

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

LET ME BEGIN BY EXPRESSING OUR PROFOUND PLEASURE IN BEING HERE TO BLESS THE OFFICIAL COMMENCEMENT OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI.

WE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO EXTEND A HEARTILY AND WARM WELCOME TO THOSE WHO COME FROM BEYOND OUR BORDERS, INCLUDING ALL THE FRIENDS OF THE KINGDOM.

WE ARE COGNISANT OF THE FACT THAT MANY EMASWATI HAVE TRAVELLED FROM DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE COUNTRY TO PARTICIPATE IN TODAY'S EVENT. HAVING YOU IN OUR MIDST UNDERSCORES THE GREAT SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS OCCASION.

A REFLECTION TO THE EVENTS OF 2019

WE THANK THE ALMIGHTY GOD AND OUR ANCESTORS FOR PROTECTING AND GUIDING US AS WE ENTER THE NEW YEAR 2020; THE START OF A NEW DECADE AND ERA WHICH SIGNIFIES NEW BEGINNINGS.

IT'S TIME TO USE YOUR GIFTS AND TALENTS TO ACCOMPLISH YOUR GOALS.

WE THEREFORE ANTICIPATE A RENEWAL IN ALL THINGS AS WE REMAIN UNITED IN THE COMMON PURPOSE TO PURSUE OUR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA, AS EMASWATI.

THIS UNITY HAS PREVAILED DURING NUMEROUS ACTIVITIES INCLUDING OUR TRADITIONAL CEREMONIES AND CHURCH SERVICES. WE WITNESSED AN IMPRESSIVE PROCESSION FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE MAIN INCWALA WHERE A HUGE TURNOUT OF DIFFERENT REGIMENTS MARKED THE SUCCESS OF THIS EVENT.

WHAT GIVES US HOPE AND CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE IS THE HIGH NUMBER OF ALL MEMBERS OF SOCIETY ATTENDING **"LAMASIKO, NEMIKHOSI YEMASWATI"**.

ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS

AS PARLIAMENTARIANS START THEIR SECOND YEAR IN OFFICE, WE WISH TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE TASK BESTOWED UPON YOU BY THE PEOPLE.

YOU CARRY A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY UPON YOUR SHOULDERS IN PROVIDING THE NECESSARY LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK TO CATALYSE THE ATTAINMENT OF OUR NATIONAL VISION 2022 ASPIRATIONS. WE ARE PLEASED WITH YOUR QUICK ADAPTATION TO PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE.

NOW THAT YOU HAVE FAMILIARISED YOURSELVES, THE NATION EXPECTS AN EVEN GREATER CONTRIBUTION FROM THIS AUGUST HOUSE TO HASTEN THE PACE OF OUR SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AGENDA. TIME WAITS FOR NO MAN. THEREFORE, EVERY MINUTE SHOULD COUNT AT EACH SITTING THIS YEAR, WITH ALL YOUR ENERGY INVESTED IN A UNITED APPROACH IN ACHIEVING OUR GROWTH TARGETS.

WE SHOULD DO SO WITHOUT LOSING TOUCH WITH YOUR CONSTITUENCIES WITH WHOM WE SHARE COMMON VALUES THAT DEFINE US AS AN OASIS OF PEACE AND AN IDEAL INVESTMENT LOCATION.

DIALOGUE, PEACE AND UNITY

EMASWATI, SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL, ARE KNOWN GLOBALLY AS A NATION THAT EMBRACES DIALOGUE, PEACE AND UNITY. THESE KEY TENETS ARE WHAT DISTINGUISH US FROM THE REST OF MANKIND.

THESE VALUES ARE ENSHRINED IN OUR ETHOS AND HAVE BEEN PASSED ON FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION, SO WE NEED TO PROTECT AND GUARD THEM FOR THE BENEFIT OF THOSE COMING AFTER US.

AS THE NATION IS AWARE, OUR UNITY AS EMASWATI REMAINS CRITICAL BECAUSE IT YIELDS HANDSOME DIVIDENDS IN TERMS OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES AND ECONOMIC GROWTH.

THE FOUNDERS OF THIS KINGDOM HAD AN AMICABLE WAY OF ADDRESSING NATIONAL DIFFERENCES THROUGH OUR TRADITIONAL FORUMS WHICH ALLOW ALL CITIZENS, IRRESPECTIVE OF AGE, RELIGION OR GENDER, TO VOICE THEIR IDEAS ON HOW BEST WE CAN TAKE THIS COUNTRY FORWARD.

