



*Statement by the Ms. Paulina M. Elago
Executive Secretary of SACU
at the funeral of
H.E. Tswelopele Cornelia Moremi
Founding Executive Secretary of SACU*

**7 APRIL 2018
GABORONE, BOTSWANA**

Director of Ceremonies,

Honourable Ministers here present,

Officials of the Government of the Republic of Botswana,

The bereaved Moremi family,

Relatives, friends and fellow mourners,

I greet you all in the name of our lord Jesus Christ.

The entire staff of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) Secretariat, is deeply saddened by the passing-on of Her Excellency Madam Tswelopele Cornelia Moremi.

Ms. Moremi was the founding Executive Secretary of SACU, a position she held from January 2004 until January 2014. She was instrumental in operationalising the SACU Agreement, 2002, [which had just been signed by the five SACU Member States](#). This Agreement ushered in a new dispensation in the operations of SACU, [which is the oldest Customs Union in the world](#). It also made provision for the establishment of various institutions.

As part of this process, Ms Moremi had the huge responsibility of overseeing the setting-up of the institutions of SACU, primarily the SACU Secretariat, in Windhoek, Namibia.

Notwithstanding the limited human resources at her disposal, **Connie**, as she was fondly known, established and operationalised the Secretariat and ultimately SACU, into a phenomenal organisation which is renowned throughout the world. [The current Headquarters of the SACU Secretariat bear testimony to her legacy at SACU.](#)

Connie provided oversight on the development and implementation of various policies and procedures, within the organisation. An astute leader who paid attention to detail, Connie ensured that over the years, the Secretariat successfully delivered on its mandate in servicing the Member States. We at SACU, shall forever be grateful for her selfless contributions in this regard.

Under her able and visionary leadership, various Trade Agreements between SACU and third parties were concluded. She will forever be remembered in the annals of SACU for her invaluable contributions and leadership towards the advancement and promotion of SACU's regional integration Agenda.

Her role in fostering key strategic partnerships with regional and international partners, significantly contributed to trade and economic development within and beyond SACU.

We celebrate her contribution to trade and socio-economic development not only in SACU, but across the continent and beyond. We also celebrate her role as a woman in leadership, which has inspired other women to rise to higher levels.

Her death is therefore not only a loss to her family, but also a deep loss to the SACU region and beyond, and more specifically the SACU Secretariat, where she served with full dedication, passion and loyalty. Her sense of professionalism, integrity and deep level of commitment to regional integration will continue to inspire us at the Secretariat, to serve our members and our organization.

We will certainly miss Connie. The tributes we pay her today only underscore the importance of her work, her leadership and the many lives she has touched whilst at SACU.

Our deepest condolences go to the bereaved family, friends and all those who had an opportunity to work with her. We also convey our condolences to the Government and People of the Republic of

Botswana, during this difficult moment. May the lord comfort you all.

Even though our hearts are heavily burdened by her departure to her final destination, may you take comfort in the words from the book of Isaiah 41:10 that says *“So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand”*.

A person that departs from this earth never truly leaves, for they are still alive in our hearts and minds; through us, they live on. Surely, she will not be forgotten and her legacy lives on.

With these few words, may the soul of our founding Executive Secretary, Madam Tswelopele Cornelia Moremi, rest in eternal peace.