

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

SIYANIVUSELA
EPHALAMENDE!

NONKHE

BEKUNENE

INTRODUCTION

IT IS A GREAT JOY FOR ME TO BE WITH YOU HERE TODAY FOR THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI. I WISH TO SAY HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL.

WE ARE PLEASED THAT YOU COULD SET ASIDE TIME TO BEAR WITNESS TO THIS VERY SIGNIFICANT CEREMONY WHICH MARKS A NEW SESSION FOR OUR PARLIAMENTARIANS.

AS WE ENTER THE NEW YEAR, WE NEED TO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR ANCESTORS AND THE LORD ALMIGHTY FOR THEIR PROTECTION AND GUIDANCE OVER THE PAST YEAR WHICH WAS A YEAR FILLED WITH NUMEROUS CHALLENGES.

COMMEND PARLIAMENT FOR THEIR GOOD WORK

PARLIAMENT, IN ANY SOCIETY, IS A VERY IMPORTANT ARM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH ENACTS LAWS THAT PROMOTE PEACE AND STABILITY, A HEALTHY INVESTMENT CLIMATE, NATIONHOOD, FISCAL PRUDENCE AND LEGISLATION THAT WILL COMBAT POVERTY, DISEASES, AND CORRUPTION AMONGST OTHER LAWS.

WITH A COUNTRY FACED WITH MANY CHALLENGES, THE NATION IS LOOKING UP TO YOU AS ONE OF THE INSTITUTIONS TO COME UP WITH WELL RESEARCHED, CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS THAT CAN BE COUNTED AMONGST THE SUCCESS STORIES OF 2012.

YOUR CONSTITUENCIES AND THE NATION ALSO EXPECT YOU TO EXECUTE YOUR LEGISLATIVE FUNCTION WITH DIGNITY, HONESTY, INTEGRITY AND HUMILITY AT ALL TIMES, AS PARLIAMENT IS A HIGHLY RESPECTED INSTITUTION.

YOU SHOULD REMAIN ABOVE REPROACH AND LEAVE A GOOD LEGACY IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

THE NATION IS LOOKING FORWARD TO A SPEEDY CONCLUSION OF THE POLITICIAN'S CODE OF ETHICS DURING THIS SESSION, TO SERVE AS A GUIDING PRINCIPLE IN YOUR DAY TO DAY ENDEAVORS.

REFLECTION ON THE PREVIOUS YEAR 2011

TAKING A LOOK BACK, AT DEVELOPMENTS THAT UNFOLDED THROUGHOUT EVERY CORNER OF THE WORLD, THE PAST YEAR SAW SOME INSTABILITY RESULTING IN FORCED REMOVAL OF SOME GOVERNMENTS.

WE ALSO WITNESSED THE CRUMBLING OF ECONOMIES GLOBALLY WHICH GAVE BIRTH TO THE FINANCIAL CRISIS, THAT HAD A NEGATIVE EFFECT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF COUNTRIES SUCH AS OUR KINGDOM.

WE HAD NEVER IMAGINED WE WOULD SPEND A DAY WITHOUT KNOWING WHAT TOMORROW WILL BRING DUE TO THE UNPRECEDENTED BUDGETARY SHORTFALLS.

THIS HAS PRESENTED US WITH A VERY IMPORTANT LESSON AND A HUGE CHALLENGE GOING FORWARD FROM WHICH WE SHOULD CRAFT STRATEGIES THAT WOULD PROTECT US FROM EXPERIENCING A REPEAT OF THIS HARDSHIP IN YEARS TO COME.

THE PREVIOUS YEAR'S PROBLEMS SHOULD BE A THING OF THE PAST. WE ARE OPTIMISTIC THAT THE YEAR 2012 WILL USHER PROGRESS FOR THE COUNTRY AND ITS PEOPLE.

THE TASK BEFORE US NOW IS HOW WE PUT STRATEGIES THAT WILL BE IMPLEMENTED AND MONITORED EFFECTIVELY IN ORDER TO REALISE OUR GOALS AND OBJECTIVES.

SACU RECEIPTS

WE WELCOME THE FACT THAT THERE ARE POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS EMERGING FROM THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CUSTOMS UNION (SACU) RECEIPTS WHICH FORECAST A SIGNIFICANT GROWTH FOR THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR AND THIS BRINGS HOPE TO THE NATION.

