

Adopted



SACU8/S/C

COMMUNIQUÉ

8TH SUMMIT OF THE SACU HEADS OF STATE OR GOVERNMENT

MANDVULO, ESWATINI

29TH JUNE 2023

Adopted

1. The 8th Summit of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) Heads of State or Government took place on the 29th June 2023, in Mandvulo, Kingdom of Eswatini.
2. **His Majesty King Mswati III** chaired the Summit, attended by **His Excellency Mr. Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa**, President of the Republic of South Africa; **the Right Honourable Samuel Ntsokoane Matekane**, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho; **the Right Honourable Dr. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila**, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia representing **His Excellency Dr. Hage Gottfried Geingob**, President of the Republic of Namibia; and **Honourable Mmusi Kgafela**, Minister of Trade and Industry of the Republic of Botswana representing **His Excellency Dr. Mokgweetsi Eric Keabetswe Masisi**, President of the Republic of Botswana.
3. The Summit warmly welcomed and congratulated **Mr. Thabo David Khasipe** on his appointment as the Executive Secretary of SACU.
4. The Summit acknowledged the global developments that have had a significant impact on the economies of SACU Member States. These include the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which has led to global economic consequences and geopolitical divisions. The economic consequences of this conflict include supply chain disruptions and instability in the food and energy markets, resulting in a pessimistic global economic outlook for 2023.
5. The Summit emphasised the importance of continued close collaboration among SACU Member States to address the economic challenges arising from these global developments.
6. The Summit commended the Council on the progress made in implementing the SACU Strategic Plan, which was approved by the Council and endorsed by the Summit in June 2022. The Plan is based on the following pillars: (a) Industrialisation, focusing on regional value chains, investment attraction, and export promotion; (b) Trade Facilitation and logistics; (c) Implementation and leveraging of the African Continental Free Trade Area; (d) Unified engagement with third parties; (e) Finance and Resource Mobilisation; and (f) Effectiveness of SACU institutions.
7. In the area of the Trade Facilitation and Logistics Programme, which includes customs cooperation, border coordination, behind-the-border measures, transport and logistics, support for trade agreements, and cross-cutting policy imperatives, the Summit noted the completion of an Operational Plan to guide its implementation. The Plan outlines the scope of work for the Trade Digitalisation and Digital Transformation Project, Risk Management, Compliance and Enforcement Project, and Infrastructure Development Project. Notable achievements under Customs Cooperation include the interconnectivity of Customs IT Management Systems and the implementation of the Authorised Economic Operator Programme with 176 authorized economic operators.
8. Regarding industrialisation, particularly the profiling of projects, resource mobilisation, and implementation in the areas of meat and meat products, leather and leather products, fruits and vegetables, textiles and pharmaceuticals the Summit recognised that Member States have agreed to prioritise projects that are ready for implementation and can yield immediate benefits.

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9. The Summit noted that following its directive in June 2022 to prioritise the production of fertilisers, Agro-Chemicals, and Seed Production, Member States have formed a Task Team and agreed on the Terms of Reference to advance work in this area. The Task Team will assess the work done by other organisations such as SADC, COMESA, USAID, FAO, and leverage their efforts, as this matter involves all SACU Member States. In parallel, Member States have started developing a comprehensive implementation program outlining the necessary tasks.
10. The Summit noted with appreciation that all SACU Member States have ratified the Agreement establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). The SACU Provisional Schedule of Tariff Concession (PSTC) to the AfCFTA, which includes products with a full tariff reduction (90 percent) over a ten-year period, was adopted on the 31st May 2023. Additionally, all Revenue Administrations in SACU have completed the necessary documentation for the implementation of the AfCFTA.
11. The Summit noted that the Council held a Ministerial Retreat on the 27th June 2023, to discuss key policy and strategic matters aimed at strengthening the governance and effectiveness of SACU institutions to ensure the successful implementation of the SACU Strategic Plan.
12. The Summit noted the expiry of AGOA in 2025 and called for the extension of AGOA for the current beneficiary countries.
13. The Summit congratulated **Professor Edward Kieswetter**, Commissioner of the South African Revenue Service (SARS) on his appointment as the Chair of the World Customs Organisation (WCO).
14. The Summit further noted that the Kingdom of Lesotho will assume the Chairmanship of SACU from 15 July 2023 to 14 July 2024, succeeding the Kingdom of Eswatini.
15. The Summit commended His Majesty King Mswati III of the Kingdom of Eswatini for his exceptional leadership and guidance during his term as the Chair of SACU. Likewise, the Summit congratulated the **Right Honourable Samuel Ntsokoane Matekane** on assuming the Chairmanship of SACU from 15th July 2023.

ADOPTED AT MANDVULO IN THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI ON THURSDAY, 29TH JUNE 2023.