OUR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHALLENGES ARE NOT UNIQUE TO US. THESE ARE DRIVEN BY THE GLOBAL PHENOMENON THAT CURRENTLY PREVAILS. THIS HAS HAD A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON MANY SECTORS OF OUR SOCIETY BECAUSE ECONOMIES OF THE WORLD ARE INTERTWINED.

EMASWATI HAVE ALWAYS RESPECTED THOSE ENTRUSTED WITH LEADERSHIP POSITIONS IN ALL THE SPHERES OF OUR NATION. THIS BEGINS FROM FAMILY LEVEL, COMMUNITY, CHIEFDOM UP TO NATIONAL LEADERSHIP. **"MASWATI ASIBEKE EMBILI INHLOPHO NEKUTHULA EVENI"**.

GOD GAVE EACH NATION ITS UNIQUE CULTURE TO PRACTICE AND PASS ON TO FUTURE GENERATIONS. THERE IS NO CULTURE OR IDEOLOGY THAT IS SUPREME WHICH HAS TO BE IMPOSED ON OTHER NATIONS OF THE WORLD.

LIKEWISE, DEMOCRACY IS TAILORED TOWARDS THE CULTURAL NORMS AND BELIEFS OF EACH NATION. WE CALL UPON ALL EMASWATI INCLUDING THOSE LIVING ABROAD, TO REMAIN TRUE TO THEIR IDENTITY.

THEY SHOULD PLACE THE INTEREST OF OUR NATION ABOVE THEIR OWN. WE SHOULD CHERISH OUR UNITY AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIP THAT HAS EXISTED SINCE OUR PREDECESSORS FOUNDED THIS GREAT NATION SO MANY YEARS AGO.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK - 2022 TARGET

THIS YEAR BRINGS INTO FOCUS THE REALITY THAT WE ARE NOT TOO FAR FROM THE YEAR 2022, A YEAR WE HAVE SET OURSELVES TO ATTAIN FIRST WORLD STATUS.

FOR US, THIS WILL MEAN THAT WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO OVERCOME UNEMPLOYMENT; ENSURE THAT THERE IS PROVISION OF QUALITY HEALTH AND EDUCATION SERVICES FOR ALL; EQUAL AND ADEQUATE ACCESS TO SOCIAL SERVICE AMENITIES; AND ALSO MAKING SURE THAT THE DISABLED ARE AFFORDED A LIFE WITHOUT CHALLENGES.

LET US DO AN INTROSPECTION, AND CONSIDER THE PROGRESS WE HAVE DONE, AND SEE HOW FAR WE ARE TO OUR SET GOAL. IF WE ARE STILL NOT THERE, WE OUGHT TO ADDRESS THE SHORTFALLS AND ACCELERATE OUR EFFORTS TOWARDS MAKING OUR DREAM COME TRUE.

IN THE MEDIUM-TERM, OVERALL GROWTH IS PROJECTED TO BE 2.6 PERCENT, WHICH SHOWS A SIGNIFICANT GROWTH FROM LAST YEAR'S PROJECTION. THIS DEVELOPMENT IS DRIVEN BY THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR WHICH IS BENEFITING FROM ANTICIPATED CONTINUED POSITIVE EXPORTS OF THE COUNTRY'S GOODS TO OUR TRADING PARTNERS.

WE NEED TO THEREFORE MANAGE ALL RISKS WITHIN OUR DOMESTIC ECONOMY TO ENSURE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH.

REVENUE

IT IS VITALLY IMPORTANT FOR THE KINGDOM TO BE SELF-SUSTAINED AND FINANCIALLY STABLE. THIS NECESSITATES THAT MORE REVENUE IS GENERATED IN-COUNTRY. IT ALSO REQUIRES APPROPRIATE REVENUE LAWS, PRIORITISATION OF EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE TAX COLLECTION, ADEQUATE MEASURES TO CONTROL EXPENDITURE AND CREATION OF REVENUE SOURCE.

