



# **Government Initiatives to Support Services Suppliers under the WTO LDC Services Waiver**

**Presentation by Emmanuel MUTAHUNGA at the  
WTO Council for Trade in Services Webinar: LDC  
Services Export Performance & Facilitating  
Implementation of Preferences Notified Under  
the LDC Services Waiver, 2<sup>nd</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2021**



# Introduction

- Appreciation to the WTO CTS for organizing the Webinar on this topical subject
- An opportunity for us as LDCs, preference-granting WTO Members, and even non-preference-granting developed/developing WTO Members, to do a self-assessment



# LDC Services Waiver – Spirit and Rationale

- Very important Decision reached in 2011
- Important process: the LDC Collective Request
- The process of Notification of the Preferences under the Waiver by Members
- Utilization of the Preferences by LDCs?
- Rationale/Spirit: increase the participation of LDCs in international trade in Services – what do the statistics say!



# Notifications of Preferences under the Waiver

- 2015 - Waiver period was extended to 2030 – is the pace of Notifications encouraging?
- Is the LDC utilization of the notified preferences encouraging?
- Literature: desired impacts of preferences granted under the services waiver has not yet been realized
- Why?: cases of notified measures reflecting the applied MFN regime; and some notified measures reflect commitments found in preferential trade agreements which also reflect the applied regime



## Uganda Government Initiatives to Support Services Suppliers under the WTO LDC Services Waiver

- The 2008 National Trade Policy identifies Services as a priority area for Uganda
- This prioritization informed and drove Uganda's spirited engagement in the WTO Services negotiations processes
- After the Services Waiver Decision, & then the Notifications, Uganda developed the National Policy on Services Trade, complete with an Implementation Plan (2017)



## Uganda Government Initiatives to Support Services Suppliers under the WTO LDC Services Waiver

- National Policy on Services Trade Objectives:
  - i. Promoting domestic capacity development in Services trade and enhancing firm level competitiveness
  - ii. Strengthening human and institutional capacities
  - iii. Increasing market access opportunities
  - iv. Strengthening regulatory and institutional framework



## Uganda Government Initiatives to Support Services Suppliers under the WTO LDC Services Waiver

- National Policy on Services Trade Objectives
- v. Mainstreaming Services Trade in national development planning frameworks



## Uganda Government Initiatives to Support Services Suppliers under the WTO LDC Services Waiver

- Specific Policy Actions under the National Policy on Services Trade:
  - i. Improving firm level competitiveness,
  - ii. Improving Export Market Access *{incl. ‘Developing Strategies for Uganda Services Suppliers to take Advantage of the WTO LDC Services Waiver’}*;
  - iii. Establishing Services Specific Planning Mechanism, and
  - iv. Strengthening Regulatory and Institutional Frameworks





## Uganda Government Initiatives to Support Services Suppliers under the WTO LDC Services Waiver

- Activities under ‘Developing Strategies for Uganda Services Suppliers to take Advantage of the WTO LDC Services Waiver’ include:
  - ✓ Analysis of market preferences notified under the WTO
  - ✓ Conducting market entry studies
  - ✓ Sensitizing the private sector of the available opportunities and how to harness them



## Uganda Government Initiatives to Support Services Suppliers under the WTO LDC Services Waiver

- Activities (Continued):
  - ✓ Capacity assessment for domestic services suppliers
  - ✓ Development of a Market Sustainability Strategy
  - ✓ Continued engagement in Trade in Services at Multilateral level



## Uganda Government Initiatives to Support Services Suppliers under the WTO LDC Services Waiver

- What has been done so far: Policy implementation is ongoing, but the pace could be better
- Private sector has been organized, and process continues. More capacity building needed
- Public sector capacity building in the area of Services Trade ongoing



## **Uganda Government Initiatives to Support Services Suppliers under the WTO LDC Services Waiver**

- Important role of Services Trade in enhancing Merchandise Trade now greatly appreciated among wider stakeholders
- At multilateral level, we need to bring our the ‘preference’ aspect more as we notify so that we remain within the spirit of the Waiver



**A lot done; much more to do**

- *Thank You*