

YOUR MAJESTY THE INDLOVUKAZI,  
EMAKHOSIKATI,  
YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESSES,  
PRIME MINISTER,  
COUNCILLORS,  
CHIEFS,  
CHIEF JUSTICE,  
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER,  
CABINET MINISTERS,  
EXCELLENCIES, MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS,  
PRESIDENT AND MEMBERS OF SENATE,  
SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY,  
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

**SIYANIVUSELA NONKHE BEKUNENE EPHALAMENDE.**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

WE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WELCOME EVERYONE TO THIS AUSPICIOUS OCCASION OF THE JOINT SESSION WHICH MARKS THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE **SECOND SESSION** OF THE **TENTH PARLIAMENT** OF THE KINGDOM OF E-SWATINI.

WE EXTEND A VERY WARM WELCOME TO YOU ALL **NINE BEKUNENE**, AS WELL AS TO OUR FRIENDS WHO HAVE TRAVELLED FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE GLOBE TO JOIN US FOR THIS MOMENTOUS CEREMONY, WHICH SETS IN MOTION PARLIAMENT BUSINESS FOR THIS YEAR, 2015.

## EVENTS OF THE PAST 2014

LOOKING BACK AT 2014, WE HAVE REASON TO BE GRATEFUL ON SEVERAL FRONTS. ALL OUR ANNUAL CALENDAR ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS; EMAGANU, UMHLANGA, INCWALA AND GOOD FRIDAY, ENJOYED MASSIVE SUPPORT AND PARTICIPATION FROM THE DIFFERENT REGIMENTS AND THE NATION AT LARGE.

OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE REMAINS THE FOUNDATION OF OUR UNITY AND PEACEFUL EXISTENCE, AS IT CREATES A CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR ALL EMASWATI TO LIVE IN HARMONY WITH ONE ANOTHER.

WE THEREFORE HAVE A DUTY TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE WHAT HAS BEEN PASSED ON TO US BY OUR FORBEARERS. OUR FUTURE GENERATION DESERVES NO LESS FROM US.

## TARNISHING THE IMAGE OF THE COUNTRY

TIME HAS COME FOR EACH OF US TO LOVE OUR COUNTRY JUST AS WE LOVE OURSELVES. IT SHOULD DEEPLY CONCERN US WHEN WE HEAR PEOPLE WHO HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OF OUR CULTURE, PORTRAYING IT IN BAD LIGHT ON SOME FOREIGN FORUMS.

THIS HAS DRASTICALLY AFFECTED OUR IMAGE AS A COUNTRY IN MANY SPHERES. IT HAS DEPRIVED THE NATION OF KEY BENEFITS THAT COULD CONTRIBUTE HANDSOMELY TO BOTH OUR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL WELFARE PROGRAMMES.

LET US BE REMINDED THAT WE ARE ONE NATION AND ONLY HAVE ONE COUNTRY. I THEREFORE CALL UPON EVERY CITIZEN TO EMBRACE THIS VALUE AND PROTECT THIS COUNTRY FROM THESE DESTRUCTIVE ACTS BECAUSE **LE – MASWATI LELIVE!**

### **FISCAL SITUATION**

THE HIGHLY UNPREDICTABLE REVENUES, PARTICULARLY THE RECEIPTS FROM SACU, CONTINUE TO PRESENT A CRITICAL CHALLENGE TO OUR FISCAL SUSTAINABILITY AND THIS WILL REMAIN ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES OF OUR TIMES.

THE SOLUTION IS TO SAVE FOR RAINY DAYS DURING GOOD YEARS WHILST CAREFULLY INVESTING IN CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS. THIS IS CRITICAL FOR GROWING THE ECONOMY AND DIVERSIFYING OUR REVENUE BASE.

WE ARE PLEASED THAT THIS IS WHAT GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN DOING SINCE THE FISCAL CRISIS THAT ENDED IN 2011. GOVERNMENT HAS PROGRESSIVELY INCREASED HER RESERVES TO AROUND 4 MONTHS OF IMPORTS FROM 2 MONTHS IN MARCH 2012.

