



ANNOUNCEMENT: SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE 5TH JOINT SACU WTO TRADE POLICY REVIEW

31TH October 2023

WINDHOEK, NAMIBIA

The 5th Joint SACU Trade Policy Review was held on 25-27 October 2023, in Geneva, Switzerland. SACU is reviewed every seven years with the previous review having taken place in November 2015. Its primary aim is to foster enhanced compliance among all Members with the rules, disciplines, and commitments established within different WTO Agreements.

The Trade Policy Review (TRP) Mechanism is a vital facet of the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) transparency initiatives. The TPR process is overseen by the WTO Trade Policy Review Body. Under this mechanism, SACU Member States are obligated to undergo reviews every seven years. SACU has previously been reviewed in 1998, 2003, 2009, and 2015, making this year's evaluation another significant milestone in the ongoing assessment process.

This year's session was chaired by Ambassador Saqer Abdullah Almoqbel of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as the Chair of the WTO Trade Policy Review Body and led by the Kingdom of Lesotho as the current Chair of SACU. The TPRB Meeting unfolded in two sessions. The first session, held on the 25th October 2023, set the tone for the process. SACU Member States received approximately 383 advance written questions from 16 WTO Members for this Review. During this session, 25 WTO Members delivered statements and posed questions to the SACU Member States. The second session took place on the 27th October 2023, where the SACU Chairperson and individual Member States provided responses to the questions.

The WTO Members made statements on various areas, amongst others; SACU Institutional matters, such as the operationalisation of the Tariff Board; SACU Common Policies; SACU Common Revenue Pool, including discussions on the review of the revenue-sharing arrangement; Notifications by Member States, with a focus on Member States falling behind on their obligations; and SACU Common External Tariff, particularly the need to ensure WTO compliance, as the current regime is considered complex.

SACU Member States have agreed to convene a post-Trade Policy Review Workshop in due course. The 5th Trade Policy Review Session was attended by all SACU Member States, as well as the Secretariat.

Issued by:

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For EXECUTIVE SECRETARY