

ESWATINI NATIONAL ARCHIVES

AND RECORDS SERVICE BILL 2020 MICT PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE WORKSHOP

26TH MARCH 2021

PROGRAM DIRECTOR

HONOURABLE SPEAKER

CHAIRPERSON – MICT PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE

HON. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

PRINCIPAL SECRETARY – MICT

PARLIAMENTARY SERVICE OFFICIALS

MEDIA

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

It is a joy to stand before the Honourable Members today after a long time. We offer a special welcome to the Honourable Speaker and the Honourable Members of the Ministry of Information, Communications, and Technology Portfolio Committee from the House of Assembly.

Honourable Members, THE IMPORTANCE OF the Archives legislation cannot be over-emphasized. Thomas Jefferson said,

“Let us save what remains: not by vaults and locks which fence them from the public eye and use in consigning them to the waste of time, but by such a multiplication of copies, as shall place them beyond the reach of accident.”

This means that we should protect our heritage with everything, safeguard them for the day of trouble, and make it accessible to the citizens to whom it belongs. Inclusion is key. Governments need Legislation for Compliance and to ensure that records and archives are managed and preserved accordingly for posterity

The absence of comprehensive archives legislation leads to non-conformity of Government Ministries and Departments to public records and archives management requirements, resulting in the subsequent loss of valuable Government records. .

As a matter of fact, records and Archives play a vital role in providing evidence of Government Transactions. This increases transparency and accountability and is a strong measure in the fight against corruption. In addition, records inform policy development and as we all know, they also preserve the country's documentary heritage for posterity.

Honourable Members, the current archives Act NO 5 of 1971 is limited in the sense that it does not address the management of records in their active and semi-active stages neither does it address the issue of electronic records management and related systems including electronic documents and records management systems. .

The third generation archives acts -

— which the Eswatini National Archives AND Records Service Bill of 2020 (ENARS) is characteristic of - stipulate that the principles which govern good records keeping sets the outcomes that ought to be achieved and the expectations that ought to be satisfied.

The ENARS BILL aims to bridge the gap by accommodating the changes brought about by electronic records management, as well as the records continuum model.

The emergence of technology has resulted in Government utilising information management systems to process and manage electronic records. These systems need to be regulated and controlled so as to ensure that all records generated and maintained remain reliable, authentic and secure throughout their life cycle.

The ENARS BILL will ensure that all records management issues outside the paper realm are addressed and assist in the development of appropriate regulations .

Honourable Members, your active participation and valuable contributions in this exercise will be highly appreciated. .

Having introduced the Bill, it would be remiss of me not to thank and commend the Minister of Commerce, the Honourable Senator Mangoba Khumalo for a par excellent job holding the reins in my absence, promoting the use of ICTs, driving the growth of the ICT sector, and seeing 5 ICT Ministry Bills through the House of Assembly. I also appreciate our Hon. Chairperson Member of Parliament Macford Sibandze for constantly debriefing me about all matters and exhorting me during a most difficult period in life. A few ICT board members also reached out to me but my true voice of reason has been HRH Princess Ncengcenge who did not grow weary of offering me her shoulder, counselling me on many levels.

Notwithstanding, if there is anything that breaks my heart on a daily basis, it is the constant inflow of messages from emaSwati young and old whose faith and confidence is placed on me for employment and scholarships. It is for this reason, that I appreciate the PS' role in holding the Ministry together, unravelling our national broadband strategy and

pushing the projects we had initiated and shall soon launched, projects that will will avail mass employment.

On a sad note, however, the Ministry lost a pillar during this last quarter. The demise of Ntombifuthi Sukati our US, a no-nonsense, hardworking, and courageous woman who demanded excellence among members of the Ministry was heartwrenching. We console ourselves by saying she did not lose her fight against cancer due to frailty or weakness but because of her precision. In her time, she left absolutely no stone unturned; she indeed fulfilled her calling.

Honourable Members, may I express sincere gratitude for the invaluable support of the Portfolio Committee in crafting Bills and giving them the much required impact in society. The committee has shown resilience and loyalty by continuing to serve emaSwati in spite of the challenges posed by the COVID 19 pandemic, which has affected us in different ways.

It is therefore with respect that I submit my unfeigned apologies for my absence from work for a period that alarmed the nation. In hindsight, the timing of my pregnancy was not wise given the economic state of the Kingdom and the timelines set for my outlined vision for the Ministry. After devoting my entire life to the Kingdom, in that split moment, I chose myself. Whether due to mental or emotional duress, I experienced rare complications when giving birth. Giving birth is on its own a harrowing experience. Moreover, giving birth at the height of COVID and during the first ever lockdown was a fearsome thing since little research had been done on the prevention, mitigation and cure thereof, plus the actual effects of the coronavirus on newborn babies.

Be that as it may, 3 months can never suffice for healing and recovery. The Constitution of the land has been indeed been contravened yet I would still imagine that the import of the Constitution is to be a refuge for the people. It should serve the people, it should protect the vulnerable, be it women, children, or those living with disabilities. Perhaps the Constitution can be revisited so as to align with other countries. In many countries, institutions give a fully paid leave to the maternal parent and even fathers, because child rearing should be a shared responsibility.

Despite my absence, I have been fully involved, fully engaged on all work processes of the Ministry, some have even seen me occasionally sneaking in. My promise is that my loyalty cannot be questioned. Due to deeply personal issues that cannot be disclosed, due to circumstances beyond my control, I have been absent but in your hearts you know I am true

to the oath; I have been true to the oath; I am the oath. Sifungo yintfo lengiyatisako futsi
sifungo akusiyo intfo lengiyicalisako ephalamende.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS, I Take this moment to declare this workshop opened..

Nine bekunene, INKHOSI ISIBUSISE