



**REMARKS BY MS. PAULINA MBALA ELAGO, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
OF SACU**

**5TH SACU SUMMIT, LOZITHA, KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND
23RD JUNE 2017**

Director of Ceremonies, Honourable Martin G. Dlamini, Minister of Finance, Swaziland and Chairperson of the Council of Ministers,

Your Majesty King Mswati III, Kingdom of Swaziland and the Chairperson of the SACU Summit of Heads of State and Government,

Your Excellency President Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa,

Your Honour, Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi, Vice President of the Republic of Botswana,

The Right Honourable Dr Sibusiso Barnabas Dlamini, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland,

Honourable Calle Herman-Gustav Schlettwein, Minister of Finance, Republic of Namibia'

Ms. Motena Tsolo, Chief Executive, Economic Policy at Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, representing of the Kingdom of Lesotho,

Honourable Ministers and Members of the SACU Council,

Honourable Members of Parliament,

Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

Distinguished Invited Guests,

Officials of the SACU Secretariat,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sanibonani. Good Morning.

1. Allow me to express my sincere appreciation to you, Your Excellencies for taking time off your busy schedule on this day, to meet and engage on the SACU Agenda.
2. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our host, the Kingdom of Swaziland, for the hospitality and excellent facilities accorded to us since our arrival. I also wish to thank the members of the Council of Ministers for the necessary preparations made to facilitate this Summit.

Your Majesty, Your Excellences,

3. The Summit is taking place in the aftermath of the visit by His Majesty King Mswati III to the SACU Headquarters in Windhoek, Namibia. His Majesty visited the Secretariat in his capacity as the Chairperson of SACU, to familiarise himself with the operational environment and to meet with the Secretariat's staff. The Secretariat and I remain deeply humbled by your visit, Your Majesty, especially because this was the first time that the Secretariat was visited by the Chairperson of SACU at the level of the Summit, since its establishment in 2004. We hope we will be honoured with similar visits by the SACU Chairpersons in the future.

Your Majesty, Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen

4. The 5th Summit of the SACU Heads of State and Government that is taking place today, was preceded by a series of Meetings of SACU Institutions, starting with the Meeting of the SACU Finance and Audit Committee, Commission and the Council. These were held from the 19th - 22nd June 2017, in Ezulwini, Swaziland.
5. As you may be aware, the focus of the 5th Summit is mainly to consider a progress report from the Council of Ministers. This will report the achievements attained on the implementation of the Roadmap to reinvigorate the SACU Work Programme that was approved by the SACU Heads of State and Government on 12 November 2015.
6. We are grateful that the Heads of State and Government will have an opportunity today, to reflect on the work done so far and provide guidance on how to move our regional Agenda forward.
7. In this regard, I am pleased that the Council was able hold discussions to reflect on all policy and strategic issues facing SACU prior to the Summit. The Council has agreed on the broad principles to move the SACU Agenda forward. An actionable Work Programme has also been discussed and agreed by the Council, including the institutional arrangements for its implementation.

8. With the approval by the Council of the SACU Work Programme; we now have a clear way forward on SACU's future direction.
9. The Secretariat remains available to assist and to support the Member States and the SACU institutions to ensure that the SACU Work Programme is successfully implemented.

Your Majesty, Your Excellencies,

10. As the oldest Customs Union in the world today, the role SACU plays in supporting the economies of the member States is well recognised. Allow me to put this in context; it is well documented that intra-regional trade in Africa is not only low but remain limited to few products. This can be attributed to the existence of trade barriers such as inefficient border procedures and non-diversification of the production base, which prevent Africa from reaping the full benefits of international trade.
11. SACU is well positioned to overcome such challenges and facilitate the integration of the economies of its Member States into the global economy. This is because through the free movement of goods, SACU can help build regional value chains, and thereby propel the region to tap into global value chains.
12. Supported by competitiveness-enhancing policies and strategies at individual country and regional levels, SACU can therefore be

an important instrument for cross-border trade and thus an engine of inclusive growth, as stated in our Mission.

13. SACU is not only focusing on Revenue Sharing as most analysts tend to believe. SACU is implementing other equally important programmes that are aimed at facilitating cross border trade through specific programmes such as the SACU Trade Facilitation programme, which is specifically designed to create a conducive trading environment for the traders in the region. It focuses broadly on Customs Modernization, with emphasis on IT connectivity, Risk Management and Enforcement and Trade Partnerships. Once these programmes are fully implemented, the time spent by the traders at our borders will be reduced and thereby improve the ease of doing business.
14. Similarly, SACU Member states are pursuing a Trade negotiations agenda collectively with third parties, which includes the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area as well as the Continental FTA. This is in addition to the implementation of concluded trade agreements with MECOSUR, SADC-EU Economic Partnership Agreement, amongst others.
15. We need to focus on developing and enhancing the production base to be able to take full advantage of the market opening opportunities provided by these agreements. I believe the outcomes and deliverables of the Council Work Programme, complemented by the requisite instruments and policy

interventions to promote industrial development will allow SACU to take advantage of market access and thus ensure sustainable growth, going forward.

16. In conclusion, I wish to convey my gratitude to His Majesty for the leadership and guidance that the Secretariat has received during your term as the Chair of SACU, and look forward to your continued support. Clearly, notable and remarkable progress has been made during your term as the Chair of SACU.
17. Equally, I wish to express my sincere appreciation and thanks to the entire Summit, the SACU Council of Ministers, and members of the SACU Commission for the leadership provided to the Secretariat.
18. With these few remarks, I thank you for your kind attention.