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South Africa's revised trade offer to the US described as 'broad, generous, open and ambitious'

12TH AUGUST 2025 BY: TERENCE CREAMER - CREAMER MEDIA EDITOR



South Africa submitted a revised trade offer to the US on August 12, after its previous

'Framework Agreement' submitted in May failed to avert the institution of 30% 'reciprocal tariffs' on South African products as from August 8.

Details of the new offer were not provided during a joint briefing hosted on Tuesday by Trade, Industry and Competition Minister **Parks Tau** and Agriculture Minister **John Steenhuisen**, owing to a non-disclosure agreement in place with the US.

Nevertheless, it was confirmed that it was confined to trade and tariff matters and did not include offers in relation to some of the domestic policy complaints raised by President **Donald Trump** during his Oval Office meeting with President **Cyril Ramaphosa** in May.

Tau confirmed that the revised offer had been approved by Cabinet on August 6, while Steenhuisen described it as a “broad, generous and open offer” that sought to meet the ambition criteria set by the US and which he argued would be good for both South Africa and the US if adopted.

“The new offer substantively responds to the issues the US has raised in the 2025 National Trade Estimates Report,” Tau said, indicating that it built on the previous offer submitted in May.

He also confirmed that there had been engagements with the US subsequent to the imposition of the 30% tariffs and that Department of Trade, Industry and Competition's chief director for bilateral trade relations **Malose Anthony Letsoalo** had been stationed in Washington DC to ensure ongoing contact and discussions.

Likewise, Steenhuisen said that the Department of Agriculture had set up a high-level team that included its director-general, **Mooketsa Ramasodi**, to engage the US, while agricultural attaché Dr **JB Jaftha** was now in Washington DC to help deal with some of the phytosanitary issues arising from both the US and South Africa.

Steenhuisen acknowledged that non-trade policy issues had been raised with South Africa and other countries by the Trump administration, describing it as a “new normal”. These

included concerns in relation to farm murders, South Africa's black empowerment and affirmative action policies and the country's land exploration legislation.

However, Steenhuisen, who is also leader of the Democratic Alliance which is participating in the Government of National Unity led by Ramaphosa, stressed that his and Tau's interactions with the US were confined to trade and tariff matters.

International Relations and Cooperation Minister **Ronald Lamola** was pursuing diplomatic efforts on other matters raised, Steenhuisen stated.

SHOW OF GOODWILL

Tau also confirmed that, notwithstanding the ongoing negotiations, South Africa had already taken various proactive steps to address longstanding concerns raised by the US as a show of "goodwill".

On poultry, South Africa had granted market access under the conditional self-ban and self-lifting system, which would enable the US to leverage the Tariff Rate Quota of 72 000 t agreed in 2016.

For blueberries, South Africa had granted market access for US states that are free of fruit fly and agreed to mitigation measures with those states with fruit fly, while trade would be opened in relation to pork subject to the bio-security requirements.

“Consequently, the USA-Africa Trade Desk has informed us that it will be shipping containers of poultry and pork to South Africa in two weeks’ time, which is testimony that these issues have been resolved,” Tau announced.

“The shipments will come from the states of Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, North Carolina and Alabama through the Ports of New Orleans in Louisiana, Savanna in Georgia, and Norfolk in Virginia.”

The US is South Africa’s third-largest trading partner after the EU and China, and accounts for about 4%, or R9.8-billion, of the country’s total yearly agriculture exports.

Steenhuisen stressed the counter-seasonality of many of South Africa’s agricultural exports, highlighting the quality and cost competitiveness of the country’s citrus exports to the US in particular.

Tau also announced that consultations were under way with industry and members of the Southern African Customs Union regarding ways to respond to a request from the US for South Africa to consider reducing tariffs as a way to address the deficit and tariff disparity with the EU due to the SADC-EU Economic Partnership Agreement.

Meanwhile, government reconfirmed the main components of the Economic Response Package that had been endorsed by Cabinet after the imposition of the tariffs, including: an export support desk; the use of the Localisation Support Fund to develop mitigation strategies for affected firms; the use of the Export and Competitiveness Support Programme, which included a working capital facility and plant and equipment

facility; drawing on existing instruments from the Department of Employment and Labour to mitigate potential job losses; and the initiation of a block exemption for exporters under the competition legislation to enable collaboration and coordination by competitors.

No figure was provided regarding the scale of the financial resources dedicated to these interventions, however.

“Government is going to do everything possible to keep the American market open for our goods.

“We will at the same time accelerate our efforts to diversify markets and build on the efforts we have put in place to ensure predictability in trade and leverage all our existing partnerships to secure markets for our products,” Tau said. 🇿🇦

Phone: +27 (0)11 622 3744

Email: newsdesk@engineeringnews.co.za

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