

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

**SIYANIVUSELA  
EPHALAMENDE.**

**NONKHE**

**BEKUNENE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

IT IS A GREAT HONOUR FOR ME TO JOIN YOU ALL HERE TODAY FOR THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE THIRD SESSION OF THE 12TH PARLIAMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI.

WE EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO ALL THOSE WHO ARE PRESENT HERE, INCLUDING HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT, OUR DISTINGUISHED INTERNATIONAL GUESTS, OUR DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, AND THOSE WHO ARE FOLLOWING THESE PROCEEDINGS THROUGH VARIOUS MEDIA PLATFORMS.

YOUR PRESENCE REFLECTS THE COLLECTIVE EFFORT REQUIRED FOR OUR NATION'S DEVELOPMENT.

## **40 YEARS OF SIGNIFICANT MILESTONES**

AS WE CELEBRATE 40 YEARS OF MY REIGN AS THE MONARCH OF THE KINGDOM, I WISH TO EXTEND MY APPRECIATION TO THE LORD ALMIGHTY AND OUR ANCESTORS AS WELL AS ALL EMASWATI WHO HAVE STOOD BY THE KING AND REMAINED UNITED THROUGH THE FOUR DECADES OF MY REIGN.

A KING, IS KING BY HIS PEOPLE AND YOU HAVE DEMONSTRATED TRUE PATRIOTISM AS WE WALKED THROUGH VARIOUS HIGHS AND LOWS, FACED DISEASES AND CHALLENGES, AND CELEBRATED SUCCESSES TOGETHER.

AS WE ENTER 2026, LET US BE REMINDED THAT THIS IS A YEAR OF **AGAPE LOVE, WHICH CALLS UPON US TO DEMONSTRATE THE HIGHEST FORM OF UNCONDITIONAL AND SACRIFICIAL LOVE.**

THIS CALLS UPON ALL OF US TO RISE AND MAKE THE FOLLOWING COMMITMENT:

- LORD PLEASE GRANT ME **AGAPE LOVE,**
- MAY I LOVE MY NEIGHBOUR UNCONDITIONALLY,
- MAY I UPHOLD RESPECT AND HONOUR NATIONAL INTEREST AND NOT SELF INTEREST AT ALL TIMES,
- MAY I BE FOUND PLEASING AND HONEST IN SERVING MY COUNTRY IN JESUS' NAME, **AMEN!**

AS THE MONARCH OF THE KINGDOM, ONE RECALLS WHEN I ASCENDED TO THE THRONE IN 1986, THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE WAS FAR DIFFERENT FROM WHAT IT IS TODAY. WE HAVE UNDERGONE A PROFOUND TRANSFORMATION AS A NATION.

WE ARE PROUD TO NOTE THE NUMEROUS ACHIEVEMENTS ACROSS MANY SECTORS. OUR INFRASTRUCTURE HAS WITNESSED THE DEVELOPMENT OF STATE-OF-THE ART HIGHWAYS, AN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AND DAMS, TO MENTION A FEW.

WE NOW HAVE ENHANCED SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES PROGRAMMES THAT INCLUDE GRANTS FOR THE ELDERLY AND DISABLED, AS WELL AS POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUNDS THAT HAVE CHANGED MANY LIVES IN OUR COMMUNITIES.

WHILE OUR POPULATION HAS ALMOST DOUBLED SINCE 1986, WE ARE PLEASED THAT LIFE EXPECTANCY HAS IMPROVED FROM 32 TO 65 YEARS.

THE ECONOMY HAS ALSO SHOWED REMARKABLE GROWTH FROM A GDP OF APPROXIMATELY E1.4 BILLION IN 1986 TO THE CURRENT E95.2 BILLION.

MOST SIGNIFICANTLY, WE HAVE ENJOYED PROLONGED PEACE AND STABILITY THAT HAS SUSTAINED OUR DEVELOPMENT.

THROUGHOUT THE FOUR DECADES OUR NATION HAS BEEN ABLE TO CHART ITS OWN POLITICAL PATH THAT GAVE BIRTH TO OUR CONSTITUTION AND AN ELECTORAL SYSTEM THAT ENJOYS DIRECT REPRESENTATION TO PARLIAMENT THROUGH THE TINKHUNDLA SYSTEM OF GOVERNANCE.

