

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

**SIYANIVUSELA  
EPHALAMENDE.**

**NONKHE**

**BEKUNENE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO BE HERE TODAY TO COMMENCE THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 12<sup>TH</sup> PARLIAMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI.

WE WARMLY WELCOME ALL WHO ARE HERE, OUR DISTINGUISHED GUESTS WHO HAVE TRAVELLED FAR AND WIDE, INCLUDING OUR VALUED DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS AND FRIENDS. WE ALSO WELCOME EVERYONE PARTICIPATING THROUGH VARIOUS TECHNOLOGICAL PLATFORMS TO ENGAGE IN THESE SIGNIFICANT PROCEEDINGS.

## **LOOKING BACK ON THE YEAR 2024**

WE HAVE NOW ENTERED 2025, A NEW YEAR THAT IS FULL OF PROMISE. WE THANK THE LORD ALMIGHTY FOR A SAFE ENTRY INTO A YEAR OF NEW OPPORTUNITIES.

WE DECLARE THIS YEAR AS THE YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION TO THE PROMISED LAND. IT IS THE ENDING OF ONE CHAPTER AND THE BEGINNING OF A NEW ONE.

IT IS ALSO THE YEAR IN WHICH WE NEED TO IMPROVE OUR CRITICAL AREAS SUCH AS HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION, JOB CREATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY, TAKING CARE OF THE ELDERLY AND THE YOUTH. AS WE DO SO WE MUST REMAIN GROUNDED IN OUR RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE AND UNITED IN COMMON PURPOSE.

THE NATION'S OVERWHELMING RESPONSE TO ALL NATIONAL CEREMONIES, PARTICULARLY THE INCWALA, AFFIRMED OUR GROWING UNITY AND DEEP AFFECTION FOR NATIONAL PRIDE AND PATRIOTISM, WHICH SERVES AS THE CORNERSTONE OF SHARED SUCCESS.

### **GOOD RAINS AND RELIEF EFFORTS**

THE PAST FEW WEEKS HAVE SEEN THE COUNTRY EXPERIENCE EXCELLENT RAINS THAT HAVE HELPED ENHANCE OUR WATER CONSERVATION AND FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY EFFORTS.

HOWEVER, AS WE WELCOME THESE RAINS, WE ARE ALIVE TO THE DESTRUCTION THEY HAVE CAUSED ON SOME OF OUR ROADS, BRIDGES, AND PEOPLE'S HOMES. SADLY, A FEW LIVES HAVE ALSO BEEN LOST.

WE EXTEND OUR SYMPATHIES TO ALL THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN NEGATIVELY AFFECTED BY THESE RAINS. WE HAVE BEEN ASSURED THAT THE EMERGENCY AND RELIEF AGENCIES HAVE BEEN WORKING TIRELESSLY TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT.

## **OVERVIEW OF 1<sup>ST</sup> SESSION FOR PARLIAMENTARIANS**

AS WE REFLECT ON THE FIRST SESSION OF THE 12<sup>TH</sup> PARLIAMENT, WE RECOGNISE SOME TANGIBLE ACHIEVEMENTS BY OUR LEGISLATORS.

HAVING FOUND YOUR FOOTING, WE HAVE SEEN YOUR DEDICATION THROUGH VIBRANT DEBATES, ACTIVE PRESENCE AND SERVING THE PEOPLE WHILST PRODUCING LEGISLATION AIMED AT UPLIFTING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF EMASWATI.

GOING FORWARD, AS A “**NKWE**” COMMITMENT TO ADDRESSING SUBMISSIONS MADE DURING THE SIBAYA, PARLIAMENT MUST STRENGTHEN CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT AND ENSURE FULL PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN LEGISLATIVE OUTCOMES FOR GOOD SERVICE DELIVERY.

WE ALSO ENCOURAGE PARLIAMENT TO BE RESPONSIVE TO EMERGING TRENDS IN TECHNOLOGY. IT IS NOW TIME THAT EVERY LISWATI HAS ACCESS TO LAWS PASSED AND LIVE STREAMING OF PARLIAMENT DEBATES.

