

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



STATEMENT BY

BY

HIS EXCELLENCY, DR NANGOLO MBUMBA

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE VISIT TO THE SOUTHERN
AFRICAN CUSTOMS UNION (SACU) HEADQUARTERS**

March 02, 2022 – WINDHOEK

Check against delivery

- **Director of ceremonies**
- **Hon. Verna Sinimbo, Deputy Minister of Industrialization & Trade;**
- **Hon. Heather Sibungo, Deputy Minister of Environment, Forestry & Tourism;**
- **Hon. Maureen Hinda-Mbuende, Deputy Minister of Finance;**
- **Hon. Hamunyera Hambyuka, Swapo Party Chief Whip in the National Assembly;**
- **Hon. Dr. Tobie Aupindi, Swap Party Member in the National Assembly;**
- **Ms. Paulina Elago, Executive Secretary of Southern African Customs Union (SACU);**
- **Amb. Jerobeam Shaanika, Head of Regional Organisations at Ministry of International Relations & Cooperation;**
- **Esteemed Senior Staff Members of SACU;**
- **Members of the Media**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good morning,

- 1.** It is my distinct honour to pay a courtesy visit to the Headquarters of SACU, here in our Capital City of Windhoek.

- 2.** On the onset, allow me to thank the Management and Staff of the SACU Secretariat for ensuring that despite the challenges and limitations posed by the Covid-19 pandemic, trade facilitation within SACU Member States continues, in line with the set and established trade protocols.

- 3.** The purpose of our visit is really to familiarize ourselves with the work programme and priorities of SACU and as a member state, hosting this important institution, to emphasize our commitment to the union and its work.

- 4.** Namibia commends and recognises SACU, as one of its key strategic partners working, among others, towards a post-COVID economic recovery. As you are all aware, post-COVID-19 recovery requires a committed focus on economic transformation, competitiveness, collaboration and diversification. These are all achievable through strategic partnership and enhanced cooperation going forward.
- 5.** The pandemic has, for the last two years, disrupted our efforts towards economic recovery, and that of other SACU member states, resulting in depletion of SACU revenues since its existence.
- 6.** It is therefore imperative that as government, together with all our stakeholders, including SACU, we should redouble our efforts and work together to strengthen our continued fight towards economic recovery through regional economic integration.

7. In these times of global economic instability, framed by fragile world economic recovery and outlook; effective regional integration is now of paramount significance.

8. It is in this spirit that His Excellency, Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia, has declared 2022 as a Year of Reimaging, which entails forming or creating a new mental picture or image of the world in which we live. Therefore, we should embark upon a recovery process that involves restoring, refocusing and rededicating our efforts to achieve our collective mission.

Director of Ceremonies;

9. Having been a de factor member since SACU's inception in 1910, Namibia officially became a member of SACU following its independence in 1990. The decision to join SACU was informed by, among others, the recognition and importance of the inter-

linkage between Namibia's economy and that of its trading partners in SACU.

- 10.** Embracing regional integration was seen, as a vehicle for overcoming the constraints of a small domestic market, integrating into the global economy, and, as a means to facilitate the structural transformation of our national economy.
- 11.** In this context, Namibia recognises that its continued involvement in regional integration efforts by virtue of being a member of SACU, is thus a strategic response to the growing demand for market enlargement within the context of globalisation.

Director of ceremonies,

- 12.** We prioritize regional integration efforts, as a credible strategy for tackling our development challenges. It is an ideal platform for promoting large scale investment

and economic efficiency required for economic growth and employment creation.

- 13.** I would like to urge the SACU Secretariat to work closely with all member states and Namibia in particular, to ensure that SACU's trade policies are entrenched and streamlined with our national policies with a clear strategy that promotes coherence across all sectors to ensure that the country maximise its benefits from such arrangements.

- 14.** With these few remarks, I once again commend the work of the SACU Secretariat and wish you a successful year ahead and beyond.

I thank you!