



**Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Swaziland
to the United Nations**

Statement by

His Majesty King Mswati III

Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland

**on the occasion of the General Debate of the
72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly**

20 September 2017

New York

Please Check Against Delivery

Mr. President Miroslav Lajčák,
Your Excellencies,
Heads of States and Government,
United Nations Secretary-General Mr. António Guterres,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Introduction

Mr. President,

Allow me to express our sincere congratulations to you on your election as the President of the 72nd session of the United Nations General Assembly.

We commend you for immediately identifying six overarching priorities for your tenure that touch on attaining peace, giving impetus to the SDGS, climate change commitments, equality and human rights for all, among others.

These priorities truly capture several of the current troublesome global challenges and we look forward to working closely with you on these issues.

The Kingdom of eSwatini would also like to commend the leadership of the new Secretary-General, who is committed to transforming the UN to be fit for the 21st century.

Mr. President,

The reform of the United Nations and its attendant bodies has been discussed for a substantial period of time. My delegation believes that fresh impetus must be given to this process and tangible progress made.

We are therefore encouraged by the intentions of the Secretary-General to refocus our attention on the reform agenda. The reform of the Security Council is a key aspect of the process and no transformation could be complete without its fundamental change.

To this end, the Kingdom of eSwatini wishes to reiterate Africa's call for permanent membership to the Security Council in accordance with the Ezulwini Consensus.

The United Nations is urged to listen to the voice of millions of Africans who want to contribute to the welfare of the global community as equal partners.

We are confident that under the able leadership of the Secretary-General, the UN will scale to greater heights and support countries in implementing the 2030 agenda and the Paris Agreement.

The United Nations staff is also congratulated for their remarkable work in supporting inclusive and sustainable development, tackling diseases, promoting peace and stability and creating a conducive environment for mankind to live in, sometimes under extremely inimical conditions.

Theme for the 72nd Session

The theme of this session: "**Focusing on people: striving for peace and a decent life for all on a sustainable planet**" resonates perfectly well with the motto of the Sustainable Development Goals of "Leaving No One Behind".

This theme is indeed cross-cutting in nature as it impacts every aspect of life. It calls upon all of us to work towards creating peaceful countries, continents and a sustainable world where people can lead a peaceful and prosperous life.

In this vein, we wish to urge the UN member states to join hands in addressing the issue of nuclear threats that have the potential to disturb the world peace.

No country has the right to make the world an unsafe place to live and we owe it to our people and to future generations to put a stop to it.

Terrorism still remains a threat to the safety of our people in various parts of the world. It is a setback to key developmental issues that deserve the priority attention of the UN.

The Kingdom of eSwatini is committed to peace and a decent life for all. We are also firm believers in the principle of consultative decision-making. This involves a transparent and all-inclusive undertaking that grants every citizen an opportunity to voice their views in order to constructively contribute to the social, economic, cultural and political development of the country.

Accelerating progress on the sustainable development goals (SDGs)

Mr. President,

Our country is committed to the SDGs as they provide a framework for development for the global community to strive for inclusive and sustainable development of our respective countries.

We have taken several initiatives for mainstreaming and localization of the SDGs through public awareness campaigns, consultations, education and training at all levels.

The Kingdom of eSwatini has also integrated the goals into the National Development Strategy which was revised to capture its linkages with the SDGs and the African Union Agenda 2063.

Appropriate institutional arrangements are now in place for proper monitoring of implementation of the goals at all levels.

Climate change and food security

Sustainable Development Goal 13 calls for "**Urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**".

The urgency is now a global reality and recent weather episodes such as hurricanes, floods and mudslides across the world have shown that no nation is immune from its impacts. The Kingdom of eSwatini is no exception.

The southern African countries, including our Kingdom, faced severe drought conditions in 2015/2016. Its devastating effects, aggravated by the fall of the army worm, adversely affected crop production.

Funds from other projects and activities were diverted to mitigate the challenges.

The scale of the drought led the SADC region to declaring it a natural disaster. We are thankful to the UN, development partners, the international community, NGOs and other local organizations for supporting us during this period.

Government will continue with her programme of providing farming input subsidies to our farmers. The development of adequate water harvesting infrastructure to enhance food sufficiency will also remain a top priority for the country.

We urge donors and all nations, to not only fulfill their pledge towards the green fund, but to also adopt policies to strike the correct balance between production of essential products and environment sustainability to protect and preserve the world for future generations.

