

# COMESA MISSION REPORT

2-3 OCTOBER 2008

LUSAKA, ZAMBIA

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1	Background to Study .....	1
1.2	Key Areas for Consideration .....	1
2.	STUDY OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY.....	2
2.1	Main Objective.....	2
2.2	Specific Objective.....	2
2.3	Methodology.....	3
2.4	Experiences and Constraints.....	4
3.	FINDINGS FROM COMESA BENCHMARKING CASE STUDY .....	5
3.1	Documentation.....	5
3.2	Reporting.....	8
3.3	Conferencing Logistics .....	12
4.	CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	13
4.1	Recommendations .....	13

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background to Study**

1.1.1 At the 12th Council Meeting held on the 28th September 2007 in Maseru, Lesotho Council decided that SACU institutions should maintain records in the form of reports. Council further directed the Secretariat to undertake detailed planning to ensure the smooth implementation of this decision and to develop procedures for approval and maintenance of reports before this decision is implemented.

1.1.2 At the 15<sup>th</sup> Council meeting held on 27 June 2008 in Midrand, South Africa, the Secretariat reported that an analysis on the type of reports that would be most suitable for SACU institutions was underway and that it would develop proposals on how meetings could be configured to efficiently generate reports for timely adoption. The Secretariat further reported that in order to determine the most appropriate report formats, it had started a benchmarking exercise with other sister organisations to acquire practical knowledge and skills on best practices.

### **1.2 Key Areas for Consideration**

1.2.1 The Secretariat has commenced work on this benchmarking exercise and has undertaken desk top research on the reports of other regional and international organizations, these include:

- The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA);
- The Southern African Development Community (SADC);
- The World Trade Organization (WTO); and
- The African Union (AU).

1.2.2 This research has focused on the nature, structure and content of the reports of the respective organizations. Subsequent to its initial analysis five key areas for consideration emerged. These are:

- A clearly defined mandate of SACU institutions;
- The nature, structure of the report of the Commission;
- The content of the report of the Commission;
- The content of the reports of the Technical Liaison Committees;
- The organising and planning of meetings.

1.2.3 In addition to this desk top research already undertaken, the Secretariat visited the COMESA Secretariat in Lusaka, Zambia, on the 2-3 October 2008, for the purpose of benchmarking SACU practices with regard to the nature, structure and content of reports; and the planning and organising of meetings against those of COMESA. The findings of this visit are included below.

## 2. STUDY OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

### 2.1 Main Objective

2.1.1 The main goal of this study is to develop a restructured format for reports of SACU Organisations that clearly outlines the nature, structure and content of these reports. In addition, the study aims to develop more efficient and effective procedures for receiving, processing and distributing documentation associated with the meetings of the SACU institutions. Finally the study examines the organising and planning of SACU Meetings.

### 2.2 Specific Objective

2.2.1 The specific objectives of the study are to:

- a) Determine the Role and Responsibilities Associated with Documentation and Conferencing within the COMESA Secretariat.
- b) Determine the Extent of Linkages Required Between Technical Directorates and Documentation and Conferencing Officer and Compare with SACU Practice. This will include but is not limited to:
  - Identifying Persons Responsible for Compilation of Documents;
  - Identifying the Link Between Authors and Documentation and Conferencing Officer
  - Assessing the Systems Used to Monitor and Report on Progress
  - Defining the Processes, Structures and the Specific Roles and Activities of all involved from the Initial Stage of Compilation of Documents Through to the Eventual Distribution to Member States.
  - Assess the Time Frame Allocated to Management of Timelines Associated with the Various Activities
- c) Assess the Nature and Structure of the Reports Compiled by the COMESA Secretariat and Compare Against SACU Practice.
- d) Assess the content of reports compiled by the COMESA Secretariat and compare against SACU practice. This will include assessing the manner in which a balance is struck between the capturing of Member States discussions and the capturing of decisions of the meeting.
- e) Assess the Structure of Reporting the Work of One Committee to a Subsequent Higher Committee
- f) Assess the Manner in Which Reports are Compiled and Communicated to Member States Following Meetings
- g) Assess the Procedure and Time Frames Allocated for the Adoption of Reports
- h) Examine the Procedure for Communicating Reports to Member States
- i) Acquire Knowledge on Liaising with Host Countries in Arranging Conferences/Meetings

