

News story: Joint statement on UK, SACU and Mozambique EPA

The Honourable Ministers responsible for Trade in the UK, G Hollingbery and in SACU and Mozambique, herein represented by B. J. Kenewendo of Botswana, met in Cape Town, Republic of South Africa, today, 28th August 2018.

We welcomed the significant progress made on a future UK, SACU, and Mozambique EPA that will ensure that the parties maintain the current market access and replicate the effects of the existing EU-SADC EPA, which will ensure continuity of trade relations between the UK, SACU and Mozambique once the EU-SADC EPA no longer applies to the UK. In this regard therefore:

1. We set out today our shared understanding that inclusive trade is essential for poverty eradication and sustained growth. We agreed that the UK-SACU and Mozambique EPA must promote development and support the integration efforts of the African Continent.
2. The 2 sides commit to continue to work together towards the conclusion of a future UK, SACU and Mozambique EPA that ensures continuity in the trade relationship once the EU-SADC EPA no longer applies to the UK.
3. We recalled our roundtable discussions on trade relations post-Brexit on the 19th July 2017, wherein we agreed to explore ways to ensure that the existing trade arrangement between the UK, SACU and Mozambique currently governed by the EU-SADC EPA, will not be disrupted by the UK's departure from the EU. The UK re-affirmed its commitment to ensuring continuity of the effects of the EU-SADC EPA following the UK's withdrawal from the EU, in particular maintaining the current market access for SACU and Mozambique into the UK.
4. We welcome the significant progress our officials have made since then in the discussions on a future UK, SACU, and Mozambique EPA, that will replicate the effects of the existing EU-SADC EPA which has strong aspects of reciprocity. During this process, we recognise the UK's continuing obligations while it remains an EU Member State.
5. We have today confirmed that we will be in a position to ensure that an Agreement can be in place between the UK, SACU, and Mozambique, as soon as the EU-SADC EPA no longer applies to the UK. This confirmation, and the future UK, SACU and Mozambique EPA, are without prejudice to the terms of the EU-SADC EPA.
6. We take note of the progress achieved regarding the UK and EU's agreement on a time-limited implementation period between the EU and UK following the UK's

departure from the EU, and in particular the intention for the UK to be treated, for the purposes of EU international agreements, as an EU Member State for the duration of the implementation period between the EU and UK. The SACU and Mozambique Trade Ministers indicated that they look forward to receiving formal confirmation of the same via the proposed notification, and to continuing to receive regular updates on progress from the UK on the EU-UK negotiations under Article 50 of the Treaty of the European Union on the UK's withdrawal from the EU. SACU and Mozambique emphasise the importance of continued cumulation between all the parties in promoting continuity and to avoid disruption in trade, and urge both the UK and the EU to recognise the importance of cumulation in the discussions on a post-Brexit EU-UK arrangement.

7. Nevertheless, we recognise that it is responsible to prepare for all potential outcomes. We confirm that we are therefore taking steps to ensure that our replicated agreement can be in place, if required, immediately upon the UK's withdrawal from the EU in March 2019, in the event that no agreement is reached between the UK and EU.
8. We re-affirm that we share a strong ambition to further strengthen our partnership in the future, in order to further benefit both parties. Our EPA will form the core basis of our future economic and development relationship. We recognised that some issues have been identified that will require consideration after the UK's withdrawal from the EU in March 2019 and therefore direct our officials to prepare a built-in agenda on those outstanding issues for expeditious conclusion. We also acknowledge a range of potential issues which could help us further strengthen our partnership, and look forward to discussing those at the most appropriate time.
9. We re-affirm our intention to cooperate closely in order to ensure that the mutual benefits of a UK, SACU and Mozambique EPA are fully realised.
10. In addition, we reiterate support for a rules-based multilateral trading system, with the World Trade Organization (WTO) at its core, reaffirm the centrality of development in the WTO's work and the need to continue to fight WTO non-compliant measures that lead to protectionism and unilateralism. We remain committed to a rules-based, transparent, non-discriminatory, open and inclusive multilateral trading system and are determined to work together to further strengthen the WTO and ensure that it facilitates effective participation of all countries in the multilateral trading system.
11. Finally, we recognise that the affirmations set forth in this political understanding are not intended to be legally binding and remain 'without prejudice' to the technical discussions currently underway.