WE COMMEND YOU ALL FOR DEMONSTRATING THIS COMMITMENT THROUGH NATIONHOOD AND UNITY DURING THE EVER GROWING PARTICIPATION IN ALL **IMIKHOSI YELIVE.**

WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THIS RESOLVE WILL SUSTAIN OUR HERITAGE FOR THE NEXT 40 YEARS AND BEYOND AS IT FORMS PART OF THE CORE FABRIC OF OUR IDENTITY AS EMASWATI.

## **ECONOMIC MILESTONES AND OUTLOOK**

THESE MILESTONES ARE BY NO MEANS THE END OF OUR JOURNEY. THE COUNTRY STILL HAS MUCH TO DO AND A LONG WAY TO GO TOWARDS FULFILLING THE ASPIRATIONS OF OUR FIRST WORLD VISION.

WE SHOULD NOT REST UNTIL OUR PEOPLE GET TO REALISE MUCH IMPROVED LIVING STANDARDS THAT PLACE OUR GDP PER CAPITA AT E480,000 (\$30,000) FROM THE CURRENT GDP PER CAPITA OF E78,238.

THIS REQUIRES US TO BUILD A HIGHLY RESILIENT ECONOMIC FOUNDATION BY ESTABLISHING A WELL-STRUCTURED FINANCIAL SECTOR.

IN THE RECENT PAST, WE HAVE SEEN THE POSITIVE IMPACT THAT SACU RECEIPTS HAVE HAD ON OUR ECONOMY.

HOWEVER, GIVEN THAT THE COUNTRY'S REVENUE IS LARGELY COMPOSED OF SACU REVENUE AND TAXES, WE MUST RECONFIGURE THIS FINANCIAL STRUCTURE TO DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMY.

OUR INCOME SOURCES MUST BE SPREAD ACROSS SEVERAL STREAMS, AS IS THE CASE IN WELL-DEVELOPED ECONOMIES.

IN LOOKING TO THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE, OUR ECONOMY CONTINUES TO DEMONSTRATE STRONG RESILIENCE DESPITE FACING SEVERAL ECONOMIC SHOCKS.

THIS HAS BEEN DRIVEN LARGELY BY THE CONSTRUCTION SECTOR THROUGH MAJOR PROJECTS AND VARIOUS PRIVATE-SECTOR EXPANSIONS INITIATIVES.

THE OUTLOOK REMAINS CAUTIOUSLY OPTIMISTIC AND GROWTH IS EXPECTED TO BE SUPPORTED BY ONGOING PUBLIC AND PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN KEY PROJECTS.

## **REVENUE MOBILISATION**

OUR COUNTRY HAS GREAT POTENTIAL TO DEVELOP PRODUCTIVE INDUSTRIES THAT CAN GENERATE BILLIONS IN REVENUE, EVENTUALLY SURPASSING SACU RECEIPTS.

IT IS TIME WE SET DELIBERATE TARGETS, AIMING FOR AT LEAST TEN COMPANIES WITH A MINIMUM OF E10 BILLION ANNUAL TURNOVER ACROSS DIFFERENT SECTORS. THIS WOULD GIVE OUR ECONOMY THE MUCH-NEEDED BOOST.

WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT THIS IS ACHIEVABLE, AS DEMONSTRATED BY THE MEGA PROJECTS TAKING SHAPE IN THE COUNTRY. THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE (ICC), OPENING THIS YEAR, IS ONE SUCH PROJECT.

WE EXPECT IT TO OPERATE COMMERCIALY AND GENERATE SUBSTANTIAL REVENUE, THUS CONTRIBUTING TO OUR TOURISM ASPIRATIONS.



OTHER INITIATIVES INCLUDE MAJOR DAM CONSTRUCTION, THE STRATEGIC OIL RESERVE AND A E6 BILLION INDUSTRIAL PARK TO BE DEVELOPED WITH OUR PARTNERS TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT AND DRIVE JOB CREATION.

THEIR CONFIDENCE IN THIS PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGES US TO ASK: WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO INVEST E8 BILLION OF OUR OWN RESOURCES IN SIMILARLY VIABLE PROJECTS? SUCH INVESTMENT MUST TARGET INDUSTRIES THAT CREATE MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT.

