

**STATEMENT ON PROMOTING TRADE IN THE  
LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (LLDCs) BY THE  
ZIMBABWE MINISTER OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE  
HON. M. C. BIMHA**

**THANK YOU MR CHAIRMAN**

It is a pleasure for me and my delegation, to participate at this meeting of landlocked developing countries. I would like to thank the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) and the World Trade Organization (WTO), for co-organizing this event.

We value this forum which will deliberate on ways to address challenges we face as landlocked developing countries in realizing our trade potential. Landlocked developing countries remain marginalized in world trade and contribute only about 1% of world trade due to lack of territorial access to the sea, remoteness and isolation from world markets which raises trade costs.

Many of our countries are dependent on a few raw commodity exports including those from the extractive sector which exposes us to exogenous shocks. Furthermore, inadequate

transit facilities, cumbersome customs and border-crossing procedures, regulatory constraints, inefficient logistics, and poor infrastructure exacerbate the plight of our countries. These challenges continue to undermine efforts by the LLDCs to enhance their export competitiveness in the global trading arena.

It is critical for our countries to mitigate the impact of high trade-related costs by creating a more trade-friendly environment especially in infrastructure and logistics.

At the multilateral level, we would like to emphasise the centrality of the development dimension in the negotiations. Any outcome in any area of the negotiations should be balanced and development centred.

We are calling upon the international cooperating partners to assist our countries to overcome the current physical impediments and unlock our potential to maximize the benefits of trade and generate higher levels of economic growth.

Zimbabwe continued to be vigilant in improving road and rail infrastructure at the national level through rehabilitation and construction of new ones.

The country is in the process of reforming its policies with a view to aligning and making them coherent so as to create an enabling environment for business. A National Competitiveness Commission which is aimed at improving the business environment and reducing cost of doing business is currently being established.

At the regional level, Zimbabwe has sought to simplify the import and export clearance and turnaround time through the trade facilitation concept of the “One-Stop Border Post” with Zambia at the Chirundu Border Post. Similar arrangements will be replicated at seven other border posts in the country.

Zimbabwe has also embarked on major customs reforms which include e-tax system, Customs modernization and automation and border agency cooperation. In line with this new thrust, Zimbabwe Revenue Authority has migrated from ASYCUDA ++ to ASYCUDA World customs management system.

The Central Corridor Transit Transport Facilitation Agency (CCTTFA), SADC Member States that belong to the Beira and North – South Corridors recently met in Zimbabwe, to prioritize a list of projects as well as setting time frames for the implementation of projects under the banner of the Program on Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA). This will help ease

constraints that Zimbabwe faces in transporting the country's exports to markets in the region and beyond.

Zimbabwe is in the process of setting up an independent Border Ports Authority through legislation and operating on commercial principles that will be responsible for managing, administering and regulating all the Border Posts country wide. This is in response to the provisions of the SADC Protocol on Transport, Communications and Meteorology which promote, inter alia; improvement of transport efficiencies, reduction of transport costs and enhancement of transit facilitation.

The country has also recently launched its first ever Trade Information Portal (TIP) with technical support from the International Trade Centre and funding from the European Union to provide comprehensive, single-point access of up-to-date trade, investment, economic and regulatory information.

The country is also in the process of establishing an E-Licensing portal to enable importers and exporters to make their applications online without the need to physically visit our offices. The process is at an advanced stage but is being hampered by lack of adequate funding.

As regards the Trade Facilitation Agreement Zimbabwe is in the process of fulfilling national requirements to ratify the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and to notify its provisions under category A.

I welcome the establishment of a work program on LLDCS within the WTO and am confident that this meeting will give a strong boost to the concerted efforts of the international community to adequately address the special needs of landlocked developing countries within the WTO.

In conclusion, I call upon the WTO members to constructively engage in the remaining DDA issues and bring a balanced and development outcome that will dovetail the implementation of the 2030 SDGs. Agriculture, especially elimination of trade distorting subsidies, an outcome on Special Safeguard Measures and a permanent solution for Public Stockholding for Food Security remains our key priorities.

**I thank you.**