



“WHAT IS THE ROLE AND HOW HAVE NTFCS BEEN DOING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC?” COOPERATION IN A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD

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JUNE 2022

AGENDA



- **Global trends before the covid-19 pandemic**

- UNCTAD study shows twelve major trends currently predominant in the evolution of NTFCs around the world prior to the covid-19 pandemic. These trends have been categorized into three main pillars: institutionalization, functioning, and financing of NTFCs



- **What impact of covid-19 on NTFCs?**

- Did government use NTFC members' expertise to overcome the global pandemic or did NTFCs go dormant? Few cases of UNCTAD partners around the globe.

EVOLVING ROLES OF NTFCs OVER TIME...

Supporting negotiations

Before the adoption of the WTO TFA in 2013, committees supported negotiators

Advising on categorization ABC

NTFCs have consulted/advised on how to categorize TFA measures

Mitigating Covid-19 impact

NTFCs contributed to pandemic mitigating efforts

Analyzing gaps

Committees have conducted TF gap analyses to assess needs and priorities

Reaching out to donors

NTFCs have developed project proposals and reached out to development partners

Coordinating TF reforms

Now, NTFCs must focus on coordinating the implementation of TF reforms





GLOBAL TRENDS BEFORE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



NTFCs are here to stay.



NTFCs are legally established.



Sharing is empowering - Multi-chairpersonship is becoming more frequent in NTFCs.



Permanent secretariats are still a luxury for many NTFCs



NTFCs are broadening their scope of action.



Specific monitoring and evaluation tools for NTFCs are increasingly important but NTFCs do not seem well equipped for this task.



GLOBAL TRENDS BEFORE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

7

NTFCs are opting for inclusiveness.

8

No progress in gender mainstreaming in NTFCs since 2017.

9

NTFCs are developing the necessary communication tools.

10

The work of NTFCs is translating into concrete and positive outcomes.

11

Budget and financial resources for NTFCs are still scarce.

12

Despite the concrete outcomes produced, the sustainability of NTFCs remains at stake.

MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE GLOBAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC

UNCTAD published a 10-point action plan to mitigate the impact of the covid-19 pandemic. NTFCs can contribute to implementing all recommendations, but especially:

- Action Point 3: Protect international trade of critical goods and speed up customs clearance and trade facilitation
- Action Point 6: Safeguard transparency and up-to-date information
- Action Point 7: Go paperless
- Action Point 10: Prioritize technical assistance

Source: <https://unctad.org/webflyer/covid-19-10-point-action-plan-strengthen-international-trade-and-transport-facilitation>



MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF THE GLOBAL COVID-19 PANDEMIC



Prioritize technical assistance

Many TF measures require investment in human, institutional and technological capacities and should thus be given priority immediate technical support by development partners.

UNCTAD supports developing and least developed countries thanks to:

- ✓ **ASYCUDA's** modern customs clearance systems and digital trade solutions in over 100 countries and territories
- ✓ **Trade facilitation** online capacity-building programs and remote advisory services

Source: <https://unctad.org/webflyer/covid-19-10-point-action-plan-strengthen-international-trade-and-transport-facilitation>



WHAT IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON NTFCs?



Accelerator

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown the importance of transparency in trade regulations and controls, digitalization of trade procedures, and cooperation amongst border agencies

Ex: Morocco, Peru



Game changer

The pandemic has shifted short-term priorities. New TF measures had to be put in place to mitigate the impact of covid-19. Action plans had to be adjusted to reflect these changes.

Ex: Malawi, Honduras, Ecuador



Obstacle

Sanitary measures have forced NTFCs to change their way of functioning: no more in-person meetings, but they managed to fulfill their duties

Ex: Zambia



Sleeping pill

The global pandemic was a kiss of death for some NTFCs, which went dormant or inactive. All meetings were cancelled, and activities put on hold for the time being





BOOSTING TRADE FACILITATION EFFORTS IN PERU

In May 2020, Peru enacted the Legislative Decree N° 1492, which was elaborated at a multisectoral level by the agencies that are part of the NTFC and recognized as work of the NTFC. It aimed at:

- Approving provisions for the reactivation, continuity and efficiency of operations linked to foreign trade logistics chain.
- Achieving digitization of documents and processes of both public and private agencies, to optimize the speed of operations, prevent and reduce the risk of contagion of personnel who provide services throughout the logistics chain and also to provide better health conditions in the context of Covid-19.



“The 2020/21 Malawi NTFC’s work plan included implementation of activities that are recognized as covid-19 mitigation projects.”



COVID-19: A GAME-CHANGER FOR MALAWI’S AND HONDURAS’ NTFC

During the pandemic Malawi’s NTFC facilitated the following:

- Developed national guidelines on clearance of goods and services including facilitating priority clearance of essential goods and services
- The NTFC mobilized resources for purchase of Personal protective equipment (PPE) and distributed them to all border frontline staff
- In order to minimize gathering of large crowds of people, all NTFC members were given mi-fi gadgets in order to continue NTFC meetings virtually.
- In order to minimize contacts, it is during the same pandemic period that the Malawi Revenue Authority enhanced e-payment systems
- The 2020/21 NTFC work plan included implementation of activities which included electronic single window, upgrading of the Malawi Trade Portal, construction of one stop border posts which are recognized as covid 19 mitigation projects.