IT IS CRUCIAL TO ENSURE NO ONE IS LEFT BEHIND.  
**NINGANYAMALALI ETINKHUNDLENI, NITE NIBUYE  
LILANGA SELISHONILE.**

### **CREDIT RATING UPGRADE**

WE ARE DELIGHTED TO ENTER THE YEAR ON A POSITIVE ECONOMIC FOOTING FOLLOWING THE UPGRADING OF THE COUNTRY’S CREDIT RATING FROM B3 TO B2 POSITIVE OUTLOOK BY MOODY’S RATINGS AGENCY IN NOVEMBER 2024.

THE CREDIT OUTLOOK HAS IMPROVED DUE TO ECONOMIC AND INSTITUTIONAL REFORMS, FINANCIAL STABILITY, FISCAL CONSOLIDATION, MONETARY POLICY DISCIPLINE, EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION OF THE **REVENUE STABILIZATION FUND** AND SOUND POLICY ADVICE PROVIDED TO GOVERNMENT BY THE CENTRAL BANK.

WE ARE PLEASED THAT THE BANK HAS FINALLY LAUNCHED THE FIRST PHASE OF THE **NATIONAL PAYMENT SWITCH PROJECT** TO ENHANCE THE EFFICIENCY AND SPEED OF ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS, MODERNISE THE NATIONAL PAYMENT SYSTEM AND PROMOTE FINANCIAL INCLUSION IN THE COUNTRY.

THE BANK IS COMMENDED FOR ITS SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN VARIOUS FINANCIAL SECTORS AND BEING SHORTLISTED FOR THE GLOBAL BANKING & MARKETS AFRICA AWARDS 2025.

IT IS NOW URGED TO DOUBLE ITS EFFORTS IN PROTECTING PEOPLE'S FINANCES AGAINST DUBIOUS FINANCIAL SCHEMES. ABOVE ALL, IT MUST ENSURE THAT THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCH CRIMES FACE THE FULL MIGHT OF THE LAW.

WE CALL UPON OUR BANKS AND OTHER FINANCIAL SERVICES PROVIDERS TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES OF ESWATINI BY SUPPORTING OUR PEOPLES' IDEAS FOR EMERGING BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES AND FOCUS ON THEIR POTENTIAL AND NOT FAILURES.

### **ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE AND OUTLOOK**

THE DOMESTIC ECONOMY IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE TO GROW, LARGELY DUE TO RESILIENCE AND A REBOUND FROM EXTERNAL FACTORS.

THESE INCLUDE, RISING GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS, AND CLIMATE CHANGE. RECENT MACROECONOMIC PROJECTIONS PREDICT AN 8.3% INCREASE IN GDP IN 2025, UP FROM 4.9% IN 2024.

THE MULTI-BILLION EMALANGENI MPAKENI DAM PROJECT IS EXPECTED TO DRIVE GROWTH IN THE SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM, TOGETHER WITH THE LUBOMBO AND SHISELWENI ROADS INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE ENERGY AND MINING PROJECTS.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO THE LAUNCH OF THE STRATEGIC OIL RESERVE IN APRIL AND THE COMPLETION OF THE ICC AND FISH. WE CAN ALSO EXPECT THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT TO START THIS YEAR.

YOU WILL BE AWARE THAT OUR PARLIAMENT WAS BUILT MANY YEARS AGO AND HAS SERVED US VERY WELL BUT IT NOW NEEDS TO BE TRANSFORMED TO ACCOMMODATE THE NEEDS OF TODAY. THIS INCLUDES THE PROVISION OF A PARLIAMENTARIANS' VILLAGE THAT WILL BE BUILT IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

WE CALL UPON GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION OF LOCAL CONTRACTORS IN THESE PROJECTS, SO THAT THE PEOPLE AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY DERIVE TANGIBLE BENEFITS THAT GO BEYOND THE NEW INFRASTRUCTURE.

AS WE EMBARK ON OUR NATIONAL PLANS FOR THE NEW YEAR, WE MUST BE MINDFUL OF THE 20.4% DECREASE IN SACU RECEIPTS. IMPORTANTLY, IS THE IMPACT THIS WILL HAVE ON OUR DEVELOPMENT AGENDA AMID RISING SOCIO-ECONOMIC NEEDS.

THIS CALLS FOR PRUDENT FISCAL MANAGEMENT AND PRIORITY-DRIVEN UTILISATION OF THE REVENUE STABILISATION FUND. IT ALSO REQUIRES GREATER URGENCY IN THE DIVERSIFICATION OF THE ECONOMY TO REDUCE RELIANCE ON THE SACU POOL.