THE INDUSTRIES WE TARGET OUGHT TO BE WELL RESEARCHED SO THAT ONCE WE INVEST, WE DERIVE TRIPLE THE E8 BILLION TURNOVER, WHICH IS MONEY THAT HAS TO BE REINVESTED LOCALLY.

AS WE MARK 40 YEARS OF DEVELOPMENT, WE MUST ASPIRE TO DECLARE UNEMPLOYMENT A THING OF THE PAST OVER THE NEXT 40 YEARS.

## **WORLD BANK BUSINESS READINESS RANKING**

THE NATION WELCOMES THE RECENT RANKING OF ESWATINI AS THE 10TH-BEST COUNTRY IN AFRICA FOR BUSINESS READINESS IN THE WORLD BANK B-READY 2025 REPORT.

THIS IS A REFLECTION OF GROWING INVESTOR CONFIDENCE AND OUR ONGOING REFORMS, SUCH AS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BUSINESS ONE-STOP SHOP (BOSS).

THE COUNTRY MUST LEVERAGE THIS ACHIEVEMENT AND INTENSIFY EFFORTS TO MARKET THE KINGDOM AS AN INVESTMENT DESTINATION OF CHOICE.

WE MUST HIGHLIGHT OUR STABILITY, STRATEGIC LOCATION, DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE, AND COMMITMENT TO ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

THE COUNTRY HAS ALSO MADE GREAT STRIDES IN IMPROVING ITS ROAD NETWORK OVER THE YEARS.

THESE PROJECTS WILL CONTINUE AS THE NATION WELCOMES PROPOSED ROAD UPGRADES TO ACHIEVE THE TARGET OF PAVING 500 KM OF ROAD BY 2028. THE NATION WELCOMES THE PROPOSED ROADS UPGRADES SUCH AS THE SIPHOFANENI-MALOMA-NSOKO AND SIPHAMBANWENI ROADS.

OTHER DISTRICT AND FEEDER ROADS WILL ALSO BE UPGRADED THROUGH PHASED INITIATIVES. UNFORTUNATELY, SOME OF THIS INFRASTRUCTURE HAS BEEN DAMAGED BY HEAVY RAINS THAT HAVE ALSO NEGATIVELY IMPACTED OUR CITIZENS.

WE SHOULD ENSURE THAT THEY ARE QUICKLY RESTORED SO THAT OUR PEOPLE CONTINUE TO HAVE SEAMLESS TRAVEL TO THEIR INTENDED DESTINATIONS.

### **PARLIAMENT BUILDING PROJECT**

WE HAD ALSO LOOKED FORWARD TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING BY NOW. THE CURRENT FACILITY HAS RUN ITS COURSE AND OUR LEGISLATURE REQUIRES A FACILITY THAT IS FIT FOR ITS PRESENT PURPOSE.

WHILE WE ARE DISAPPOINTED THAT THIS HAS NOT GONE ACCORDING TO SCHEDULE, WE MUST RETURN TO THE DRAWING BOARD TO MAP OUT HOW TO MAKE THIS PROJECT, WHICH INCLUDES A PARLIAMENTARY CAMPUS, A REALITY.

THE WORK OF OUR PARLIAMENTARIANS REQUIRES LONG HOURS, COMPELLING THEM TO BE IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO PARLIAMENT SO THAT DECISION-MAKING IS SWIFT AND OUR IMPLEMENTATION TURNAROUND TIME MEETS OUR EXPECTATIONS.

GOING FORWARD, THE COUNTRY NEEDS TO STRUCTURE OUR CAPITAL PROJECTS PROGRAMMES IN WAYS THAT INCENTIVISE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION BY BOTH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS.

### **STRATEGIC OIL RESERVE**

LAST YEAR WE ANNOUNCED THAT THE STRATEGIC OIL RESERVE WILL COMMENCE THIS FINANCIAL YEAR. WE ARE PLEASED TO INFORM THE NATION THAT CONSTRUCTION OF THIS IMPORTANT FACILITY HAS NOW BEGUN AND IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED BY 2028.

THIS NATIONAL PROJECT WILL ENSURE LONG-TERM FUEL SECURITY AND REDUCE THE KINGDOM'S VULNERABILITY TO SUPPLY DISRUPTIONS.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO OUR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS FOR THEIR SUPPORT.