- j) Acquire Skills on the Establishment and Coordination of Contact Points in Member States
- k) Acquire Knowledge on the Procedures for Arranging Meetings and Events, as well as Adhering to Organizational Handbooks and any Checklists Available
- l) Learn How Best to Address Challenges Associated with Documentation and Conferencing
- m) Annotated Agenda and How it Relates to Background Papers for Discussion at Meetings
- n) The Structure for Preparing Reports of Meetings (when it has to be adopted on the same day) - Who Takes the Lead, How Do They Arrange Themselves etc.
- o) Storing and Numbering of Council decisions
- p) Preparation of Communiqué (how it is structured; who prepares the structure etc)
- q) Learn Best Practice on Handling Documentation and Conferences in General

## 2.3 Methodology

- 2.3.1 Both literature reviews and primary information collection comprising of interviews were employed in this study. With regard to the literature reviews documents and reports of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the World Trade Organization (WTO), The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the African Union (AU) were reviewed. In addition recommendations made by a consultant Mr. John Kasanga in his March 2008 report titled "Detailed Proposals for Streamlining the Structure and Concept of Secretariat Reports in Respect of the Scheduled Meetings of the: Technical Liaison Committee, Customs Union Commission and Council of Ministers", were also considered.
- 2.3.2 Primary data collection was undertaken by means of interviews and discussions with key COMESA Secretariat personnel. These included:
  - The Secretary General - Ambassador NGWENYA
  - Assistant Secretary General (Admin & Finance) - Ambassador EL-HUSSAINY
  - Director of Administration - Ms. MWEWA
  - Director of Infrastructure and Development - Mr. MARAWA
  - Head of Conferencing - Ms. DLAMINI
- 2.3.3 The interviews sought to clarify the roles and responsibilities associated with the Documentation and Conferencing functions within the COMESA Secretariat, as well as the various tasks that were followed in preparation

for their respective technical and policy organ meetings. The views solicited from those interviewed were intended to assist in assessing the functioning and perceptions of key stakeholders with regard to: the nature and content of Reports, the stakeholders responsible for each report, the manner in which these reports were created and finalised up to the point of distribution, the manner in which reports were adopted, and the time frames for report adoption.

- 2.3.4 The current practice as well as the views and suggestions of those interviewed assisted in responding to the Terms of Reference for the study and are synthesised in this report

## **2.4 Experiences and Constraints**

- 2.4.1 Throughout the study, the officials of the COMESA Secretariat were found to be very cooperative and accommodating. They also exhibited a great interest in the research, and hence no constraints were encountered. Some officials even suggested that it might be worthwhile for the Secretariat to attend one of their Summit meetings to witness and get firsthand experience of how their meetings function. This was noted and would be added to the recommendations of the study.
- 2.4.2 The visit to COMESA also provided an insight into the nature of the organisation its institutions and decision making structures. It should be noted that whilst a number of similarities exist between COMESA and SACU there are notable differences with regard to institutions and decision making authority. Within SACU the highest decision making body is the Council of Ministers whilst at COMESA this authority lies with the Summit. Also, SACU has five established Technical Committees that are required to meet every quarter whilst in COMESA sectoral technical meetings are only convened as and when required. However, despite these differences a number of similarities in terms of reporting structures were identified, these include the sequence of reporting from technical level through to the intergovernmental committee and on to Council and the Summit.
- 2.4.3 Given the differences between the organisations, the areas given the greatest attention in this analysis are the reporting from the technical level through to the Intergovernmental Committee and on to Council. This includes the nature of the reports of each of the respective organs. Attention is also given to the communiqué that emanates from the Summit.
- 2.4.4 It should also be noted that in the course of discussions it was revealed that one the greatest challenges faced by COMESA relates to translation services at meetings as well as the timeous translation of reports. This is as a result of COMESA operating with two official languages, namely English and French.

### 3. FINDINGS FROM COMESA BENCHMARKING CASE STUDY

The major findings from the research were found to cover three main thematic areas which were:

- Documentation
- Reporting
- Conferencing Logistics

These areas are further discussed below:

#### 3.1 Documentation

a. Determine the Role and Responsibilities Associated with Documentation and Conferencing within the COMESA Secretariat.	
COMESA	SACU
Responsible for Midyear and end of year Summit meetings. The Conferencing section is responsible for the management and servicing of all policy organ meetings (intergovernmental, Council and Summit). Technical meetings and/or workshops are decentralised and are the responsibility of technical directorates. Conferencing does provide administrative assistance if required and remains responsible for all procurement in respect of such meetings/workshops. Coordinate these undertaking logistical functions such as transport, accommodation, venue arrangements. Coordinate document dissemination and translation of material to Member States.	Responsible for Commission and Council Meetings Host nation provides transport and venue arrangements. Secretariat advises host on how best to plan for meetings. Coordinate document dissemination to Member States