I TRUST THAT THIS WILL HELP REVIVE A NUMBER OF PROGRAMMES THAT HAD BEEN AFFECTED BY THE BUDGET SHORTFALL.

IT WILL ALSO WORK TO PAY SUPPLIERS WHAT IS OWED TO THEM AND TO BOOST RESERVES TO IMPROVE CONFIDENCE IN THE LILANGENI.

WE LOOK UPON GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE TO SPEND SPARINGLY AND IMPLEMENT PRUDENT FISCAL EXPENDITURE MEASURES, IN ORDER TO INJECT LIFE BACK INTO THE LOCAL ECONOMY.

I WISH TO CAUTION HOWEVER, THAT SACU RECEIPTS ARE VOLATILE AND DO NOT DEPEND ON SWAZILAND ALONE. WE MUST SAVE FOR THE FUTURE BECAUSE THE FUTURE REMAINS UNCERTAIN.

ROLE OF CITIZENS IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

THE CITIZENS OF ESWATINI ARE AN IMPORTANT PARTNER IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

GOVERNMENT SHOULD EDUCATE EVERY CITIZEN ON ECONOMIC MATTERS SUCH AS THE BENEFIT AND IMPORTANCE OF DECLARING GOODS TO CUSTOMS OFFICIALS AT OUR BORDERS.

NON-DECLARATION OF GOODS AT THE BORDER MAY BE A BENEFIT TO THE INDIVIDUAL BUT IT RESULTS IN THE LOSS OF DATA COLLECTION FOR CUSTOMS OFFICIALS.

THE NATION MUST KNOW THAT IT IS VERY IMPORTANT FOR THE COUNTRY TO BE UP TO DATE WITH ITS CUSTOMS RECEIPTS AS POOR RECORD KEEPING AFFECTS THE ULTIMATE SHARE DISTRIBUTION OF RECEIPTS TO MEMBER STATES.

ROLE OF PARASTATALS

IT IS ALSO VITAL THAT WE TAKE A VERY CLOSE LOOK AT THE ROLE THAT OTHER PORTFOLIOS THAT GENERATE REVENUE FOR GOVERNMENT CAN PLAY TOWARDS BOOSTING THE ECONOMY.

ONE OF THE VALUABLE LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE FISCAL CRISIS IS NEVER TO PLACE ALL OUR EGGS IN ONE BASKET. WE SHOULD THEREFORE NOT LOOK TO SACU ALONE TO FUND OUR NATIONAL BUDGET.

IT'S TIME TO FOCUS ON OTHER PORTFOLIOS SUCH AS OUR PARASTATALS AND OUTLINE THE ROLE THEY SHOULD PLAY IN INJECTING A SHARE OF THEIR PROFITS INTO THE NATIONAL BUDGET.

OUR PARASTATALS WERE ESTABLISHED TO HELP UPLIFT THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND EASE THE BURDEN ON GOVERNMENT. SOME HAVE SUCCESSFULLY CARRIED OUT THIS MANDATE AND HAVE INVESTED LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY IN FOREIGN MARKETS.

WE MUST PUT IN PLACE STRATEGIES OF RE-INVESTING THESE FUNDS IN THE LOCAL ECONOMY WHICH IS IN DIRE NEED OF A FINANCIAL BOOST.

CLOSER MONITORING OF OUR PARASTATALS BECOMES NECESSARY IF WE ARE TO HAVE THEM PLAY THE DESIRED ROLE IN REVITALISING OUR ECONOMY.

INVESTMENT AND JOB CREATION

THE PRIVATE SECTOR CONTINUES TO BE THE ENGINE AND PILLAR OF OUR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION.

NO EFFORT SHOULD BE SPARED IN THE DRIVE TO LURE INVESTORS INTO THE KINGDOM AND EXPAND LOCAL INDUSTRIES IN ORDER TO INCREASE JOB OPPORTUNITIES.

THIS IS A TALL ORDER THAT REQUIRES US TO BE VERY INNOVATIVE, DOUBLE OUR EFFORTS AND GO THE EXTRA MILE IF WE ARE TO COMPETE FOR INVESTMENT IN THIS HIGHLY COMPETITIVE GLOBAL COMMUNITY.

WE SHOULD NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL TOURISM PROVIDES FOR GROWTH. THE INCREASING NUMBER OF TOURISTS TO SWAZILAND ARE A WELCOME TREND FOR THE KINGDOM, WHICH MUST BE MAINTAINED.