## **PRIVATE SECTOR EXPANSION**

THE KINGDOM'S ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE HAS BEEN LARGELY DRIVEN BY PRIVATE SECTOR EXPANSION, MAKING IT ONE OF THE TOP-PERFORMING STATES IN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY (SADC) IN 2024.

TO SUSTAIN THIS MOMENTUM, WE SHOULD ALSO ENGAGE IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF OUR BUSINESS SECTOR TO PROVIDE MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR JOB CREATION. IT IS TIME WE IMPROVE THE SEDCO MODEL INTO ONE THAT CAN TURN COMMUNITIES INTO ECONOMIC HUBS THROUGH THEIR ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES.

THE DECENTRALISATION PROGRAMME SHOULD ALSO INCORPORATE BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTRES IN THE COMMUNITIES TO ELIMINATE THE NEED FOR LONG DISTANT TRAVEL TO SEEK INFORMATION AND PROFESSIONAL ADVICE ON BUSINESS START-UPS IN THE MAJOR CITIES.

WE ARE ALSO PLEASED THAT THE COUNTRY WILL BE TRANSFORMING THE ESWATINI INVESTMENT PROMOTION AUTHORITY (EIPA), TO BE AN **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AGENCY**, COUPLED WITH A COMPREHENSIVE OVERHAUL OF THE INVESTMENT PROMOTION AND TRADE LEGISLATION TO ALIGN WITH GLOBAL BEST PRACTICES.

A PIVOTAL ELEMENT OF THESE REFORMS IS THE FORTHCOMING **ONE-STOP SERVICE CENTRE** FOR INVESTORS, WHICH WILL STREAMLINE SERVICES, AND MAKE ESWATINI AN INVESTMENT DESTINATION.

THE GOVERNMENT MUST FURTHER LEVERAGE PRIVATE SECTOR POTENTIAL, SUCH AS THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (AFCFTA), TO CREATE MORE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

WE URGE EMASWATI TO PLAY THEIR PART IN GROWING THE ECONOMY BY EXTENDING THEIR FULL SUPPORT TOWARDS THE '**MADE-IN-ESWATINI**' GOODS BY EMBRACING THE '**BUY LOCAL**' INITIATIVE.

GOVERNMENT ACKNOWLEDGES AND VALUES THE CONTRIBUTION BY THE SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES BECAUSE THEY ARE THE ENGINE OF OUR ECONOMIC GROWTH AS A KINGDOM.

## **INFORMATION COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENT**

THE KINGDOM IS ENTERING A TRANSFORMATIVE ERA, REDEFINING HOW EMASWATI ACCESS OPPORTUNITIES, CONNECT WITH GOVERNMENT, AND EMBRACE DIGITAL-FIRST FUTURE. THE GOVERNMENT AIMS TO PLACE PUBLIC SERVICES IN THE HANDS OF EVERY LISWATI OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS.

LAST YEAR WAS HISTORIC AS GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED A CORPORATE IDENTITY MANUAL (GCIM) AND REVAMPED THE GOVERNMENT EMAIL SYSTEM, WHICH ARE KEY STEPS TOWARDS SAFEGUARDING GOVERNMENT DATA AND ELEVATING THE IMAGE OF THE COUNTRY ON THE GLOBAL STAGE.

### **TECHNOLOGY INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT**

WE ALSO NOTE THAT GOVERNMENT HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT INVESTMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE, WHICH SAW 48 TINKHUNDLA CENTRES, AND SEVERAL GOVERNMENT STRUCTURES CONNECTED TO FREE WI-FI.

THE NATION IS INFORMED THAT MORE EMASWATI WILL HAVE EASY ACCESS TO WIFI, THANKS TO A MASSIVE COUNTRYWIDE **FIBRE-OPTIC** THAT WILL BE ROLLED OUT OVER THE NEXT 24 MONTHS, TO STRENGTHEN THE COUNTRY'S DIGITAL BACKBONE.

WE COMMEND THE GOVERNMENT FOR ITS ENGAGEMENTS AND PLANNED PARTNERSHIPS WITH HIGH-TECH COMPANIES TO PROMOTE OUR ICT AGENDA AND SKILLS TRAINING, WORKING WITH THE ROYAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY PARK. WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO THESE BEING SUCCESSFULLY CONCLUDED FOR ACTION SOON.

