

# Global Forum for National Trade Facilitation Committees 2022

1st February 2022

## Opening Remarks

**Mr. William Gain, Global Lead, World Bank Group**

- **Good Morning and thanks to UNCTAD** for continuing to sponsor this forum and we are very pleased to join with UNCTAD and our other Annex D organization partners to jointly host this critical Forum on NTFC's
- **The COVID-19 crisis has further underlined the importance of trade facilitation and efficient and coordinated border management.** Disrupting billions of lives and livelihoods, the COVID-19 pandemic threatens decades of hard-won development gains and demands an exceptional response. Maintaining trade flows as much as possible has been crucial for ensuring that essential and humanitarian goods can enter and leave countries, supporting safe working environments at the borders, and keeping cross-border trade and supply chains flowing to the extent possible to minimize the negative economic impact of the pandemic. As we approach the COVID-19 recovery phase, trade facilitation is even more critical to ensure the efficient and effective distribution of vaccines, medical goods and emergency goods
- **In response to the COVID-19 pandemic,** the WBG has stepped up support to trade facilitation reforms including the establishment and sustainability of NTFCs.
- **The WBG** is the one of the largest multilateral providers of financial and technical assistance support for trade facilitation. WBG trade facilitation support typically includes integration of risk-based systems into borders clearance processes, implementation of automated systems and innovative technologies to facilitate trade and support to establish and maintain public - private dialogue mechanisms such as NTFCs
- **As we have heard from other speakers,** Having a public private dialogue mechanism at the national and regional levels is critical to ensure the private and public sectors partner together to lead the implementation of the WTO TFA in addition to related strategies around cross border trade.
- **The success of the NTFC is dependent on many factors. E.g.:**
  - Setting strategic priorities, ensuring effective decision making and monitoring and evaluation of country progress is crucial for well-functioning of NTFCs.
  - The NTFC must also take as whole of government approach and effectively include all the relevant agencies involved in cross border trade

- Further, broadening of the dialogue to include the private sector including all relevant stakeholders is important to the success of the NTFCs and increases compliance levels of trade reforms.
- **The actual creation of the NTFC can be challenging, but the real work is in ensuring that the Committee is fully functioning and sustainable after it has been set up.** This event over the next few days will provide a forum for you to share your lessons of successes and challenges in this task.
- **An important aspect to note and consider when establishing the NTFC is one of inclusiveness for woman traders. The WBG recently completed a study to identify the specific obstacles that women face in the region related to border processes and procedures.** The research showed that fewer women traders are regularly consulted than their men counterparts and fewer women traders are represented in trade/industry associations and consequently NTFCs. Addressing these gaps is essential in ensuring that all traders can benefit from trade reforms.