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**Zimbabwe Transport System: A tool for
Trade Facilitation**

By

Zimbabwe

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ZIMBABWE TRANSPORT SYSTEM: A TOOL FOR TRADE FACILITATION: PRESENTATION AT THE SIXTH SESSION OF UNCTAD MULTI-YEAR EXPERT MEETING ON TRANSPORT, TRADE LOGISTICS AND TRADE FACILITATION

1. Introduction

Zimbabwe is a landlocked country whose main trading Ports are Maputo and Beria in Mozambique and the Port of Durban in South Africa.

For its trade Zimbabwe heavily relies on road transport and railway through border posts such as Beitbridge, Sango and Forbes for its imports and exports.

The greatest challenge faced by Zimbabwe in its trade are mainly related to border delays, congestion at Ports and poor road and railway infrastructure. These bottlenecks ultimately lead to escalation of costs of import and makes our exports less competitive on the international market.

Because of its geographic location, where it is centrally located in Southern Africa, Zimbabwe transport infrastructure does not serve it alone, but is used as transit point for Malawi, Zambia and Democratic Republic of Congo (Eastern DRC). The major traffic comprise of mineral exports and mining equipment imported into the Eastern DRC and Zambia.

The other major challenge is that railway infrastructure is in a poor state and railway systems are no longer preferred as mode of transport for bulk cargo. This scenario has led to serious burden on road infrastructure leading to fast deterioration of the road network on Regional Trunk Routes.

2. Interventions

Over the years Zimbabwe has promulgated various policies and action plans aimed at mitigating the trade and transport challenges pointed out above.

i. One Stop Border Post

In an effort to bring about border operating efficiency, Zimbabwe and Zambia opened a one stop border Post at Chirundu. This was meant to facilitate quicker clearance of transit traffic going north to DRC and Tanzania and South bound transit traffic to Mozambique and South Africa. There are plans to roll out other border posts into one stop border posts. Borders targeted are Beitbridge border between Zimbabwe and South Africa and Forbes Border between Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

ii. Extension of border hours

The Government of Zimbabwe in consultation with the neighbouring states, extended border operating hours from 2000 hours to 2200 hours for border posts such as Forbes border, Plumtree, Chirundu, Nymapanda and Victoria Falls. The Beitbridge border Post was extended to a 24 hour border. This initiative has resulted in reduced delays for transit traffic.

iii. Border Infrastructure Development Initiative

Government of Zimbabwe has partnered private sector in developing border post infrastructure such as buildings and parking bays in order to provide adequate infrastructure services and minimize border delays. This was after various studies had established that delays at Beitbridge border were related to procedures and infrastructure limitations. The pilot Border post Development Programme commenced at Beitbridge Border Post.

iv. Ease of Doing Business

In order to mitigate against delays caused by border procedures, Government of Zimbabwe came up with a directive that function of other border agencies should be done by one agent, e.g. collection of fees by various Government agents now done by the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority. Adequate signage was also posted in the various border posts to facilitate quick clearance of the travellers and cargo.

v. Cargo Tracking

With effect from January 2017, the Zimbabwe Revenue Authority introduced cargo tracking for all transit cargo and this has reduced the time transit cargo takes at the border and also facilitates its smooth passage without major delays caused by human habits like drivers parkin0 trucks unnecessarily after being cleared to proceed wit their jurneys.

vi. Road Infrastructure and Railway Rehabilitation

The Government of Zimbabwe is working on road infrastructure rehabilitation giving priority to regional trunk roads. Government is currently exploring various funding models to rehabilitate the Beitbridge – Chirundu Highway. The Plumtree to Forbes Border road was rehabilitated and completed in 2013. This road links Botswana to the Port of Beira in Mozambique.

With regards to railway, the intention is capitalisation of the National Railways of Zimbabwe so that railway infrastructure is brought to a sound state. Once the railway infrastructure is brought back to a sound state, certain bulk cargo currently moving by road will be directed to railway.

vii. Walvis Bay Dry Port Facility

Government of Zimbabwe entered into a long term lease arrangement with the Namibian Port Authority for lease of a dry port facility measuring about 18 000m² in the Port of Walvis Bay. This facility is meant to accommodate Zimbabwe bound imports and exports from Western Europe and the Americas. By leasing the space at Walvis Bay, it means Zimbabwe will be able to reduce the cost of importation of goods by reducing Port storage charges.

Conclusion

Zimbabwe strives to facilitate trade among the regional member states by providing the requisite transport infrastructure and services as a transit country because ultimately, we also transit other countries as we trade with the rest of the world. I thank you.

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