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SACU9/S/C

COMMUNIQUÉ

9TH SUMMIT OF THE SACU HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT

CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

26TH JUNE 2026

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1. The 9th Summit of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) Heads of State or Government took place on the 26th June 2026, in Cape Town, South Africa.
2. **His Excellency Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa**, President of the Republic of South Africa chaired the Summit, attended by **His Majesty King Mswati III** of the Kingdom of Eswatini; **His Excellency Advocate Duma Gideon Boko**, President of the Republic of Botswana; **Her Excellency Dr. Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah**, President of the Republic of Namibia; and **The Right Honourable Samuel Ntsokoane Matekane**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho.
3. The Summit welcomed and congratulated **Mr. Dumisani Masilela** on his appointment as the Executive Secretary of SACU.
4. The Summit considered issues related to global developments and their implications for SACU; progress on the re-imagined SACU; and the implementation of the SACU Strategic Plan (2022-2027).
5. The Summit deliberated on the prevailing global developments, including the rise in protectionism and unilateralism, as well as ongoing conflicts which have a significant impact on the economies of SACU Member States. The economic ramifications of these developments include disruptions in supply chains, elevated energy and food prices, and a subdued global growth outlook. Notwithstanding this, the Summit noted the increase in South-South cooperation which mitigates against the negative spillover effects of the current developments.
6. The Summit underscored the need for sustained and close cooperation among SACU Member States in responding to the economic challenges posed by current global developments, including through economic diversification and development of regional value chains. The Summit welcomed the extension of AGOA to December 2026 and called for an extension of at least 15 years to ensure continuity of trade, market access, preservation of the industrial base and job security. The Summit further underscored the importance of enhancing deeper regional integration, strengthening trade relations to diversify the market base.
7. The Summit approved the establishment of a SACU Regional Innovative Funding Mechanism/Fund of Funds with an initial capitalisation of R5 billion spread over the 2027/28 and 2028/29 Financial Years. The funding will come from the Common Revenue Pool and will be available to support development projects across all SACU Member States. The Summit directed that further technical work should be undertaken to establish the Fund's governance and management arrangements, recapitalisation, access criteria, project pipeline or profiling, establishment of network of DFIs and private sector, legal requirements, hosting arrangements and opportunities to mobilise additional sources of funding.
8. The Summit noted the significant progress made in implementing the SACU Strategic Plan (2022-2027), anchored on six key pillars, being, Industrialisation, Export and Investment Promotion; Trade Facilitation and Logistics; Implementation and Leveraging of the AfCFTA; Unified Engagement with Third Parties; Finance and Resource Mobilisation; and Effectiveness of SACU Institutions. Similarly, the Summit

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commended Council for the Mid-Term Review of the Strategic Plan and approved its extension to the 2028/29 Financial Year.

9. The Summit reaffirmed the importance of SACU's Industrialization, Export and Investment Promotion work programme as a key driver of SACU's long-term relevance, inclusive growth and sustainable development. The Summit noted progress in regional value chains, export potential mapping, investment facilitation and cross-border industrial cooperation. The Summit also highlighted progress in the automotive sector, including work on a Smart Specialization Strategy for Automotive and Complementary Green Mineral Beneficiation, collaboration on the battery value chain, and possible component manufacturing under the SADC Hub and Spoke model. The Summit urged the Council of Ministers to speed up implementation of identified cross-border value chains to advance a shared industrial development agenda across SACU.
10. On Trade Facilitation and Logistics, the Summit welcomed successful implementation of regional Joint Enforcement Operations targeting illicit trade which has resulted in total seizures and detentions valued at approximately R479 million, covering tobacco products. The Summit committed to enhance cooperation in view of the impact of illicit trade in the regional economy. The Summit further welcomed the continued implementation of the SACU Regional Authorised Economic Operator (AEO) Programme, which has contributed to curbing illicit trade by building a network of trusted traders and monitored via risk management under the AEO status.
11. The Summit further welcomed the commencement of regional initiatives on the approach to be adopted by SACU for identifying and packaging hard and soft infrastructure development projects; the development of the regional framework for trade digitalisation and digital transformation; and the streamlining of the administration of Sanitary and Phytosanitary measures (SPS), Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), and Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) measures. The Summit similarly noted ongoing work to explore a Concept on future Seamless Non-Stop Border Trade Environments within the Common Customs Area.
12. On the implementation and leveraging of the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA), the Summit welcomed the progress made on the implementation of the tariff liberalisation commitments and the work underway to finalise outstanding negotiations based on agreed tariff elimination Modalities. The Summit emphasised the need for the region to fully leverage the AfCFTA, to build resilience and protect Member States from global supply chain disruptions.
13. On the Unified Engagement with Third Parties, the Summit noted progress in the COMESA-EAC-SADC Tripartite Free Trade Area (TFTA), including the entry into force of the Agreement on 25 July 2024 and the conclusion of bilateral tariff negotiations between SACU and the East African Community (EAC). The Summit also noted progress on Angola's accession to the SADC Protocol on Trade, including the submission of its tariff offer in 2025, as well as updates on the implementation of the SACU+Mozambique-UK Economic Partnership Agreement, the resumption of negotiations with India, and the commencement of engagement with China and the US. The Summit reiterated its position that SACU should continue to approach any

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new negotiations as a bloc in order to preserve the integrity of the Common External Tariff and cohesion of regional integration.

14. The Summit noted that the Council held a Ministerial Retreat on the 24th June 2026 to discuss key policy and strategic matters aimed at strengthening the governance and effectiveness of SACU Institutions and ensure the successful implementation of the SACU Strategic Plan. The Summit took note of progress on the SACU Re-imagination Agenda and directed that the re-imagination process be concluded by the end of July 2027.
15. The Summit further noted that the Republic of Botswana will assume the Chairmanship of SACU from 15 July 2026 to 14 July 2027, succeeding the Republic of South Africa.
16. The Summit commended **His Excellency Cyril Matamela Ramaphosa**, President of the Republic of South Africa for his exceptional leadership and stewardship during his term as the Chair of SACU. Similarly, the Summit congratulated **His Excellency Advocate Duma Gideon Boko**, President of the Republic of Botswana on his forthcoming assumption of the Chairmanship of SACU with effect from 15 July 2026.

ADOPTED AT CAPE TOWN, IN SOUTH AFRICA ON FRIDAY, 26 JUNE 2026.