



Press Release

SACU hosts Aid for Trade Workshop, 08 – 09 September 2008, Windhoek, Namibia.

1. The SACU Secretariat in co-operation with the resource partners, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), African development Bank (AfDB) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, Africa Trade Policy Centre (UNECA/ ATPC) hosted an Aid for Trade (Aft) workshop for the SACU Member States. Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia, South Africa and Swaziland, from the 08 – 09 September in Windhoek, Namibia.
2. The workshop was facilitated by Mr. David Luke, Senior Advisor and Coordinator of the UNDP Trade and Human Development Unit, Geneva and assisted by representatives from AfDB and UN ECA/ ATPC.

3. The Executive Secretary of SACU Ms Tswelopele Moremi officially opened the workshop. She indicated that one of the objectives of the 2002 SACU Agreement is to promote the integration of SACU Member States into the global economy through trade and investment and that in order to achieve this, SACU Member States have to earnestly address the supply side constraints which hinder their effective participation.
4. She further indicated that the SACU Council of Ministers initiated the process on understanding the AfT initiative and to motivate its importance on proactive responses that could address possible supply side capacity constraints of the Member States. Council has directed that a SACU Workshop on AfT be held in 2008 to assess Member States needs in the trade-related capacity building area that can capacitate the supply side of the Member States and that a programme is developed to seek support under the AfT Initiative.
5. The objective of the SACU AfT Workshop was to provide a platform for information sharing among SACU Member States on international knowledge and experience with regard to the Aide for Trade initiative and to explore ways of how the SACU Member States can engage and benefit from this initiative.

6. The AfT Initiative was officially put on the agenda at the 6th World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong in December 2005. Previously, the AfT Initiative had been discussed in a number of fora, including the G8 Gleneagles meeting (July 2005) and the G7 Ministers of Finance meeting in London (February 2005). At these meetings a commitment was made to double aid to Africa and a pledge was made to raise resources allocated to AfT to US\$4 billion per year.

7. The primary aim of the AfT Initiative is to give African nations the necessary funds to meet the adjustment costs of implementing new trade agreements such as loss of customs revenue and loss of preferences due to ongoing global trade related effects. The initiative aims to develop roads, ports and telecommunications infrastructure, build capacity to produce goods, and simplify customs procedures. The strategy is meant to complement the Doha development trade talks aimed at lifting tariff and quota restrictions for African nations and cutting farm subsidies in developed economies.

8. At the end of the two day workshop, SACU Member States committed themselves developing a trade financing package

at a regional level that would be informed on work that is done at a national level. The workshop also set the next steps forward in terms of realising a SACU wide AfT Action Plan that would further be informed by the WTO/SACU Trade Policy Review due to begin in October this year,

9. The workshop was officially closed by Mr. Simon Nhongo, the UNDP Resident Representative & UN Resident Coordinator in Namibia.

SACU Secretariat

Windhoek, Namibia

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