WE DO ACKNOWLEDGE THE GROWTH OF SACU RECEIPTS AND HOPE THE MOMENTUM WILL CONTINUE. WE ENCOURAGE MORE PARTICIPATION OF EMASWATI TOWARDS DEVELOPING INITIATIVES THAT WOULD SUPPORT THIS REVENUE IN ORDER TO COMPLIMENT THE SACU RECEIPTS.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

ALTHOUGH WE HAVE EQUALLY COMPETING NATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS, GOVERNMENT WILL ENSURE THAT PROVISION OF RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES SUCH AS ***IMALI YABOGOGO AND BOMKHULU*** IS MADE AVAILABLE.

THIS WILL INCLUDE OUR COMMITMENT TO SUPPORT THE ORPHANED AND VULNERABLE, THOSE NEEDING SPECIAL MEDICAL ATTENTION. AND ALSO, TAKING CARE OF OUR CITIZENS IN NEED, REMAINS OUR TOP PRIORITY, AS EMASWATI WE SHALL NOT ABANDON THEM IN OUR DEVELOPMENT AGENDA.

FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

ONE OF THE KEY MANDATES OF GOVERNMENT ENTAILS ENSURING FOOD SECURITY AMID CHALLENGES POSED BY CLIMATE CHANGE, TRANS-BOUNDARY CROP PESTS AND ANIMAL DISEASES. WE ARE GRATEFUL FOR THE GOOD RAINS WHICH HAVE BEEN RECEIVED THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY.

LET US CAPITALISE ON THIS BLESSING TO PLOUGH THE FIELDS TOWARDS FOOD SELF SUFFICIENCY. WE NEED TO UPSCALE OUR FARMING EFFICIENCIES TO REACH A STANDARD THAT NOT ONLY CREATES ENOUGH FOOD FOR EACH HOUSEHOLD BUT PRODUCES A SURPLUS FOR EXPORT OUTSIDE OUR BORDERS.

GOVERNMENT MUST INCREASE THE PRESENCE OF EXTENSION OFFICERS AND ENSURE AVAILABILITY OF EQUIPMENT AND INPUTS THAT ARE SUBSIDIZED COUNTRYWIDE TO FARMERS.

VALUE ADDITION AND AGRO-PROCESSING

GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO ADDRESS THE NEED FOR VALUE ADDITION FACILITIES THAT WOULD ENHANCE AND PROMOTE THE PENETRATION OF AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS IN BOTH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL MARKETS.

THIS IS EXPECTED TO RESULT IN BOTH EXPORT-ORIENTED AND IMPORT SUBSTITUTION INDUSTRIALIZATION.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE EXPANSION OF MARKETS WILL BE DERIVED FROM INCREASED LOCAL PRODUCTION OF TARGETED PRODUCTS SUCH AS DAIRY, FRUITS AND VEGETABLES.

IMPROVING AND ADHERENCE TO QUALITY STANDARDS IS OF PARAMOUNT IMPORTANCE IN SUSTAINING THE MARKETS. FARMERS WILL BE PLEASED TO KNOW THAT GOVERNMENT HAS EMBARKED ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF A DAIRY PROCESSING PLANT TO BE COMPLETED BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR. THE FACILITY WILL SOURCE RAW MILK FROM LOCAL PRODUCERS FOR PROCESSING INTO VARIOUS PRODUCTS.

SME SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

LAST YEAR WE CALLED FOR INCREASED SUPPORT FOR OUR SMES TO STRENGTHEN OUR DOMESTIC RESOURCE MOBILIZATION. GOVERNMENT HAS DECLARED 2020 THE YEAR OF THE SMES AND WILL DEVELOP THIS SECTOR FOCUSING ON FOUR KEY THEMES: ACCESS TO FINANCE AND MARKETS; EMPOWERMENT OF CITIZENS AND IDENTIFYING INCENTIVES FOR SMES.

TRADE AGREEMENTS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED WITH INTERNATIONAL MARKETS AND A NATIONAL QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE SET UP TO STRENGTHEN OUR CAPACITY TO PROVIDE GLOBALLY ACCEPTED BEST PRACTICES AND STANDARDS.

ON INVESTMENT, ESWATINI HAS CREATED SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONES TO LEVERAGE OUR EXPORT POTENTIAL THROUGH ATTRACTING EXPORT ORIENTED MANUFACTURING PROJECTS. WE MUST ENSURE THAT WE MAINTAIN OUR GOOD BUSINESS RANKING AND ACTUALLY AIM FOR EVEN BETTER AS WE BUILD INVESTOR CONFIDENCE FOR OUR KINGDOM.

