END

*Thank
you!*