



STATEMENT

BY

HON. LUCIA IIPUMBU

MINISTER OF INDUSTRIALISATION AND TRADE

ON THE OCCASION OF THE AFCFTA-SADC REGIONAL CONSULTATION

WORKSHOP ON THE PROTOCOL ON WOMEN AND YOUTH IN TRADE

AND E-COMMERCE,

DATE: THURSDAY, 22 JUNE 2023,

WINDHOEK

- **Hon. Christine //Hoebes, Minister in the Presidency;**
- **Hon. Emma Kantema-Gaomas, Deputy Minister of Sports, Youth & National Service;**
- **Hon. Laura McLeod-Katjirua Governor of the Khomas Region (& all regional Governors present – Erongo, Otjozondjupa and Kunene);**
- **Ms. Daisry Obal, Advisor in the Office of the President on Youth Matters & Enterprise Development;**
- **Senior Government Officials;**
- **Her Excellency Alka Bhatia, UNDP Namibia Resident Representative;**
- **Ms. Gosia Lachut, Deputy Head of Mission, EU Delegation in Namibia;**
- **Mr. Allan Murangira, Youth for Tax Justice Network;**
- **Ms. Marie Avoe-Bakale, AfCFTA Secretariat;**
- **Youth Leaders from across Namibia and the SADC region;**
- **Distinguished Invited Guests;**
- **Members of the media;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Good morning,

1. It is my great pleasure to welcome you to this very important event, the African Continental Free Trade Area - Southern Africa Development Community (AfCFTA – SADC) Regional Consultation, on the 'Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade and E-Commerce'. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to you all for honouring our invitation and participating at this event.

2. I also wish to extend my appreciation to the Office of the President and Ministry of Sports, Youth & National Service for playing a leading role in coordinating this forum, as well as to our Partners. These includes; the AfCFTA Secretariat, Youth for Tax Justice Network, UNDP Namibia and EU Delegation to Namibia for contributing towards the convening of this regional workshop in the Republic of Namibia. This is a demonstration of the Namibian Governments' unrelenting commitment to cascading and domesticating the AfCFTA towards its successful implementation and to ensure that the voices of women and our young people are effectively mainstreamed into the formulation of this transformational framework.

3. The African Union theme for 2023 shines the spotlight on "***Accelerating implementation of the AfCFTA***", a theme that echoes the continental consensus that the future of Africa lies in greater investment and intra-Africa trade through reduced tariffs and freer movement of peoples and goods. This focus is timely because our large demographic majority of youth and women are at the centre of realizing our regional and continental economic integration agenda. We therefore, simply cannot afford to leave them behind.

Execellencies;

Distinguished Participants;

4. The Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area recognizes the role of women and youth in trade and the importance of empowering them to fully participate and benefit from the African Continental Free Trade Area Agreement. To this end, the 'Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade' as well as the 'Protocol on Digital Trade', are

being developed. Through these Protocols, women and youth can play a critical role in the achievement of the free trade zone by initiating youth-led initiatives particularly, in agriculture, financial services, information technology and in the creative industries.

5. Women and youth face various challenges in trading across borders and are confronted by many barriers to trade such as complex export procedures, intimidation; extortions and harassment at borders particularly in Africa. I believe the Protocol on Women and Youth in trade should address the persistent challenges faced by women in trade and provide solutions in terms of better border governance and trade facilitation. This consultation should make recommendations that will lead to state parties to implement necessary instruments at national level that will lead to the removal of all constraints impeding participation of women and youth in trade and recommendation on how E-Commerce could enhance continental trade in general.
6. Namibia as a state party to the AfCFTA Agreement and her offer within the SACU configuration has been adopted by the Council of Ministers, both in trade in goods as well as in trade in services and is therefore ready to champion initiatives that target women and youth participation in key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing logistics and tourism.
7. In that regard, Namibia has identified key sectors where women and youth have a competitive advantage, such as agriculture, aquaculture, cosmetics sector, textiles etc. The Ministry of Industrialisation and Trade concluded the first ever training on standards with focus on a Good Manufacturing Practices that targeted more than 30 cosmetic companies at the beginning of September 2022.

8. The Cosmetics and Essential Oils sector has advanced in terms of production domestically and thus participation in the regional value chain is possible. For example, our exportable firms increased from 5 in 2016 to more than 35 by 2022 through concerted efforts by the private sector, Namibian government and development partners.
9. At SADC level, Namibia has prioritized sectors for value chain development namely; Agro processing (leather processing), Pharmaceutical, Automobile, Mineral beneficiation and Tourism. Namibia has the Northern tannery, which is currently under-utilized, and thus it will be great to optimize the usage of this tannery and produce hides and skin for value addition.
10. Regional Value Chains are part of Namibia's Industry Growth Program which is part of the ongoing efforts to reinforce Namibia's economic growth, to reduce income inequality and to increase employment for its citizens. This Industry Growth Strategy forms part of the support to selected manufacturing industries envisaged by the Growth at Home Strategy, which promotes Namibia's competitive advantages and opportunities.
11. This is envisaged through the Special Industrialisation Programme whose aim is to provide targeted support for value chain analyses. These are collaboration efforts under the SADC Industrialisation Strategy (2015-2030), within the Support to Industrialisation and Productive Sectors (SIPS) Programme, which is supported by the European Union (EU) for the Secretariat of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). The Programme addresses coordination and linkage gaps and opportunities between the regional and national levels, between the public and private sector and between the private sector in SADC Member States (MS), with a

specific focus on the leather and associated value chains in the agro processing sector and associated value chains in the pharmaceutical sector.

12. Cross-border value chains are a critical component of “Growth at Home”. By leveraging comparative potential with its neighbours, the government seeks to involve both development financing institutions and the private sector to create self-sustaining industries. A study commissioned by Namibia’s Joint Value Addition Committee recommends initiating cross-border contacts within SADC to review opportunities for cooperation to improve beneficiation in a number of minerals such as in diamonds, iron ore and zinc, Lithium both for supply chain and marketing purposes.
13. This workshop should therefore, discuss and identify issues for inclusion in the Protocol on Women and Youth in Trade and E-Commerce, as well as to enhance access to economic opportunities for the youth at national and regional levels through sustainable youth priority sectors.
14. To this end, ladies and gentlemen, stakeholder engagement and information sharing continues to be very important to the successful development of the protocols on Women and Youth in Trade and E-commerce. We recognize the importance of all stakeholders as key contributors to the AfCFTA developmental agenda and as part of the solution.
15. In the area of E-Commerce, digital technologies and appropriately tailored rules for the digital economy, the Protocol on Digital Trade presents a unique opportunity for Africa to achieve digital and financial inclusion, and to enhance digital innovation. In this regard, the African Continental Free Trade Area Secretariat has developed a call to action for Digital Financial Inclusion in collaboration with Smart Africa Alliance and the UN-based Better Than

Cash Alliance to ensure that every African has the tools and financial services that enable them to make payments seamlessly in the one African market.

16. It is time to be deliberate and be intentional in our approach for implementation policies and programs that enable women and youth to leverage on available trade opportunities and to become masters of their own destinies.
17. The outcomes from this consultation will be submitted to the Continental Secretariat to further inform the finalization of these important Protocols. The SADC Youth Voice is important in this process. Your Voice is important to us and we want to negotiate, in your best interest.
18. Let me therefore implore on all of us to use this platform to emerge with concrete plans of action and make actionable recommendations that will inputs in the development of the afore-mentioned protocols.
19. With these few remarks, I wish you all a fruitful deliberation.

I thank you.