



Remarks

Remarks by the Senior Programme Officer Customs (SPO) from SADC Secretariat on the occasion of Launch of the Mwanza Time Release Study Report (TRS) on 11 November 2025, in Lilongwe, Republic of Malawi

Director of Industrialization, Business, Trade and Tourism
representing the PS

Commissioner of Malawi Revenue Agency (MRA)

Representatives from Border Agencies

Representative from Private Sector

Officials from MRA and Border Agencies here present

Colleagues from SADC Secretariat

TRS Facilitator Mr. Khwima Singini

Members of the media

Ladies and Gentlemen

Distinguished Guest

All the Protocol Observed,

Good Morning

On behalf of the SADC Secretariat and indeed on my behalf I would like to commend the Republic of Malawi for making this stride in undertaking the Time Release Study on the Mwanza border post. The workshop which is being conducted today is for the handover of the Study Report and it presents critical recommendations for improve border efficiency and effectiveness. The workshop is also a testimony that Malawi is committed with the SADC Regional integration agenda which among others goals is to increase the volume of trade and contribute to poverty alleviation as enshrined in the SADC treaty.

The Time Release Study is one of the international recognized instrument used to measure the efficiency of the border post using the World Customs Organization (WCO) tool. The

recommendations of the study if well implemented would contribute for ease of doing business and meet the expectation of the trader and other stakeholders.

SADC is currently implementing the Trade Facilitation Programme approved by the Ministerial Task Force on Regional Economic Integration in March 2016. The Programme is meant to support the consolidation of the Free Trade Area in line with the Protocol on Trade, other policy instruments and the SADC Treaty. The TRS is therefore one of the activities included in Trade Facilitation Programme and it is meant to support the implementation of the industrialization strategy anchored on Regional Value Chain (RVC) in line with the regional integration agenda as outlined in the Regional Indicative Strategy Development Plan (RISDP).

Border efficiency is therefore critical for the industrialization, and it is pre-supposing the region to have comparative and competitive advantage which can lead to contributes to

economic development, economy of scale and create therefore more jobs for youth as part of the poverty eradication.

Director of Industrialization, Business, Trade and Tourism

Commissioner MRA

Ladies and gentlemen

The consolidation of the SADC Free Trade Area requires the implementation of appropriate trade facilitation measures and instruments such as Time Release Study which will make the goods and services in the SADC Region to be more competitive and then increase the volume of intra-SADC Trade.

Trade is one of the key economic activities which contributes to increases economic growth rate, GDP rate, domestic reserves and other macroeconomic indicators.

In the last two year, the intra SADC Trade stood at 22%, and although this can be regarded as fair performance, as was expected, but there is recognition that in could be better but also it wouldn't be there if the region was not implementing the Free Trade Area (FTA). Nevertheless, there is hope for trade to

increase with the implementation of various trade facilitation measures; soft and hard infrastructure.

Director of Industrialization, Business, Trade and Tourism

Commissioner MRA

Ladies and gentlemen

I repeat; Time Release Study is one of the Trade Facilitation Instruments meant to support the implementation of the Industrialization Strategy anchored on the regional value chain as part of the consolidation of the SADC Free Trade Area in line with the Regional Indicative Strategy Development Plan (RISDP).

The implementation of its recommendations will contribute for easy of doing business and attracting therefore foreign direct investment which eventually will make the economies to catapult from low to media and from media to high income economy depending on the currant economic situation and trends of the Member States.

The study identified various requirements for interoperability of the system at the Mwanza border post which also is linked to Nacala Corridor supply chain. The Nacala Corridor is one of the Strategic in the Region and this study was conducted at the time when there are other dynamics in the region like the accession of Angola to the SADC Free Trade Area which is a big milestone in the SADC Regional Integration Agenda.

SADC is one of the recognized Regional Economic Community (REC) recognized by Africa Union and according to Abuja Treaty they (the REC) are building blocks for Africa Economic Integration and therefore the region is committed to support that aspiration by implementing the projects and activities which is in line to Africa Integration Agenda as well.

With the support of the European Union, SADC undertook Time Release Studies at Mwanza Border Post (Malawi/Mozambique)

to measure efficiencies and to recommend measures to enhance trade facilitation. TRS is an international model instrument used to measure the time frame of transaction of the goods including its clearance along the supply chain. It was possible to finalize the study through the collaboration of all stakeholders; namely transporter, Customs Officials, Drivers, Traders, Transport Authorities, Clearance Agencies, Freight Forwarder just to mention few.

There is evidence of existence of a number of challenges affecting operations of various borders posts in the region, that includes multiplicity of government border control agencies that operates in silos; lack of full computerization of border operations that leads to existence of both manual and electronic systems; challenge in simplifying and harmonising procedures as provided in the World Customs Organization (WCO) Revised Kyoto Convention (International Convention on the simplification and harmonization of Customs procedures); challenge to fully implement initiatives such as the One Stop Border Post (OSBP),

Regional Customs Transit Management System (RCTMS); Coordinated Border Management (CBM), Electronic Cargo Tracking Systems (ECTS), Risk management; and Authorized Economic Operators (AEO).

Commissioner Customs

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Study was conducted by an accredited WCO expert and supported by various stakeholders in the Transkahari Border Post; and using the World Customs Organization Time Release Study methodology/credentials. The World Bank also use the TRS as their tool for assess the efficiencies of the border post which is presented in their doing business annual report.

The study among others recommended; (i) to Harmonizanse and Standardize Procedures; (ii) Develop Customs Support System; and (iii) Structural Adjustment. The Secretariat in collaboration with Malawi is committed to facilitate the

implementation of these recommendation in order to build confidence to trader and investor and also to expedite the movement of consignment. These recommendations once implemented will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of clearance of goods, people and means of transport hance facilitating the intra- and extra SADC Trade.

The recommendations of the Study, if well implemented will also contribute to reduce the clearance time of the goods throughout the supply chain and therefore improve the easy of doing business. It is therefore imperative all the stakeholders; Port Authority, Logistics Agencies, Transporter, Port Health, Sanitary and Phytosanitary agent, customs officials, clearance agent, freight forwarders to support the implementation of the recommendation of the study.

Director of Industrialization, Business, Trade and Tourism

Commissioner MRA

Ladies and gentlemen

The Time Release Study at Mwanza was conducted at the time when there are new dynamics in the region, on consolidation of the SADC Free Trade Area, Angola has joined the SADC Free Trade Area and it is anticipated that the volume of trade in the SADC Region will increase.

The workshop which is being conducted today is meant to handover the report of the Time Release Study to Malawi and what is important, is this have to be owned by all stakeholders and also Malawi to take note of the recommendations in order to implement it expeditiously and rigorously.

The distinguish Delegates will witness this process of handover of the report as testimony of our commitment to advance the development of this region in order to be one of the best places to live in the world where people live as brothers and sisters and enjoy the prosperity.

As I am concluding this remarks, I would like once again to thank the Republic of Malawi for warm hospitality accorded us since

we arrived at the Kamudzu International Airport and all facilities put on our disposal for the success of this workshop; I would also like to thank our International Cooperating Partner EU through the EU-SADC Trade Facilitation Programme for supporting the implementation of various Trade facilitation activity including the Time Release Study and also the GIZ through CESARE Programme for the finalization of this study and the support of other Trade facilitation activities like the electronic certificate of origin.

I thank you.