THE MINING SECTOR ALSO HAS A HUGE POTENTIAL TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

THIS IS A TIME FOR EVERY SWAZI TO STAND UP AND BE COUNTED AMONGST THOSE WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THE ECONOMIC REVIVAL OF OUR COUNTRY.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COUNTRY'S INFRASTRUCTURE REMAINS ONE OF THE KEY STRATEGIES FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

THE COUNTRY MUST OFFER INFRASTRUCTURE THAT APPEALS TO INVESTORS AND PROMOTES LOCAL BUSINESS GROWTH. GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FACTORY SHELLS TOWARDS THIS OBJECTIVE.

THE PLANNED ROAD AND RAIL CONSTRUCTION DEVELOPMENTS ARE ALSO EXPECTED TO CONTRIBUTE TO OUR ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION.

OUR INFRASTRUCTURE SHOULD FACILITATE PRODUCT DIVERSIFICATION IN AGRICULTURE AND VALUE ADDITION FOR THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

THE COUNTRY STILL HAS A GREAT CHALLENGE TOWARDS FOOD SELF-SUFFICIENCY. IT DOES NOT AUGER WELL THAT WE STILL IMPORT FOOD.

LOOKING AT THE IMPORTED GOODS, YOU OFTEN WONDER HOW AND WHY WE ARE FAILING TO PRODUCE IT OURSELVES BECAUSE WE HAVE THE CAPACITY TO DO SO, AND HAVE RICH AND PRODUCTIVE SOILS.

ALL IT REQUIRES ARE PEOPLE WHO ARE DETERMINED, FOCUSED AND HAVE THE SKILLS TO DELIVER ON THIS MANDATE.

IN ALL THESE DEVELOPMENT WE SHOULD ENSURE THE FULL PROTECTION OF OUR ENVIRONMENT TO AVOID ANY ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION.

MAY I ALSO APPEAL TO THE NATION TO LOOK AFTER GOVERNMENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROTECT IT FROM THOSE WHO FIND PLEASURE IN VANDALIZING IT.

EMPOWERMENT FUNDS

THE ISSUE OF UNEMPLOYMENT IS A BIG CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT. HOWEVER, THE NATION IS PLEASED THAT THE YOUTH ENTERPRISE FUND HAS HELPED CHANGE THE LIVES OF OUR YOUTH.

THEY HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ESTABLISH THEIR OWN BUSINESSES INSTEAD OF LOOKING FOR EMPLOYMENT.

PUPILS SHOULD BE PROVIDED WITH SKILLS THAT WILL EMPOWER THEM TO BE EMPLOYED OR CREATE THEIR OWN BUSINESSES.

THIS CAN BE REALISED IF WE MAKE ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS A COMPULSORY SUBJECT IN OUR SCHOOLS.

WE RECOGNISE THAT THE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT FUND HAS CHANGED THE BUSINESS LANDSCAPE THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AND WE SHALL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE RESOURCES FOR THESE FUNDS.

EDUCATION

JOB CREATION, OF COURSE, IS NOT A ONE SECTOR TASK. IT IS THE RESULT OF A COMBINATION OF EFFORTS, ONE OF WHICH IS EDUCATION AND TRAINING.

ONE OF THE GREATEST ASSETS THIS COUNTRY HAS IS ITS HUMAN CAPITAL RESOURCE. WE THEREFORE NEED TO INVEST IN AN EDUCATION SYSTEM THAT IS NOT ONLY PRACTICAL SKILLS ORIENTED BUT ALSO TEACHES OUR FUTURE CITIZENS TO BECOME CREATIVE AND INNOVATIVE.

THE WORLD HAS REACHED A LEVEL WHERE IT NEEDS VISIONARIES WHO ARE ABLE TO SUCCEED THROUGH PROFITABLE VENTURES IN MARKETS THAT WOULD APPEAR TO BE SATURATED.

MAY I URGE TEACHERS TO FOCUS THEIR ATTENTION ON CREATING A NEW BREED OF LEARNERS WHO WILL THEMSELVES BECOME EMPLOYERS IF THIS COUNTRY IS TO PROSPER.

