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## MEDIA RELEASE

### NAMIBIA HOSTS WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANISATION EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL MEETINGS

Namibia, through the Namibia Revenue Agency (NamRA), is proud to announce its hosting of the 39<sup>th</sup> Regional Steering Group (RSG) Meeting, to be followed by the 30<sup>th</sup> Governing Council (GC) Meeting of the World Customs Organization East and Southern Africa (WCO ESA) Region in Swakopmund, Erongo Region. These significant gatherings will be held between 20-24 May 2024 and serve as important platforms for customs administrators from the 24 member countries to deliberate on critical issues outlined in the Regional Strategy (2022-2025).

The RSG Meeting's agenda encompasses a comprehensive review of the progress made since the decisions taken during the 29<sup>th</sup> Governing Council in Madagascar last year. Key focus areas include the Effective Implementation of Trade Agreements such as the African Continental Free Trade Area and other Free Trade Agreements (AfCFTA and TFA), Efficient Revenue Mobilization and Customs Modernization, strengthening Compliance and Security through data management, addressing the new working methods and the wellbeing of Customs staff.

Several Commissioners General from WCO ESA member states are expected to attend the GC Meeting which opens next week Thursday. The Secretary General of the World Customs Organisation Mr Ian Saunders, is scheduled to arrive in Namibia ahead of the Governing Council Meeting, to be officiated by the Minister of Finance and Public Enterprises Honourable Ipumbu Shiimi. Notably, this marks the second time in two years that NamRA is hosting a WCO Secretary General, following the visit by the former Secretary General Dr Kunio Mikuria in July 2022. His term ended in June 2023.

The WCO ESA, part of six regions under the WCO's global purview, plays a crucial role in providing leadership in sustainable customs capacity building and change management.

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