INVESTORS MUST FIND THE EASE OF DOING BUSINESS WITH US A PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE WITH ALL OUR SYSTEMS AND PROCEDURES. WHAT WE PROMISE MUST BE WHAT WE DELIVER.

TOURISM IS A CATALYST FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH

TOURISM CONTINUES TO BE ONE OF THE SECTORS THAT HAVE A POTENTIAL TO STIMULATE OUR ECONOMIC GROWTH.

IT IS PLEASING TO LEARN THAT ESWATINI HAS BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THE WORLD, AS THE 5TH BEST DESTINATION TO VISIT GLOBALLY. THIS ACCOLADE IS WARMLY WELCOMED, AND WILL NO DOUBT, DRAW MORE INTERNATIONAL VISITORS INTO OUR KINGDOM.

WE NEED TO TAP INTO THIS POTENTIAL AND PROVIDE THE REQUISITE INFRASTRUCTURE TO IMPROVE OUR TOURISM OFFERING. WE HAVE EMBARKED ON INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENTS TO RESPOND TO THIS NEED WHICH WILL, IN TURN, CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

MASWATI, LET US KEEP OUR COUNTRY CLEAN. CLEANLINESS ATTRACTS TOURISTS AND INVESTORS ALIKE.

I.C.T AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

THE 4TH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IS COMING WITH NEW INNOVATIVE WAYS IN THE GLOBAL I.C.T ARENA AND WE CANNOT AFFORD TO BE LEFT BEHIND.

THE COUNTRY SHOULD STRIVE TO DERIVE THE FULL BENEFITS OF I.C.T TO CREATE AN INFORMED SOCIETY THROUGH AVAILABILITY OF RELIABLE, AFFORDABLE AND HIGH QUALITY TECHNOLOGIES THAT EMBRACE THE INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVITY REVOLUTION.

GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE THE COMPLETION OF PROVIDING FREE WI-FI HOTSPOTS IN STRATEGIC PUBLIC PLACES INCLUDING SCHOOLS, TINKHUNDLA CENTRES AND POINTS OF ENTRY INTO THE KINGDOM, TO MENTION BUT A FEW.

TO ACHIEVE THIS, GOVERNMENT NEEDS TO DEVELOP APPROPRIATE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WILL PUT OUR NATION AT PAR WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD.

ROYAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PARK

GOVERNMENT WILL STRENGTHEN EFFORTS TO FIND POTENTIAL INVESTORS THAT ARE KEEN TO UTILIZE OUR INNOVATION PARK AT PHOCWENI. THIS FACILITY HAS GREAT PROSPECTS OF CONTRIBUTING TO OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

INVESTORS WILL BE ABLE TO ACCESS THESE FACILITIES WHICH INCLUDE THE NATIONAL DATA AND CALL CENTER, TRAINING AND INCUBATION SERVICES. ALL THESE READILY AVAILABLE FACILITIES ARE THERE TO OFFER THE NECESSARY SUPPORT FOR THE EASE OF DOING BUSINESS.

IMPROVING ENERGY SUPPLY IN THE KINGDOM

THE SHORTAGE OF ENERGY CONTINUES TO BE A CONCERN. THIS IS COMPOUNDED BY THE EMERGING LAPSE OF EXISTING POWER SUPPLY AGREEMENTS. WE HOPE TO BUILD SUFFICIENT ENERGY TO POWER OURSELVES AND SELL THE SURPLUS TO NEIGHBOURING STATES.

PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE ENERGY TO THE COUNTRY IS ESSENTIAL. ENERGY PLAYS A PIVOTAL ROLE IN OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT A DETAILED TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT FOR A 300MW POWER PLANT, WHICH IS SUPPORTED BY THE FRIENDS OF THE KINGDOM, WILL BE COMPLETED BY AUGUST 2020.

THE NATION WELCOMES THE NOBLE INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS SUCH AS MINI GRIDS WHICH HAVE BEEN PRIORITISED IN AN EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT AREAS WHICH ARE NOT ACCESSIBLE BY THE GRID ARE ALSO ELECTRIFIED.