### **FACTORY SHELLS CONSTRUCTION PROGRAMME**

GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF FACTORY SHELLS NATIONWIDE TO ATTRACT FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT AND CREATE JOBS, PARTICULARLY FOR THE YOUTH.

WE ENCOURAGE INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS OPPORTUNITY AND CHOOSE ESWATINI AS THEIR PREFERRED DESTINATION.

### **ENERGY SECURITY**

RELIABLE, AFFORDABLE ENERGY IS ESSENTIAL FOR OUR ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION. WE ENCOURAGE GOVERNMENT TO REMAIN COMMITTED TO INCREASING ENERGY INDEPENDENCE, INCLUDING GENERATING 50 PERCENT OF ELECTRICITY THROUGH INVESTMENTS IN SOLAR, BIOMASS AND RENEWABLES BY 2030.

WE WISH TO REAFFIRM OUR COMMITMENT TO THE WELLBEING OF EVERY LISWATI AMID RISING ELECTRICITY COSTS FROM IMPORTED POWER.

IN THIS VEIN, GOVERNMENT MUST WORK WITH THE ESWATINI ELECTRICITY COMPANY (EEC) TO FIND SOLUTIONS TO THE COMPANY'S FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES WHILE WE ADDRESS IMMEDIATE CHALLENGES FROM HIGHER IMPORT PRICES.

## **MINING AND MINERALS**

THE KINGDOM IS ENDOWED WITH AN ABUNDANCE OF RICH NATURAL RESOURCES THAT NEED TO BE FULLY EXPLOITED BY OUR MINING SECTOR. WHILE WE HAVE MINING ACTIVITY TAKING PLACE, IT IS, HOWEVER, NOT PERFORMING AT EXPECTED LEVELS.

WE NEED TO INVEST TIME AND EFFORT IN REVIEWING THE CHALLENGES FACING THIS SECTOR AND DEVELOP LASTING SOLUTIONS THAT WILL CHANGE THE ECONOMIC LANDSCAPE OF THE COUNTRY OVER THE NEXT 40 YEARS.

WE MUST ASCERTAIN THE FULL VALUE OF OUR MINERAL RESOURCES AND FURTHER EXPLORE VALUE ADDITION AND BENEFICIATION BY ESTABLISHING PROCESSING ZONES TO SELL OR EXPORT FINISHED GOODS. THIS IS IN THE SPIRIT OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA(AFCFTA) LAUNCHED BY THE AFRICAN UNION.

## **TOURISM**

WE SHOULD ALSO GIVE ATTENTION TO REVIEWING PROGRESS IN OTHER SECTORS SUCH AS TOURISM, AND THOSE PROJECTS THAT REMAIN UNDER CONSTRUCTION.

WE ARE GLAD THAT THE ICC HAS BEEN COMPLETED AND WILL BE COMMISSIONED DURING THE COMING CELEBRATIONS ON THE 25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL. WE ARE NOW LOOKING FORWARD TO THE COMPLETION OF THE HOTEL TO COMPLEMENT THE ICC.

WE NEED TO WORK TOWARDS GENERATING ADEQUATE FUNDS FROM THE ICC TO CREATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES TO COMPLETE THE HOTEL AND REDUCE DEPENDENCE ON NATIONAL FISCUS.

## **AGRICULTURE**

THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR HAS ALSO MADE GREAT STRIDES OVER THE PAST FOUR DECADES. IDEALLY, BY NOW WE SHOULD HAVE REACHED FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY LEVELS.

WHILE WE WELCOME RAINS ESSENTIAL FOR OUR AGRICULTURAL OBJECTIVES, CROPS HAVE BEEN DESTROYED BY ADVERSE WEATHER CONDITIONS SUCH AS THE RECENT HEAVY RAINFALL.

OUR HEARTS ARE WITH THOSE AFFECTED AND GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE WITH THE PROGRAMME OF SUPPORTING THOSE THAT HAVE BEEN AFFECTED.

FURTHERMORE, CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND PREPAREDNESS PROGRAMMES WILL BE EXPANDED TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES VULNERABLE TO DROUGHTS, FLOODS AND OTHER CLIMATE-RELATED RISKS.

THE TASK THAT REMAINS IS HOW TO ARRIVE AT OUR ULTIMATE GOAL. THIS SECTOR REQUIRES RELIABLE MARKETS THAT CAN GENERATE TANGIBLE TURNOVER FOR THE COUNTRY.



GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE WITH THE PROGRAMME OF SUBSIDISING OUR SUBSISTENCE FARMERS IN ORDER TO ENHANCE FOOD SECURITY.

### **FOOT AND MOUTH OUTBREAK**

WE ARE CONCERNED THAT, WHILE SEEKING TO ACHIEVE OUR SELF-SUFFICIENCY GOALS, WE ARE CONFRONTED WITH SETBACKS SUCH AS THE FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE (FMD). FMD IS NOT NEW TO THE KINGDOM AND WE HAVE CONQUERED IT BEFORE.

HOWEVER, IT HAS RETURNED, WHICH MEANS WE FAILED TO APPLY THE LESSONS OF THE PAST. THIS TIME, IT MUST SERVE AS A LESSON TO CREATE A LASTING SOLUTION THAT WILL PREVENT A RECURRENCE IN THE FUTURE.

WHILE WE THOUGHT WE HAD DONE ENOUGH IN CORDONING OFF THE AFFECTED REGIONS, THE DISEASE ELUDED OUR MEASURES AND SPILLED OVER INTO OTHER REGIONS, CLEARLY INDICATING THAT OUR PRECAUTIONS WERE NOT STRONG ENOUGH.

WE MUST INTENSIFY EDUCATION AND AWARENESS EFFORTS TO ENSURE OUR PEOPLE ARE WELL SENSITISED TO TAKE ALL NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS TO STOP THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE.

THE NATION IS ASSURED THAT GOVERNMENT WILL DO ALL THAT IS NECESSARY TO ELIMINATE THIS DISEASE FROM THE COUNTRY. GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO EXPLORE OTHER SOURCES TO PROCURE THE FOOT AND MOUTH DISEASE VACCINATION TO HASTEN THE EXERCISE.

## **WATER**

FOR THE COUNTRY TO PROSPER, IT MUST HAVE A CLEAN WATER SUPPLY. WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY THE PROGRESS MADE TOWARDS ATTAINING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS).

ON SDG 6, THE COUNTRY HAS ENSURED 75 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION HAVE ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER. WORKING WITH OUR DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS, WE MUST CONTINUE TO MAINTAIN THIS GOOD RECORD UNTIL WE HAVE CLEAN WATER FOR ALL BY 2030.

## **INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

TECHNOLOGY PLAYS AN INTEGRAL ROLE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COUNTRY. IT IS, THEREFORE, IMPORTANT THAT THIS INFRASTRUCTURE PLACES US ON PAR WITH THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY.

THE 40-YEAR MILESTONE WE CELEBRATE THIS YEAR MEANS THE COUNTRY MUST MOVE COMPLETELY FROM ANALOGUE TO DIGITAL.

THIS REQUIRES US TO ASSESS ALL OUR OPERATING STRUCTURES TO DETERMINE IF THEY MEET THE STANDARDS FOR TRANSITIONING TO DIGITAL SYSTEMS AND ENSURE AFFORDABLE AND RELIABLE DATA CONNECTIVITY.

WE LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE MANY OF OUR DAILY FUNCTIONS ARE DIGITALLY CONNECTED. THIS MEANS WE NEED TO CREATE THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT FAST-TRACKS OUR ADOPTION OF DIGITAL AND SATELLITE TECHNOLOGY.

WE ARE ALREADY LAGGING IN PROVIDING DIGITAL PASSPORTS THAT MAKE TRAVEL SEAMLESS BY PROCESSING ENTRY THROUGH VIDEO SCANNING, WHILE OUR SYSTEM STILL REQUIRES MANUAL PROCESSING. THE DISADVANTAGE OF THE PHYSICAL PASSPORT IS THE THREAT OF FORGERY, WHICH CAN BE ELIMINATED BY UPGRADING IT.

### **REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND**

AS WE LOOK TOWARDS THE NEXT 40 YEARS, WE MUST CONSIDER HOW WE PLAN AND STRUCTURE OUR ECONOMY SO IT CAN DELIVER ON THE ASPIRATIONS OF OUR NATIONAL VISION.

IT CALLS FOR A RESTRUCTURING OF BUDGETING SYSTEMS AND PRIORITISATION IN WAYS THAT CAN ELIMINATE POVERTY AND INCENTIVISE THE BUSINESS SECTOR TO PROVIDE THE REQUIRED START-UP CAPITAL TO DRIVE JOB CREATION AND ECONOMIC GROWTH.