#### Recommendation:

Secretariat continues to arrange meetings as per rules of procedure in liaison with host nation. For Council and Commission meetings Documentation officer to continue to liaise with SACU contact points for all confirmations and dissemination of documentation as previously done.

b. Determine the Extent of Linkages Required Between Technical Directorates and Documentation and Conferencing Officer and Compare with SACU Practice. This will include but is not limited to:	
COMESA	SACU
Responsible Directors coordinate documents within	Individuals responsible for documentation prepare

<p>their directorates and submit final copies to Conferencing Services.</p> <p>Technical reports submitted as is.</p>	<p>papers and Documentation Officer follows up on them individually till papers are finalised</p> <p>Technical reports accompanied by cover page summarising issues.</p>
<p><b>• Identify the Link Between Authors and Documentation and Conferencing Officer</b></p>	
<p><b>COMESA</b></p>	<p><b>SACU</b></p>
<p>The link is via the Technical Director who approves all material to be sent to meetings</p>	<p>Documentation officer liaises with all officers responsible for papers and sets deadlines for submission</p>
<p><b>• Assess the Systems Used to Monitor and Report on Progress</b></p>	
<p><b>COMESA</b></p>	<p><b>SACU</b></p>
<p>Conferencing has set time deadlines (4 weeks prior to event) according to the rules of procedure as to when reports are to be submitted in. However they still face challenges and documentation is occasionally late from technical directorates. Still working on ways to improve current system.</p>	<p>Have intranet system that reminds all creators of papers of deadlines for first and final submissions of papers. Intranet system also has documentation posting dates to Member States. Courtesy calls and emails are also given to those responsible for papers. Challenges are still faced and the system needs to be furthered strengthened to ensure all responsible sign acknowledge responsibility and adhere to deadlines set for documentation preparation.</p>
<p><b>• Define the Processes, Structures and the Specific Roles and Activities of all involved from the Initial Stage of Compilation of Documents Through to the Eventual Distribution to Member States.</b></p>	
<p><b>COMESA</b></p>	<p><b>SACU</b></p>
<p>Conferencing reminds organisation of upcoming meetings well in advance (2months). Directors begin to prepare all necessary papers within their directorates. Papers verified by responsible director and then, depending on nature and sensitivity of issue, papers are checked by Assistant Secretary Generals and/or Secretary General (SG). . Once paper is cleared documentation is sent to conferencing. According to Rules of procedure this should be done 4 weeks prior to event to allow for translation, photocopying and mailing of paperwork to Member States. Once conferencing has received documentation and numbered it accordingly for packs, it is translated, photocopied and bound then</p>	<p>Documentation officer reminds organisation of Council meeting dates and that respective officers should be preparing their papers. Documentation gives all officers a timeframe of when first drafts are needed, followed by timeframe for final drafts to be submitted to Executive Secretary for final sign off. In order to facilitate process for draft to final documents, meetings are held between authors and executive Secretary. Furthermore deadlines for mailing of Packs are given, and officials responsible for papers are reminded to have their respective papers ready on time. Constant reminders are given via email and telephone. In practice delays are still experienced due to lack of commitment and</p>

<p>sent via electronic and surface mail to Member States. The Secretariat normally prepares a few extra copies per Member State as safety measures in case of forgotten documents. In practice delays are still experienced due to lack of commitment and signature to previously set deadlines.</p>	<p>signature to previously set deadlines. Hence new manner of enforcing deadlines needs to be established and respective personnel answerable if documentation not received on time.</p>
<p>• <b>Assess the Time Frame Allocated to Management of Timelines Associated with the Various Activities</b></p>	
<p><b>COMESA</b></p>	<p><b>SACU</b></p>
<p>Directors responsible for coordinating preparation of papers within directorate. Papers need to be finalised and circulated to documentation four weeks in advance of meeting</p>	<p>Directors coordinate preparations of papers within Directorate. No set timelines by directorate rather adhere to those previously set by DCO.</p>

**Recommendation:**

Directors should take full responsibility of papers during first two stages. I.e. the preparation of papers as well as the sign off from Executive Secretary (ES). This should be clearly dated and signed of upon final verification from the ES. Once this has been completed, documentation to be sent to Documentation officer for final pack compilation. This will eliminate any ambiguity of responsibility for documentation and eliminate the current delays experienced in getting documentation out. All Directors responsible for papers should commit via signature to having documentation in on time and should advise well in advance of any changes they foresee. Finally once deadline is set for documentation it should be adhered to and any documentation that is not complete will become a late submission.