WE ARE PLEASED THAT GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO ENSURING THAT FUNDS ARE SECURED IN THIS FINANCIAL YEAR FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGIC FUEL DEPOT AT PHUZUMOYA.

THE NATION IS LOOKING FORWARD TO THE COMPLETION OF THE 10MW SOLAR POWER PLANT BY THE END OF THIS YEAR.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THESE EFFORTS IN THE ENERGY SECTOR WILL MAKE US SELF-SUFFICIENT AND SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTE TO INCREASED INDUSTRIALISATION, JOB CREATION AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF EMASWATI.

PROVISION OF CLEAN WATER TO THE POPULACE

THIS FINANCIAL YEAR, EMASWATI IN THE SHISELWENI REGION WILL WITNESS THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE NHLANGANO – MATSANJENI WATER AND SANITATION PROJECT WHICH WILL BENEFIT OVER 38,000 PEOPLE. IT IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED IN THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR. THIS WILL CONNECT TO THE ALREADY EXISTING PROJECT.

ANOTHER PROJECT THAT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED IN THE COMING YEAR IS THE MANZINI INTEGRATED WATER SUPPLY AND SANITATION PROJECT. IT WILL ENSURE ACCESS TO SAFE DRINKING WATER TO OVER 76,000 RESIDENTS IN THE PERI URBAN AND RURAL AREAS OF THE MANZINI REGION.

AT COMPLETION THE NATIONAL WATER COVERAGE WILL INCREASE BY 3 PERCENT TO PLACE OUR NATIONAL WATER COVERAGE AT 84 PERCENT BY THE YEAR 2024.

OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

AS A COUNTRY WE HAVE EMBARKED ON OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL PROJECTS WHICH WE WISH TO SEE BEING PURSUED TOWARDS COMPLETION AS WE HEAD TOWARDS 2022.

THESE INCLUDE THE REFERRAL HOSPITAL, INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE AND 5 STAR HOTEL, NEW PARLIAMENT BUILDING, OUR ROAD PROJECTS; INCLUDING THE RAILWAY LINE CONNECTING US TO LOTHAR IN THE REPUBLIC SOUTH AFRICA AND MOZAMBIQUE. WE URGE THE GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE TIMELY DELIVERY TO GUARANTEE THAT WE MEET OUR SET TARGETS.

AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA AND E-TRADE

WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA, WE ARE PRIVILEGED THAT ESWATINI IS HOST TO THE E-TRADE REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS WHICH WILL FACILITATE ACCESS TO THESE MARKETS.

HOWEVER, WE DO NOTE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS WHICH COULD INFLUENCE AND AFFECT GLOBAL TRADE AND THIS MAY POSE A RISK AND COMPROMISE OUR DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.

WE, THEREFORE, NEED TO BE PREPARED AND WELL POSITIONED TO FACE THE CHALLENGING TIMES AHEAD. WE PLEAD WITH ALL THE COUNTRIES OF AFRICA TO FULLY UTILISE THE E-TRADE FACILITIES TO ENSURE THAT FUTURE GENERATIONS GET TO APPRECIATE AND BENEFIT FROM SUCH INITIATIVES.

EDUCATION A TOP NATIONAL PRIORITY

THE CONTINUED ESTABLISHMENT OF SCHOOLS HAS SEEN THE COUNTRY ALIGNING ITSELF WITH THE UNITED NATION'S STANDARDS THAT NO CHILD SHOULD WALK A DISTANCE OF OVER 5KMS TO ATTAIN EDUCATION.

AS WE CELEBRATE HALF A CENTURY, THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH PRIMARY AND HIGH SCHOOLS IN HER DESIRE TO ENSURE THAT EDUCATION IS FOR ALL AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE. WE HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TRAIN SUFFICIENT AND QUALIFIED SCHOOL TEACHERS TO PROVIDE QUALITY EDUCATION TO THE NATION.

AT THIS JUNCTURE, WE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONGRATULATE LEARNERS FOR THE BEST PERFORMANCE DURING THE 2019 EXTERNAL EXAMINATIONS. WE ALSO PRAISE THE TEACHERS FOR THEIR HARD WORK IN ENSURING THE RESULTS WERE OF THE HIGHEST STANDARDS.

WE GIVE ASSURANCE THAT DESPITE THE FISCAL CHALLENGES, GOVERNMENT SHALL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION.