WE WERE PLEASED TO VISIT SOME PROJECTS UNDER THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (RDF). WE FOUND MANY EMASWATI ENGAGED IN BUSINESS THROUGH THE START-UP CAPITAL PROVIDED.

WE MUST CONTINUE TO CREATE BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN OUR COMMUNITIES TO AVERT URBAN MIGRATION, WHICH RESULTS IN OVERCROWDING AND A LACK OF RETURN ON INVESTMENT FOR ENTREPRENEURS.

THIS MIGRATION ALSO CREATES SOCIAL CHALLENGES DUE TO HOUSING NEEDS, LEADING TO UNPLANNED SETTLEMENTS. WE MUST FOCUS ON GROWING THE CONSTITUENCIES THROUGH INFRASTRUCTURE THAT CREATES A CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR BUSINESS AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL.

WE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO URGE THE BENEFICIARIES OF THIS FUNDING TO USE IT IN ADDRESSING THE NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE IN THEIR HOME AREAS.

### **NATIONAL HOUSING INITIATIVE**

THE PROVISION OF DECENT HOUSES FOR OUR NEEDY PEOPLE SHOULD REMAIN AN INTEGRAL PART OF OUR DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.

GOVERNMENT SHOULD ENHANCE THIS PROGRAMME SO THAT NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND. WE ALSO WISH TO THANK THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR GIVING GOVERNMENT A LIFELINE BY SUPPORTING THIS NATIONAL INITIATIVE.

## **YOUTH FUND**

THE COUNTRY HAS ALSO CREATED THE YOUTH FUND OVER THE YEARS, WHICH WAS MEANT TO ENSURE THAT NO YOUNG PERSON IS WITHOUT A MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD.

WE HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED WITH THE MANY YOUNG PEOPLE MAKING USE OF THIS FUND TO ENGAGE IN BUSINESS, SOME OF WHOM HAVE INFORMED ME OF HOW IT HAS CHANGED THEIR LIVES FOR THE BETTER.

GOVERNMENT WILL ENHANCE, REVIEW AND UPDATE OUR POLICIES FROM TIME TO TIME TO ENSURE THE COUNTRY IS IN A POSITION TO ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES FACED BY OUR YOUTH.

## THE ELDERLY

EVERY COUNTRY HAS AN OBLIGATION TO CARE FOR ITS ELDERLY CITIZENS, ENSURING THEY ARE LOVED AND CARED FOR IN APPRECIATION OF ALL THE SACRIFICES THEY HAVE MADE.

THEY SHOULD DEPART THIS EARTH WITH THEIR HEARTS CONTENT THAT THEIR EFFORTS WERE WORTHWHILE. AS THE SISWATI ADAGE SAYS, **'ASINAKEKELE BATALI BETFU NJENGALOKU NABO BASINAKEKELA'**.

## HEALTH

AS WE ARE AWARE, A PRODUCTIVE NATION IS A HEALTHY NATION. ACHIEVING A HEALTHY NATION IS AN ENORMOUS TASK. WE HAVE HEARD THE MAJOR OUTCRY OVER DRUG SHORTAGES IN OUR HEALTH FACILITIES.

AS THE GOVERNMENT IS CURRENTLY WORKING TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE, WE WISH TO STATE THAT FROM NOW ONWARDS, THESE DRUG SHORTAGES SHOULD STOP NOW.

WE MUST ENSURE THAT EVERY LISWATI THAT SEEK MEDICAL TREATMENT MUST FIND THE NECESSARY DRUGS WHEN THEY ARRIVE AT A HEALTH FACILITY NEEDING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION. ALL MEANS POSSIBLE SHOULD BE EMPLOYED TO AVERT THIS CHALLENGE IN THE FUTURE.

THIS EXPERIENCE MUST PROVIDE VALUABLE LESSONS ON THE STRATEGIES REQUIRED FOR A SUSTAINABLE DRUG SOURCING AND SUPPLY CHAIN FOR OUR HEALTH SECTOR.

WE NEED EFFECTIVE LONG-TERM PLANS THAT SPAN THE NEXT 40 TO 50 YEARS TO ENSURE OUR FUTURE GENERATIONS FIND OUR SYSTEMS AND STRUCTURES OPERATING EFFICIENTLY AND EFFECTIVELY.

