



Advancing Opportunities for Women and Youth under the AfCFTA

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Advancing economic empowerment and decent employment opportunities for women & youth

- Number of provisions in the AfCFTA Agreement that can expand economic empowerment & advance decent and productive employment opportunities for women and youth. But benefits are not automatic.
- Successful implementation of AfCFTA can boost economic and trade opportunities for small businesses and micro-enterprises through:-
 - Boosting the demand for goods manufactured.
 - Creation of regional value chains, export-oriented industries can source supplies from smaller businesses across borders.

Advancing economic empowerment and decent employment opportunities for women & youth

- Promote inclusive trade and economic empowerment for informal cross border traders through the establishment of AfCFTA Non-Tariff Barrier Mechanism
- Advance manufacturing and wage employment in capital-intensive industries and in the integration of regional value chains.
- Increase women's participation and benefits from liberalization of trade in services particularly in terms of productive employment and decent jobs.

Leveraging New Opportunities for Women & Youth under the AfCFTA: Informal & Formal Sector

- Zimbabwe's informal economy employs over 90 per cent of Zimbabwe's potential workforce.
- Further consideration to be given to improving the current environment for small-scale traders.
- Disproportionate challenges confronting female informal cross-border traders, include: corruption and bribery, other forms of harassment, difficulties in complying with costly technical regulations—including SPS requirements, import and export permits and limited access to, and use of ICT to facilitate trade.
- Small businesses—particularly women micro-entrepreneurs are disproportionately impacted by challenges, including: limited access and cost of finance; poor access to export markets, lack of marketing knowledge; inadequate management and entrepreneurial skills, lack of access to infrastructure, lack of access to land; inappropriate **technology**; lack of information and a hostile regulatory environment.

Inclusive trade under the AfCFTA

- Ensuring equal access in new AfCFTA trade and economic opportunities for female cross-border traders and entrepreneurs in the informal and formal sector, through consideration of the following:
 - Continental Simplified Trade Regime
 - Context-specific trade facilitation measures to reduce the time and cost of trading
 - Sensitisation of the AfCFTA online NTB reporting, monitoring and elimination mechanism

Empowering SMEs and Microenterprises under the AfCFTA

- Ability of enterprises to enter regional value-chains, upgrade into higher value activities and take advantage of new markets under the AfCFTA is dependent on empowering entrepreneurs.
- Policies and programmes should address gender-specific constraints; and respond to priority needs of various groups.
- Need to build upon existing interventions and to define new approaches for traders and entrepreneurs, including micro-entrepreneurs, to effectively participate in expanded intra-African trade under the AfCFTA.

Supporting the participation of traders and entrepreneurs in the AfCFTA

- Context-specific complementary measures to support the effective participation of women and youth traders in the AfCFTA may include:-
 - Access to finance/working capital;
 - Facilitating market links and market information;
 - Mentorship, buyer and business network opportunities;
 - Technology and digital payment systems for cross-border payments;
 - Capacity building and expertise training on meeting local content and rules of origin requirements; other regulations, including complying with AfCFTA certificates of origin, SPS measures and other technical requirements such as packaging, labelling and certification of products that meet AfCFTA trade standards;
 - Specialized financial literacy, business and financial management training, particularly for female micro-entrepreneurs;

Strategic sectors for sustainable economic empowerment

- Successful implementation of the AfCFTA can advance the economic empowerment of women and youth in priority sectors and value chains:-
 - **Agriculture:** AfCFTA can provide expanded markets for exports, and opportunities for women to integrate into agricultural regional value chains, value-added agro-processing and upstream and downstream activities.
 - **Manufacturing:** AfCFTA can give renewed impetus to women's manufacturing and wage employment in both labour-intensive and capital-intensive manufacturing.
 - **Services:** Opportunities for women to progress from low-skilled activities to medium- and higher-skilled activities, as part of liberalization of trade in services under AfCFTA.



THANK YOU!

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