



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

Talking Points at the Ministerial Round-table

By

**Hon. Verna Sinimbo (MP), Deputy Minister of
Industrialization and Trade, At the AFCFTA Conference on
Women & Youth in Trade**

**AFCFTA CONFERENCE ON WOMEN & YOUTH IN
TRADE**

12 September 2022

**Julius Nyerere International Convention Centre,
Dar es Salaam, United Republic of Tanzania**

“Reflecting on challenges women and youth face in cross border trade in Africa”

Closed Ministerial session to discuss:

- Issues identified by women and youth in cross border trade
- The mainstreaming of women and youth issues in national implementation strategies

Your excellencies, honourable Ministers, women and youth businesses, policy makers and supporters, all protocol observed

1. It gives me great pleasure to participate in this Ministerial Roundtable, focusing rather on practical issues faced by women and youth traders on our beautiful continent.
2. . The decision to include a Protocol on women and youth is already a milestone. It is a much needed instrument to address practical trade- related issues and the persistent bottlenecks experienced by women and youth traders both in the formal and informal trade.
3. By now, we are all aware of the many challenges facing our women and youth in trading on the continent; lack of access to reliable trade intelligence, capital, investments, buyers connections, cumbersome custom processes and not to

forget representation and participation in trade governance to influence trade policy making and implementation.

4. One thing for sure, we have abundant products made by women particularly ready for trading in terms of consumption, but perhaps requires much work to get their products trade compliance in order to benefit from the preferences offered by the Afcfta and other trade agreements too. technical requirements such as labeling & packaging remains a challenge, For example, products found at informal markets are mostly products unique to the geographical environment and could find niche markets on the continent but the packaging & labeling is non-existent and therefore are not trade compliance.

How do we take these products to the next level by preparing the women traders with the requisite technical skills? I believe this is one of our low hanging fruits to unlock cross border trade opportunities specifically for the informal sector in Africa.

5. We are faced with overlapping trade rules and we need to simplify them to create a harmonized trade regime. Trade documents are too technical, this makes many women traders shy away from investing in opportunities that unlock these preferences. We therefore need to hold their hands,

guide them and unlock opportunities which lies in addressing non-tariff barriers while fast-tracking trade facilitation initiatives.

6. Women and youth can't only focus on trade in goods but also increase their participation in the trade in services agenda. In light of this, I'm happy to share that Namibia is one of the countries that have submitted offers under the Trade in Services protocol. We have to champion initiatives that targets women and youth participation in key services sectors such as logistics and tourism sectors.

7. Excellencies and Honourable Ministers, allow me to conclude by sharing key milestones for Namibia in preparing the women and youth traders for the effective implementation of the Afcfta:

- ❖ Namibia have published the initial offers including relevant documents such as rules of origin, supplier declaration documents etc

- ❖ In the next coming month, we will be launching our Afcfta National Implementation And Action Plan that covers women and youth as they were key stakeholders In its formulation. A Communication strategy is also included in the Plan.

- ❖ Namibia launched the Afcfta National Awareness Campaign in August 2022 (last month) targeting specifically Women, Youth and Micro; Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). It is currently ongoing.
- ❖ We have also identified key sectors where women and youth are mostly concentrated such as agriculture, aquaculture, cosmetics and services and target those for development at national level.
- ❖ One such sector we're excited about and have been developing for the past 7 years is the Cosmetics sector.
- ❖ The Ministry has concluded last week the first ever training in Standards with focus on Good manufacturing Practices (GMP) that targeted more than 30 cosmetics companies. 7 years ago, we had less than 10 cosmetics companies and today I'm proud to say we have more than 30 all women owned and ready to trade on the continent whether to source ingredients/inputs or export.
- ❖ The Ministry continues to facilitate engagements and technical skills training with business support organizations including banks in order to prepare Namibia to take full advantage of the Afcfta opportunities.

8. Ladies and gentlemen, we can only measure the success of the Afcfta implementation if we are able to deliberately enable women and youth businesses to join regional value chains and trade impact-fully and profitability within africa and of course beyond.

THANK YOU!!