

***Official Statement by His Excellency,
Lt. General Seretse Khama Ian
Khama, President of the Republic
of Botswana***



Friday, 12 April 2013

Gaborone, Botswana

Your Majesty, King Mswati III

Your Excellency President Hifikepunye Pohamba;

Your Excellency President Jacob Gedleyihlekisa Zuma;

The Right Honourable, Prime Minister [Dr Thomas Motsoahae Thabane](#);

Chairperson of the SACU Council of Ministers;

Honourable Ministers;

Madam Executive Secretary of SACU;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Senior Government Officials;

Distinguished invited guests;

Ladies and Gentleman.

It is a great honour and privilege for me, on behalf of the government and people of Botswana, to welcome you, your Excellencies, the SACU Heads of State and Government, and your delegations to Botswana and to

Gaborone in particular, for this meeting of the SACU Heads of State and Government.

It is also a great honour for me to preside over this Summit which marks another important milestone in cementing the long established relationship that exists amongst our five nations.

Let me also take this opportunity to express my sincere gratitude, to your Excellencies, for having found time amidst your very busy schedules to be here today. Your presence is testimony to the importance we all attach to this Organisation and its continued role in deepening integration amongst our five countries.

Finally, let me also take this opportunity to congratulate the Kingdom of Lesotho for hosting successful elections last year and congratulate South Africa on the successful hosting of the 5th BRICS Summit on 26-27 March 2013.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman;

This is our 4th Summit. You will recall that when we met at our inaugural Summit on the 22nd of April 2010 in Windhoek, Namibia, we all recognised the enormous challenges facing the Organisation. We recognised the important role SACU can play in promoting regional integration and the economic development of all its Member States and collectively adopted a Vision of SACU to be *‘An economic community with equitable and sustainable development dedicated to the welfare of its people for a common future’*. This Vision seeks to transform the Organisation and help the Organisation move forward supporting both the regional and continental integration efforts of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU).

However, we also recognised that agreeing on a Vision and Mission on its own is not sufficient to guide the organization into the future and agreed to institutionalise the meeting of SACU Heads of State and Government.

Your Excellencies,

Subsequent to that inaugural meeting, SACU Heads of State and Government met twice more in South Africa. Our last meeting took place in March 2011 in Pretoria, where we further addressed the challenges facing the Organisation and as we seek to transform the SACU from its colonial and apartheid legacy to a modern organisation that can respond to our economic development needs and make a meaningful contribution to regional integration efforts.

In this regard we endorsed an initial work programme focussing on five priority areas and decided that regional industrialisation will be the overarching objective of the SACU work programme.

I believe, the purpose of today's meeting is to receive and update on the progress achieved in addressing these priority areas and provide strategic direction as we continue to transform SACU into a vehicle for deeper integration.

Your Excellencies,

Implementation of the work programme and addressing the priorities set by ourselves has not been without its challenges. Ofcourse, recent global economic uncertainty and the continued fragility of the global economic recovery has necessitated that we move cautiously. Declining trade revenues and subdued global demand has dampened regional growth forecasts and requires us to act innovatively to ensure we are able to address our socio-economic and development imperatives.

The time has come to address the challenges facing our economies respectively and collectively. It is therefore imperative that we work together, as a region, to ensure that the regions economic performance can be put on a higher sustainable economic growth trajectory. Ours is a journey of a life time and as such we should never tire in our efforts to maintain our

solidarity for the benefit of our people and the region at large.

With these few remarks, I would like to reiterate my profound gratitude for having you all at this venue. I declare this Summit officially opened and wish you successful deliberations.

I thank you.