



**GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI**

**REMARKS BY MINISTER FOR INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS &  
TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

**HER ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS SIKHANYISO**

**DURING THE WORKSHOP FOR SENATORS ON CYBERCRIME BILLS**

**HAPPY VALLEY HOTEL & CASINO**

**10 -11 MAY 2021**

Honourable Senate President

Deputy Senate President

Chairperson & Members of the ICT Portfolio Committee

Honourable Senators

Principal Secretary

Director Communications

ESCCOM Chief Executive

Parliament Officials

Ministry officials

Journalists

Ladies and Gentlemen

The cyberspace is increasingly becoming interwoven in the daily lives of individuals, organizations and countries. It has brought about positive change to the way people communicate, has opened up new avenues for businesses and improved efficiencies; and has also given governments the opportunity to offer their services online.

Some of the benefits of the cyberspace include that of being a virtual library of information that is available 24/7, providing an efficient means of communication, social networking, and entertainment. Furthermore the

cyberspace offers numerous other opportunities to be leveraged on providing new impetus for innovation and disruptive ideas and solutions.

Although, the Internet has brought about positive change, it also brings about many threats and risks, one of which is cybercrime. Cybercriminals are constantly finding new ways to exploit the internet and systems and because of the nature of the Internet, it is easy for these criminals to go unpunished. Furthermore, many who use the internet are not aware of the threats.

Eswatini is no exception to cybercrime and with this staggering increase in commercial crime, concerted efforts have been taken by Government and her stakeholders including the private sector and law enforcement to ensure a safer internet for all citizens. However these efforts are being weakened by the absence of supporting legislation. It is therefore imperative that the country develops the related laws to create a safe cyberspace and an enabling environment for doing business and also to safeguard the social interest of citizens.

Even though the cyberspace is a very fluid and dynamic environment, we have tried as a ministry, to make a legislation that is tight and stringent to serve as an effective deterrent to would be cybercriminals. This Bill is called the Computer crime and Cybercrime Bill of 2020. The cybercrime bill covers quite a number of offences and provides for appropriate sanctions for each. We are aware that such crimes are largely committed by individuals sitting outside the borders of our country, and as such we hope to work hand in hand with the international community in trying to arrest this scourge.

Since the cyberspace has become the backbone of global commerce and communication, the Ministry has found it necessary to develop the Electronic Communications and Transactions Bill. This Bill is numbered amongst the requirements put forward by the World Bank in order to provide budgetary support to governments. The world is abuzz with e-Commerce, e-payments, e-government, etc. and the Kingdom of Eswatini is not left behind; the country is already engaged in online orders, online payments and some government services are already available online. However, a proper legislative framework to govern this space and provide proper guidance is yet to be formalized. Consumers and traders need proper protection on transactions conducted using digital platforms and contracts entered into, and signed digitally, must be recognized in law.

Furthermore, since data has become the new gold with the potential of benefitting EmaSwati in numerous ways, the Ministry has developed the Data Protection Bill. Personal information or data is very important and personal to all people. It is very important that a framework for the proper collection and processing of same is put in place and properly governed. Personal information includes such data as names of identifiable individuals, addresses, finger prints, health information, financial details, etc. There are many organizations that collect and use personal data and have been doing so for a long time with no particular guidance. The collection, use, retention and disclosure of that data to third parties are some of the aspects addressed by this bill.

Lastly, Honourable President, The Ministry of Information Communications and Technology is pleased to get an opportunity to re-present to Honorable

Senators, the Eswatini Broadcasting Bill 2019 which, primarily, is aimed at providing a regulatory framework for all broadcasting services in the country. This will result in the introduction of a three tier system of broadcasting (Public, Commercial and Community broadcasting services) as well as Subscription services. The bill also advances the establishment of the Eswatini Broadcasting Corporation, a national public broadcaster, by amalgamating the operations and resources of Eswatini Television Authority (ETVA) and the Eswatini Broadcasting and Information Services (EBIS).

The Ministry views the bill as a key broadcast industry transformer and carries a huge impact in the socio economic development of the country, in that;

- It will trigger new investor interest in the broadcasting sector with particular reference to the establishment of new television and radio stations.
- More jobs will be created, both formal and informal, across all sectors of the broadcasting industry.
- The amalgamation of the EBIS and ETVA will save government and ETVA, huge running costs as these institutions will now share resources.
- The bill promotes the development of the Film and Video production industry which is currently the missing link in the full functional capacity of the new Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) broadcasting network.
- Eswatini's ranking in relevant international index ratings will improve

dramatically because the country will have conformed to key requirements of associate international organisations such as UNESCO, African Platform on Access to Information (APAI), Southern African Broadcasters Association (SABA), World Summit on Information Societies (WSIS) to name a few.

- The Country is competing for a substantial global funding through the United States run Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) (US\$40 Million). The Broadcasting Bill 2019 is key in improving the MCC scorecard for accessing the funds.

The country's broadcasting architecture has not evolved in many years hence the slow progress and efforts in modernizing the industry. This state of affairs has robbed the country of a growth area that has the potential of stimulating and transforming the economy. This Bill is designed to untangle and unlock complexities which may exist and also to balance business interest and society's right to information.

Honourable President we have brought for the consideration of the House these pieces of legislation to help protect EmaSwati as they enjoy the digital world that comes with a lot of promise for individuals, organizations and nations alike as already alluded to, earlier. We further appreciate the opportunity to reflect on the Eswatini Broadcasting Bill 2019 which promises to transform our Broadcasting sector.

With these few remarks, Honourable President I want to thank you and wish you well as you take a look into these bills.

May God bless you.