



CLOSING REMARKS

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY, DR. MOKGWEETSI E.K. MASISI
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA
AND THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE SUMMIT OF THE SACU
HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT**

ON THE OCCASION OF THE

**7TH SUMMIT OF THE SACU HEADS OF STATE AND/OR
GOVERNMENT**

Date: 30th JUNE, 2022

VENUE: GABORONE, BOTSWANA

- **Your Majesty King Mswati III, of the Kingdom of Eswatini;**
- **Your Excellency Dr. Hage Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia;**
- **Your Excellency Mr. Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa;**
- **The Right Honourable Dr. Moeketsi Majoro, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho;**
- **Your Honour, Mr. Slumber Tsogwane, Vice President of the Republic of Botswana;**
- **Honourable Ms. Peggy Onkutlwile Serame, Chairperson of the SACU Council of Ministers;**
- **Honourable Ministers and Members of the SACU Council;**
- **Your Excellency Paulina Mbala Elago, Executive Secretary of SACU;**
- **Honourable Members of Parliament;**
- **Your Excellencies Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**
- **Distinguished Invited Guests;**
- **Members of the SACU Commission and other Senior Officials;**
- **Officials of the SACU Secretariat;**

- **Members of the Media;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Good Afternoon.

1. It gives me great pleasure to address you once again, as we conclude the proceedings of the 7th SACU Summit. The Summit has successfully concluded its deliberations. I am pleased to inform you that the discussions were conducted in a frank and cordial manner, which enabled us to reach consensus on the key strategic issues on our Agenda.
2. I therefore thank you Members of the Summit, for all the contributions made during the Meeting which certainly made my work easier as the Chairperson. I believe we have provided the Council of Ministers with the requisite and clear guidance on what needs to be done in advancing the SACU Agenda.
3. The 7th Summit considered a Report from the SACU Council of Ministers, on the Refocused Work Programme which formed the basis for the adopted Strategic Plan for SACU for the period 2022-2027.

4. The Strategic Plan focuses on ***Industrialisation through the development of regional value chains, investment attraction and export promotion, financing for industrialisation, Trade Facilitation and Logistics*** as well as the ***implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)***.
5. The Summit commends the Council of Ministers on the development of the Strategic Plan, a key milestone on the SACU Agenda. This was an intense process which entailed extensive stakeholder consultations that included the private sector and other key partners, whose contributions shaped and informed the Strategic Pillars.
6. We have also noted, with appreciation, the various interventions and initiatives that were undertaken to reach this point. This includes the Sectoral Roundtables that were convened in the priority sectors and sub-sectors of *Leather and Leather products, Fruits and Vegetables, Meat and Meat products, Textiles and Clothing and Cosmetics and Essential Oils*.

7. These sectors offer extensive opportunities for the development of regional value chains across SACU. Consequently, their development and investment potential were considered at the Investment Roundtable that was held on 12th to 13th April, 2022.

8. The Summit noted that while some areas have advanced, work still needs to be undertaken to actualise the outcomes of the interventions being undertaken. This will enable the region to realise its industrialisation Vision of becoming an industrial, investment, manufacturing and innovation hub on the Continent and beyond, and to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the AfCFTA.

9. As we embark on the implementation phase, we should recognise that regional industrialisation, investment and export promotion will require substantial financial resources, as well as cooperation amongst the Member States to succeed. In this regard, concerted efforts should be deployed for work to start in earnest and urgently, to mobilise the financial resources to support the SACU industrialisation agenda and the Trade Facilitation and Logistics Programme.

10. ***Your Majesty, Your Excellencies***, The Strategic Plan for 2022-2027 sets out the direction that SACU will follow in its pursuit of its Vision, Mission and Strategic Priorities over the next five years. The 6 Strategic Pillars adopted will inform SACU's programmes and strategic interventions over the implementation period as well as its responses to emerging international, continental and regional opportunities and challenges.
11. It is our hope as the Summit that the Strategic Plan will assist the SACU region to focus on enhancing economic development, diversification, industrialisation and the competitiveness of the Member States, as well as their integration into the global economy through trade and investment.
12. The Summit has noted that overall, significant progress has been achieved in converging on the 6 Strategic Pillars. However, additional efforts are required to conclude on other critical issues.