SUPPORT TO EMPOWER YOUTH IN THE COUNTRY

GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO CREATING MORE AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL YOUNG PEOPLE IN EDUCATION AND IN THE LABOUR MARKET TO PROMOTE THE ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND SOLIDARITY OF ALL YOUNG PEOPLE.

WE NOTE WITH APPRECIATION THAT SINCE THE REVIVAL OF THE YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FUND IN EARLY 2019, OVER E6 MILLION HAS BEEN DISBURSED IN SUPPORT OF 115 YOUTH OWNED BUSINESSES, AN INVESTMENT WHICH HAS CREATED OVER 300 JOBS SO FAR.

GOVERNMENT, THROUGH ITS COLLABORATION WILL CONTINUE TO PRIORITIZE CAPACITY BUILDING FOR YOUNG ASPIRING ENTREPRENEURS TO BE ABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES IN THE VARIOUS SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY.

ELIMINATING OF HIV/AIDS PANDEMIC

IN 2019, THE WORLD UNITED IN FRANCE TO MOBILISE RESOURCES FOR THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV AND AIDS WHERE ESWATINI PLEDGED US\$6 MILLION OVER A 3 YEAR PERIOD. FROM THIS PLEDGE, WE ARE PLEASED THAT THE GLOBAL FUND HAS IN TURN COMMITTED THE HIGHEST AMOUNT EVER RECEIVED BY THE KINGDOM.

THIS WILL ENHANCE OUR PERFORMANCE ON THE GLOBAL HIV INDICATORS WHICH HAVE SHOWN GREAT IMPROVEMENT OVER THE LAST THREE YEARS. THE NUMBER OF NEW HIV INFECTIONS ARE DECREASING, AIDS RELATED DEATHS DECLINING AND PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV ON TREATMENT ARE VIRALLY SUPPRESSED.

MORE MOTHERS ARE GIVING BIRTH TO CHILDREN FREE FROM HIV. THESE ARE ALL POSITIVE SIGNS THAT ESWATINI IS INDEED ON THE RIGHT TRACK TO ACHIEVE ITS VISION OF ENDING AIDS AS A PUBLIC HEALTH THREAT. ***I REPEAT - OUR VISION TO END AIDS BY 2022 IS ON TRACK!***

IN AS MUCH AS WE HAVE GREAT SUCCESSES, WE STILL HAVE A LOT TO ACCOMPLISH IN THE NEXT TWO YEARS. WE MUST REACH THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS AT RISK OF CONTRACTING HIV.

THE RESPONSE MUST BE PLANNED AT TINKHUNDLA AND CHIEFDOM LEVEL THUS PUTTING COMMUNITIES AT THE CENTRE OF THE EPIDEMIC AND THIS APPROACH WILL ENSURE THAT NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND. WE APPRECIATE THE TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM DEVELOPMENT AND DONOR PARTNERS.

CORRUPTION IS AN ADVERSARY OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

CORRUPTION HAS REMAINED AN IMPEDIMENT TOWARDS SUSTAINED ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF OUR KINGDOM. THE PASSING INTO LAW OF THE PREVENTION OF ORGANIZED CRIME ACT, 2018 AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ASSET FORFEITURE UNIT IS ANOTHER MILESTONE IN ASSET TRACING AND LIFESTYLE AUDITS TO ENSURE PROCEEDS OF CRIME ARE RETURNED TO THE PUBLIC PURSE.

WE URGE THE JUDICIARY TO EXPEDITE CORRUPTION CASES SO THAT PERPETRATORS GET TO SEE THAT THE COUNTRY MEANS SERIOUS BUSINESS.

GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

AS THE NATION IS AWARE, IN 2015, WORLD LEADERS ADOPTED THE 2030 AGENDA WITH THE 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS).

THEY ARE OUR SHARED VISION TO END POVERTY AND RESCUE THE PLANET. WITH ONLY 10 YEARS REMAINING TO ACHIEVE THOSE GOALS, LIKE OTHER WORLD LEADERS, I CALL UPON EVERYONE TO WORK HARDER IN ACCELERATING EFFORTS TOWARDS ENDING ALL FORMS OF POVERTY AND INEQUALITIES.

