



Remarks by Ms. Paulina M. Elago,
Executive Secretary of SACU
on the occasion of the Inauguration of the SACU Headquarters
12 November 2015, Windhoek,
Namibia

Director of Ceremonies, Honourable Calle G.H. Schlettwein, Minister of Finance of Namibia;

Your Excellency President Jacob Zuma, President of the Republic of South Africa and Chairperson of the SACU Summit;

Your Excellency Lieutenant General Seretse Khama Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana;

Your Excellency Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia;

The Right Honourable Barnabas Dlamini, Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland;

Honourable Mathetjoa Metsing, Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho;

The Right Honourable Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila, Prime Minister of the Republic of Namibia;

Honourable Peter Katjavivi, Speaker of the National Assembly;

Honourable Asser Kapere, Chairman of the National Council;

His Lordship Peter Shivute, Chief Justice;

Honourable Netumbo Nandi- Ndaitwah, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of Namibia;

Honourable Nhlanhla Nene, Minister of Finance of South Africa and Chairperson of the SACU Council of Ministers;

Honourable Ministers;

Honourable Members of Parliament

Representatives of Regional Organisations;

Members of the Diplomatic Corps;

Distinguished invited guests;

SACU Secretariat Team;

Members of the media;

Ladies and gentlemen.

Good Morning! Dumela, mwalalapo, mwapenduka, morweni, sawubona, goeie more, bonjour, habari za asibuji, gutten morgen,

I am greatly honoured to address this august gathering on the occasion of the inauguration of the SACU Headquarters. On behalf of the SACU Secretariat and on my own behalf, it is my privilege to welcome you all to this historic occasion. Thank you for honouring our invitations to witness this momentous ceremony.

I would like to extend a special welcome to the SACU Heads of State and Government to the SACU Headquarters.

On behalf of the Secretariat, we express our deepest gratitude to their Excellencies for finding the time in their busy schedules to come to Windhoek, to inaugurate the SACU Headquarters which is your very own building. This will certainly be an event which will forever be etched in SACU's annals and legacy.

In the same vein, let me also welcome the SACU Council of Ministers, members of the SACU Commission and the Finance and Audit Committee, and further thank them for their leadership and oversight provided to the Secretariat, during the construction of this building.

Looking at the entire facility, which you will all have an opportunity to tour later on, we can all be proud of the output of our efforts. At the Secretariat, and indeed the whole of SACU, we are truly proud to contribute such a modern structure to the landscape and architecture of the City of Windhoek.

Your Excellencies;

It will be remiss of me not to acknowledge the tremendous support that the Secretariat has received from the Government and the people of Namibia, since its establishment in 2004. The Government of Namibia, through its different Ministries and Agencies, has generously supported SACU in various ways to facilitate the

operations of the Secretariat in Namibia. More critically we thank the Government of Namibia for making available the land where our Headquarters is standing, as well as the organisation of this event.

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests,

The construction of this building commenced in September 2012, and was completed in April 2014, which was within the agreed timeframe as well as the approved budget.

To that end, I wish to recognise the people, some of whom are with us here today, who worked tirelessly to plan, coordinate and build this landmark in the heart of Windhoek. The immense and invaluable contributions made by all those that were involved in ensuring that this Headquarters became a reality, are highly appreciated.

Let me, therefore, also extend a warm welcome to the architects, who were responsible for the design of this impressive building, and congratulate them for a job well done.

In the same vein, I would like to extend our appreciation to the contractor, engineers, quantity surveyor and indeed all the other professional teams who were involved in this Project.

I further acknowledge the hard work that the Secretariat staff put into this Project, and their patience in ensuring that the Project is successfully delivered. One can only concede that the Secretariat could not have managed to monitor this Project, without the critical and invaluable technical support of the Task Team on the SACU Headquarters Project. We appreciate all their inputs and expert advice and applaud them for their guidance.

As I only came in at the tail end of the Project in April 2014 when I joined SACU, I can only extend my deep gratitude to my predecessor and the founding Executive Secretary of SACU, Ambassador Tswelopele Moremi, for steering the Project to its conclusion.

Your Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Surely, with this impressive facility at the disposal of the Secretariat, it goes without saying that this has created an enabling environment necessary us to execute our mandate. Let me assure you that the Secretariat staff stand ready to fully implement the SACU Priority Work programme as approved by the Summit, in order to realize SACU's Vision of "*an economic community with equitable and sustainable development, dedicated to the welfare of its people for a common future*".

It is acknowledged that full implementation of the SACU Agreement, 2002 requires great efforts both by the Member States and the Secretariat. We need to put together processes that will ensure that we attain our goals as an organization. I am mindful of the challenges towards the achievement of these goals; however, I strongly believe that these challenges are not insurmountable.

Your Excellencies, distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

Once again, let me thank you for being here, especially to Their Excellencies, who have taken valuable time out of their tight schedules to be here with us to inaugurate this new home for the SACU Secretariat.

Thank you for dedicating your time to participate in this event and we look forward to your continued support.

I thank you for your kind attention