### **ELIMINATING HIV/AIDS**

ON HIV/AIDS, WE SET OURSELVES A TARGET TO CONQUER THIS DISEASE. WE ARE PLEASED THAT INDICATIONS SHOW WE ARE WELL ON COURSE TO CURB THIS AILMENT IN OUR SOCIETY.



WE ARE GRATEFUL THAT ESWATINI WAS SELECTED AS THE FIRST COUNTRY IN AFRICA TO PARTICIPATE IN THE LENACAPAVIR (PREP) INJECTION PROGRAMME FOR HIV/AIDS PREVENTION, TAKEN ONCE EVERY SIX MONTHS.

THIS WILL ENHANCE OUR NATIONAL OBJECTIVE OF FIGHTING AGAINST HIV/AIDS BY 2030 IN THE KINGDOM. WE REMIND ALL EMASWATI THAT WE ARE STILL AT WAR WITH THIS DISEASE. TRANSMISSION RATES REMAIN UNACCEPTABLY HIGH.

WE MUST GUARD AGAINST RECKLESSNESS AS THIS COULD RESULT IN EARLY PREGNANCIES THAT WE MUST AVOID BY ALL MEANS. WE WANT OUR YOUTH TO COMPLETE SCHOOL AND EMBARK ON MEANINGFUL CAREERS TO BETTER THEIR LIVES.

THEY MUST NOT RUSH INTO PARENTHOOD BUT DO SO WHEN THEY REACH ADULTHOOD. THE COUNTRY SHOULD SPARE NO EFFORT UNTIL THE LAST INFECTED PERSON IS CURED OF HIV.

## **DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND GBV**

THE KINGDOM REAFFIRMS ITS COMMITMENT TO EMPOWER ALL CITIZENS AND UPHOLDING THE DIGNITY AND RIGHTS OF ALL EMASWATI.

AS A COUNTRY WE REMAIN CONCERNED ABOUT THE GROWING REPORTS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND ABUSE IN THE HOME, WHERE THE MAN WHO OUGHT TO PROTECT THE FAMILY TURNS AGAINST IT AND ABUSES HIS WIFE AND DAUGHTERS.

THESE ISSUES ARE WORSENERED BY ALCOHOL AND DRUG ABUSE, WITH SOME CASES INVOLVING PSYCHOLOGICAL CHALLENGES.

WE URGE EVERY CITIZEN TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY AND REPORT THESE CASES TO LAW ENFORCEMENT AS SOON AS SIGNS APPEAR, BECAUSE EXTREME CASES DO NOT HAPPEN ON A WHIM; THOSE CLOSE TO THE INDIVIDUALS ARE OFTEN AWARE OF THE SITUATION.

AS A COUNTRY, WE MUST TAKE A FIRM STANCE AGAINST ABUSE AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE. EVERY GIRL, WOMAN, BOY, OR MAN DESERVES TO BE TREATED WITH RESPECT, WHICH IS RECIPROCAL AND IT STARTS WITH AN INDIVIDUAL RESPECTING THEMSELVES.

## **EDUCATION**

OUR NATIONAL GOALS INCLUDE EQUIPPING OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM WITH THE REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY THAT WILL TRANSFORM OUR PUPILS' LIVES AND HELP THEM UNDERSTAND THE WORLD BETTER.

THE YOUTH ARE WELL-PLACED TO USE TECHNOLOGY, AS THEY ARE VERY ACTIVE IN THIS SPACE. WE ENCOURAGE THE YOUTH TO CONSIDER WHAT VALUE ADDITION IS CREATED FROM THE TIME SPENT ENGAGING WITH TECHNOLOGY.

OUR WISH IS TO SEE THAT ALL OUR YOUTH ARE EDUCATED, UNLIKE IN THE PAST WHEN MANY ADULTS DID NOT RECEIVE THE OPPORTUNITY OF FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION.

WE CONGRATULATE ALL THOSE WHO PASSED THEIR EXAMS AND WERE PLEASED TO SEE SOME REGIONS PUTTING IN VERY STRONG PERFORMANCES. WHILE SOME REGIONS WERE NOT AS STRONG, WE NEED TO INVESTIGATE THE CAUSE OF THIS UNDERPERFORMANCE.