<p><b>c. Learn How Best to Address Challenges Associated with Documentation and Conferencing</b></p>	
<p><b>COMESA</b></p>	<p><b>SACU</b></p>
<p>COMESA basically undertakes regular reviews of their Secretariat and in this time re-examines each function.</p>	<p>Continue to undertake case studies and do desk research on other similar organizations both regionally and internationally to determine the most efficient and effective manner of performing job function.</p>

**Recommendation:**

Keep liaising with Sister Organisations such as COMESA, SADC, EFTA to continuously look at improving the Documentation and Conferencing Description. Arrange more field trips with these and other sister organisations and attend their Council and Summit meetings to get a feel for situations and challenges they face as and when they may occur .

## 3.2 Reporting

### a. Assess the Nature and Structure of the Reports Compiled by the COMESA Secretariat and Compare Against SACU Practice.

COMESA	SACU
COMESA produces reports for all their meetings which are adopted at the same meeting. The Structure of the report is pre-decided by the respective directors and it generally follows the format of an outline of the issue, a brief discussion of any outstanding items and finally the capturing of the decisions. The Secretariat aims to keep the reports as short as possible with them getting even shorter as they are elevated to a higher level with the main focus being decisions.	The Secretariat produces reports for all meetings other than Council, where minutes are produced. Its reports are adopted at the meeting, whereas council minutes are adopted at the following meeting. In all its reports the Secretariat gives a background to topic, followed by a summary of the dialogue and lastly decisions made.

#### Recommendation:

Secretariat to build on its current structure of reports but shorten the discussions to just a paragraph with major focus being on decisions.

### b. Assess the content of reports compiled by the COMESA Secretariat and compare against SACU practice. This will include assessing the manner in which a balance is struck between the capturing of Member States discussions and the capturing of decisions of the meeting.

COMESA	SACU
COMESA prepares dummy reports in advance of all meetings. What these comprise of is a brief introduction to topic, an anticipated discussion on key issues and the decisions that are expected to be made. These dummy reports are created by the Directors in charge and the Chief Editor who works hand in hand with the technical directors to ensure correct language, structure and formatting. In this way 90 % of report is prepared before the meeting takes place and then during meeting personnel responsible for their sections complete any changes in dialogue and decisions that might occur and report is adopted the same day. Note that the report is a summary of the papers and is not intended to capture majority of member state dialogue during the meetings. Rather it is more focussed on the decisions, with the papers being used as reference points should individuals feel they need to dig	Currently SACU reports contain dialogue from previous meetings reminding readers of the purpose of the report and past decisions. After which the reports introduce the material to be discussed at the meeting. They are then followed by dialogue on Member States discussion before finally they present the decisions to be made. Hence they tend to focus more on the dialogue between Member States and decisions from past meetings.

deeper into the material.

**Recommendation:**

The Secretariat should follow COMESA's example and prepare dummy reports with the main focus being on the decision to be made, specific Member States position should only be reflected if specifically requested and technical information should be referenced to the initial background paper/report. This will in turn keep the reports down to a more readable size throughout the various SACU structures.

**c. Assess the Structure of Reporting the Work of One Committee to a Subsequent Higher Committee**

COMESA	SACU
Currently COMESA structure consists of an Admin and Finance Committee (PS/ Senior Official) that reports to the Intergovernmental Committee (IGC) (PS Level) which in turn reports to Council (Ministers Trade) and they subsequently report to Summit/Authority (Heads of State). Reports of lower level committees are adopted at their respective meetings and then presented as is with a background note to the subsequently higher committee by the chairperson of that committee. For example IGC to Council would be presented by the IGC Chairperson. Thereafter a new report is created and adopted at the same meeting and presented as is to the subsequently higher level meeting. Note throughout that the reports will be getting significantly shorter and as the structures are raised to higher levels the focus becomes more on decisions. Finally from Summit/Authority a Communiqué is produced highlighting all major decisions for that meeting.	SACU practice involves similarly the presentation of reports to the subsequently higher levels by the chairpersons of the respective committees. Again these reports are adopted at the respective meetings and presented to the next. The key difference is that SACU reports at all levels tend to focus on the proceedings of past meetings, the dialogue taking place between Member States, and the capturing of Decisions. Making them very lengthy in comparison at all levels.

