



**REMARKS DELIVERED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT AND
INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

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**WORKSHOP ON LLDCS (LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES):
FROM DATA TO POLICY — STRENGTHENING TRADE AND
TRANSPORT COST ANALYSIS IN LLDCS**

REMARKS FOR WORKSHOP ON LLDCS (LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES): FROM DATA TO POLICY — STRENGTHENING TRADE AND TRANSPORT COST ANALYSIS IN LLDCS

Mr. Abdoul Salam Bello, Chief in the Office of the High Representative on Landlocked Developing Countries

United Nations Resident Coordinator for the Republic of Zimbabwe, here ably represented by Mr Innocent Madziva

Ms Nnana Pheto, Senior Officer in the Office of the High Representative on Landlocked Developing Countries

Local representatives of the United Nations Institutions resident in Zimbabwe

Representatives from Foreign Affairs and International Trade

Representatives from Industry and Commerce

Representatives from Finance and Investment Promotion

Representatives from Lands, Agriculture and Rural Resettlement

Representatives from Health and Child Care

Representatives from Department of Immigration

Senior officials from the Ministry of Transport

Representatives from Zimbabwe Revenue Authority

Representatives from National Handling Services

Representatives from ZimTrade

Representatives from ZimSTATS

Representatives from University of Zimbabwe

Representatives from Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries

Representatives from Zimbabwe National Chamber of Commerce

Representatives from Shipping and Forwarding Agents Association of Zimbabwe

Representatives from Transporters Association of Zimbabwe

Representatives from Cross Border Association of Zimbabwe

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

It is both an honor and a responsibility to speak today on a theme that strikes at the heart of development for Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs): *From Data to Policy — Strengthening Trade and Transport Cost Analysis*. Today, we gather to bridge one of the most critical gaps in sustainable development: the gap between knowledge and action, between data and decision-making in transport and trade facilitation.

Allow me to recognise all Government Ministries, institutions, State entities, the private sector, regional institutions such as the SADC Secretariat and development partners. Your participation at this workshop is very important as it allows us to bring our heads together and understand the challenges landlocked countries, particularly Zimbabwe face in regional integration and transportation. Your participation is aimed at assisting one another to ensure development of smoother pathways towards reducing transport and trade facilitation costs across borders.

Ladies and gentlemen,

LLDCs face unique and persistent challenges in terms of transport and trade facilitation. The lack of direct access for countries such as Zimbabwe to the sea increases transport costs, reduces competitiveness, and limits participation in global trade. Many LLDCs also experience constraints in energy access, digital connectivity, and climate resilience. These challenges are not new, but our tools to address them can be redefined and customised to meet our current challenges and diverse economies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

This draws me to the purpose of this workshop. With the birth of the 4th Revolution a few years ago, IT, electronic devices, technology and the internet of things have driven global transportation, transport and logistics and trade through a spiral of paradigms, where countries, Governments and businesses had to adapt to keep up with the changes in technologies. In this whole maze, the demand for data has continued to rise, with key decisions in most Member States being led by the provision of adequate data. **Data** has become one of our most powerful resources. It enables us to measure, to compare, to understand. But data alone does not change lives. *Policies* do. Evidence must be transformed into actionable, context-specific solutions that respond to the realities of each country and community. That is the essence of this workshop: how to move *from data to policy*.

We must begin by strengthening the **data ecosystems** within LLDCs — ensuring that national statistical offices, research institutions, and ministries have the capacity, the technology, and the collaboration frameworks needed to collect and use data effectively. Without reliable data, even the best-intentioned policies risk missing their mark. The various institutions here present, as they conduct business continue to record on various transactions, be it monetary or movement of vehicles, passengers and goods. This data is used for future research and development, an initiative that can assist any

entity to move forward and grow. Historical facts and data can help us shape the future of Zimbabwe under this LLDC umbrella.

There is need for us to focus on **integration** by bringing together data on trade, transport, energy, education, and environment to build a holistic understanding of development challenges. This helps policymakers identify the linkages — for example, how improving border efficiency can boost exports, or how investing in digital corridors can expand access to education and markets. Zimbabwe is landlocked but at the same time, strategically located, an opportunity that can assist and catapult the country to socio-economic prosperity. The current initiatives to streamline border operations through modernisation and expansion of border posts and other related infrastructure and systems is a step towards addressing the existing bottlenecks in the country.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As a country, we need to make sure that data speaks the language of **policy**. Too often, data sits in reports and databases, disconnected from decision-making. We must translate insights into actionable recommendations, and we must communicate them clearly — to our principals and the general public.

Ladies and gentlemen, Establishment of partnerships is critical for our economy. We do not and cannot operate in a vacuum. The “silo mentality” does not bear results. No country, and no institution, can do this alone. Regional cooperation, South–South learning, and partnerships between governments, academia, and the private sector are crucial for turning shared data into shared progress.

Let us remember every dataset represents people, traffic or transaction. Traders waiting at a border, students walking miles to school, entrepreneurs seeking access to markets. When we improve how we use data, we improve

lives. As we begin today's discussions, let us focus on the "*how*": How data informs more inclusive transport and trade policies; how countries can be prepared in instances of natural disasters that affect transport and trade; how we as a country can contribute to the global data revolution and make a mark towards Zimbabwe's visibility. There are so many questions that we can answer.

If we succeed, the outcomes of this workshop will not just be recommendations on paper, but the foundation for stronger, evidence-based policies that advance towards addressing the Awaza Decade of Action.

Together, let us move from data to policy — and from policy to progress.

I Thank you.