

**WELCOMING REMARKS BY THE SENATE PRESIDENT, AT STATE OPENING
OF THE 3RD SESSION OF THE 11TH PARLIAMENT, ON 19TH FEBRUARY 2021**

BAYETHE WENA WAPHAKATHI

NKHOSI NDLOVUKAZI MHLEKAZI

Your Majesty, The King and iNgwenyama of the Kingdom of Eswatini

Your Majesty, the INdlovukazi and the Queen Mother

Emakhosikati,

Bantfwabenkhozi;

Bobabe Tikhulu;

Royal Councillors;

My Colleague, Mr. Speaker;

The Deputy Prime Minister and the Acting Prime Minister;

Your Lordship, The Chief Justice;

Honourable Cabinet Ministers;

Honourable Members of Both Houses Of Parliament;

Excellences , Members Of The Diplomatic Corps;

Judges of the Supreme Court, Judges of The High Court, as well as Judges of The
Industrial Court;

The Learned Attorney General;

Regional Administrator

Parliamentary Service Board

Clerk to Parliament and Parliamentary Service Staff

Your Graces, The Bishops;

Distinguished Guests;

Media Houses

Ladies And Gentlemen

NGWENYAMANDVUNA: I am greatly honoured to have the privilege to welcome His Majesty the King, on behalf, not only of myself as the Senate President, but also that of my colleague, Hon. Petros Mavimbela, the Speaker of the House of Assembly as well as all honourable parliamentarians of this august Parliament on this significant and particularly novel occasion.

Bayethe, Wena Waphakathi

Ndlovukazi, Mhlekaazi, our open hearts equally extend a warm welcome to the Mother of the Nation. Nkhosi, Ndlovukazi

Your Majesty, given the novelty of the times many of your guests are following the opening of parliament online. We also welcome all those who are following proceedings online.

Your Majesty, the opening of this 3rd session of the 11th parliament is against the backdrop of the global COVID -19 pandemic. It has indeed been a very difficult period for everyone in the past year 2020. The world has been besieged by an uncanny thief that has brought unforetold misery and devastation to every nation and family. Regrettably, the Kingdom of Eswatini has not been spared by this scourge. We have all been, and continue, to be deeply traumatized, in more ways than one, by the unrelenting brutality of this pestilence.

Be that as it may, as Emaswati we stand firm, shoulder to shoulder, with great courage and determination that as a nation we will emerge victorious against this difficult chapter of our lives.

We do not neglect to humble ourselves before the Lord who, through His merciful Grace, has intervened and ensured that a very significant number of Emaswati escape the throes of death meted out by this Thief.

We accordingly pose to celebrate the gallant and selfless efforts of our Healthcare workers and all frontline workers and first responders who, with the support of your Government Your Majesty, have tirelessly led from the front, risking their lives and those of their families in order to deliver much needed healthcare and other pertinent support to your nation from this scourge. We are eternally grateful for their selfless service.

Ngwenyama Ndvuna, despite that the previous year has been like no other, we are extremely grateful that our unity and resilience as a nation sustained us so much such that we did not have to deviate, at least not significantly, from all that makes us unique among other nations. We are thankful for the successful completion of “imikhosi yelive”. Given the protection experienced

during this period we give praise to the Almighty God for the covering of his hand upon the Kingdom of Eswatini.

Hlangalwezwe, although as parliamentarians we are wounded and deeply affected, we are by no means defeated. As per the Royal command in the previous Session, we remain cognisant of the task bestowed upon us by the People and we continue to be committed to “providing the necessary legislative framework to catalyse the attainment of our National Vision 2022 aspirations”.

When we began the second Session, no one could have imagined what was to come. The proverbial sneeze in one part of the world resulted in the whole world catching a cold. Ngisho umkhuhlane hhayi kudlala Mbangazitha. Needless to say, the effects of this cold were so pervasive and devastating that we were required to think on our feet and adapt to what has come to be affectionately known as the “new normal”.

Against this backdrop, Your Majesty, we were able to continue to pass legislation, including subordinate legislation as well as the ratification of International instruments. To mention but a few, The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank, Eswatini Coved19 Emergency Response Project).

The unparalleled teamwork that developed between Parliament and Cabinet gave impetus to the accelerated delivery of all these things in record time. Despite this, we are happy to report and observe, Your Majesty that Parliament did not lose sight of its principal mandate and function, which is to execute its oversight responsibility over the Executive arm of Government truthfully and fearlessly. The critical Motions moved, incisive Questions posed, and numerous Select (*ad hoc*) Committees formed, are testament to Parliament’s robustness in living up to its mandate.

At the regional and international level, we are again delighted to report that we were able to continue with our commitments, *albeit* within the constraints and dictates of the “new normal”;

Ndlal’selwa, it is gratifying to report that parliament, with the assistance of some development partners, was able to conduct successful workshops to capacitate parliamentarians and staff on how to conduct virtual meetings. As we speak, both Chambers of Parliament are ceased with the task of amending the respective Standing Orders to be able to adapt to the “new normal” without deviating much from the critical traditions of Parliament.

Fortuitously Your Majesty, many of the new ways of working which we have now adopted, are actually in line with Vision 2022 wherein is enshrined His Majesty the King's goal to adapt Eswatini to first world norms. *Lwandle Olukhulu*, the novelty associated with how this auspicious occasion has been organised is an acknowledgement of the transformative ways of working where geographic distances are no bar to productivity and instant delivery. We have also seen an increase in virtual communication and global connectivity.

In my final remarks Your Majesty, and in the context of the continuing challenges of COVID-19, I would like to implore the nation to relentlessly adhere to all the laid down protocols and to keep safe at all times. Responsible behaviour, not fear, is therefore encouraged.

Njenge lisiko letfu, iphalamende yakho Ngwenyama Ndvuna ingitfumile Wena Wekunene kutsi ngitfule siphosetinkhomo letisiblanu. Letintsatfu teMbube Yemhlaba bese kutsi letimbili tibe Tendlovu Yemhlaba.

Mbangazitha, Ngwenyama YeMaswati it is now my singular Honour and privilege to invite His Majesty to address this Joint Sitting of Parliament and thereby inaugurate the Third (3rd) Session of the Eleventh (11th) Parliament.

Ngekutitfoba lokukhulu Hlangalweze ngicela Imbube Yemhlaba Iphefumulele Iphalamende, Iphefumulele Live, Iphefumulele Umhlaba.

Bayethe Wena Waphakathi