### **SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FOR OUR DEVELOPMENT**

THE ENERGY SECTOR REMAINS ESSENTIAL IN DRIVING ESWATINI'S DEVELOPMENT AND RESILIENCE. OVER THE PAST YEAR, GOVERNMENT HAS MADE SIGNIFICANT STRIDES IN ENERGY GENERATION AND SECURITY, FOSTERING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY.

WE URGE ESWATINI ELECTRICITY COMPANY TO PARTNER WITH POTENTIAL INVESTORS IN ENSURING THAT WE TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF THE ALTERNATIVE SOURCES OF ENERGY SOLUTIONS. THESE INCLUDE COAL, BIOMASS AND SOLAR, AS WE AIM TO MEET OUR GOAL OF PROVIDING AFFORDABLE POWER SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOR OUR PEOPLE.

THE NATION WILL BE PLEASED TO KNOW THAT GOVERNMENT HAS NOW CONNECTED **88% OF HOUSEHOLDS** TO THE NATIONAL GRID. WHILE THIS IS A NOTABLE PROGRESS, THE ULTIMATE GOAL IS TO REACH 100% COUNTRYWIDE WELL AHEAD OF THE UNIVERSAL ENERGY TARGET OF 2030.

### **HEALTH SECTOR IMPROVEMENTS**

THE GOOD HEALTH OF OUR NATION IS INTEGRAL TO OUR DEVELOPMENT. WHILE THE COUNTRY HAS PROGRAMMES IN THE HEALTH SECTOR, WE NEED TO IMPROVE ON PROVIDING AN AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE, WHICH CATERS FOR ALL EMASWATI.

WE COMMEND THE EFFORTS MADE BY GOVERNMENT IN ENSURING THAT DRUGS HAVE BEEN DISTRIBUTED AND MADE AVAILABLE IN THE DIFFERENT HEALTH FACILITIES.

AS PART OF OUR TRANSFORMATION GOING FORWARD, LET US HAVE A MINIMUM STANDARD FOR ALL OUR HOSPITALS AND CLINICS WITH REGARDS AVAILABILITY OF ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT, DRUGS AND FACILITIES SO THAT EVERYONE WILL RECEIVE TREATMENT REGARDLESS OF THEIR FINANCIAL POSITION.

AFFORDABLE HEALTH CARE MEANS NO ONE SHOULD BE TURNED AWAY DUE TO LACK OF RESOURCES. LIFE IS FOR EVERYONE DESPITE ONE'S AFFORDABILITY. SERVICES MUST BE AVAILED TO ALL AT ALL TIMES.

WE NOTE HOW THE COUNTRY HAS DONE WELL IN STEMMING THE TIDE OF HIV AND AIDS, BUT WE NOW FACE A NEW THREAT IN THE GROWING NUMBER OF NON-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES (NCDS).

THE NATION IS STILL EXPECTING THE DELIVERY OF THE REFERRAL HOSPITAL, WITH A FULLY-FLEDGED CANCER TREATMENT FACILITY.

IN THE MEANTIME, WE NEED TO PUT IN PLACE REGULATIONS AND PERMISSIVE LAWS AROUND ISSUES OF RADIATION FOR CHEMOTHERAPY THAT WILL ALLOW EMASWATI TO BENEFIT FROM THIS TREATMENT LOCALLY.

WE ALSO NEED TO SPEED UP EFFORTS TO SET UP PHAMARCEUTICAL INDUSTRIES TO MANUFACTURE AND SUPPLY THE MEDICATION THAT WE IMPORT FROM OTHER COUNTRIES FOR OUR HEALTH FACILITIES.

### **EDUCATION REMAINS A PRIORITY**

EDUCATION IS THE BEDROCK OF ANY NATION. AN EDUCATED AND WELL-INFORMED NATION IS LIKELY TO SUCCEED IN ALL ITS ENDEAVOURS. OUR SCHOOLING SYSTEM HAS GIVEN US AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRAIN MASTERMINDS WHO CAN DEVELOP THE ECONOMY OF ESWATINI.

A TESTAMENT TO THIS IS THE NUMBER OF EMASWATI OR ESWATINI EDUCATED INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE AT THE HELM OF MULTINATIONAL CORPORATIONS IN NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES AND ABROAD.

