

**MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE UNITED KINGDOM
OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND (UK), AND THE
SOUTHERN AFRICAN CUSTOMS UNION (SACU) FOR SUPPORT TO THE
SACU CUSTOM MODERNISATION PROGRAMME**

**20 JANUARY 2020
LONDON, UK**

PRESS RELEASE

1. On the 20th January 2020, the Executive Secretary of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU), Ms. Paulina Mbala Elago, and the Director for Economic Diplomacy at the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO), Mr Lewis. Neal, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support implementation of the ongoing SACU Customs Modernisation Programme.
2. The SACU Regional Customs Modernisation Programme seeks to strengthen collaboration and to enhance administrative efficiencies amongst Customs Administrations in the SACU Member States of Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa. The key objective of the Programme is to enhance efficiency in order to facilitate cross border movement of goods while securing borders to curb the scourge of illicit trade, as well as to ensure seamless movement of legitimate trade. The Programme also aims to promote Traders' compliance with the national laws and policies.
3. The Programme is further designed to enhance efficiency in the core strategic areas of Customs Administration, notably Information Technology Systems, Strategies, Processes and Procedures. This entails the development and implementation of the regional Customs Tools and Frameworks to strengthen cooperation and collaboration on IT Connectivity; Risk Management and Enforcement; Preferred Trader Programme; and Customs Legislative Framework.
4. To date the key regional Customs Tools and Frameworks have been developed. These include (a) Model Bilateral Arrangement to facilitate automatic exchange of information; (b) Preferred Trader Programme Engagement Strategy; (c) Preferred Trader Programme Training Manuals on Risk Management and Audit for Customs Officials; (d) Preferred Trader

Programme Internal and External Manuals to guide Customs Officials and Traders on implementation of the Preferred Traders Programme; (e) IT Connectivity Blue Print; (f) IT Connectivity Utility Block “Your Export Is My Entry”; (g) IT Connectivity Unique Consignment Reference; (h) Regional Customs Risk Management and Enforcement Strategy; (i) Regional Customs Compliance Management Strategy.

5. An initial funding support amounting to £158,690.09 has been committed by the UK for the period from October 2019 to 31 March 2020. The UK has further committed to provide continued support towards the implementation of the SACU Customs Modernisation Programme as well as Trade related support. The funding support for the subsequent year will be based on the activities to be agreed by both Parties.
6. The support from the UK will therefore assist SACU Member States to fully implement the above critical regional Tools and Frameworks. The ultimate objective is to enhance efficiencies related to cross border movement of goods.
7. It is envisaged that upon full implementation of the SACU Customs Modernisation Programme, the SACU region will benefit from amongst others, reduced costs, predictability and transparency, improved co-operation and collaboration with various stakeholders, increased competitiveness and Sustainable customs reform and modernization efforts in the region. For the private sector, the benefits that will accrue in the long term include reduction in the transaction costs associated with border crossings, and enhanced competitiveness of business which encourages new investments.
8. The signing of the MoU was witnessed by the High Commissioner of Botswana and the Representatives of the High Commissioners of Eswatini, Lesotho, Namibia and South Africa.
9. For more information, kindly contact:
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Issued by:

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