THE NATION IS AWARE THAT WE ARE STILL FACED WITH A RISK OF DECLINING SACU REVENUES OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS, AT THE VERY LEAST. THIS WOULD REQUIRE US TO INVOKE ALL THE LESSONS WE LEARNT IN THE PAST FINANCIAL CRISIS. GREATER FISCAL DISCIPLINE WILL ALSO BE NEEDED—BOTH IN THE WAY RESOURCES ARE ALLOCATED AND UTILIZED.

### **IMPROVING REVENUE COLLECTION**

IT IS PLEASING TO NOTE THAT THE INITIATIVE TO IMPLEMENT A VALUE ADDED TAX REFUND ARRANGEMENT SYSTEM, WHICH WAS ANNOUNCED TO THE NATION DURING THE SPEECH FROM THE THRONE LAST YEAR, WILL BE IMPLEMENTED ON THE 1<sup>ST</sup> OF APRIL, 2015.

**E-MASWATI** ARE URGED TO FAMILIARISE THEMSELVES WITH THE NEW SYSTEM IN ORDER TO MAXIMISE BENEFITS FROM ITS OPERATION.

CITIZENS ARE FURTHER ENCOURAGED TO DILIGENTLY DECLARE THEIR IMPORTS IN ORDER TO IMPROVE OUR TAX COLLECTIONS.

THIS WILL ALSO IMPROVE OUR STATISTICS THAT ARE EQUALLY IMPORTANT FOR PLANNING PURPOSES. WE ENCOURAGE THE SWAZILAND REVENUE AUTHORITY TO CONTINUE WITH THEIR GOOD WORK. TIME HAS ALSO COME FOR THE AUTHORITY TO FAST TRACK THE PROGRAMME OF LIFESTYLE AUDITS.

### **PUBLIC ENTERPRISES**

AS INDICATED LAST YEAR, WE ARE PLEASED TO INFORM THE NATION THAT CONTRIBUTIONS BY PUBLIC ENTERPRISES TO THE CONSOLIDATED FUND, WILL COMMENCE AT THE BEGINNING OF THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR.

GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER LOOKING AT THE ISSUE OF CORPORATE TAX FOR THESE ENTITIES, ESPECIALLY THOSE THAT GENERATE REVENUE.

THIS ENDEAVOUR WILL CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TOWARDS ENHANCING REVENUE COLLECTION. BOARDS OF DIRECTORS IN THE CONCERNED PUBLIC ENTERPRISES ARE EXPECTED TO PLAY A VITAL ROLE, TO SECURE SUCCESS OF THIS INITIATIVE GOING FORWARD.

### **ECONOMY**

PRELIMINARY FORECASTS FOR REAL GDP GROWTH INDICATE THAT THE ECONOMY GREW BY 2.5 PERCENT IN 2014, WHICH IS LOWER THAN THE REVISED ESTIMATE OF 3.0 PERCENT IN 2013.

THE SLOWDOWN IN REAL OUTPUT GROWTH RESULTED FROM A LOSS OF MOMENTUM IN THE SECONDARY SECTOR, MAINLY MANUFACTURING, ELECTRICITY AND WATER SUPPLY SUBSECTORS.

MANUFACTURING, WHICH ACCOUNTS FOR ABOUT A THIRD OF GDP, IS PROJECTED TO HAVE GROWN BY 1.3 PERCENT IN 2014 COMPARED TO 1.9 PERCENT THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

WE NEED TO ADDRESS THE LOW PERFORMING SECTORS TO ACHIEVE A JOB-CREATING TURNAROUND WHILE KEEPING TARGETS OF A REASONABLE GDP GROWTH, WELL WITHIN SIGHT.

GOVERNMENT, TOGETHER WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR, IS ENCOURAGED TO WORK ON ACHIEVING THIS TARGET. THE SITUATION WILL BE MONITORED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.

THE EFFECT OF FALLING GLOBAL PRICES OF MINERALS, SUCH AS IRON ORE, WAS ALSO EVIDENT IN THE MINING SECTOR WHERE PRODUCTION WAS HALTED IN THE LAST QUARTER OF 2014, FOLLOWING A PLUNGE IN INTERNATIONAL PRICES.

THIS PROBLEM HAS AFFECTED MANY SERVICES WHICH RESULTED IN JOB LOSSES. ANOTHER CAUSE FOR CONCERN WAS THE CLOSURE OF SOME FIRMS IN THE TEXTILE SECTOR.

