

**South Africa Regional Forum on " Enhancing Competitiveness in Southern Africa: A Roadmap for Success", Johannesburg, February, 9 – 10, 2009**

**How can Aid for Trade be used to assist trade facilitation initiatives in the region ?**

**Some practical key messages.**

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- Rather than having a more philosophical debate on Aid for Trade and trade facilitation initiatives, I would like to contribute some key messages on how to facilitate their implementation.
- **Aid for Trade** is the part of Official Development Assistance (ODA) – grants and concessional loans – targeted at trade-related programs and projects. It is about assisting least-developed and other developing countries to increase exports of goods and services, to integrate into the multilateral trading system and to benefit from liberalised trade and increased market access. Aid for Trade can thus address supply side constraints facing African countries, including those related to trade-related infrastructure, productive capacity and adjustment support.
- To allow implementation of trade facilitation initiatives it is important that you are domestically focussed on them and that your development partners are focussed on them. How to draw the attention of your development partners to trade facilitation initiatives which are important to you?
- One, you – government in strict consultations with the private sector - must list it as one of your trade priorities. Important vehicle to do so is the Aid for Trade Questionnaire I spoke about, where you can list your Government's priority areas of intervention and operational strategy to improve your country's capacity to benefit from trade expansion and integration into the world economy. Moreover, for the LDCs present, your DTISs which you prepare under the (enhanced) Integrated Framework process. Most important is that the government considers these activities as part of their national development strategies: for example reflecting them in your national budget would illustrate that.
- Two, profile these projects at high political level.
- To illustrate these two points, let us take the example of the N – S Corridor. This is a concrete example right here in this region. It is trade facilitation in action through aid for trade.
- We would like to profile the N –S Corridor at the political, multilateral level at the Global Aid for Trade Review at the WTO in Geneva in July. For us to be able to do so, it is extremely important that the partner countries here present list in their Aid for Trade Questionnaire the priorities you are discussing at the Workshop today. For example, the N-S Corridor but also the other corridors which you discussed and are of importance to you. Furthermore, for the LDCs, make sure you list them in your DTISs or their updates under the Enhanced IF. To emphasis this latter point, as I said yesterday, participation of some LDCs in the North-South Corridor programme stems from priorities identified in their DTISs under the Integrated Framework. Moreover, as you know, there will be a sub-regional review on Aid for Trade on 7 April, in Lusaka, as part of the High-level North-South Corridor Aid for Trade Meeting on 6 and 7 April. As I said yesterday, this sub-regional review is one of the centre pieces of events held in the run-up to the Global Aid for Trade Review in Geneva in July of this year. Your presence at the Lusaka event, both as beneficiary and as donors seems therefore highly relevant to show the high importance you attach to your trade facilitation initiatives.

- At the WTO, Trade Facilitation consists of two basic arms: the negotiations and Aid for Trade. We spoke about Aid for Trade. Let me say a few words about the negotiations. They are progressing well. One of the elements in the negotiations is for example creating a "one border post". There is a proposal tabled in the negotiations on the creation of a "one border post" on the Zambia/ Zimbabwe border (Chirudu). Another proposal relates to the creation of one single window to deal with all trade "red tape" - bureaucracy. As part of the negotiations, Trade Facilitation Needs Assessments are being done. In this region they have so far been completed by Angola, Dem Rep of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland ( I have been told, only recently, and with assistance from the Trade Hub!) and Zambia. A request has been received from Botswana. Needs Assessments help countries to identify where they stand in relation to future commitments in the Trade Facilitation negotiations: does the country already comply, for example, are the appropriate measures already in place to create a "one border post" ? Or, is there a need for Trade Related Technical Assistance to comply? I am afraid I am not the greatest expert in these negotiations, but I have a few name cards from my colleague at the WTO who deals directly with these negotiations and will be happy to provide them to you for any further questions.

Thank you