



## COULD GI BE A GOOD RURAL DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR CERTAIN COMMUNITIES?

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On 17 September 2020, the NAMC hosted a virtual webinar presented by agricultural senior economist – Dr Moses Lubinga. The presentation was titled *Geographical Indication (GIs) for market access, rural development and inclusive growth*. The seminar aimed to showcase how rural communities stood a chance in promoting their produce through GI's.

The GIs is described as a generic term involving various legal mechanisms used to protect geographical designators that inform consumers about the geographic origin of a product, the product's quality and characteristics. Broadly, the GIs are categorised into two forms; a) protected designation of origin (PDO), meaning that each and every activity relating to the production, processing and preparation should occur in that specific region; b) GIs are protected - it allows for at least one of the stages of production, processing to take place in that particular region and that preparation must occur in the specified region such as spirits and Aromatised wines.

Through GIs producers, consumers and the local communities benefit a lot through;

- ❖ Production and employment within the region,
- ❖ Better income distribution throughout the whole production chain.
- ❖ GIs foster diversification in production, hence an excellent tool for market access.
- ❖ Enable consumers to benefit from a wider range of choice and diversity of quality products.

Dr Herbert Lubinga believed South Africa should adopt a similar drive and strategy for rural communities, as it could improve the country's footprint. Given that the GIs for Trade is perceived as a strong policy tool through which commodities may become more profitable and competitive while preserving the unique characteristics of agricultural products.

In his conclusion, Dr Lubinga recommended that the various industries should consider identifying economically significant traded non-GI products and introduce them into markets of interest, for example EU, China etc. Most importantly, the South African government should come on board to support the process of registering GIs rather than complicating the process.