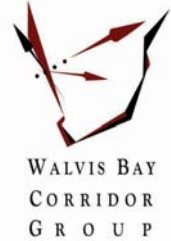




United Nations Economic
Commission for Africa (UNECA)



Communiqué of the Joint UNECA-WBCG Workshop and Study Tour on Trade Facilitation: Promotion of Intra-African Trade

1. We, the representatives of the following national and international institutions: Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Works and Transport, Ministry of Home Affairs & Immigration, the National Planning Commission, the Chamber of Commerce, and Polytechnic all of Namibia; Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU); Port Management Association of Eastern and Southern Africa (PMAESA), Walvis Bay Corridor Group (WBCG), Federation of East and Southern African Road Transport Associations (FESARTA); Tanzania Ports Authority, Namibia Ports Authority, Luanda Ports Authority; Central Corridor, Trans Kalahari Corridor Management Committee, ~~and~~ Southern Africa Global Competitiveness Hub; –United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), African Development Bank (AfDB), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank, Swedish Trade Council, Global Transport Knowledge Partnership (gTKP) Resource Centre met in Walvis Bay, Namibia, from 24-26 February 2008 to participate in a workshop and study tour on trade facilitation.
2. The workshop and study tour, which was hosted by the Government of Namibia, were organized jointly by the UNECA and WBCG, with the support of the UNECA's African Trade Policy Centre. The objectives of the workshop were: (1) to share experiences in the implementation of trade facilitation and corridor management programs across the eastern and southern Africa sub-region and (2) assess progress in the design and implementation of trade facilitation programmes and projects within the sub-region.
3. We ~~listened~~ received ~~to~~ various presentations on trade facilitation efforts and challenges in the East and Southern Africa sub-region and observed that high transport costs continue to impede intra-regional as well as external trade. We identified, among others, that poor infrastructure, ~~non-tariff barriers~~, numerous checkpoints associated with bribes and long delays, delays at borders, and inefficient transport services are contributing factors.
4. We took note of efforts to enhance collaboration between the ~~regional~~ Regional economic ~~communities~~ Economic communities ~~Communities (RECs)~~ and corridor management institutions. In this regard we commended ongoing efforts by

COMESA, SADC and EAC to harmonize their trade and transport policies and instruments including those of trade facilitation.

5. We noted that sustainability remains a major challenge not only to corridor management institutions but also to some projects funded by the donor community that are supporting their trade facilitation activities. In this regard, we further noted that corridor management institutions needed champions to ensure their survival. For instance, we observed the experience where the Namibian Port Authority and the Government of Namibia are fully committed to the success of WBCG.
6. We underscored the important role of the media in sensitising the public on trade facilitation issues including the work of corridor management institutions and other stakeholders. We further underscored that the media could play a key role in promoting regional integration in general, especially in ensuring that governments meet their commitments.
7. We drew valuable lessons from the study tour of the Port of Walvis Bay (Namport) on port operations and management in support of trade facilitation.
8. After an exhaustive discussion we agreed on the following recommendations:
 - (i) Member states, RECs, and corridor management institutions should build capacity of their officials to plan and implement trade facilitation activities;
 - (ii) Member states should be encouraged to implement measures to reduce high transport costs by improving transport infrastructure, reducing tariffs, removing non-tariff barriers and reducing delays along corridors and at borders;
 - (iii) Member States should promote the role of railways by enhancing regional connectivity and undertaking network rehabilitation and reforms in management so as to benefit from the lower costs which ensue from rail transport;
 - (iv) Public Private Partnerships should be explored to promote trade facilitation, financing of infrastructure and effective management of corridors;
 - (v) Member States and RECs should implement measures aimed at improving border management. This should include harmonizing and increasing working hours at adjacent border post as well as operationalizing and expanding one-stop border posts initiatives. In addition, corridor management institutions should endeavour to put in place mechanism for monitoring corridor performance to ensure continued efficiency;
 - (vi) Member States, RECs and other stakeholders should take steps to ensure the sustainability of corridor management institutions, including self-financing mechanism such as user fees, taking into account the long term growth and development of these institutions;
 - (vii) Corridor management institutions should identify key stakeholders to act as their champions with the view to ensuring their sustainability;

- (viii) Corridor management institutions should be encouraged to dialogue with RECs to agree on mechanisms through which the RECs could facilitate their activities. In this regard, corridor management institutions are urged to support the implementation of the trade and transport protocols of the RECs;
- (ix) Regional Sectoral Associations, such as FESARTA and PMAESA, are encouraged to dialogue with RECs to develop a system for their financial sustainability through user-pay principle and other means;
- (x) Member States should be encouraged to accede to existing international conventions on trade facilitation, movement of transit traffic and special action for landlocked countries;
- (xi) Transit countries should be encouraged to reduce transit times at the ports and promote the use of cargo tracking systems. They should also continue to improve port capacity, notably the expansion of container handling capacity. In addition, port communities should be established or strengthened;
- (xii) Member States should harmonise road transit charges and publish such charges and fees in accordance with guidelines of SADC/COMESA; and
- (xiii) The Aid for Trade Initiative should be leveraged in implementing trade facilitation activities at the level of member States' corridor management institutions and RECs.

9. We appeal to Honourable Dr. Hage Geingob, Minister of Trade and Industry, Namibia, to share this communiqué with his colleagues, Ministers responsible for Trade and Transport in East and Southern Africa.

10. We thanked the Government and people of Namibia for hosting the workshop and Study Tour of the Port of Walvis Bay (~~Namport~~ NAMPORT) and for their ~~kind~~ warm hospitality.

Done in Walvis Bay, Namibia on 26 February 2009