



2ND MEETINGS OF THE SACU REGIONAL CUSTOMS TRADE FORUM AND PREFERRED TRADER EXPERTS

The Deputy Executive Secretary, Deputy Director: Trade Facilitation and the Customs Specialist attended, respectively, the 2nd meeting of the SACU Regional Customs Trade Forum on 12 October 2015 and the Preferred Trader Experts meeting on 13 October 2015 in Johannesburg, South Africa. The two meetings were convened by the SACU Secretariat in collaboration with the WCO Secretariat, under the WCO SACU Connect Project.

The SACU Regional Customs Trade Forum meeting was attended by the associations representing, amongst others, freight forwarders, clearing agents, transporters, manufacturers, Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the companies that are participating in the national Preferred Trader Programme. The SACU Regional Customs Trade Forum is a regional platform set up to promote trade facilitation dialogue with the business community. It was inaugurated in November 2013 in Maseru Lesotho and has since held two meetings (first in in July 2014).

The objective of the 2nd meeting was to finalize the Terms of Reference (TOR) for the Forum, agree on administrative arrangements for managing the Forum, including funding mechanisms for and sustaining the activities of the forum, the proposed structure for management of the Customs Trade Forum at the national and regional levels and to also receive feedback from the private sector on the Preferred Trader Programme.



The meeting outcome include, amongst others:

- Customs Administrations should revive and re-establish the National Customs Trade Forums and that the report of the forums be sent to the SACU Secretariat for circulation to the Regional Customs Trade Forum;
- Other Government Agencies (OGAs) should be invited to participate in the activities of the Forum, including meetings;
- The Preferred Trader Programme should not exclude the Small Micro and Medium Enterprises; and
- The SACU Secretariat to design capacity building initiatives for the private sector with emphasis on the benefits that the Private Sector derive from trade agreements such as the WTO TFA and others, and compliance with customs and OGAs laws and regulation

The Preferred Trader Experts meeting was convened on 13 October 2015 and was attended by all five SACU Member States, the SACU Secretariat, the WCO Secretariat, and the consultant contracted by the WCO to develop the procedure manual for the Preferred Trader Programme. The objective of the meeting was to agree on the way forward concerning the first draft procedure manual developed by the Consultant.

The meeting outcome include, amongst others:

- The 2nd draft of the procedure manual that the Consultant is working on should be for internal use by the Customs Administration and it will be finalised and circulated by 20 November 2015; and
- The SACU Regional Preferred Trader External Guide will be developed for use by the traders.