THAT IS A CLEAR INDICATION THAT OUR EDUCATION IS STRONG ENOUGH TO IMPROVE EVEN FURTHER TO DEVELOP NEW UNIVERSITIES SUCH AS THE PROPOSED SADC UNIVERSITY OF TRANSFORMATION, WHICH CAN HELP THE COUNTRY CREATE MORE JOB OPPORTUNITIES.

THE YOUTH OF THIS COUNTRY ALSO DESERVE AN EDUCATION OF HIGH STANDARDS THAT IS DEVOID OF DISRUPTIVE ELEMENTS THAT COMPROMISE THE QUALITY.

WE HAVE A DUTY TO IMPROVE THE LEARNING CONDITIONS TO GUARANTEE OUR YOUTH A BRIGHTER FUTURE. WE CALL UPON ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO PLAY A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN ENHANCING THIS SECTOR WHICH PLAYS A VITAL ROLE IN POVERTY ERADICATION, INDUSTRIALISATION AND IMPROVED QUALITY OF LIFE.

### **AGRICULTURE SECTOR**

FOOD SOVEREIGNTY REMAINS A PRIORITY FOR THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI.

THE COUNTRY IS AIMING AT PRODUCING ALL THE FOOD THAT IT EATS SINCE AVAILABILITY OF FINANCIAL RESOURCES DOES NOT GUARANTEE A PROVISION OF FOOD.

IN 2024 THE COUNTRY EXPERIENCED A SHORTFALL IN ITS TARGETED METRIC TONNES OF MAIZE DUE TO THE HEAT WAVES THAT AFFECTED US. HOWEVER, FARMERS HAVE TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE SUBSIDISED TRACTOR HIRE SERVICES, THUS CREATING ANTICIPATION OF AN IMPROVED HARVEST FOR 2025.

GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO PROVIDE INCENTIVES THAT ENCOURAGE DIVERSIFICATION OF PRODUCTION AND VENTURE INTO OTHER CROPS THAT ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE.

PRIORITY IS BEING GIVEN TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF SMALL AND MEDIUM MULTI-PURPOSE DAMS IN COMMUNITIES TO IMPROVE WATER SECURITY AND ENABLE SMALL-SCALE FARMERS TO GROW THEIR PRODUCE AND VENTURE INTO COMMERCIAL FARMING.

AFTER PRODUCING WE MUST THEN PROCESS THE GOODS TO PROMOTE AGRI-PROCESS INDUSTRIES IN ESWATINI.

IN ADDITION, GOVERNMENT IS ALSO CONSTRUCTING A DISTRIBUTION CENTER AND COLD STORAGE FACILITY AT THE KM III INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT TO SUPPORT COMMERCIALISATION OF AGRICULTURE.

### **TOURISM VITAL FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH**

THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI HAS BECOME A POPULAR TOURIST DESTINATION. THIS SECTOR HAS SEEN A 11% INCREASE IN REGIONAL AND INTERCONTINENTAL VISITS, WITH THE DESTINATION BEING RANKED BY CNN TRAVEL AMONG THE TOP 25 TRAVEL DESTINATIONS IN 2025.

PREVIOUSLY WE WERE ALSO RANKED TOP 5 BY LONELY PLANET TRAVEL AS ONE OF THE BEST TRAVEL DESTINATIONS IN THE WORLD.

LET US KEEP OUR COUNTRY ATTRACTIVE BY REDUCING WASTE POLLUTION THROUGH INITIATIVES LIKE THE **PHATSA SAKHO NAWE CAMPAIGN** AND PROMOTING REUSABLE BAGS, WHICH HAVE SEEN A 30% DECREASE IN PLASTIC LITTER.

### **WATER AND SANITATION MANAGEMENT**

THE KINGDOM AIMS TO ACHIEVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL 6 (SDG-6) WHICH STIPULATES THAT PEOPLE SHOULD NOT WALK MORE THAN 2 KILOMETRES TO ACCESS WATER, WITH THE MAIN TARGET OF HAVING WATER REACH EACH HOUSEHOLD AS PART OF THE TRANSFORMATION PROCESS.