HOWEVER, POSITIVE PROSPECTS WERE NOTED IN AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, WHOLESALE, RETAIL, TOURISM AND CENTRAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES SUBSECTORS.

#### **ENERGY CHALLENGES**

THE SADC REGION IS FACED WITH A SERIOUS SHORTAGE OF ELECTRICAL ENERGY. OUR KINGDOM IS NO EXCEPTION AS WE ARE NOW AND AGAIN ASKED BY ESKOM TO REDUCE OUR IMPORTS.

THIS CLEARLY INDICATES THAT THERE IS A SERIOUS NEED TO INVEST IN LOCAL GENERATION OF POWER, AS IMPORTING IT IS NO LONGER GUARANTEED.

WE ARE PLEASED THAT GOVERNMENT IS DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO MITIGATE THE SITUATION.

WHILE GOVERNMENT IS ENGAGED IN THE PROCESS OF LOOKING INTO NEW ENERGY SOURCES, CONSIDERATION SHOULD BE GIVEN TO ADDITIONAL HYDRO-GENERATION, RENEWABLE ENERGY, AS WELL AS THERMAL POWER GENERATION, JUST TO MENTION A FEW.

SERIOUS CONSIDERATION SHOULD ALSO BE GIVEN TO MAXIMISING THE IMPORT AND USE OF GAS AS AN ADDITIONAL ENERGY SOURCE.

WITH THE PHUZAMOYA FUEL RESERVE PROJECT NOW UNDERWAY, WE ENCOURAGE INVESTORS TO CONSIDER ESTABLISHING A PETROLEUM INDUSTRY IN THE AREA, WHICH HAS BEEN RESERVED FOR ENERGY DEVELOPMENT.

WHILE WE PURSUE OUR ENERGY OBJECTIVES, THE NATION IS ENCOURAGED TO USE ELECTRICITY SPARINGLY TO AVOID LOAD SHEDDING.

#### **INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

THE COMMISSIONING OF THE NEW INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT HAS CAST A SPOTLIGHT ON THE KINGDOM'S AVIATION SECTOR. IT HAS OPENED UP OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR BUSINESSES TO PARTNER WITH WELL-KNOWN PLAYERS IN THE FREIGHT AND OTHER SERVICES.

THE COUNTRY IS ALSO ANXIOUSLY LOOKING FORWARD TO THE COMPLETION OF THE SIKHUPHE-MBADLANA HIGHWAY, AS WELL AS THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NEW HIGHWAYS FROM THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.

WE WISH TO THANK ALL THE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS FOR THE SUPPORT TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCTION OF THESE NEW ROADS.

THE NATION SHOULD COOPERATE WITH GOVERNMENT IN EXECUTING THESE PROJECTS, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO MAY BE AFFECTED DURING THE CONSTRUCTION PROCESS.

## **INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

IMPROVING ACCESS TO INTERNATIONAL MARKETS REMAINS A PRIORITY FOR THE KINGDOM OF E-SWATINI. IN THIS REGARD, WE WELCOME THE RECENT CONCLUSION OF THE NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT AND THE EUROPEAN UNION.

THIS WILL PROVIDE THE COUNTRY WITH A MASSIVE MARKET ACCESS OPPORTUNITY TO EXPORT ALL OUR GOODS, QUOTA-FREE AND DUTY-FREE, TO THE 27- BLOCK OF COUNTRIES IN EUROPE.

## **TRADE IN SADC REGION**

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROTOCOL ON TRADE IN GOODS IN THE SADC REGION, WHERE 90 PERCENT OF THE 15 MEMBER STATES HAVE SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED THEIR DUTIES FOR MOST PRODUCTS, IS A POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT.

THIS PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE KINGDOM TO EXPORT HER GOODS TO A MARKET SIZE WHICH HAS A POPULATION OF MORE THAN 260 MILLION PEOPLE.

WE ARE ALSO LOOKING FORWARD TO THE CONCLUSION OF THE TRIPARTITE TRADE TALKS THAT WILL ENHANCE TRADE WITHIN THE COMESA, SADC AND THE EAC. THIS WILL PROVIDE A MARKET SIZE OF MORE THAN 600 MILLION PEOPLE IN 27 AFRICAN COUNTRIES.

OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY SHOULD TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THESE NEW WINDOWS OF TRADE OPPORTUNITY.

## **FOOD SECURITY**

AGRICULTURE REMAINS AN IMPORTANT SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY AND EMPLOYS A SIGNIFICANT PROPORTION OF THE POPULATION.

THE ISSUE OF FOOD SECURITY REMAINS CRITICAL IF WE ARE TO FIGHT HUNGER AND ERADICATE POVERTY. WE ARE ALIVE TO THE FACT THAT ISSUES OF CLIMATE CHANGE CONTINUE TO ADVERSELY AFFECT OUR FARMERS.

TO ADDRESS THIS, VARIOUS PROGRAMMES AIMED AT INCREASING EFFICIENCY AND PRODUCTIVITY HAVE BEEN IMPLEMENTED. THESE INCLUDE THE PROVISION OF SUBSIDIZED AGRICULTURAL INPUTS SUCH AS TRACTORS, FERTILIZERS AND SEEDS.

IN MOVING TOWARDS THE DIVERSIFICATION AND COMMERCIALISATION OF AGRICULTURE, CONSIDERATION SHOULD ALSO BE GIVEN TO AGRO-PROCESSING AS REGIONAL FARMING PROJECTS. THIS SHOULD NOT BE LIMITED TO MAIZE AND SUGAR, BUT EXTEND TO DROUGHT RESISTANT CROPS.

IN THE AREA OF IRRIGATION, WE ARE PLEASED WITH THE PROGRESS TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF LOWER USUTHU IRRIGATION PROGRAMME, LUSIP II. THIS WILL BOOST SMALL-HOLDER FARMERS AND WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE PROJECT THIS YEAR.

A SPECIAL THANKS GOES TO ALL THE FINANCIERS WHO HAVE MADE THIS DEVELOPMENT A REALITY. THE COMPLETION OF THIS DAM SHOULD GIVE BIRTH TO AN INDUSTRY THAT INCORPORATES CULTIVATION, PROCESSING AND SALE TO RETAIL MARKETS.

LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION IS YET ANOTHER AREA OF OPPORTUNITY. INDIVIDUALS AND ORGANISATIONS SHOULD INTENSIFY THEIR CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS THE FULFILMENT OF OUR BEEF QUOTA TO THE EU AND OTHER MARKETS.

WE ARE ENCOURAGED THAT THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI HAS ATTAINED THE HIGHEST QUALITY CERTIFICATION FOR HER BEEF EXPORTS TO THE EU. THIS IS EVIDENCE OF THE COUNTRY'S POTENTIAL TO COMPETE AT THE HIGHEST INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.

## **SOCIAL WELFARE**

THE SUCCESS OF ALL THE PROJECTS IDENTIFIED TO BOOST THE ECONOMY, WILL NO DOUBT HELP US TO ADDRESS THE DIFFERENT SOCIAL SECTOR CHALLENGES THAT WE FACE AS A COUNTRY.

GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO TAKE CARE OF ORPHANS AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN, THE ELDERLY AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES.

WAYS OF CUSHIONING THE VULNERABLE MEMBERS OF SOCIETY FROM THE RISING COST OF LIVING ARE BEING CONSIDERED.

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NO SUPPORT STRUCTURE, GOVERNMENT WILL LOOK INTO PROVIDING HOUSING FACILITIES AND OTHER SUPPORT SERVICES.

THE RESIDENTIAL VILLAGE THAT GOVERNMENT PROPOSED TO CONSTRUCT WILL COMMENCE THIS FINANCIAL YEAR.

GOVERNMENT ALSO REMAINS COMMITTED TO ITS PROMISE OF PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR THE NATION AS THIS PROJECT WILL GO A LONG WAY IN ADDRESSING THE HOUSING NEEDS OF OUR PEOPLE.

## **HEALTH**

HEALTH HAS REMAINED ONE OF THE KEY PRIORITIES FOR THE KINGDOM. GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO COMMIT FUNDS TO ENSURE THE COUNTRY HAS PRODUCTIVE NATIONALS WHO WILL ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES.

