



ATF NEWS BRIEF

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Namibian Agricultural Trade Forum
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WHAT IS NEW!!!

1. ATF consults on trade facilitation

The ATF held its 31st Public Dialogue on the 28th May 2013. The public dialogue was dedicated to trade facilitation. The Dialogue was well attended by participants from both the public and private sector. The aim of the Dialogue was to stimulate debate on trade facilitation in the Namibia, particularly in light of the WTO Agreement on Trade Facilitation negotiations, which is nearing conclusion.

Dr Trudi Hartzenberg and Professor Gerhard Erasmus from the Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa (Tralac) and Ms Patricia Liswaniso from the Ministry of Trade and Industry gave presentations on experiences of trade facilitation at the regional level and from the Namibian government perspective. Inter-agency cooperation at national, regional and multilateral level as well as the need for an integrated approach was highlighted as one of the critical issues for the successful formulation and implementation of trade facilitation programmes. Coupled with this is the need for an effective dispute resolution mechanism.

2. The WTO gets a new boss

The World Trade Organization (WTO) formally appointed Roberto Azevedo as its new director general replacing Pascal Lamy, whose tenure will end on 31 August 2013.

Azevedo, who has been Brazil representative at the WTO for years, became the first WTO Director General to emerge from the BRICS group of developing countries (Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa).

The appointment of Azevedo raises questions of whether it means a new dimensional approach towards reviving the stall of the Doha development agenda, which aims to integrate developing countries into a multilateral trading system.

Well, the next Bali ministerial meeting scheduled for December 2013 will unpack the outstanding trade negotiation issues and craft the way forward under the new leadership. Also, of special

interest at the next Bali Ministerial meeting are negotiations on trade facilitation, of which Namibia will be expected to make a decision on whether it is ready to sign or not.

3. SADC

3.1 SADC Trade Negotiation Forum(TNF)

The SADC TNF held its 46th meeting from the 23-24 May 2013 in Gaborone, Botswana. Discussion on the accession of the DRC and Angola to the SADC Trade Protocol formed part of the deliberations. As per the SADC road map, DRC is expected to accede to the protocol and commence implementation by January 2015. Angola has, however, indicated that they are still under the recovering phase from the civil strife which had damaged the country's productive capacity and that the country has not, as yet, reformed its tariffs.

3.2 Tripartite Free Trade Area (TTNF): COMESA, EAC & SADC

The TTNF held its seventh meeting from the 8th-10th May 2013 in Kigali, Rwanda. It was preceded by the meetings of the respective Technical Working Groups (TWGs). A welcome achievement was the commencement of the text based negotiations which signifies considerable progress. However, despite the progress made, the timeline (June 2014) set for finalization of negotiation for Phase one (trade in goods) seems to be rather unrealistic.

More so that, negotiations to align the Rules of Origins of different economic blocs into a harmonized rule has not commenced as yet. Member states are, however, expected to submit market access offers by 1st September 2013.

The ATF held a private sector consultation meeting to develop the defensive and offensive interests for Namibia in the TFTA. Namibian offer is expected to be consolidated and scrutinized at a SACU level during the week of the 10th June 2013 before submitted to the tripartite secretariat. The next Tripartite Trade Negotiation Forum will take place in September in Uganda on dates to be communicated.

4. SADC/EC Economic Partnership Agreement(EPA)

Negotiations on EPA with the European Union have been on-going for a while now and it is thus still "work in progress". Negotiations are intensifying as SADC EPA states approach the set deadline for the withdrawal of the market access regulation 1528/2008.

This is further exacerbated by the fact that most countries, especially SACU states, are alarmed by the implications of widespread tariff elimination and other binding conditionalities that would be imposed to them, while at the same time also trying to maintain market access especially for Namibia and Botswana.

The EU request on agricultural market access into SACU against a SACU request of an automatic agricultural safeguard remains the most contentious issue that has to be resolved and both parties have to show some restraint to find a compromise solution.

In preparation for the next negotiation round to take place from the 14th – 21st June in Brussels, the SADC EPA held a preparatory meeting during the week of the 20th May in Botswana.

Member states recognized the fact that some of the agricultural products that enter the South African market under the EU-SA TDCa are already at zero tariffs, and this existing regime is likely to cause harm to the developing industries in the BLNS countries. The BLNS were then requested to compile a priority list of products that should qualify for agricultural safeguards. The ATF convened a private sector consultation meeting to undertake this exercise.

Other major outstanding issues relate to the provision of Administration Cooperation arrangements which would allow SADC EPA states to use/import raw materials from non-SADC EPA states for the purpose of exporting to the EU. It is hoped that the June round would allow for a more substantial progress towards the successful conclusion of the EPA.

5. SACU

5.1 Summit, Council and Commission

The SACU Commission meeting was held in April 2013 in Gaborone, Botswana. A considerable masterpiece was the approved request for Namibia to increase her wheat rebate quota from the current level of 50,000 tons to 80,000 tons per year. However, this enlargement is subjected to a condition as presented by South Africa, namely that no wheaten products may be sold from Namibia to other SACU member states.

While the agricultural private sector welcomes this development, such a condition can stifle the development of value addition in Namibia. Namibian grown wheat and wheat imported from SACU should essentially be excluded from this condition. Therefore, the Agricultural Trade Forum and the Ministries of Agriculture, Water and Forestry and Trade and Industry, are working together to find a mechanism that is suitable to all parties.

The SACU Technical Committee on agricultural rebates will be meeting on the 05th June 2013 in Johannesburg, South Africa and the issue will further be deliberated.

5.2 SACU-USA TIDCA

No progress is being made. Namibia is still waiting for the report on the observations made in the beginning of February 2013. Once received, Namibia will be expected to comment and submit it back for onward transmission to FSIS. Meanwhile, the Directorate of Veterinary Services is urged

to start implementing its corrective actions and familiarize themselves with the v20 regulation of 200

List of Acronyms

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific
BLNS	Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland
CET	Common external tariff (of the SACU)
COMESA	Common Market for East and Southern Africa.
DDA	Doha Development Agenda (current round of WTO negotiations)
DFQF	Duty and Quota Free market access to EU markets
DoP	Directorate of Planning at Ministry of Agriculture Water and Forestry
DVS	Directorate of Veterinary Services at MAWF
EAC	Eastern African Community
EC	European Council / Commission
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreements
EFTA	European Free Trade Area (Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Lichtenstein)
EU	European Union
FTA	Free trade Agreements/ Area
FSIS	Food Safety and Industrial Standards of the USA
FVO	Food and Veterinary Office – inspections from the EC
IPPC	International Plant Protection Council
ITAC	International Trade Administration Commission of South Africa
Mercosur	Latin American Common Market (Spanish translation) comprising Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay
MTI	Ministry of Trade and Industry
MAWF	Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry
NAMA	Non Agricultural Market Assess
NCA	Northern Communal Areas
NTBs	Non Tariff Barriers
OIE	World Organisation for Animal health
RoO	Rules of Origin
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SPS	Sanitary and Phytosanitary
SSM	Special Safeguard measures
TBT	Technical Barriers to Trade
T-FTA	Tripartite Free Trade Area: COMESA, EAC, SADC
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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