13. These include work related to the formulation of common policies, tariff-setting, regional financial integration, review of the revenue sharing formula and the operationalisation of the institutions set out in the SACU Agreement of 2002, that have been deferred in the medium term.
14. We have therefore endorsed that the mid-term review of the Strategic Plan, be the opportunity for us to reflect on these issues as part of the evaluation of the progress made, achievements and lessons learnt from the implementation of the Strategic Plan.
15. Based on the guidance provided by the Summit, the Council of Ministers has been directed to ensure that the finalisation of the Implementation Plan and review of the Organisational Structure of the Secretariat are expedited in order to facilitate the implementation of the Strategic Plan.
16. The Summit has reaffirmed that the necessary resources will be availed to ensure a successful fruition of this process. It will however be critical that we engage, collaborate and strengthen partnerships with our Development Partners for

the financial support that would make all this a reality, considering the economic challenges that we are currently facing, exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

17. At this juncture, allow me on behalf of the Summit, to once again commend the Council of Ministers, SACU Commission and the Secretariat, for the Report presented to the Summit. You now have the Strategic Plan with clear goals, initiatives, activities and timelines; all that remains is for you to execute these efficiently and optimally for the economic development of our region.
18. ***Your Majesty, Your Excellencies,*** the Summit has also noted that **Ms Paulina Mbala Elago**, the Executive Secretary of SACU, will be completing her term of office in October 2022 and that the necessary arrangements are ongoing to recruit her successor.
19. On behalf of the Summit, I want to thank Ms Elago, for her professionalism, dedication and commitment in leading the Secretariat and implementing our regional agenda.

20. As I recall, Ms Elago had to facilitate the revitalization of the SACU Work Programme after an extended period of a stalemate in its implementation, as well as coordinating engagements amongst the Member States. This was her first assignment when she joined the Secretariat in 2014.

21. Other notable achievements during her term include the conclusion of the negotiations of the AfCFTA; SACU, Mozambique and United Kingdom Economic Partnership Agreement as well as the implementation of the EU-SADC Economic Partnership Agreement and SACU-EFTA Free Trade Area Agreement. The implementation of the SACU Customs Modernisation Programme is another successful key initiative she has overseen including the recently adopted Strategic Plan for 2022-2027.

22. I am pleased to note that SACU's visibility as a regional economic vehicle for industrialisation, has been enhanced through various engagements and initiatives continentally and beyond, including in our respective Member States.

23. The Secretariat has also successfully hosted the respective Chairpersons of the SACU Summit at the Headquarters, in Windhoek. Through this initiative, the Chairpersons (myself included), were able to appreciate the operations of the organisation, the challenges faced and measures to address them through the respective institutions of SACU as well as meeting the key resource of the organisation, the Staff of the Secretariat.

24. Thank you, Ms Elago, for all your hard work in getting us to where we are as an organisation. May the lord bless you abundantly in your future endeavours.

25. ***Your Majesty, Your Excellencies***, the Republic of Botswana's term as the Chair of SACU ends on the 14th July, 2022. I am honoured to have served as the Chairperson of the Summit since the 15th July, 2021 and hope that you were well-facilitated at the different structures; being the Council of Ministers, SACU Commission and all Technical Committees, by my fellow Batswana assigned as Chairpersons of these structures.

26. In this regard, let me congratulate His Majesty King Mswati III, as the incoming Chairperson of the SACU Summit. I also convey my good wishes to you and the people of the Kingdom of Eswatini, for assuming this role. I pledge the Republic of Botswana's continued support to you as you steer us in this important role in SACU.

27. We thank you all for accepting our invitation to Gaborone, Botswana, for the 7th SACU Summit and wish you travel mercies as you depart to your respective destinations.

I thank you. PULA!