PROGRAMMES AIMED AT MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF DISEASES THAT AFFECT OUR PEOPLE, SUCH AS HIV, TB AND MALARIA, SHOULD CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THE NECESSARY SUPPORT.

WE HOPE THE DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND INVESTORS WHO WANT TO BUILD A REFERRAL HOSPITAL WILL BE CONCLUDED THIS CURRENT YEAR.

WE SHOULD ALSO BE WELL PREPARED TO COUNTER EMERGING THREATS SUCH AS THE EBOLA DISEASE. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT A CURE WILL BE FOUND BEFORE IT WIPES OUT MANY FAMILIES ON THE CONTINENT.

THE NATION WILL BE PLEASED TO KNOW THAT THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI IS WELL POSITIONED TO BECOME ONE OF THE FIRST AFRICAN COUNTRIES WITH A GENERALISED EPIDEMIC, TO ATTAIN AN AIDS-FREE GENERATION.

REPORTS THAT THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI IS CONSIDERED AMONG THE TOP-20 COUNTRIES THAT HAVE MADE MAJOR STRIDES IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV/AIDS, IS HIGHLY COMMENDABLE.

THE RECENT YEARS HAVE SEEN HUGE REDUCTIONS IN THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO ARE NEWLY INFECTED WITH HIV, WHILE MORE PEOPLE IN NEED OF THE TREATMENT ARE RECEIVING IT AND ARE ENJOYING A LONGER LIFE.

WE THANK THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE GLOBAL FUND, AS WELL AS ALL THE INSTITUTIONS AND INDIVIDUALS, WHO HAVE MADE SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS HELPING US ACHIEVE THESE RESULTS.

WHILE THE WORLD'S SCIENTISTS SEARCH FOR A CURE FOR HIV, I ENCOURAGE ALL **EMASWATI** TO CONTINUE PLAYING THEIR PART IN PREVENTING NEW INFECTIONS. WE ENCOURAGE ALL THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY INFECTED TO ENROL FOR TREATMENT AND CARE.

I WISH TO ASSURE THE NATION THAT I WILL PERSONALLY SEE TO IT THAT THE FIRST WORLD SWAZILAND IS HIV /AIDS FREE.

TODAY, HERE AND NOW, I DENOUNCE ALL HIV STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION **-LOKUKHOMBANA AKUPHELE, KUTSI NYA MASWATI!**

#### **INVESTING IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

SINCE WE GAINED OUR INDEPENDENCE, GOVERNMENT HAS CONTINUED TO SUPPORT EDUCATION FROM PRIMARY TO THE TERTIARY LEVEL.

THE INTRODUCTION OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION WHICH, HAS GIVEN ACCESS TO EDUCATION UP TO GRADE 7 LEVEL, LIVES UP TO THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS TARGET OF EDUCATION FOR ALL BY 2015. THIS IS HIGHLY COMMENDABLE.

WE NOW HAVE A HUGE CHALLENGE TO DEVELOP MORE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING FOR OUR YOUTH IN THE COUNTRY THAT WILL BE AFFORDABLE TO PARENTS AND OF HIGH QUALITY.

THE NATION HAS INDICATED THE NEED TO DECENTRALIZE OUR INSTITUTIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY BECAUSE THE CURRENT LOCATIONS ARE COSTLY TO THE PARENTS WHO HAVE TO PROVIDE FOR TRAVELLING, ACCOMMODATION AND TUITION FEES.

THEREFORE, GOVERNMENT SHOULD UPGRADE OUR COLLEGES INTO UNIVERSITIES AS THIS IS IN LINE WITH OUR DECENTRALIZATION POLICY.

#### **INFORMATION COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY**

SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND INNOVATION REMAIN THE KEY CATALYSTS TOWARDS ELEVATING THIS COUNTRY TO A HIGHLY COMPETITIVE LEVEL.

WE ARE PLEASED THAT A SCIENCE POLICY HAS SINCE BEEN DEVELOPED AND THAT A DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE, RESEARCH, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED.

ENCOURAGING PROGRESS HAS ALSO BEEN MADE TOWARDS THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE ROYAL SCIENCE AND THE BIO-TECHNOLOGY PARKS.

