



07 December 2009

Press Statement

20th Meeting of the SACU Council of Ministers held on 04 December 2009 in Windhoek, Namibia.

1. The 20th Meeting of the SACU Council of Ministers was held on the 04 December 2009 in Windhoek, Namibia. The meeting was preceded by a SACU Commission Meeting held from 30 November to 03 December 2009 in preparation for the SACU Ministerial Meeting.
2. The Council of Ministers considered a proposed work plan towards addressing a new Strategic Direction the Customs Union has embarked on since the September 2009 Special Council Meeting held in Ezulwini, Swaziland. The objectives of this new work programme are:
 - The development and sustainability of a unified engagement amongst SACU Member States in trade negotiations with third parties; .
 - Finalisation of Policy Frameworks for SACU, in the areas of industrial policy; agricultural policy; competition policy and unfair trade practices as provided for in the 2002 SACU Agreement;
 - The development of a SACU trade and tariff policy and trade strategy that support industrialisation in SACU;

- The development of deliberate initiatives to promote intra - SACU Trade;
 - The Investigation of financing options for cross-border projects;
 - The development of SACU positions on new generation issues, taking into account ongoing negotiations;
 - A defined roadmap for moving towards an Economic Community and Monetary union;
 - Positioning SACU at the centre of the SADC Economic Integration Agenda
 - Exploring the possibility to review the 2002 SACU Agreement.
3. SACU will meet early in the New Year to develop concrete programmes and activities to implement the above objectives.
 4. The Council of Ministers also took note of an update on SACU's Trade initiatives with third parties and of the SACU Trade Policy Review held by the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on the 04 and 06 November in 2009. The objective of the Trade Policy Review, which is conducted in line with the transparency mechanism of the WTO, was to, *inter alia*, increase the transparency and understanding of SACU's trade policies and practices, as well as to enable a multilateral assessment of the effects of these on the multilateral trading system. SACU successfully completed its Review and programmes and activities will be developed and implemented to strengthen the Customs Union in preparation for the next Trade Policy Review scheduled for 2015
 5. At the same meeting the Council of Ministers presided over the impact of the Global Financial Crises on SACU. Council reviewed the impact of the crisis from a Global Perspective and assessed the financial implications in relation to the SACU Common Revenue Pool and SACU's Trade Agenda.

6. Council concluded that though there are signs of recovery with regards to the Global Financial Crises, the rate of recovery is slow and is still surrounded by uncertainty. This will inevitably affect the SACU Revenue Pool in the short term to medium term and consequently affect the fiscal budgets of the Member States.

7. The Council of Ministers mapped out a way forward to deal with these immediate challenges facing the Customs Union and agreed to meet again on 15 January 2010 in South Africa for continued discussions in this regard.

END

SACU Secretariat

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