

REMARKS BY HONOURABLE THULISILE DLADLA

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI

DELIVERED ON BEHALF OF HIS MAJESTY KING MSWATI III

**AT THE SECOND WORLD SUMMIT FOR SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, DOHA,
QATAR**

YOUR HIGHNESS SHEIKH TAMIM BIN HAMAD AL THANI, EMIR OF THE STATE
OF QATAR,

YOUR MAJESTIES,

YOUR EXCELLENCY, ANTONIO GUTERRES, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE
UNITED NATIONS,

YOUR EXCELLENCY, ANNA BAERBOCK, PRESIDENT OF THE 80TH UNITED
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY,

DISTINGUISHED HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT,

EXCELLENCIES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I. OPENING: A CALL FOR SHARED HUMAN DIGNITY

IT IS A PROFOUND HONOUR TO STAND BEFORE YOU TODAY. I DELIVER THIS
STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF HIS MAJESTY KING MSWATI III, THE GOVERNMENT,
AND THE RESILIENT PEOPLE OF THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI.

YOUR EXCELLENCIES, WE ARE DEEPLY GRATEFUL TO YOU AND THE STATE OF
QATAR FOR HOSTING THIS CRITICAL WORLD SUMMIT. YOUR LEADERSHIP IN
BRINGING THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY BACK TO THE CORE VALUES OF SOCIAL

DEVELOPMENT, ERADICATING POVERTY, SECURING EMPLOYMENT, AND ENSURING SOCIAL INTEGRATION, IS BOTH TIMELY AND COMMENDABLE.

FOR ESWATINI, THE SOLEMN COMMITMENT MADE IN COPENHAGEN IS NOT JUST A POLICY DOCUMENT; IT IS THE MORAL CONTRACT THAT GUIDES OUR NATION. WE BELIEVE THAT TRUE STABILITY IS BUILT ON SOCIAL JUSTICE, AND THAT PROSPERITY MUST BE SHARED BY EVERYONE.

II. ESWATINI'S VISION: CENTERED ON THE CITIZEN

YOUR MAJESTIES, YOUR EXCELLENCIES,

UNDER THE VISIONARY LEADERSHIP OF HIS MAJESTY KING MSWATI III, ESWATINI HAS DELIBERATELY TRANSFORMED ITS APPROACH. WE HAVE MOVED FROM SIMPLY GIVING AID TO ACTIVELY FOSTERING SELF-RELIANCE AND ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT. OUR NATIONAL STRATEGY IS TO ENSURE THAT EVERY CITIZEN IS NOT JUST A BENEFICIARY OF DEVELOPMENT, BUT A CREATOR OF IT.

THIS CHANGE IS DRIVEN BY CONCRETE PROGRAMS THAT ARE DELIVERING REAL RESULTS AT THE GRASSROOTS LEVEL.

ESWATINI HAS ALSO MADE COMMENDABLE STRIDES IN EMPOWERING WOMEN, YOUTH, AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES. WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN PARLIAMENT AND DECISION-MAKING CONTINUES TO RISE, SUPPORTED BY CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES AND GENDER MAINSTREAMING ACROSS ALL SECTORS. THE PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 2018 AND ESWATINI'S RATIFICATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES HAVE EMBEDDED INCLUSION, ACCESSIBILITY, AND DIGNITY WITHIN OUR GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY SYSTEMS. IN THIS REGARD, GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN INTENTIONAL IN PROVIDING THE ELDERLY AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES HOUSING THAT ENSURES THEIR SECURITY AND DIGNITY.

III. PILLAR OF EMPOWERMENT: LOCALIZING ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

WE ARE TACKLING POVERTY AND UNEMPLOYMENT BY PUTTING RESOURCES DIRECTLY INTO THE HANDS OF OUR PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS:

A. THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (RDF): THE ENGINE OF SELF-EMPLOYMENT

THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT FUND (RDF) IS THE CORNERSTONE OF OUR GRASSROOTS ECONOMIC STRATEGY.

THIS FUND PROVIDES SEED CAPITAL AND SUPPORT TO ORGANIZED COMMUNITY GROUPS FOR INCOME-GENERATING PROJECTS.

BY OPERATING THROUGH OUR LOCAL GOVERNANCE SYSTEM, THIS FUND ENSURES THAT RESOURCES GO DIRECTLY TO THE PEOPLE WHO NEED THEM, TRANSFORMING SMALL INITIATIVES IN AGRICULTURE, SERVICES, AND CRAFT PRODUCTION INTO VIABLE BUSINESSES.

IT IS A POWERFUL MECHANISM THAT SHIFTS INDIVIDUALS FROM DEPENDENCY TO SUSTAINABLE SELF-EMPLOYMENT, FOSTERING TRUE COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP OF WEALTH CREATION.

B. INVESTING IN YOUTH AND FUTURE GROWTH

TO ADDRESS YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT, WE HAVE THE YOUTH ENTERPRISE REVOLVING FUND (YERF). THIS IS NOT JUST A LOAN SCHEME; IT'S AN ECOSYSTEM DESIGNED TO CULTIVATE TOMORROW'S LEADERS.

THIS FUND OFFERS START-UP AND EXPANSION CAPITAL, COUPLED WITH CRUCIAL MENTORSHIP AND BUSINESS SKILLS TRAINING.