“Our NTFC conducted its activities as per its TORs, albeit being impacted negatively” – Zambia’s NTFC Secretariat member



DESPITE THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, ZAMBIA’S NTFC HAS FULFILLED ITS DUTIES

During the pandemic, Zambia’s NTFC has managed to overcome obstacles posed by covid-19 and implement trade facilitation initiatives

- Two Time Release Studies have been undertaken on Mwami Border Post and Nakonde Border Post completely by the NTFC Technical Working Group on TRS
- Coordinated Border Management strategy and guidelines were developed by the NTFC working group
- Implementation of the Zambia Electronic Single Window was undertaken, including the creation of electronic Permits for three agencies under the Ministry of Agriculture
- Continued virtual interaction of the NTFC members with subcommittees and working groups, and Steering Committee
- Trade facilitation awareness activities carried out virtually for both Public and Private Sector



The covid-19 was an extra-strong sleeping pill for certain NTFCs



THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC PRECLUDED MANY NTFCs FROM COORDINATING REFORMS

In many countries, especially in SIDS and least developed countries, NTFCs have not been active during the covid-19 pandemic.

- Some of them slowed-down their activities, had fewer meetings
- Some of them have been “dormant” as in-person meetings were not allowed
- Some of them lost their members, as they were called for joining covid-19 taskforces because of their expertise
- Others are focusing their energy in the post-pandemic economic recovery



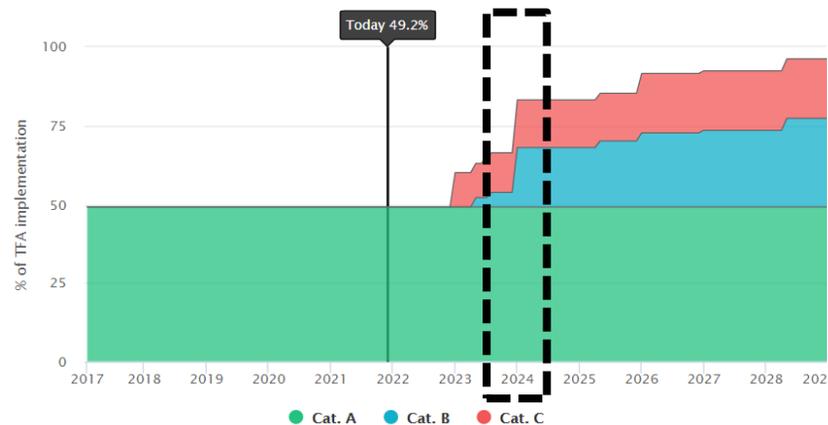
IN THE FUTURE?

Despite the pandemic, time flies, and there is a risk for a “commitment shock” for many developing countries.

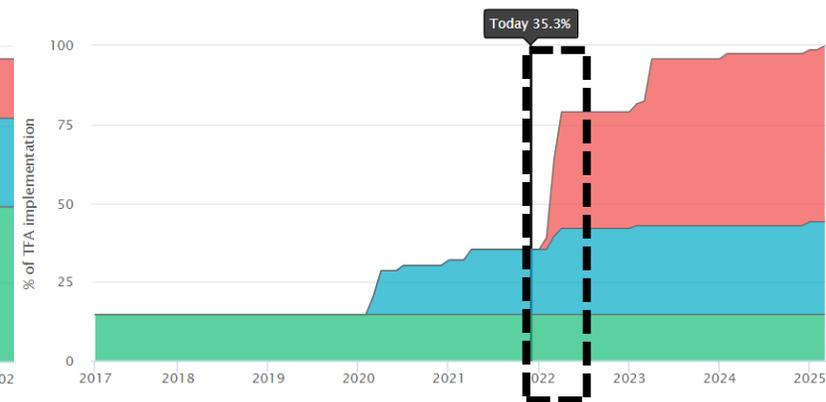
Most of Saint-Lucia’s and Jamaica’s commitments must be implemented within 24 months, and 12 months, respectively.

SAINT-LUCIA’S TIMELINE OF IMPLEMENTATION COMMITMENTS

Based on implementation commitments by all WTO Members over time



JAMAICA’S TIMELINE OF IMPLEMENTATION COMMITMENTS





IN THE FUTURE?

In this context, national (and regional) trade facilitation committees must fully play their role as **coordinators** or trade facilitation reforms.

And UNCTAD has some tools 😊

TFA Art. 23.2 **National Committee on Trade Facilitation**

*“Each Member shall establish and/or maintain a national committee on trade facilitation or designate an existing mechanism **to facilitate both domestic coordination and implementation** of the provisions of this Agreement.”*



IN THE FUTURE?

For more information on the UNCTAD's tools mentioned such as:

- Empowerment program for the NTFCs
- Rapid Scan of TF preparedness in time of crises
- Reform Tracker
- E-learning system for TF
- Trade Information Portals
- Automated System for Customs Data (ASYCUDA)
- please visit:

<https://unctad.org/topic/transport-and-trade-logistics/trade-facilitation>

And <https://asycuda.org/es/>

THANK YOU

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