

## Quarterly SACU Customs Bulletin April to June 2011

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strengthening the cooperation between SACU and the WCO as it provided an opportunity for the Executive Secretary of SACU, Ms Tswelopele C. Moremi and the Secretary General of the WCO, Mr. Kunio Mikuriya to sign a Memorandum of Understanding between SACU and the WCO. This Memorandum marks the official framework for a fruitful collaboration between the two Secretariats that has already since long existed on a strategic and operational level under the SACU-WCO Customs Development Programme, a common effort for deeper regional integration and a better trade climate through trade facilitation.

### **1. WCO CUSTOMS CAPACITY BUILDING COMMITTEE**



The SACU Executive Secretary and WCO Secretary General at the signing of the MOU on collaboration for deeper regional integration.

The 1<sup>st</sup> World Customs Organization (WCO) Capacity Building Committee meeting was held on 27 – 29 September 2010 in Brussels, Belgium. This event marked an important milestone in



SACU Customs Specialist showcasing the SACU Customs Development Programme at 2<sup>nd</sup> CBC meeting in Brussels

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> WCO Customs Capacity Building Committee meetings held from 3 to 5 May in Brussels, Belgium, the Customs Specialist attended and took an opportunity to showcase the SACU-WCO Customs Development Programme. The aim was to continue to promote the programme, targeting the global customs audience and further highlight

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the work that is taking place in the SACU region with regard to Customs reform and modernization. For SACU this meeting was important as it relates to the role that the WCO plays in customs reform in the SACU region and strengthens SACU's collaboration with the WCO.

The following issues were identified as key pillars that the SACU Secretariat could use towards building a regional center of customs expertise:

- Closer collaboration with WCO in various technical areas;
- Access of SACU Secretariat into members resources of the WCO; and
- Closer collaboration with the WCO for capacity building activities that will sustain and support the activities of the Customs Development Programme.

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### ***2. NATIONAL CONSULTATIONS ON CUSTOMS POLICIES***

In its pursuit of customs reform and modernization globally, the SACU Customs Development Programme has initiated work, to ensure that the region operates within a predefined set of guiding Customs policies. A SACU Customs Policy Framework has been adopted by the SACU Council of

Ministers. The Policy Framework sets Trade Facilitation, Economic Protection and Societal Protection as the three pillars for Customs cooperation in the region.

In an effort to engage traders and external stakeholders on the Customs Development Programme as well the development of regional customs policies, a series of National Stakeholder Consultations were undertaken in Botswana, Lesotho, Swaziland and South Africa. The aim of the Stakeholder consultations was to introduce traders and other external stakeholders to the Customs Development Programme, obtain their views on draft regional customs policies, agree on their engagement in the Programme, and enhance dialogue between traders and the SACU Customs Administrations at a regional level.



Participants in the SACU customs policy consultation in Swaziland

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defining requirements and approach for making IT connectivity a reality in the region.

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### **3. SACU IT CONNECTIVITY**



SACU IT experts during the SACU IT connectivity project launch

SACU launched the IT connectivity project under the Customs Development Programme, as a tool to implement the Customs policy objective of facilitating trade and promoting economic and societal protection of the region. The launch of this project also marks an important step towards establishing regional connectivity between Member States. Its primary objective is to establish customs to customs IT connectivity, customs to business connectivity, as well as customs to other government agencies connectivity that would allow for the electronic exchange of data. An IT Working Group meeting was held on 6-7 June 2011 in Windhoek, Namibia and commenced work on

### **4. LAUNCHING OF RISK MANAGEMENT AND CUSTOMS ENFORCEMENT**



Participants in the Customs Enforcement workshop as Risk Management was launched

SACU has also launched customs risk management and enforcement project as an important pillar for combating illicit trade in the region. A meeting comprising Customs Enforcement experts from all Member States was held on 14-15 June 2011, in Windhoek Namibia.

Due to inter linkages between risk management and customs enforcement, the working group commenced work on a wide risk management approach for SACU. The priority areas in this regard are tobacco and tobacco products, liquor, electronics, and textiles and

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clothing. In terms of these areas Member States have agreed to cooperate and share information in an effort to combat illicit trade.

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### **5. LAUNCH OF SWAZILAND REVENUE AUTHORITY (SRA)**

The SACU Executive Secretary, Ms. Tswelopele Moremi and the Director responsible for Trade Facilitation and Revenue Management in SACU, Mr. Dumisani Mahlinza attended the launching of the Swaziland Revenue Authority (SRA) on 11th March 2011 in Swaziland. The launch marked a milestone for Swaziland and has brought the number of Revenue Authorities in SACU to four.

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### **6. UPCOMING EVENTS IN THE CUSTOMS CALENDAR**

In the next 3 months, the region will be implementing the work program under IT, Risk Management and enforcement and Trade Partnerships. The WCO will be undertaking missions to the region to continue work on developing a regional risk management strategy as well as launch the Trade Partnerships Project.

A meeting of SACU Heads of Customs is also scheduled to consider progress achieved and provide direction in a number of work areas.

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### **7. ADDITIONAL CUSTOMS INFORMATION**

SACU Customs related information in Member States:

For any information on specific import requirements and customs regimes applicable in the SACU member states use the links below:

<b>Member State</b>	<b>Relevant Customs Authority</b>
Botswana	Botswana Unified Revenue Service <a href="http://www.burs.org.bw">www.burs.org.bw</a>
Lesotho	Lesotho Revenue Authority <a href="http://www.lra.org.ls">www.lra.org.ls</a>
Namibia	Ministry of Finance <a href="http://www.mof.gov.na/custom1.htm">http://www.mof.gov.na/custom1.htm</a>
South Africa	South African Revenue Service <a href="http://www.sars.gov.za">www.sars.gov.za</a>
Swaziland	Swaziland Revenue Authority <a href="http://www.sra.org.sz">www.sra.org.sz</a>

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