CURRENTLY, 75% OF THE POPULATION HAS ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER. OUR GOAL IS 100% BY 2030. THIS WILL BE ACHIEVED THROUGH THE WATER PROJECTS TO BE CONSTRUCTED ALL AROUND THE COUNTRY.

## **TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE**

GOVERNMENT WILL PURSUE PLANS TO ENHANCE THE COUNTRY'S AIR, RAIL AND ROAD NETWORK FOR ALL-WEATHER ACCESS. A ROAD UPGRADING PROGRAMME AIMED AT ADDRESSING THE SIGNIFICANT THREATS POSED BY CLIMATE CHANGE IS UNDERWAY.

GOVERNMENT WILL MOBILISE RESOURCES FOR INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, FOCUSING ON COST-EFFECTIVE SERVICES AND IMPROVING MAINTENANCE FOR STRUCTURES THAT HAVE OUTLIVED THEIR DESIGN LIFE. THIS WILL ENSURE CONTINUED SERVICE FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.

## **PERFORMANCE OF THE NATIONAL AIRLINE**

THE LAUNCH OF THE COUNTRY'S ONLY COMMERCIAL AIRLINE IS ANOTHER MILESTONE OF THE LAST TWO YEARS AND IT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO GROW INTO A REGIONAL CARRIER WITH THE NECESSARY SUPPORT.

THE RECOGNITION BY THE AFRICAN AIRLINES ASSOCIATION FOR BEING THE BEST IMPROVED IN INTER-AFRICA CONNECTIVITY FOR 2023 VALIDATES THE COUNTRY'S DECISION TO RE-LAUNCH THE NATIONAL AIRLINE. TO REACH SELF-SUFFICIENCY THE ENTITY NEEDS THE SUPPORT FROM THE GOVERNMENT AND THE NATION AT LARGE.

### **DECENTRALISING GOVERNMENT SERVICES**

GOVERNMENT HAS PRIORITIZED DECENTRALISATION OF SERVICES TO ENSURE AFFORDABLE CIVIL REGISTRATION AND IMMIGRATION FOR ALL CITIZENS IN RESPONSE TO CALLS FROM SIBAYA.

A COUNTRYWIDE MOPPING EXERCISE CARRIED OUT IN ALL CHIEFDOMS, AS WELL AS AN INITIATIVE CALLED "**CLOSING THE TAP**" IN OUR HEALTH FACILITIES, HAS REDUCED THE NUMBER OF UNDOCUMENTED CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS EXCLUDED FROM ACCESS TO HEALTH AND EDUCATION.

## **NATIONAL COMMITMENT TO YOUTH ACTIVITIES**

IT IS OFTEN SAID THAT THE YOUTH IS THE CANVAS UPON WHICH THE MASTERPIECE OF TOMORROW IS PAINTED. WE HAVE LAUNCHED SEVERAL INITIATIVES TO PROVIDE THEM WITH OPPORTUNITIES FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS TO TACKLE THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING.

WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY THE INCREMENTAL PROGRESS MADE UNDER THE GRADUATE TRAINEE PROGRAMME LAUNCHED LAST YEAR AND COMMEND THE INSTITUTIONS THAT HAVE COMMITTED TO LONG-TERM ENGAGEMENT OF OUR YOUTH.

PROVIDING ACCESS TO FINANCE THROUGH THE YOUTH ENTERPRISE FUND FOR BUSINESS VENTURES THAT WILL MAKE OUR YOUTH KEY PLAYERS IN ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION, REMAINS CRITICAL.

GOVERNMENT IS ALSO ACTIVELY WORKING TO PROMOTE CULTURAL HERITAGE AND DRIVE SPORTS INNOVATION.

WE CONGRATULATE ALL THOSE WHO HAVE ACHIEVED MEDALS IN INTERNATIONAL TOURNAMENTS FOR MAKING US PROUD AS A NATION.

### **CARING FOR THE VULNERABLE POPULATIONS**

AS EMASWATI, WE ALL HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY OF CARE FOR THE VULNERABLE GROUPS IN OUR SOCIETY, INCLUDING THE ELDERLY.

WE COMMEND GOVERNMENT FOR INITIATING EFFORTS TO TRACE CHILDREN AND PARENTS WHO HAVE NEGLECTED THEIR DUTY. FURTHER EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE BY GOVERNMENT AND ITS PARTNERS TO ACCORD DECENT SHELTERS FOR THE LESS PRIVILEGED.

