



The BRR team led by BRR Executive Director Mrs. Sharon Sichilongo (forth from right) with Chililabombwe Municipal Council Acting Town Clerk Mr. Mabvuto Masiye (fifth from right) and part of the Management team



STREAMLINING BORDER OPERATIONS TO ENHANCE TRADE FACILITATION

The Business Regulatory Review Agency (BRR) recently conducted a monitoring exercise in the border towns of Nakonde, Ndola, Mufulira and Chililabombwe.

The purpose of the monitoring activity, carried out from 31st March to 4th April 2025, was to assess the level of compliance by local authorities with the National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) directive.

The Agency observed that Nakonde Town Council and Chililabombwe Municipal Council had fully complied with the directive under the NTFC to delegate the collection of local levies to the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA).

This marks a significant step to-

ward integrated border management. However, while Ndola City Council and Mufulira Municipal Council had initiated engagements with the ZRA, full compliance was still pending primarily due to infrastructural limitations and limited ZRA operations at Sakania and Mukambo border posts.

BRR Executive Director Sharon Sichilongo commended the councils for the progress made, empha-

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This streamlining initiative is a critical step toward enhancing the speed and efficiency of customs clearance, eliminating overlapping functions and supporting Zambia's broader agenda to improve the ease of doing business.

sizing that their efforts contribute to the creation of a more efficient border environment, fostering

the seamless movement of goods and reducing transaction costs for businesses.

Following the NTFC directive, and through coordinated engagements between the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry, seven local authorities have since been withdrawn from operating at border

posts including Mwami, Chirundu, Kazungula, Mokambo, Sakania, and Sesheke.

This streamlining initiative is a critical step toward enhancing the speed and efficiency of customs clearance, eliminating overlapping functions and supporting Zambia's broader agenda to improve the ease of doing business.



The BRR team with Ndola Town Council, Town Clerk George Mulenga (on the left) and part of the management team



The BRR team with Mufulira Municipal Council Town Clerk, Ms. Kasonde Musongole (third from left) with some members of the Management team

WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN IN BUSINESS

Starting a business is often compared to navigating uncharted waters - challenging, unpredictable and at times, overwhelming. For women, the journey can be even more demanding due to a combination of household responsibilities, economic barriers, social expectations, legal hurdles and institutional limitations that often place them at a disadvantage.

One of the most significant obstacles women face is access to finance. Many women-owned businesses tend to be small, informal and perceived as high-risk by lenders. This perception, coupled with a lack of collateral and financial literacy, often prevents women from obtaining the capital they need to start or grow their ventures.

To help level the playing field, the Zambia Federation of Associations of Women in Business (ZFAWIB) plays a vital role in empowering women entrepreneurs across the country. According to Maureen Sumbwe, Chief Executive Officer of ZFAWIB, the Federation was established to promote women's entrepreneurial development and assist them in transitioning from the informal to the formal economy.

Ms. Sumbwe emphasizes the importance of mentorship and business formalization as key strategies for success. "Through mentorship, we encourage women to formalize their businesses, which in turn opens doors to financial support, training, market access, and scalability," she said. Formal businesses enjoy greater security and credibility, making them more attractive to investors and development partners.

Despite these efforts, Ms. Sumbwe notes that more must be done to remove structural barriers that continue to hinder women's business growth. She calls for the streamlining of business registration processes and the decentralization of regulatory and licensing services, particularly in rural and underserved areas. "The current systems are not only complex but costly, draining limited resources from women who are just trying to establish a



Zambia Federation of Associations of Women in Business, Chief Executive Officer Ms. Maureen Sumbwe.

"There is a resilient spirit in every woman. Remember, even the most successful businesses started from humble beginnings. No one should despise the day of small starts."

foothold," she explained.

Looking beyond policy and systems, Ms. Sumbwe encourages women to take initiative and start income-generating activities, no matter how small. "Life is not static," she said. "Women, whether in business or formal employment, should aim to have multiple streams of income. That way, if one dries up, they are

supported by another."

Her message to aspiring and existing women entrepreneurs is one of hope and resilience. "There is a resilient spirit in every woman. Remember, even the most successful businesses started from humble beginnings. No one should despise the day of small starts."

In the spirit of solidarity, organizations like ZFAWIB continue to create pathways for women to succeed, ensuring that they are not only supported but celebrated as they contribute meaningfully to Zambia's economic development.



CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY COMMEND BRRA FOR BUSINESS REGULATION ENGAGEMENTS

Chambers of Commerce and Industry across various districts have commended the Business Regulatory Review Agency (BRRA) for its proactive role in assisting businesses to navigate the business regulatory environment. The commendations highlight BRRA's instrumental contribution in addressing regulatory challenges and supporting the private sector.

This came to light during a series of stakeholder engagement meetings held between the BRRA and local chambers of commerce in Nakonde, Ndola and Mufulira Districts.

In Nakonde, the President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Thomas Botha, commended the BRRA for addressing several concerns raised by the private sector. He emphasized the need for continued dialogue between the Agency and business communities, noting that many issues still require attention. “The BRRA has

“The BRRA has been key in facilitating solutions. We encourage them to maintain open lines of communication with the private sector.” – Thomas Botha, Nakonde Chamber of Commerce and Industry

been key in facilitating solutions. We encourage them to maintain open lines of communication with the private sector,” he stated.

In Ndola, the Council Secretary of the Ndola and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Felix Mu-

sonda, acknowledged the positive strides made by the BRRA, particularly in simplifying regulatory processes. However, he stressed the importance of setting clear and realistic timelines for the implementation of reforms. “Defining deadlines will give businesses greater clarity, predictability, and confidence in the regulatory process,” he added.

Meanwhile, in Mufulira, the Chamber expressed satisfaction with its first official engagement with the BRRA. Members welcomed the opportunity to exchange ideas and



The BRR team with members of the Mufulira Chamber of Commerce and Industry and officials from Mufulira Municipal Council.

“These interactions are crucial. Building strong partnerships with business stakeholders is vital for creating a regulatory framework that supports economic growth and private sector development.” – Sharon Sichilongo, BRR Executive Director

functions. During the meeting, BRR Executive Director, Sharon Sichilongo, outlined the mandate of the Agency and elaborated on its collaborative approach in working with stakeholders to foster a more efficient business regulatory environment.

isfaction with the engagements, emphasizing the importance of sustained collaboration with the private sector. “Building strong partnerships with business stakeholders is vital for creating a regulatory framework that supports economic growth and private sector development,” she said.

better understand the Agency’s

Mrs. Sichilongo expressed sat-



The BRR team with members of the Ndola and District Chamber of Commerce and Industry

DID YOU KNOW? CORNER

DID YOU KNOW THAT

The Business Regulatory Act, No.3 of 2014 provides for a number of interventions that are being implemented to achieve an efficient, cost effective and accessible business licensing system. These interventions include the coordination and operationalization of Regulatory Services Centres (RSCs). A Regulatory Services Centre (RSC) is a one stop shop established to facilitate access to multiple business regulatory services under one roof. RSCs are operational in Chinsali, Chipata, Kabwe, Kitwe, Livingstone, Lusaka and Solwezi.

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