

HOW TO IMPROVE CONDITIONS FOR INFORMAL CROSS-BORDER TRADE?



Demands of SNI affiliates which are part of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

STOP HARASSEMENT AND VIOLENCE

- Decency and dignity in treatment at border posts when authorities are engaging cross-border traders;
- End all forms of intimidation and harassment to which traders become victims
- Ban on extortion;
- Negotiation of ICBT facilities and decency in treatment at border posts concerning tariffs and violence;
- An end put to the various harassments of which traders are victims;
- Security for traders and their goods (often victims of the lawless);
- Provide facilities for women who engage in cross-border trade;
- Clean up the customs and police corridors of certain countries (e.g., Nigeria) and make them respect the rules established in the ECOWAS or FTAA area.

ACCESS TO RIGHTS AND SUPPORT

- Identifying & organizing all ICBT across our countries which are not recognized or organized;
- Promotion of Social Protection, workers' rights and active/participatory social dialogue;
- State provision of informal cross-border traders' loans with reasonable interests/grants to enable them to restart their businesses where there have been casualties and losses on the borders due to abuses suffered; Psychosocial support for ICBT especially those who lost their jobs within the COVID-19 period. Direct investment to generate more wealth in place/reduce poverty;
- Promotion of ILO recommendation 204 and formalization of activities and recognition of informal economy actors.

TAXATION

- Custom Tariffs harmonization at border post to allow for free movement of people and goods;
- Access to certificate of origin to cross-border traders;
- Simplified custom tariffs at all entering post of our borders;
- Everything concerning goods i.e., paying of duty, checking goods and other relevant documents are carried out at one particular point.;
- Special tellers for informal traders with fast tracked declarations/transactions without extortion at borders.
- Harmonize the different fees to be paid;
- A border access document is available; significant reduction of taxes within borders;
- Exchange of different currencies;
- Reduction of customs duties on quantities and specific products.

POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

- Compliance with agreements between ECOWAS countries;
- Introduction and enforcement of ECOWAS ID Cards;
- Close monitoring of harmonization of regulations;
- Proper documentation allowing easy crossing of the border through legal routes;
- Ratification of international documents and instruments to facilitate trade in Africa sub-regions.

INCLUSIVE NEGOTIATIONS

- Creation of a platform of decision-making forums.;
- Create a framework for consultations between related stakeholders who work at the borders of neighboring countries;
- Establishment of a border listening and guidance office for traders;
- Establishment of a bipartite consultation framework (Government-Trade Union).