THE NATION IS ALSO AWARE OF THE ONGOING DIGITAL MIGRATION PROGRAMME IN THE BROADCASTING SECTOR THAT WILL PROVIDE HIGHER QUALITY PICTURE, SOUND AND MORE TELEVISION CHANNELS.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO ITS SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION BY JUNE 2015 AND TO ALL THE OPPORTUNITIES IT WILL PROVIDE.

IT IS ALSO COMMENDABLE TO NOTE THAT TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS ARE BEING EXTENDED TO RURAL COMMUNITIES THROUGH THE WIRELESS RADIO NETWORK. THIS WILL BRING FREE BROADBAND AND INTERNET CONNECTIVITY CLOSER TO SCHOOLS AND HEALTH CENTRES THIS YEAR.

GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO ROLL OUT THEE-GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME TO ENABLE CITIZENS TO ACCESS ALL GOVERNMENT INFORMATION THROUGH THE INTERNET.

WE HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE PROGRAMME WILL ENHANCE OUR EFFORTS TOWARDS ATTAINING THE ASPIRATIONS OF VISION 2022.

#### **INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND STABILITY**

HUMANITY WAS CREATED BY GOD TO LIVE PEACEFULLY WITH EACH OTHER. HOWEVER, THERE CONTINUES TO BE RISING HOSTILITIES IN THE WORLD, INCLUDING OUR CONTINENT AFRICA. PEOPLE HAVE RESOLVED TO USING FORCE TO SETTLE THEIR DIFFERENCES YET IT HELPS NO-ONE.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO PROMOTE THE SPIRIT OF DIALOGUE AT ALL TIMES, WHERE WAYS AND MEANS OF WORKING TOGETHER OUGHT TO BE ADOPTED TO REDUCE CONFLICT.

TERRORISM IS ALSO SHOWING ITS UGLY HEAD AND HAS RESULTED IN SOME OF OUR PEOPLE LIVING IN PERPETUAL FEAR OF BEING KIDNAPPED OR SOMETIMES KILLED.

IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES HAVE DIVIDED THE WORLD AND THESE DEFEAT THE VERY PRINCIPLES OF THE FORMATION OF THE UNITED NATION OF CO-EXISTENCE ON THE GLOBE.

WE ENCOURAGE THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL AND OTHER CONTINENTAL AND REGIONAL SECURITY ORGANS TO URGENTLY CURB THIS PHENOMENON.

### **CORRUPTION**

AS A NATION, WE HAVE REACHED A POINT IN OUR LIVES WHERE WE OUGHT TO BE REMINDED OF THE WISE WORDS OF KING SOMHLOLO WHO HAD A VISION THAT WARNED US OF DIRE CONSEQUENCES IF WE WERE TO CHOOSE MONEY OVER THE BIBLE.

WHAT WE SEE TODAY IS A TERRIFYING APPETITE OR LOVE OF MONEY WHICH HAS BRED GREEDY INDIVIDUALS AMONGST US. THESE PEOPLE ARE PREPARED TO GO TO GREAT LENGTHS TO LIE FOR THEIR SELFISH FINANCIAL BENEFIT. THIS MUST STOP IF WE ARE TO ELIMINATE CORRUPTION.

LET US BE SATISFIED AND CONTENT WITH WHAT GOD HAS GIVEN US. **MASWATI! NGULOYO NALOYO MUNTFU AKATI KUTSI LENGINAKO KWENELE, UNGIBUSISILE NKULUNKULU NGAKO!**

THE COUNTRY WILL CONTINUE TO STRIVE IN ITS PATH OF RESISTANCE AND INTOLERANCE TO ALL FORMS OF CORRUPTION, BY MAKING IT A HIGH RISK CRIME.

WE NOTE WITH PRIDE THAT THE 2014 GLOBAL CORRUPTION PERCEPTION INDEX RATINGS IMPROVED FAVOURABLY FOR THE

COUNTRY. IN ADDITION TO THIS, THE KINGDOM HAS BEEN RATED AMONGST THE 10 LEAST CORRUPT COUNTRIES IN AFRICA.

THIS UPWARD TREND CAN ONLY BE MAINTAINED IF ALL STAKEHOLDERS UNITE TO AGGRESSIVELY AND COLLECTIVELY IMPLEMENT A MULTI-SECTOR AGENDA AND ENFORCE A ZERO TOLERANCE APPROACH TOWARDS CORRUPTION.

