

INDIRECT TAX **CUSTOMS & EXCISE**

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 06: June 2025

PART A: AfCFTA - WHAT'S NEW?

AFRICA CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA

News on AfCFTA

June 2025 activities

AfCFTA Private Sector Platform Established

On 17 June 2025, the AfCFTA Secretariat held a closed webinar with representatives from Africa's private sector and Business Support Organisations (BSOs) in Accra, Ghana. This meeting formed part of the launch of the AfCFTA Private Sector Platform (ACTA PSP), aimed at enhancing cooperation between the Secretariat and the private sector.

Key outcomes included the approval of the Platform's Terms of Reference and the establishment of its foundational structures. The ACTA PSP will serve as a network of businesses and trade actors focused on advancing AfCFTA implementation. Its main goals are to coordinate private sector contributions, promote discussions and training, facilitate trade and investment in Africa, and support underrepresented groups such as Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), women, and youth.

The Pan-African Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PACCI) was chosen as Chair for one year, with the AfCFTA Secretariat acting as Co-Chair. Participants also expressed interest in joining technical Working Groups across various topics. The meeting introduced the African Private Sector Hearing (APSH), which will provide a platform for BSOs to engage with the Secretariat on trade issues- marking a step forward in supporting Africa's economic integration.

Online reference: AfCFTA Secretariat Successfully Hosts Private Sector Meeting with BSOs (30 June 2025); [<https://au-afcfta.org/2025/06/afcfta-secretariat-successfully-hosts-private-sector-meeting-with-business-support-organisations-bsos/>.]

SAIT customs comment

Involving the private sector in the rollout of the AfCFTA is essential to ensure that all stakeholders understand the benefits and compliance requirements associated with the agreement.

Engaging businesses, particularly MSMEs, fosters awareness and encourages participation in regional trade. It is equally important for the AfCFTA Secretariat to actively seek and consider feedback from the private sector regarding potential barriers that may hinder MSMEs from fully benefiting from the agreement.

Addressing these concerns can help create a more inclusive environment, allowing smaller businesses to thrive and contribute to Africa's economic integration and development.

PART B: TRADE CORRIDORS

News on trade corridors

June 2025 activities

South Africa's Trade Challenges at the Lebombo Border

On 25 June 2025, reference was made to a global report by expert Barbara Mommen, which addressed the inadequate infrastructure in South Africa's logistics sector. She, for instance, pointed out that the Lebombo Border Post struggles with heavy road freight traffic, leading to significant delays.

Mommen noted that the border was not designed to handle the current vehicle volumes and highlighted the physical challenges of the location, which complicate infrastructure development.

Mommen emphasised that increased involvement and accountability from agencies on both sides of the border could improve cargo flows on the corridor. She expressed concern over the lack of urgency in addressing ongoing issues, which hampers efficient cross-border trade and fiscal revenue.

Mommen observed resentment within both public and private sectors in South Africa towards the volumes of trade directed out of the Port of Maputo. She explained that the Port of Maputo often offers better logistical advantages, allowing for significant savings in sailing time and costs.

The IMD's World Competitiveness Rankings also pointed to a disconnect in public-private partnerships and the need for governments to be more responsive in supporting cross-border supply chain efficiency. Regular bilateral discussions on trade issues are essential for improving the efficiency of the busiest trade corridor in Southern Africa.

Online reference: Infrastructure alone not the only trade shortcoming – corridor specialist (30 June 2025); [<https://www.freightnews.co.za/article/infrastructure-alone-not-only-trade-shortcoming-corridor-specialist>]

SAIT customs comment

It is my understanding that many developed countries have addressed border infrastructure challenges by investing in upgrades and streamlining processes.

They have implemented efficient systems to reduce congestion and improve cargo flow. For example, some countries have established coordinated efforts between the public and private sectors to enhance logistics and facilitate trade.

Considering the Lebombo border challenges, adopting similar strategies could help improve operations and support cross-border trade in the region.

PART C – SARS CUSTOMS NEWS

General updates: Customs

May – June 2025

Legal counsel: Secondary legislation – Tariff amendments 2025

The table below refers to a correction notice:

Date	GG and Notice Number	Description	Implementation date
2 June 2025	GG 52791 R.6274	By the amendment of provisional payment in relation to anti-dumping duties against the alleged circumvention of the anti-dumping duties on new pneumatic tyres of rubber of a kind used in motor cars, to replace “Thailand” with “Vietnam” under tariff subheading 4011.10.05 where it appears in Notice No. R. 6234 of <i>Government Gazette</i> No. 52750 dated 30 May 2025.	30 May 2025 up to and including 29 November 2025

20 June 2025	GG 52882 R.6323	By correcting the English version of Note 10 in Chapter 84 in Notice No. R. 1089 of Government Gazette No. 45378 published on 22 October 2021, by referring to “84.85” instead of “85.85” where it occurs in the last line of that Note.	With retrospective effect from 1 January 2022
--------------	--------------------	--	---

The table below refers to an increase in the general fuel levy:

