



**THEME: ENHANCING REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION THROUGH
 INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT: A CASE OF ONE STOP
 BORDER POST**

1.0 Background

Infrastructure development is very fundamental in the trade facilitation agenda as well as in deepening regional economic integration among Regional Economic Communities (RECs). This is because well-established infrastructure such as roads, railways and border infrastructure, among others facilitate efficient intra-regional trade and the free movement of goods, services and people across boundaries. It follows, therefore, that the absence of well-established infrastructure negatively impacts the flow of goods and services including individuals. The African Union (AU) Agenda 2063 aspires to put in place the necessary infrastructure to support Africa’s accelerated integration and growth, technological transformation, trade and development. This infrastructure development is therefore aimed at catalysing integration and intra-African trade and investment, among other things.

One key element in facilitating infrastructure development relating to trade is the model of One-Stops Border Post (OSBPs). The OSBP concept refers to the legal and institutional framework, facilities, and associated procedures that enable goods, people, and vehicles to stop in a single facility in which they undergo necessary controls following applicable regional and national laws to exit one state and enter the adjoining state (OSBP Sourcebook, 2nd Edition, 2016) In 2004, the East African Community (EAC) together with the Northern Corridor Transit and Transport Coordination Authority developed the East African Transport and Trade Facilitation Project, which among other activities, called for the development of OSBPs in the Region. OSBPs have also been identified as a central element in the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) and its associated Priority Action Plan (PAP) prioritising continental programs to address the infrastructure deficit that severely hampers Africa’s competitiveness in the global market (ibid).

The Chirundu OSBP, the border between Zambia and Zimbabwe, is the first OSBP in the African region. The OSBP programme was initiated by the Common

Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Regional Economic Community and the Zimbabwean and Zambian governments embarked on the preparations to launch an OSBP at Chirundu in 2004 (COMESA, 2013). Following the launch of the Chirundu OSBP, with the support of development partners, the concept and development of OSBPs has expanded rapidly with the support of development partners as one of the major tools to tackle impediments to the growth of trade in Africa. More than 80 OSBPs/joint border posts (JBPs) on the continent are now at the planning or implementation stage. However, as of 2016, not all OSBPs that have been constructed are fully functional (OSBP Sourcebook, 2nd Edition, 2016).

However, despite the progress recorded of more than 80 OSBS in the process of being operationalised, and the anticipated benefits of the model of OSBP such as improvement in physical infrastructure, streamlining the bureaucratic clearance procedures, and generally improving the efficiency in border management and operations, very little is known regarding the progress and trajectory of implementing the OSBP model in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) Region. Therefore, the role of Regional Parliaments in facilitating pieces of legislation to support the establishment of OSBP and advocating for adequate budget allocation to support the core cannot be downplayed. With the commencement of trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) on 1st January, 2021, acceleration of infrastructure development under the OSBP model will be very fundamental in realising the returns from intra-regional trade under the AfCFTA and under other trade Agreements.

With this background, the TIFI Committee will consider the theme *Enhancing Regional Economic Integration through Infrastructure Development through the concept of OSBP*.

2.0 Objectives

The objectives of the Committee meeting on ***Enhancing Regional Economic Integration through Infrastructure Development: A case of One Stop Border Posts*** are to:

- i. understand the background to the concept of OSBPs
- ii. explore the benefits of OSBPs;
- iii. appreciate the role of OSBPs in the trade facilitation agenda including harmonisation and simplification of international trade procedures;
- iv. appreciate the lessons learnt, the challenges being faced and the prospects, if any, in the implementation of OSBPs;
- v. learn the status in implementing the model of OSBP in the Southern African Region;
- vi. establish the role national Parliaments can play in enhancing regional economic integration through infrastructure development;

3.0 Methodology

The virtual meeting will be a one day activity hosted by the SADC Parliamentary Forum (SADC PF) and convened by the by the SADC PF Standing Committee on Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment (TIFI). The meeting will receive expert presentations from COMESA, the Zambia Revenue Authority, Zimbabwe Revenue Authority and the Southern Africa Cross Border Traders' Association.

4.0 Venue and Date

The Meeting will be held virtually on Zoom on 11th April, 2021 from 09:30 to 16:00 (GMT+2) and simultaneous interpretation will be available in the three official languages of SADC PF, namely English, French and Portuguese.

5.0 Participants

The Session will be attended by members of the SADC PF Standing Committee on on Trade, Industry, Finance and Investment and stakeholders drawn from Civil Society Organisations, the media and technical partners in SADC.