

# Non-Tariff Measures on Agricultural Trade in SADC: Are they Substituting Tariffs?

---

## **Summary**

The launch of the SADC free trade area in 2008 has been applauded as it signified an era of low tariff protection in the region. At the same time Article VI of the SADC Trade Protocol called for elimination of all non-tariff barriers and refraining from introducing new ones. Therefore beyond the year 2008, trade in SADC was supposed to be the most liberal in the history of the regional bloc. As a result, intra-regional trade was also expected to be showing major increases.

However, over the period 2000 to 2010 other trade and regulatory measures in SADC have increased. These measures, non-tariff measures (NTMs) have also affected intra-SADC trade as there was no substantial improvement in trade that accompanied decline in tariffs. The extent of the impact of NTMs on SADC trade is still not fully understood due to lack of reliable data. In the seminar, NTMs data that was collected from SADC agricultural products of ten countries will be discussed to shed some light on these measures as well as to expose them.

The results confirm that these countries have increased their use of NTMs of the period. On average one agricultural product was subjected to 17 NTMs. SACU countries appear to be the leaders in the use of NTMs, while Malawi had the least incidences of NTM applications. Most of the NTMs are applied on fruits, meat, dairy, vegetables and cereal products. The use of SPS and export measures were increasing faster than other categories. Finally, there is a pattern that shows that use of NTMs increased more when countries were required to reduce most of tariff lines. That raises the question whether NTMs are used as substitutes for tariffs. This is a serious concern as NTMs can be trade restricting, and if they are not addressed, they will reverse the gains of SADC free trade area as well as other initiatives of trade liberalisation.