URGENT ATTENTION NEEDS TO BE GIVEN TO AVOID EMERGING SLUMS IN THE FUTURE. WE HAVE TO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY SOCIAL ASSISTANCE AND CARE TO ENSURE VULNERABLE EMASWATI DO NOT GROW UP IN THESE AREAS.

GOVERNMENT WILL WORK CLOSELY WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN PROVIDING AFFORDABLE HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR EMASWATI AS THIS IS A BASIC NECESSITY FOR ALL.

CASH TRANSFERS TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND THE ELDERLY HAVE ALSO BEEN MADE. DUE TO THE INFLATIONARY ISSUES AND THE BURDEN OFTEN EXPERIENCED BY THE ELDERLY PERSONS, THEIR **GRANTS WILL BE INCREASED** THIS COMING FISCAL YEAR.

### **CORRUPTION STIFLING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE COUNTRY'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC GOALS HINGES ON THE SUCCESS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION.

OUR INITIATIVES TO COMBAT CORRUPTION NEED TO BE FOUGHT TOGETHER, WITH INCREASED EFFORTS TO PROTECT WHISTLEBLOWERS, STRENGTHEN POLICIES AND CREATE A CULTURE OF INTEGRITY.

HOLDING ACCOUNTABLE THOSE INVOLVED AND FACILITATING CORRUPTION, IS CRUCIAL IF THE NATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENDA IS TO SUCCEED AND ENSURE CORRUPTION IS NOT TOLERATED.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

THE WORLD IS FACING NUMEROUS COMPLEX CRISES IN A FORM OF GLOBAL TENSIONS AND CONFLICTS, REQUIRING A STRONGER COLLABORATION BY COUNTRIES TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES, WHICH ARE CAUSING DEVASTATION AND REVERSING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.

THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI REMAINS COMMITTED TO THE NOBLE IDEALS OF THE UNITED NATIONS, SUCH AS THE 2023 NEW AGENDA FOR PEACE, THE AFRICAN UNION AGENDA 2063, SADC GOALS, JUST TO MENTION A FEW.

WE ARE ALSO COMMITTED TO STRENGTHENING THE RELATIONS THAT HAPPILY EXISTS WITH FRIENDS AND DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS IN FOSTERING CORDIAL BILATERALS AND ESTABLISHING NEW ONES.

LET US ALSO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE INCENTIVES AFFORDED BY THE MANY TRADE AGREEMENTS WE HAVE ESTABLISHED AT INTER-CONTINENTAL SUMMITS TO BOOST OUR START-UP CAPITALS FOR ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS.

## **CONCLUSION**

**NINE BEKUNENE**, I WISH TO CONCLUDE WITH A REMINDER OF THE NATIONAL CALL OF '**NKWE**' FROM SIBAYA. THIS REQUIRES OF US TO COMMIT AND REAFFIRM THAT THE CIVIL SERVICE IS THERE TO GIVE SERVICE TO THE NATION, NOT TO BE SERVED BY THE NATION.

THIS MEANS PUBLIC SERVANTS SHOULD GO ALL OUT IN PROVIDING ESSENTIAL SERVICES IN ALL FOUR REGIONS TO HELP US REALISE THE TRANSFORMATION WE HAVE DECLARED THIS YEAR. THE JOURNEY TO PROSPERITY WILL BE MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH **OUR UNITY!**

AT THIS JUNCTURE, MAY WE ALL RISE, AND INVITE THOSE FOLLOWING THESE PROCEEDINGS FROM THEIR RESPECTIVE LOCATIONS, TO REPEAT AFTER ME AS WE COMMIT TO THE FOLLOWING PRAYER;

LORD;

I AM BLIND WITHOUT YOUR LEADERSHIP,  
INCOMPETENT WITHOUT YOUR DIRECTION,  
INSUFFICIENT WITHOUT YOUR INSTRUCTIONS,  
INCAPABLE WITHOUT YOUR ANNOINTING.

AMEN.

**TOGETHER WE WILL MAKE IT!**

**DECLARATION**

IT IS NOW MY SINGULAR HONOUR TO DECLARE THE SECOND SESSION OF THE 12<sup>TH</sup> PARLIAMENT OFFICIALLY OPENED UNDER MY HAND.

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