**Recommendation:**

SACU continue with its current reporting procedures to subsequently higher bodies; however look to summarise reports at higher levels and keep main focus of the report on the decisions.

**d. Assess the Manner in Which Reports are Compiled and Communicated to Member States Following Meetings. Also Assess the Procedure and Time Frames Allocated for the Adoption of Reports (taking into account Structure for Preparing Reports of Meetings (when it has to be adopted on the same day) - Who Takes the Lead, How Do They Arrange Themselves etc.)**

COMESA	SACU
<p>COMESA prepares dummy reports in advance of all meetings. These are then populated during meetings and adopted immediately after the meetings. Hence Member States depart from meetings with Final adopted copies of all reports. Meetings are scheduled with a day in between them to allow for adoption of reports. I.e. Council meeting would run for 2 days with first day being actual meeting deliberations and second day a half day golf tournament would be organised for ministers whilst Secretariat prepared report, then Ministers would reconvene to adopt report.</p> <p>The COMESA Secretariat indicated that once an issue had been interrogated at Technical level and again at IGC level, there tends to be very little changes and one can get a good estimation of Council decisions on particular items. With this in mind, COMESA prepares a dummy Council report based on the IGC report. This dummy report includes the decisions that are expected to be taken by the Council and allows for speedy compilation of the eventual Council report.</p>	<p>SACU prepares its reports during the meetings and they are adopted a few hours after the meeting, and Member States are able to depart with copies. However in the case of Council, report is only prepared 2 weeks after the meeting and is then mailed out to Member States and adopted at the subsequent Council Meeting, causing possible delays in implementation of decisions. There is no time set aside to adopt report and Secretariat works back to back to prepare reports. As Ministerial meeting only set for half a day no time is currently allowed for adoption and hence the delay till next meeting in the following quarter.</p>

**Recommendation:**

Secretariat continues with its current method of report preparation paying close attention to earlier recommendations regarding summarisation of decisions. The method of record of Council proceedings is amended from minutes to reports. The Council report is prepared immediately and adopted by Council at the meeting. This would require that time be allocated for preparing the report and that Council be required to reconvene for adoption. Consideration needs be given to re-aligning the timing of the meetings of Council to allow for this.

e. Examine the Procedure for Communicating Reports to Member States	
COMESA	SACU
Once adopted, Reports are sent to Member States via conferencing unit or through different directorates as and when needed.	Once adopted, Reports are sent to Member States via Documentation office or through different directorates as and when needed.

f. Annotated Agenda and How it Relates to Background Papers for Discussion at Meetings	
COMESA	SACU
<p>COMESA prepares an annotated agenda for all policy organ meetings. The annotated agenda is a one paragraph summary of the issues to be discussed and is prepared by the relevant directors in collaboration with the documentation officer.</p> <p>An annotated agenda is not prepared for any technical meetings.</p>	<p>No annotated agendas are prepared.</p>

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that consideration be given to preparing annotated agendas for the meetings of Commission and Council.

g. Storing and Numbering of Council decisions	
COMESA	SACU
<p>COMESA currently doesn't number decisions, rather they are stored under the corresponding meeting</p>	<p>SACU doesn't number decisions either, they are stored under the corresponding meeting</p>

**Recommendation:**

Consideration is given to a system of ordering, sequencing and filing Council decisions.

h. Preparation of Communiqué (how it is structured; who prepares the structure etc)	
COMESA	SACU
<p>Communiqué is prepared following the meeting of the Authority/Summit.</p> <p>Communiqué highlights key decisions taken by Summit.</p> <p>Prepared by legal directorate and written in legal language with input being provided by all Directors</p> <p>Final sign off of Communiqué after preparation by Secretary General</p>	<p>No Communiqué is prepared.</p>

**Recommendation:**

SACU does not have a summit or authority as its highest decisions making body. However, consideration should be given to developing a summary of key Council decisions following Council meetings. This summary could be modelled along the lines of a communiqué.

### 3.3 Conferencing Logistics

a. Acquire Knowledge on Liaising with Host Countries in Arranging Conferences/Meetings	
COMESA	SACU
Continuous communication with desk Officers in member States from the time meeting dates are set. For Summit/Authority meetings the Secretariat conferencing team Travels to meeting venue week in advance. The responsibility for arrangements is divided between host nation and Secretariat; however Secretariat coordinates all activities associated with the meeting. 2-3 Days before meeting Secretariat sends all Key Conferencing staff to venue to prepare, venue issues, stationery and equipment issues, protocol, transport etc.	Liaise with Host nation once invitations have been sent out. Host nation then prepares all accommodation, venue, transport arrangements and notifies Secretariat of the progress. Secretariat departs for meetings the day before and picks up progress with Host nation upon arrival.

