Trade facilitation provisions in the AfCFTA

- Cross border trade costs and delays are generally high in Africa, compare to other regions of the world;

- Implementing Trade facilitation will significantly improve intra African trade;

- Digital technology is needed to enhance efficiency at the borders by helping to simplify and automate international trade procedures;

- AfCFTA addresses trade facilitation in Annex 4 of the protocol of trade in goods (there is also Annex 8 on transit);

- Note: many state parties had previously ratified the WTO TFA which is in force since 2017

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Specific Challenges of TF in Africa

- Digital trade facilitation has some prerequisites that are not always in place, namely lack of power supply and poor internet access; Example: at the Cameroonian borders with Gabon or Equatorial Guinea, power outage can last up to two weeks;

- A study conducted by UNECA revealed that road transport accounted for almost 77% of the total intra-African freight transport demand (sea transport being at 22%);

- However it was reported that the first consignment of batteries under the GTI took six long weeks to travel from the ports of Mombasa to Tema, near Accra, because the goods went via Singapore;

- Information on how to comply with trade procedures is not always timely available;

How can we address those challenges ?

- What is being done:
  - The AfCFTA secretariat has adopted a trade-corridor by trade-corridor approach to achieve the objectives of the annexes on transit, trade facilitation and customs procedures, Abidjan–Lagos Corridor will be the pilot corridor;
  - Include AfCFTA in the national trade facilitation Roadmap and accelerate WTO TFA's implementation;
- Implement Electronic Cargo Tracking Systems for goods in transit:
  - a system established with an objective to electronically monitor on real time goods usually using Radio Frequency Identification) while in transit, and control de goods along the corridor route to the destination. RFID allow trucks to be checked only once each way and in the process, cutting crossing times from over a day to a few hours;
- Build One stop border posts or Joint border posts: example Nigeria and Cameroon recent Joint border post at EKOK, will link ECOWAS with ECCAS and contribute to increase trade between the two RECs

How can we address those challenges ?

- Automate border procedures whenever possible, not only customs:
  - For example since last year in Cameroun, phytosanitary certificates are delivered electronically and exchange with other countries via the IPPC ePhyto solution;
  - We recently develop a mobile application to issue the Electronic Cargo Tracking note in our terrestrial border and it is actually being tested in our border with Gabon and Equatorial Guinea, then our northern border with Nigeria. This allows us to have live data;
- Make information readily available through trade portals with specific section addressing AfCFTA. Why, what and how ? In Cameroon we are in the process of upgrading our trade information portal;

Thank you for your kind attention !!!