



MEDIA RELEASE

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TO: ALL JOURNALISTS AND NEWS EDITORS

RE: SACU EXECUTIVE SECRETARY INTRODUCTION TO PRESIDENT POHAMBIA

WINDHOEK NAMIBIA; Wednesday 18 June 2014, the SACU Executive Secretary was introduced to the President of the Republic of Namibia His Excellency President Hifikepunye Pohamba by the Honourable Minister of Finance Ms. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila. The Ministry of Finance is the Ministry directly responsible for the SACU Portfolio within the Government of the Republic of Namibia.

In her introduction the Minister mentioned that SACU was very important to Namibia for the role it plays in regional integration within Southern Africa, the greater Africa as well as the global Arena. This therefore translates to the importance that Namibia regards the appointment of Ms. Paulina Elago to the position of leading such a critical organisation, more so because of her being a National of Namibia. The Minister then went on to reaffirm the governments confidence in Ms. Elago's ability to lead the organisation and build up on the foundation that has already been laid. This she said was drawn from the experience of Ms. Elago which spans over a period of 20 years in the area of trade and regional integration issues. As a former Chief Trade negotiator for Namibia, with over 20 years' experience she possess the qualities, skills and expertise required for the job. She already has a good understanding of SACU, its dynamics and history-having been involved in the renegotiations of the 1969 agreement, which culminated into the SACU Agreement 2002, which now she will have to implement as part of her mandate.

The President then welcomed Ms. Elago back home and also back to SACU. He went on to state that the SACU Summit of Heads of State and Government have placed a high regard on the work of SACU and they have high expectations. This was demonstrated by the decision to institutionalize a Summit of Heads of State and Government as an organ of SACU. Under the 2002 SACU Agreement the highest decision making body was the SACU Council of Ministers, comprising Ministers of Finance and Trade. The decision to institutionalize the Summit then provided a forum for Heads of State and Government to engage and provide strategic political direction on issues affecting the organization. During this Summit the Heads of State and Government also adopted a vision of SACU becoming “An **economic community with equitable and sustainable development dedicated to the wealth of its people for a common future**”. This vision reflects the desire of SACU Member States to transform the organization to a deeper level of integration. Through the President emphasized on the importance Namibia as a Member State of SACU placed on the work of SACU. The president concluded by pledging the support of the Government of Namibia to the SACU Secretariat and a commitment to the continued implementation of the SACU Work Programme.

In response, Ms. Elago thanked the Government of Namibia for supporting her candidature during the recruitment process for the position. She expressed her gratitude for the honour bestowed upon her by the SACU Council of Ministers for being afforded the opportunity to lead SACU. She went on to outline the key priorities she has been given for the furtherance of the SACU agenda. These she mentioned are all geared to take forward the work of implementing the priority areas promulgated by the Summit of Heads of State & Government. One immediate priority was the relocation of the Secretariat offices to the new building, which she said as much as it was exciting, it was proving to be a big task.

Ms. Elago also thanked the President for his support as a member of the SACU Summit and also as the Host of the SACU Secretariat. She assured the President and the Minister that she will work diligently to deliver on the mandate given to her.

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