**Recommendation:**

Secretariat to build on current process of arranging meetings by departing for meetings 2days before event. Secretariat also to undertake Member State visits to establish contact with all key personnel in Member States i.e. Minister’s personal assistants, PS personal assistants, SACU contact personal in each Member State. This will increase knowledge of Member State systems, as well as build personal relationships between Member State personnel and Secretariat.

b. Acquire Skills on the Establishment and Coordination of Contact Points in Member States	
COMESA	SACU

**Recommendation:**

See point A under conferencing logistics

c. Acquire Knowledge on the Procedures for Arranging Meetings and Events, as well as Adhering to

Organizational Handbooks and any Checklists Available	
COMESA	SACU
Have developed comprehensive rules of procedure that are complimented by several, conference and documentation tracking forms and checklists.	Currently follow Rules of Procedure handbook. Also developed Conference checklist to aid with regards to equipment and stationery required.

**Recommendation:**

Secretariat should introduce additional checklists to enhance effectiveness of meeting arrangements at each stage of preparation. I.e. from initial invitations to Member States to the setup of the conference venue before delegates arrival.

**4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**4.1 Recommendations**

4.1.1 The outcome of the case study indicates that there is room for SACU to restructure its reporting formats, as well as its procedures for receiving, processing and distributing documentation associated with the meetings of the SACU institutions. Finally recommendations are also summarised with regards to the organising and planning of SACU Meetings.

4.1.2

**Documentation Preparation**

4.1.3 The main recommendation under documentation is that the SACU Secretariat should adopt a document tracking system whereby all papers to be prepared for Council are recorded by the DCO on a Council Paper Tracking Form. This form will highlight individuals responsible for each paper, the responsible directors, the target dates for submission vs. the actual dates received and the departure dates. Finally to get the full commitment of all involved in the documentation preparation process, this form should be signed off by directors who will be responsible in ensuring timely preparation of papers from their respective directorates as well as timely submission of these papers to the Executive Secretary for final approval before submission to the DCO. This will eliminate any ambiguity of responsibility for documentation and eliminate the current delays experienced in getting timely documentation to Member States.

4.2

**Reporting Procedures**

4.2.1 In this section it is recommended that the Secretariat follow COMESA's example and prepare dummy reports with the main focus being on the decision to be made, specific Member States position should only be reflected if specifically requested and technical information should be referenced to the initial background paper/report. This will in turn keep

the reports down to a more readable size throughout the various SACU structures.

4.2.2 Additionally it is recommended that the Secretariat continues with its current method of report preparation paying close attention to earlier recommendations regarding summarisation of decisions. The method of recording Council proceedings is amended from minutes to reports. The Council report is prepared immediately and adopted by Council at the meeting. This would require that time be allocated for preparing the report and that Council be required to reconvene for adoption. Consideration would therefore need to be given to re-aligning the timing of the meetings of Council to allow for this.

4.2.3 Finally under reporting, whilst SACU does not currently have a summit or authority as its highest decision making body, consideration should be given to developing a summary of key Council decisions following meetings. This summary could be modelled along the lines of a communiqué and would give a snapshot of the final outcome of Council meetings.

4.2.4

#### **Conferencing Logistics**

4.2.5 In the Conferencing department key recommendations are that the Secretariat builds on current processes of arranging meetings by departing for meetings 2 days before the event. The Secretariat should also undertake visits to Member States to establish contact with all key personnel in Member States i.e. Minister's personal assistants, senior officials personal assistants, as well as SACU contact personal in each Member State. This will increase knowledge of Member State conferencing systems, as well as build personal relationships between Member State personnel and the Secretariat.

4.2.6 Finally the Secretariat should introduce additional checklists to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of meeting arrangements at each stage of preparation. I.e. from initial invitations to Member States to the final setup of the conference venue before delegate arrivals.

4.2.7 In Conclusion it is recommended that the Secretariat keep liaising with Sister Organisations such as COMESA, SADC, EFTA, WTO to continuously look at improving the Documentation and Conferencing Function. In addition the Secretariat should look to arrange more field trips with these and other sister organisations and attend their Council/ Summit meetings to get a better feel for real life situations and challenges they face as and when they may occur.