#### **HOSTING AU IN 2020**

I AM PLEASED TO INFORM THE NATION THAT IN THE YEAR 2020, THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI WILL HOST THE AFRICAN UNION SUMMIT.

THIS IS BOTH A HUGE OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE OUR CAPABILITIES, AS WELL AS A DAUNTING CHALLENGE FOR US.

WE ARE TO WITNESS DELEGATIONS BIGGER THAN WE HAVE HAD TO DEAL WITH IN THE PAST AND THIS CALLS FOR UTMOST COOPERATION AND DEDICATION TOWARDS FULFILLING THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE HOST NATION.

THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY, AS WELL AS ALL CITIZENS, MUST ENSURE THAT WHEN THE TIME COMES, WE WOULD HAVE MADE ADEQUATE PREPARATIONS TO PROVIDE A SUMMIT THAT WILL MAKE US, AND ALL OF AFRICA, VERY, VERY, PROUD.

#### **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

WE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO RECOGNISE AND EXTEND OUR SINCERE GRATITUDE TO THE FRIENDS OF THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI.

TODAY WE ARE ABLE TO COUNT VARIOUS SUCCESSES IN OUR DEVELOPMENT AGENDA, WHICH HAVE BEEN MADE POSSIBLE BY THE SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM YOUR GOVERNMENTS AND TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS.

WE ATTACH GREAT VALUE TO OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS. PLEASE EXTEND TO YOUR GOVERNMENTS THE GRATITUDE AND COMMITMENT OF THE SWAZI PEOPLE TO FOSTERING THIS BOND OF FRIENDSHIP FOR MANY MORE YEARS TO COME.

#### **CONCLUSION**

WHILE SUCCESS HAS BEEN REALIZED IN CERTAIN SECTORS, CHALLENGES DO PERSIST.

WE SHOULD, THEREFORE, REMAIN UNFALTERING AS A NATION SINCE WE HAVE A HUGE TASK TO FOCUS ALL OUR ENERGIES AND ATTENTION ON ADDRESSING THE PROBLEMS THAT ARE AFFECTING OUR PEOPLE IN A HOLISTIC MANNER.

GOVERNMENT SHALL CONTINUE TO ADDRESS THE MANY SOCIAL CHALLENGES THAT WE FACE AS A NATION - SUCH AS ACCESS TO ADEQUATE CLEAN WATER, FOOD, EDUCATION, ELECTRICITY, UNEMPLOYMENT, BETTER ROADS, GRANTS FOR THE ELDERLY AND QUALITY HEALTH SERVICES TO MENTION BUT A FEW.

WE CAN ONLY ACHIEVE THIS AS A NATION IF WE COME TOGETHER AND MAKE A NATIONAL COMMITMENT TOWARDS ACHIEVING A PEACEFUL AND PROSPEROUS NATION AS PART OF OUR NATIONAL VISION 2022.

WE WISH TO ENCOURAGE THE ENTIRE POPULATION PARTICULARLY THE YOUTH, TO APPRECIATE THAT THROUGH HARD WORK WE CAN CREATE MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR NATION.

WE THANK OUR PARLIAMENTARIANS FOR THE COMMITMENT AND DETERMINATION OVER THE PAST YEAR. WE ENCOURAGE YOU TO CONTINUE TO WORK HARD AND UPHOLD YOUR INTEGRITY AS THE COUNTRY SEEKS TO ATTAIN ITS NATIONAL ASPIRATIONS.

ONCE AGAIN WE WISH TO THANK THE NATION FOR CONTINUING TO UNITE AND PRESERVE THE PEACE WHILE MAKING MEANINGFUL

CONTRIBUTION TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AS WE SET OUT TO BECOME A FIRST WORLD COUNTRY BY THE YEAR 2022. THIS IS HIGHLY COMMENDABLE!

**DECLARATION**

**IT NOW GIVES ME THE GREATEST PLEASURE TO DECLARE THAT THE 2<sup>ND</sup> SESSION OF THE 10<sup>TH</sup> PARLIAMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI IS OFFICIALLY OPENED.**

**I THANK YOU, MAY THE ALMIGHTY GOD BLESS US ALL.**

**SIYABONGA!**