



SOUTHERN AFRICAN CUSTOMS UNION SECRETARIAT

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External Document	(1) 17/04/07
Purpose	Press Statement
Circulation	All
Subject	SACU Council of Ministers Meeting To be held on 20 th April 2007 in Swaziland.
Date of media release issue	17 April 2007

1. The Southern African Customs Union (SACU) Council of Ministers Meeting will be held on the 20th of April 2007 in Swaziland. The SACU Council of Ministers is the supreme decision making authority on SACU matters and it meets quarterly to preside over the functioning and performance of SACU Institutions, SACU Policy Mandates and Procedures and any issues pertaining to the SACU 2002 Agreement.
2. The SACU Council is represented by at least one Minister from each Member State, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, South Africa and Swaziland. Chairmanship of the Council is rotated annually among the Member States. Currently the SACU Council of Ministers is chaired by the Kingdom of

Swaziland, through her Minister of Finance, Honourable M. Sithole.

3. The meeting was preceded by the SACU Commission Meeting which was held in Piggs Peak Swaziland on the 11th – 13th April 2007 in preparation for the Council Meeting.
4. The proposed programme for the Council of Ministers seeks to reflect on the need to consolidate SACU and SACU's wish to accelerate implementation of the SACU 2002 Agreement and thereby position SACU within the region.
5. The Establishment of the SACU Tariff Board as provided for in Article 11 of the SACU 2002 Agreement; the establishment of National Bodies as provided for in Article 14 of the SACU 2002 Agreement; the development of common policies and finalisation of a Common Trade Negotiating Mechanism through a Cooperation Mechanism on Competition Policies, all of which are on the Meetings agenda, will facilitate the acceleration of the implementation of the Agreement.

6. Also on the agenda is the Management of the Common Revenue Pool, the adoption of an Annex on Mutual Administration Assistance and an approach to Regional Integration that may contribute positively to the integrity of the Customs Union.

7. The Council of Ministers will also preside over the role of SACU on deepening regional integration. Council at its last meeting in December 2006 established a Task Team at Commission level to monitor relevant developments that will inform a SACU position on Regional Integration. The Terms of Reference for the Task Team have been adopted by the Member States. At a meeting of the Task Team that took place on 30th March 2007, in Walvis Bay, Namibia, the Task Team defined its work plan and identified the necessary empirical studies to be undertaken in order to inform SACU's Regional Integration Programmes.

8. The SACU Council of Ministers Meeting will in summary concentrate on a number of priority and strategic lines of action and seek greater coordination among the various

SACU Institutions responsible for the execution of the 2002
SACU Agreement.

End.

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