AS THE NATION IS AWARE, CURRICULUM REFORMS IN OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM ARE UNDERWAY, AIMED AT ALIGNING LEARNING OUTCOMES WITH NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND GLOBAL TRENDS.

WE URGE ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO WORK TOGETHER TO ENSURE THAT IT DELIVERS THE TARGETTED SKILLS DEVELOPMENT. THE TRAINING OF OUR TEACHERS SHOULD ALSO BE PRIORITISED TO ENSURE THEY ARE WELL EQUIPPED TO PERFORM UPON THIS MANDATE.

## **INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND EXPORT**

THE KINGDOM REMAINS COMMITTED TO SAFEGUARDING AND EXPANDING MARKET ACCESS FOR ESWATINI'S GOODS AND SERVICES THROUGH BILATERAL, REGIONAL AND MULTILATERAL AGREEMENTS.

WE WELCOME THE SUPPORT THE COUNTRY RECEIVES FROM ITS INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS IN FACILITATING TRADE THAT HAS SUPPORTED INDUSTRIALISATION, JOB CREATION AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH, BENEFITING THOUSANDS OF ESWATINI.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS AND THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY IN ADVANCING THE IDEALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS, THE AFRICAN UNION, COMESA AND SADC.

AS A COUNTRY, THIS YEAR WE WILL ASSUME THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE SADC ORGAN ON POLITICS, DEFENCE AND SECURITY COOPERATION (TROIKA).

WE COMMIT OURSELVES TO WORKING HARD IN EFFORTS AIMED AT ACHIEVING PEACE IN THE REGION. THESE STRUCTURES HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED TO ENSURE HARMONY AND SOCIAL COHESION FOR OUR PEOPLE.

THEY ARE MEANT TO PROMOTE GOOD NEIGHBOURLY RELATIONS BETWEEN STATES THAT FOSTER MUTUAL RESPECT AND DETER THE USE OF UNCONSTITUTIONAL MEANS TO EXERT PERSONAL INTERESTS OVER ANOTHER.

WE WILL BE GUIDED BY THE SADC STRUCTURES AND WORK WITH MEMBER STATES TO FULFIL THE OBJECTIVES OF THE ORGAN, WHILE LEAVING A MEMORABLE LEGACY.

WE WILL ALSO BE PURSUING THE OBJECTIVES OF THE AFRICAN UNION'S AGENDA 2063 TO ATTAIN '**THE AFRICA WE WANT**', WHICH ASPIRES TO PEACE, MUTUAL RESPECT, AND COOPERATION, ADHERING TO THE PRINCIPLES OF THE UN CHARTER THAT ALL COUNTRIES ARE CALLED UPON TO RESPECT.

WE DENOUNCE CONFLICT AND VIOLENCE AND CALL UPON EVERY COUNTRY TO OPERATE WITHIN THE CONFINES OF LAW AND ORDER, RESPECTING THEIR CONSTITUTIONS.

## **CONCLUSION**

WE TAKE THIS OPORTUNITY TO CONGRATULATE PARLIAMENT ON DOCUMENTING ITS HISTORY FROM 1967 TO DATE, AND COMMEND ALL THOSE WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TOWARDS THE WRITING OF THIS BOOK.

WE ARE PLEASED TO INFORM THE NATION THAT IN LINE WITH OUR TRANSFORMATION AND INNOVATION AGENDA, PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES WILL NOW BE BROADCAST LIVE. THIS WILL HELP THE PEOPLE TO FOLLOW ACCURATELY THE REPRESENTATIONS MADE IN THE HOUSE AS THEY HAPPEN.

WITH THIS CLOSER SCRUTINY, WE URGE YOU PARLIAMENTARIANS TO WORK WITH **NKWE** IN PURSUING THE ASPIRATIONS OF OUR NATIONAL VISION, TO ENSURE THAT THE KING AND COUNTRY ARE PROUD OF YOUR SERVICE DELIVERY.

**DECLARATION**

IT IS NOW MY SINGULAR HONOUR TO DECLARE THE  
THIRD SESSION OF THE 12TH PARLIAMENT  
OFFICIALLY OPEN.

THE PARLIAMENTARY TV STUDIOS ARE ALSO  
OFFICIALLY OPEN.

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