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## **STATEMENT**

**By:**

**TSWELOPELE C. MOREMI**

**EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF SACU**

**At**

**XLII REGULAR MEETING OF THE COMMON MARKET  
COUNCIL (CMC) AND SUMMIT OF PRESIDENTS OF  
MERCOSUR AND ASSOCIATED COUNTRIES**

**MONTEVIDEO, URUGUAY**

**19 DECEMBER 2011**

Honourable Ministers from MERCOSUR and Associated Countries

Your Excellency, General Secretary of the MERCOSUR Secretariat

Your Excellencies, members of the Diplomatic Corps

Representatives of Regional and International Organisations

Distinguished delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great honour and privilege for me to address this distinguished audience representing the Member Countries of the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU) on this important occasion marking the XLII (forty-second) regular meeting of the Common Market Council and Summit of the Presidents of MERCOSUR and Associated Countries. At the outset I would like to take this opportunity to thank the government of the Republic of Uruguay for the excellent arrangements made for my arrival and participation in this forum.

Your Excellencies, honourable Ministers, distinguished delegates,

The year 2010 marked an important milestone in the history of SACU. SACU Member States launched the Organisation's centenary celebrations in 2010 which took place in April 2010 in Windhoek, Namibia. This occasion was also used to convene the first Summit of Heads of State and Government, which provided strategic and political direction on the future of the organisation.

In this regard the Heads of State and Government adopted a Vision and Mission. The SACU Vision is to be:

*"An economic community with equitable and sustainable development, dedicated to the welfare of its people for a common future",*

Finally in order to provide ongoing political guidance, the Heads of State decided to institutionalise the Summits, which will become a regular feature of the SACU calendar.

The Mission: to achieve this Vision, SACU has adopted a Mission statement which inter alia aims to:

- Serves as an engine for regional integration and sustainable development, industrial and economic diversification, the expansion of intra regional trade and investment, and global competitiveness;
- Builds economic policy coherence, harmonization and convergence to meet the development needs of the region;
- Develops effective, transparent and democratic institutions and processes.

In order to achieve this Vision and Mission, the Heads of State and Government decided on a new SACU work programme. This new work programme is focussed at strengthening SACU as an institution and laying the foundation for a deeper and more integrated regional economic community that could serve as a basis for regional integration in Southern Africa.

Some of the key areas of focus will be

- a) the establishment of new institutions including the Tariff Board and a Tribunal. This will also involve strengthening the technical and analytical capabilities of the SACU Secretariat.

- b) the development of a regional industrial development policy, aimed at achieving balanced and equitable economic development amongst all our Member States.
- c) trade facilitation aimed at facilitating intra-SACU trade by identifying and implementing cross-border investment projects, while also streamlining customs and border procedures. This also includes the development of common transport policy.
- d) the adoption of a set of principles to guide SACU negotiators will ensure a unified engagement in all trade negotiations.
- e) the review of the current revenue sharing arrangements, taking account of the changing global, economic and financial situation. At the same time the review of the revenue sharing agreement must be supportive of SACU's new Vision and overarching objectives of promoting regional industrial development.

Your Excellencies,

As part of the centenary celebrations SACU launched a series of National Conferences in all Member States, which included the private sector, academia and civil society to share their views with us on the steps that should be taken to achieve the Vision and Mission as adopted by the Heads of State and Government.

This culminated in a Regional Conference for the private sector in July this year. The objective of the Conference was to profile SACU, broaden stakeholder participation, and create awareness about the new SACU Vision and Mission and the new SACU Work Programme.

From the discussions that took place it emerged that political imperatives rather than economic and business parameters often drive

regional integration in Africa and that there was a need to revisit the model of integration to have a more holistic and inclusive approach involving business and private sector. The SACU Council therefore directed the Secretariat to develop a strategy for engaging the private sector in the SACU programmes. This we have started and it is expected that in future, we will have a much more inclusive process when developing common policies and executing SACU work programmes.

As we start to develop an approach towards a greater involvement of the stakeholders we believe we can benefit from the experiences of MERCOSUR in the inclusion of the private sector and civil society in the process of regional integration.

Your Excellencies,

Finally, the SACU Member Countries are committed to strengthening their relationship with MERCOSUR Countries, which also promote our stated objective of closer South-South cooperation, generating greater cohesiveness amongst the countries. In this regard, the SACU Member States wish to confirm their commitment to implement the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) once all the processes of ratification have been completed on both sides. We view the PTA as an important tool to strengthen our trade relations and increased trade and investment between our two regions.

I am therefore pleased to announce to you today that the Republic of Botswana and the Republic of South Africa have already ratified the PTA, while the Republic of Namibia and the Kingdom of Swaziland have

submitted it to their respective Parliaments for ratification. It is expected that they will be able to ratify the PTA soon. The Kingdom of Lesotho has started her internal processes and will submit it to her Parliament in the New Year.

We are further pleased with the status of ratification amongst MERCOSUR Member States, with the Federative Republic of Brazil already having ratified the Agreement and the other countries having started this process. We believe that if both sides continue along this path with the necessary urgency, we should be able to implement the PTA in the near future.

Your Excellencies, honourable Ministers, distinguished delegates,

In conclusion let me once again thank you for this opportunity to attend this important meeting. We view SACU's participation in these meetings as an important step in further strengthening the already excellent relationship that exists between our two regions. I would like to assure you of SACU's commitment to build upon this for the benefit of respective Member States and their private and social sectors.

I thank you.