

# REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY H.E. DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB,  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,**

**AT**

**THE INAUGURATION OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN  
CUSTOMS UNION HEADQUARTERS BUILDING**

**12 NOVEMBER 2015**

**WINDHOEK**

*(Check Against Delivery)*

**President Jacob Zuma, Chairman of SACU;**

**President Seretse Ian Khama, President of the Republic of Botswana;**

**Prime Minister Barnabas Dlamini of the Kingdom of Swaziland;**

**Deputy Prime Minister Metsing of the Kingdom of Lesotho;**

**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;**

**Your Lordship, Peter Shivute, Chief Justice;**

**Honourable Ministers from Namibia and member states;**

**Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**

**Miss Paulina Elago, Executive Secretary of SACU;**

**Distinguished Invited Guests;**

**Local and regional media representatives;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

**On behalf of the Government and the people of the Republic of Namibia, I warmly welcome you to Windhoek. Your presence here today is testimony to the importance we all attach to this Union and its continued role in deepening economic integration amongst our five countries. SACU is the oldest customs union in the world and therefore serves as a building block for SADC and other regional economic bodies. I am reminded of the words of Tate Nelson Mandela who said: *“I dream of the realization of the unity of Africa, whereby its leaders combine in their efforts to solve the problems of this continue”*. While ours is a Union of**

only five (5) countries, the aims and objectives of SACU encompass the ideals referred to by Comrade Mandela.

A worrying global development is the discrepancy in income distribution across and within nations. The rich are getting richer while the poor remain in a vicious poverty trap. Therefore, prosperity must be shared and growth must be inclusive.

Furthermore, let us be cognisant of the dangers of unequal economic development. What we want for our Union and region are economies characterized by sustained and inclusive growth as well as stable political climates.

The African Development Bank undertook a study on the prospects for the economic integration of Southern Africa. The Study indicates that Africa must transform its weak production structures and fragmented markets by embracing economic integration with a renewed sense of purpose and direction. The ghastly alternative would be a sub-continent at risk of marginalisation in its participation in the global economy. In this regard, we need to transform our region into a hive of economic opportunities and in so doing; make economic participation more accessible and inclusive.

Your Excellencies,

Under the SACU Agreement of 2002, the Council provides political and strategic guidance and is the highest decision-making authority on all SACU matters. I am happy that we have made progress in institutionalizing the Summit of the SACU Heads of State and Government. It can thus be expected that the SACU Summit will strengthen sub-regional stability and development, and increase investor

confidence in our sub-region. The extent of our political will and commitment to the economic integration process will determine the success of SACU.

It is against this background that I call upon all our Member States to work together to further deepen and strengthen work on the priority areas of focus of SACU, including a review of the revenue sharing model, intellectual property, industrial development, industrial policy, and strengthening the capacity of the SACU Secretariat, amongst others.

With these remarks, please allow me once again to welcome my brothers to the Land of the Brave for the Inauguration of the SACU Headquarters. Let us continue to work together as a Family in this SACU House to build a strong and prosperous sub-region where nobody should feel left out.

Let me conclude by quoting the SACU vision, which was adopted at the SACU Heads of State and Government meeting right here in Windhoek in 2010. It reads as follows, *“An economic community with equitable sustainable development, dedicated to the welfare of its people for a common future.”*

I thank you.