C. UNLOCKING CORRIDORS

AS A LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRY, ESWATINI CONTINUES TO FACE DISTINCT CONSTRAINTS RELATED TO GEOGRAPHY AND MARKET ACCESS. HOWEVER, THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY AND THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA, WE ARE TURNING THESE CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES.

WE ARE INVESTING IN TRANSPORT CORRIDORS, RENEWABLE ENERGY, AND DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE TO IMPROVE CONNECTIVITY, FACILITATE TRADE, AND ENHANCE COMPETITIVENESS. WE BELIEVE THAT THE SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF LANDLOCKED AND SMALL STATES MUST BE SUPPORTED BY GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS THAT ENSURE ACCESS TO MARKETS, TECHNOLOGY, AND SUSTAINABLE FINANCING.

IV. PILLAR OF SUSTAINABILITY: THE POWER OF SMALLHOLDER FARMERS

IN OUR AGRICULTURAL HEARTLAND, WE HAVE SEEN A PROFOUND RURAL RENAISSANCE DRIVEN BY THE SUCCESS OF OUR SMALLHOLDER SUGAR CANE GROWER ASSOCIATIONS. RURAL DEVELOPMENT HAS ALSO BEEN A DEFINING FEATURE OF ESWATINI'S SOCIAL PROGRESS. THROUGH INITIATIVES SUCH AS THE ESWATINI WATER AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT ENTERPRISE, WE HAVE EXPANDED IRRIGATION, PROMOTED CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE, AND IMPROVED FOOD SOVEREIGNTY. THESE INVESTMENTS HAVE STRENGTHENED THE LIVELIHOODS OF RURAL COMMUNITIES AND ENHANCED NATIONAL FOOD SECURITY. THROUGH THIS STRATEGIC SUPPORT AND MODERN IRRIGATION, THOUSANDS OF SMALL FARMERS HAVE GRADUATED FROM SUBSISTENCE FARMING TO HIGH-VALUE, COMMERCIALY-ORIENTED AGRICULTURE.

THESE GRASSROOTS ASSOCIATIONS PROVIDE A VITAL STRUCTURE: THEY SECURE COLLECTIVE ACCESS TO MARKETS, SHARE RESOURCES, AND ENSURE QUALITY CONTROL.

THIS MODEL HAS NOT ONLY UPLIFTED RURAL HOUSEHOLD INCOMES SIGNIFICANTLY BUT HAS ALSO CREATED SUSTAINABLE, LONG-TERM EMPLOYMENT, MAKING THESE SMALLHOLDERS A CRUCIAL AND RESILIENT PILLAR OF THE NATION'S ECONOMY.

V. PILLAR OF SOCIAL SECURITY: INVESTING IN HUMAN CAPITAL

OUR ECONOMIC EFFORTS ARE POWERFULLY SUPPORTED BY STRONG SOCIAL GUARANTEES:

IN THE EDUCATION SECTOR, OUR COMMITMENT TO FREE PRIMARY EDUCATION HAS RESULTED IN NEAR-UNIVERSAL ENROLMENT AND WE HAVE ACHIEVED STRONG GENDER PARITY.

WHEN IT COMES TO HEALTH OUR DRIVE FOR UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE HAS DELIVERED SIGNIFICANT PUBLIC HEALTH ACHIEVEMENTS, INCLUDING A GLOBALLY RECOGNIZED SUCCESS IN REDUCING NEW HIV INFECTIONS AND A CORRESPONDING INCREASE IN LIFE EXPECTANCY.

IN ENSURING THAT NOBODY GETS LEFT BEHIND, WE PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME, ENSURING THAT DEPENDABLE GRANTS REACH THE ELDERLY, ORPHANS, AND PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, ENSURING THAT COMPASSION IS A CONSTANT IN EVERY LIFE.

VI. CONCLUSION: A CALL FOR GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP

YOUR EXCELLENCIES,

THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI, AS A LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRY, UNDERSTANDS THAT WHILE WE WORK TIRELESSLY ON OUR OWN, OUR SUCCESS IS TIED TO GLOBAL COOPERATION. WE FACE PERSISTENT CHALLENGES, BUT WE ARE DETERMINED TO OVERCOME THEM.

WE ARE ACTIVELY ALIGNING OUR NATIONAL VISION WITH THE DOHA PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING COUNTRIES 2024 – 2034.

YOUR HIGHNESS, WE THANK YOU ONCE MORE FOR SETTING THE STAGE FOR ACTION. WE CALL UPON THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY TO RENEW ITS SOLIDARITY AND TRANSLATE ASPIRATIONS INTO TANGIBLE RESULTS BY:

INCREASING PREDICTABLE FINANCING FOR SOCIAL PROTECTION AND CLIMATE ADAPTATION.

FACILITATING GENUINE TECHNOLOGY AND KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER.

STRENGTHENING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO GLOBAL MARKETS FOR ALL OUR GOODS.

THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI, UNDER THE STEADY HAND OF HIS MAJESTY KING MSWATI III, WILL CONTINUE TO CHAMPION A WORLD WHERE EVERY PERSON CAN LIVE WITH DIGNITY, OPPORTUNITY, AND HOPE. LET US WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD SOCIETIES THAT ARE NOT JUST WEALTHY, BUT ARE FUNDAMENTALLY INCLUSIVE, EQUITABLE, AND SUSTAINABLE.

I THANK YOU.