Date	GG and Notice Number	Description	Implementation date
2 June 2025	GG 52791 R.6276	Amendment to Part 3 of Schedule No. 6, because of the increase in the general fuel levy as announced by the Minister of Finance in his budget speech on 21 May 2025; the diesel refund provisions are adjusted accordingly.	4 June 2025

The table below refers to an increase in the rate of the general fuel levy for petrol and diesel:

Date	GG and Notice Number	Description	Implementation date
2 June 2025	GG 52791 R.6275	Amendment to Part 5A of Schedule No. 1, by an increase of 16c/li in the rate of the general fuel levy for petrol from 385c/li to 401c/li and 15c/li for diesel from 370c/li to 385c/li, respectively as well as the substitution of Note 8 to give effect to the Budget proposals announced by the Minister of Finance on 21 May 2025.	4 June 2025

The table below refers to the substitution of anti-dumping items:

Date	GG and Notice Number	Description	Implementation date
6 June 2025	GG 52812 R.6283	Amendment to Part 1 of Schedule No. 2, by the substitution of anti-dumping items under 207.02, to replace the words “producer/exporter” with the word “producer” against the alleged dumping of new pneumatic tyres of rubber of a kind used on motor cars, buses or lorries classifiable in tariff heading 40.11, originating in or imported from the People’s Republic of China – ITAC Minute M10/2024.	6 June 2025

Confirmation of access to customs amendments:

All Customs amendments and proposed amendments were accessed from the specified web address:

Online reference: SARS: What’s new at SARS (24 June 2025) [<https://www.sars.gov.za/whats-new-at-sars/>]

PART D – GENERAL MATTERS OF INTEREST

Strengthening SARS Customs Through Public-Private Partnerships

From 12-16 May 2025, the SARS hosted the Regional Steering Group and the Governing Council of the World Customs Organization (WCO) for the East and Southern Africa region.

The meetings focused on key developments and finalised the new East and Southern Africa region (ESA) Regional Strategy for 2025-2028. Participants, including customs administrations and regional partners, emphasised the importance of strategic reform and regional integration.

A major topic was the Trade Facilitation Agreement, aimed at reducing trade barriers and improving efficiency. The WCO plays a vital role in supporting Africa's involvement in global trade. South Africa's Deputy Minister of Finance, Ashor Sarupen, highlighted tools like enhanced connectivity and pre-arrival processing to improve customs operations.

SARS Commissioner Edward Kieswetter stressed the need for collaboration between customs and the private sector to address shared challenges. He noted that customs must adapt to changes such as e-commerce growth and modern practices to build resilient economies.

The meetings concluded with South Africa being elected as Vice-Chair of WCO ESA, which will help strengthen governance and support the implementation of strategic priorities. This partnership between SARS and the private sector is essential for improving customs efficiency and promoting trade under the African Continental Free Trade Area.

Online reference: SARS Hosted progressive World Customs Organization East and Southern Africa Regional Meetings from 12–16 May 2025 (30 June 2025); [<https://www.sars.gov.za/latest-news/media-release-sars-hosted-progressive-world-customs-organization-east-and-southern-africa-regional-meetings-from-12-16-may-2025/>].

PART E – CONCLUSION

Strengthening Public-Private Collaboration in WCO Customs

On 25 June 2025, the annual Dialogue between the WCO Policy Commission (PC) and the Private Sector Consultative Group (PSCG) took place at WCO Headquarters in Brussels.

This meeting aimed to enhance public-private collaboration on customs and trade issues. It followed a PSCG meeting on 23-24 June, which focused on proposals to strengthen cooperation with the WCO.

WCO Council Chairperson Edward Kieswetter opened the session, highlighting the importance of the partnership between the WCO and PSCG in addressing supply chain challenges. He provided updates on recent discussions, including the endorsement of the draft PSCG Code of Ethics and plans to review the PSCG's Terms of Reference.

This year marked the 20th anniversary of the PSCG, prompting discussions on modernising its engagement model. The PSCG presented proposals for deeper alignment and structured cooperation with the WCO, including regular performance reviews.

The Dialogue also addressed consultation practices at national and regional levels, emphasising the role of WCO Regional Private Sector Groups (RPSGs) in incorporating diverse private sector views into global discussions.

WCO Deputy Secretary General Ricardo Treviño presented the PSCG composition for 2025-2026, highlighting the group's broad representation. WCO Secretary General Ian Saunders reaffirmed the commitment to stronger collaboration with the private sector to improve international trade.

Online reference: WCO Policy Commission and the Private Sector Consultative Group look toward deeper partnership (30 June 2025); [<https://www.wcoomd.org/en/media/newsroom/2025/june/wco-policy-commission-and-the-private-sector-consultative-group-look-toward-deeper-partnership.aspx>].

Author of the Newsletter:

Dr. Rodrick (Ronnie) van Rooyen

PD International Business and Trade and PhD Maritime and Customs Management; LLM Maritime Law and MPhil Maritime Studies