WE ALSO NEED TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENSURE THAT WE LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND. HUNGER IS ON THE RISE, GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS CONTINUE TO CLIMB, AND THOSE AT RISK CONTINUE TO BE MOST AFFECTED BY CONFLICT, INEQUALITY AND INJUSTICE. TOGETHER WE CAN OVERCOME THESE CHALLENGES.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND COOPERATION

OUR PHILOSOPHY OF “**A FRIEND TO ALL AND ENEMY TO NONE**” HAS BEEN THE POLITICAL ETHOS OF ESWATINI SINCE THE TIME OF KING SOBHUZA II.

HE PLACED GREAT EMPHASIS ON A WORLD ANCHORED ON PEACE, DIALOGUE, RESPECT AND COMMON SHARED VALUES. GUIDED BY THESE, THE KINGDOM WILL CONTINUE TO WORK TOWARDS ESTABLISHING AND MAINTAINING GOOD INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS WITH CURRENT AND NEW BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL PARTNERS.

PEACE AND STABILITY IN THE CONTINENT AND THE GLOBE

EVERY AFRICAN’S DREAM IS TO SEE A CONFLICT FREE CONTINENT. ONE OF THE ASPIRATIONS OF THE AFRICAN UNION IS TO SILENCE GUNS IN AFRICA BY 2020. HOWEVER, IT IS SAD THAT OUR CONTINENT CONTINUES TO EXPERIENCE INSTABILITY WHICH HAS CAUSED A LOT OF TENSIONS AND SUFFERING TO OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

WITH THE TENSIONS ACROSS THE WORLD, WE ENCOURAGE THE USE OF THE EXISTING STRUCTURES AND INSTITUTIONS FOR DIALOGUE AND TO AMICABLY DISCUSS, RESOLVE AND FIND LASTING SOLUTIONS TO BRING WORLD PEACE AND ORDER.

FOR OUR CONTINENT WE CALL UPON THE AFRICAN UNION, WORKING TOGETHER WITH THE UNITED NATIONS, TO ADDRESS THIS SCOURGE. WE SHOULD FIND AN AFRICAN SOLUTION TO SOLVE AFRICA'S CHALLENGES AND CONFLICTS. THIS WILL PROMOTE THE ATTAINMENT OF "**THE AFRICA WE WANT BY 2063**".

WE ARE ALSO LIVING IN A TIME OF GLOBAL ECONOMIC INSTABILITY AND AN UNPREDICTABLE FUTURE. THE WORLD MUST COME TOGETHER TO ADDRESS THE TENSIONS THAT ARE STAGNATING THE ATTAINMENT OF THE SET SDG'S AND OUR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA.

CONCLUSION

AS I CONCLUDE, I HEREBY INVITE EVERY CITIZEN TO RISE UP AND DRAW FROM THE RICH RESERVES OF OUR **BUNTFU** TO REDISCOVER **INHLONIPHO**, BOTH OF WHICH ARE ESSENTIAL FOR US TO TAKE ON THE ENORMOUS TASK THAT LIES AHEAD. WE HAVE A NATION TO BUILD, AN ECONOMY TO REVIVE AND SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS TO FULFILL.

LET US TAP INTO THE ENORMOUS POTENTIAL THAT OUR COLLECTIVE ATTRIBUTES PROVIDE TO MOULD AN IMPENETRABLE CIRCLE OF TRUST IN OUR CAPABILITIES TO CREATE A SOCIETY OF VISIONARIES, OPTIMISTS, ENTREPRENEURS AND ACTIVE CITIZENS WITH FIRST WORLD MINDSETS AND OUT OF THE BOX THINKERS.

LET US NOT BE STALLED IN OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS 2022 BY NON-DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES AS THIS WOULD BE TO SURRENDER OURSELVES TO POVERTY, HUNGER AND DISEASE. THIS IS NOT THE ESWATINI WE WANT.

MASWATI, IT IS TIME TO SEIZE THE DAY. BE REMINDED THAT TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE. AS IN TODAY'S DIGITALLY ADVANCED AND INNOVATIVE WORLD, A DECADE CAN ELAPSE OVERNIGHT. SO, **LET US KEEP MOVING!**

DECLARATION

IT IS NOW MY SINGULAR HONOUR TO DECLARE THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE SECOND SESSION OF THE ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI OFFICIALLY OPEN.

I THANK YOU, MAY THE ALMIGHTY GOD BLESS US ALL!