Non-Tariff Barriers in Exporting to Africa

Mauritius ranks 1st in Africa in the **World Bank's Ease of Doing Business 2017** ranking. This is no small achievement as countries are measured across 11 business facilitation parameters. Some of the modalities measured are: protecting minority investors, getting credit and trading across borders, amongst others. This high ranking of Mauritius reflects the efforts of the State in enabling the ease of import, export and investment in the country.

Mauritius currently has approximately 920 export-ready enterprises, of which most small enterprises export to Africa and the Indian Ocean Islands. In 2010, our exports to Africa and the Indian Ocean islands amounted to Rs 7.3 bn. In 2015, these were at Rs 11.5 bn and Rs 10.6 bn in 2016. These figures show the great potential of Mauritius to exploit Africa as a consistent market. However, this Mauritian ambition is faced by challenges. The difficulties are mostly in the form of **Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs)—**since tariff barriers are already overcome under **SADC** and **COMESA FTAs**-- which discourage Mauritian manufacturers to export to these destinations.

Non-tariff barriers are those barriers which delay export procedures and render it costlier and cumbersome. Exporters, therefore, are disproportionately affected in their ability to supply foreign markets and in their competitiveness.

Enterprise Mauritius
7th Floor, St James Court
St Denis Street, Port Louis
Republic of Mauritius **Tel:** 230 212 9760 **Fax:** 230 212 9767

Below are some of the main NTBs which hinder Mauritian exports towards Africa:

- The administrative lengthiness in obtaining **Pre-Verification of Conformity (PVOC)** and **Certificates of Conformity (COC)** certifications when exporting to markets such as Tanzania and Kenya.
- A number of African markets insist on stringent testing before receiving imports. Often, Mauritian laboratories do not have the competencies and have to subcontract the tests to overseas laboratories. This, therefore, takes time and increases the costs. Countries such as Kenya and Tanzania have selected laboratories which they recognize and exporters compulsorily have to conduct their tests via those specific laboratories.
- The cost of transportation greatly affects the competitiveness of Mauritian products to Africa. This is especially the case for exports to Northern and Western African countries as well as landlocked territories.
- Strict labelling requirements and pre-shipment inspections are also major constraints when exporting to some destinations.
- In specific cases, access to the Ethiopian market—a country with relatively high purchasing power--is hampered due to the latter's non ratification of the **COMESA FTA.**
- Similarly, Mauritian exports of textiles and apparels are hampered by the double transformation rule enforced under the **SADC** Rules of Origin, which restricts use of raw materials from a non-SADC member states.

These NTBs hamper Mauritius from realising its optimal export potential to African markets and need to be addressed. Enterprise Mauritius, with the support of the Government, constantly endeavours to eliminate these NTBs. With this very objective, in the coming few months, EM will be organising a workshop titled **" Mauritius Exporting to Africa and the Region"** in order to enable our local operators to grasp the procedural and technical knowledge involved in exporting towards these identified markets.

Enterprise Mauritius
7th Floor, St James Court
St Denis Street, Port Louis
Republic of Mauritius **Tel:** 230 212 9760 **Fax:** 230 212 9767