Education for sustainable development

Mr. President,

The net enrollment ratio in primary school increased significantly from 79.2% in 2000 to 97.7% in 2015 in the Kingdom.

This is a reflection of efforts by the country to ensure that all children have access to education irrespective of their socio-economic status.

Government provides for the needs of our children. Greater focus is placed on assisting those who are orphaned and vulnerable through various programmes

that ensure they too are able to access free primary school education and are provided with adequate nutrition through school feeding schemes.

In our quest to achieve a decent life for all, and in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Africa's Agenda 2063, the Kingdom of eSwatini has put in place several all-inclusive initiatives which are aimed at ensuring that no one is left behind.

Government also provides grants to the elderly as a way of supplementing their livelihood.

Innovative parks for sustainable development

The Kingdom is also developing innovation parks that will capacitate our young people with creative skills to enable them to contribute to the sustainable development of the country.

We would like to forge partnerships with well-established international parks to leverage and learn from their experience.

We have urged our private sector to take advantage of this initiative. We believe that this initiative, coupled with many others, will help nurture a future generation that is skilled and well equipped to provide solutions to tackle the socio-economic challenges and youth unemployment facing our nation.

SADC University of Transformation

The Kingdom will be hosting the SADC University of Innovation and Technology. This institution is expected to produce highly skilled manpower and also provide solutions to transform economies thus enabling countries in the SADC region to meet their skills gap.

We seek the support of highly educated facilitators and the international community to make this project a reality.

Social development

Tackling poverty, hunger, disease burden and improving the basic standard of living of our people has been at the centre of our Vision 2022 and National Development Strategy.

The importance of human capital investment and promotion of the interests of vulnerable groups are a crucial step towards economic growth and prosperity.

I have full confidence in the innovative and educated workforce that has demonstrated an indomitable spirit and resilience in overcoming the severe social, economic and environment challenges we have been confronted with in recent times.

As a result, "Rising Above Adversity to Create Prosperity for All" has been our national guiding theme for 2017.

Youth empowerment and demographic dividend

The critical importance of the demographic dividend to Africa's transformative development has been acknowledged by African leaders.

They have recognized the urgent need to accelerate the implementation of the African Union roadmap to harness the demographic dividend through investment in our youth.

HIV/AIDS and Malaria

The HIV and AIDS pandemic remains one of our priority areas as it continues to undermine our sustainable development objectives. It is stretching our health resources to the limit, calling for collective action by the government, international donors and other stakeholders to address it.

As a nation, we have taken a decision to attain an AIDS-free status in 2022, a vision that is in line with the global agenda to end AIDS by 2030.

Mr. President, we are happy to inform this august house of the positive results we have attained through our concerted policies in tackling this scourge.

Key findings from the second Swaziland HIV Incidence Measurement Survey, **SHIMS2**, reveal that we have achieved more than 70% viral load suppression among adults living with HIV.

We have also achieved a major reduction of nearly half in HIV incidence between 2011 and 2016.

While we are encouraged by these results, we will continue to do everything within our ability to ensure that there are no new infections.

We are also happy to mention that our efforts to tackle malaria eradication is being recognized.

We are honoured that the African Heads of State and Government, during their AU Summit held in Addis Ababa in January 2017, elected us to be the chair to lead the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA).

Tomorrow we shall be having a side event for malaria here in the UN headquarters. Malaria is a scourge that requires our concerted efforts to eradicate it from the face of the earth. We are aiming at partnering with our private sector in Africa and beyond to mobilize resources to combat it.

We appreciate the support from our partners and further appeal to financial institutions, development partners and donors to join us in this fight since it has handsome dividends for our populace in our beloved African continent.

Conclusion

Mr. President,

Among the political issues that have continued for too long is the continued denial of the right of the people of the Republic of China on Taiwan to participate in the un system.

Taiwan has shown significant commitment to the ideals of the United Nations and has aligned her priorities with those of the organization. Humankind, therefore, has a lot to benefit from Taiwan's experience towards our global agenda as a member of the un.

I re-affirm the full commitment of the government of the Kingdom of e-Swatini towards the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals.

However, it is worth noting that while our goals may be universal, we do not all share the same capabilities and capacities for implementing them.

Hence, recognizing the resource and capacity constraints, there is a need for enhanced resources, capacity building, technology transfer and South-South Cooperation to support lower middle-income countries, along with LDC's, to achieve the ambitious and transformative agenda.

I thank you – may the almighty god bless us all.