

**REMARKS BY THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY ON THE OCCASION OF
THE VISIT BY HIS EXCELLENCY LIEUTENANT-GENERAL DR
SERETSE KHAMA IAN KHAMA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
BOTSWANA AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE SACU SUMMIT OF THE
HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT**

5 February 2018, Windhoek, Namibia

Your Excellency Lieutenant-General Dr. Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana and the Chairperson of the SACU Summit,
Honourable Ministers,
Your Excellency, Madam Tshenolo Modise, High Commissioner of the Republic of Botswana to Namibia,
Distinguished Members of the Botswana Delegation,
Senior Officials of both Governments of the Republic of Namibia and the Republic of Botswana,
SACU Secretariat Colleagues,
Members of the Media,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Dumelang, Good afternoon,

Re a go amogela Tautona. (We welcome you Mr President).

It is my privilege and honour to welcome you, Your Excellency and your delegation, to the SACU Headquarters. On behalf of the SACU Secretariat and indeed on my own behalf, I wish to thank you for taking time off your busy schedule, to visit the SACU Headquarters in your capacity as the Chairperson of the SACU Summit, and to meet with the Secretariat's staff.

I wish to also thank the Government of the Republic of Namibia for facilitating this visit.

Your Excellency,

Your visit is important to us as it provides us an opportunity to appraise you, Your Excellency, on key developments and status of the implementation of the SACU Work Programme.

Since the Ministerial Retreat that was held in June 2016, the SACU Council of Ministers has adopted the SACU Work Programme, which was endorsed by the 5th SACU Summit, in June 2017 in the Kingdom of Swaziland.

The Work Programme entails the following focus areas:

- (a) the review and development of a suitable architecture for tariff-setting, rebates, duty drawbacks and trade remedies;
- (b) a review of the Revenue Sharing Formula and the long-term management of the Common Revenue Pool;
- (c) the establishment of a Stabilisation Fund and exploring the feasibility of a financing mechanism for regional industrialisation;
- (d) identifying financing options for regional projects; and
- (e) the development of public policy interventions to promote and align industrial development and value chains.

Without going into details, I wish to highlight that the Secretariat continues to work hard and around the clock, to ensure the full and successful implementation of the Work Programme.

The implementation of these activities is presently ongoing and guided by the timelines as agreed in the Schedule of Implementation and Work Programme for the Ministerial Task Teams on Trade and Industry and on Finance.

To date, the Secretariat has successfully facilitated three Workshops on the following key outcome areas: (i) Public Policy Interventions to promote industrial development and Value Chains; (ii) the Review and Development of a suitable Architecture for Tariff-setting and Trade Remedies; and (iii) on the Review of the Revenue Sharing Arrangement, feasibility of establishing the Stabilisation Fund and the establishment of a Financing Mechanisms for regional projects.

Your Excellency, Honourable Ministers, Ladies and Gentlemen

The purpose of these Workshops was to assist the Member States to establish a common understanding on the various issues, share information on the work previously undertaken by SACU, as well as gaining insights on the regional and international experiences of other organizations.

The outcomes of the discussions will also inform the ongoing national consultations in Member States aimed at to developing national positions for consideration by the Ministerial Task Teams and the Council, in April 2018.

The Ministerial Task Teams on Trade and Industry, and on Finance that have been established to facilitate the urgent implementation of the Work Programme, are scheduled to meet in April 2018. The Task Teams will receive a report from the Senior Trade and Finance Officials on progress made on the Work Programme.

We are looking forward to the 6th SACU Summit scheduled for June 2018, which will be hosted by the Republic of Botswana. At this Summit, the Council of Ministers will report progress and the achievements attained on the implementation of the SACU Work Programme.

We trust that the SACU Heads of State and Government will have an opportunity at that time, to reflect on the work done and provide guidance on how to move our regional Agenda forward.

In addition to the Ministerial Work Programme, work is ongoing on the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Programme, Trade Negotiations and Revenue Management, amongst others.

We remain grateful for the leadership and guidance that the Secretariat has received from the SACU Summit, the SACU Council of Ministers and members of the SACU Commission, under the able leadership of the Republic of Botswana. We look forward to your continued support during the Republic of Botswana's term as the Chair of SACU.

As the oldest Customs Union in the world today, I believe that SACU can play an important role in supporting the economies of the Member States as well as to deepen regional integration and trade in general. By facilitating trade, SACU can help promote industrialisation, and thereby propel the region to tap into global value chains. SACU can therefore be an important instrument not only for cross-border trade, but most importantly an engine of economic growth.

Indeed, the SACU Vision and Mission that seek to broadly ensure that the Organisation serves as a building block for close economic integration in the Southern African Region, speak to this point. This can only be attained through the dedication and transformation of the current Customs Union to an Organisation that is able to face the current and future developmental challenges of the region.

The Secretariat remains available to assist and support the Member States and the institutions of SACU to ensure that the SACU Work Programme is timely and successfully implemented, for SACU to become a vehicle for regional development and integration in support of the economies of the Member States, going forward.

In conclusion, Your Excellency, let me once again thank you most sincerely, for gracing and blessing us with your visit, and meeting with our staff.

RE A GO LEBOGA TAUTONA (We thank you Mr President).