CORRUPTION

AS WE MOVE FORWARD IN REBUILDING THIS COUNTRY AMIDST ALL THESE CHALLENGES, ONE MUST EXPRESS SERIOUS DISAPPOINTMENT AT SOME INDIVIDUALS WHO CONTINUE TO PLUNDER STATE RESOURCES FOR PERSONAL BENEFIT.

WE HAVE SEEN THESE INDIVIDUALS DIVERT NATIONAL FUNDS INTENDED FOR IMPORTANT PROJECTS FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT. WE CAN NO LONGER ALLOW THESE PEOPLE TO PLACE THEIR PERSONAL INTEREST ABOVE THAT OF THE COUNTRY.

IT IS TIME, SERIOUS ACTION IS TAKEN AGAINST SUCH SELFISH PEOPLE AND IT SHOULD BE ACTION THAT TRULY SERVES AS A VERY EFFECTIVE DETERRENT IF THIS COUNTRY IS TO MAKE ANY PROGRESS ECONOMICALLY FROM THIS DAY FORTH.

SOCIAL WELFARE

THE COUNTRY HAS SEVERAL SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS WHICH INCLUDE THE ORPHANED AND VULNERABLE CHILDREN WHO LOOK UP TO THE COUNTRY TO PROVIDE THEM WITH FOOD, SHELTER AND PROPER HEALTH CARE AND EDUCATION.

WE ALSO HAVE AN OBLIGATION TOWARDS THE ELDERLY WHO ARE NO LONGER ABLE TO FEED THEMSELVES.

THE ELDERLY HAVE PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT PART IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS COUNTRY AND IT IS TIME THAT WE TAKE GOOD CARE OF THEM.

GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FUNDS TO SUPPORT THESE SOCIAL PROGRAMMES.

HEALTH

GOVERNMENT REMAINS COMMITTED TO THE PROVISION OF ADEQUATE HEALTH SERVICES TO THE CITIZENS AND THIS IS DONE THROUGH THE PROVISION OF THE NECESSARY RESOURCES AND SUBVENTIONS TO NON-GOVERNMENT HEALTH FACILITIES.

WHERE THERE IS LOSS OF LIFE, LET THIS BE THROUGH THE CALLING OF THE LORD AND NOT AS A RESULT OF NEGLIGENCE, POOR HEALTH CARE OR SHORTAGE OF ESSENTIAL DRUGS, MEDICINE OR EQUIPMENT.

GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO PROVIDE FUNDS FOR THE PHALALA FUND REFERRAL SCHEME TO ENSURE THE NATION GETS SPECIALISED HEALTH CARE SERVICES.

HIV/AIDS TREATMENT AND CARE

GOVERNMENT SHOULD ALSO SCALE UP ITS SERVICES TOWARDS THE VIRTUAL ELIMINATION OF DISEASES INCLUDING HIV INFECTIONS, PROVISION OF ANTI-RETROVIRAL THERAPY, AS WELL AS THE TREATMENT OF TB AND MALARIA.

WE NEED TO BE REMINDED HOWEVER, THAT THE BEST MEDICINE FOR OUR BODIES SHOULD BE THE INDIVIDUAL DISCIPLINE TOWARDS LIVING A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE.

PEACE

THE PREVAILING PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE KINGDOM CONTINUES TO BE ONE OF THE MAJOR STRONG-POINTS FOR INVESTMENT AND TOURISM PROMOTION.

THE NATION IS URGED TO CONTINUE WORKING WITH APPROPRIATE STRUCTURES IN CONTRIBUTING TO PEACE AND SECURITY, AS THIS IS ONE OF THE KEY PILLARS FOR DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI WILL CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN THE RELATIONSHIP THAT HAPPILY EXISTS WITH THE REST OF THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY.

WE ALSO APPRECIATE THE SUPPORT THAT WE CONTINUE TO RECEIVE FROM OUR DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS. OUR MEMBERSHIP TO THESE INSTITUTIONS HAS BROUGHT IMMENSE BENEFIT TO THE KINGDOM.

ASPIRATIONS FOR 2012

ONCE AGAIN MAY I EMPHASISE THAT IN THE YEAR 2012 WE NEED TO SEE PROGRESS ON THE ECONOMIC FRONT. EVERY EFFORT MUST ALSO BE MADE TO MEET ALL OUR SOCIAL OBLIGATIONS.

THIS YEAR, WE NEED TO FACE THE CHALLENGES HEAD ON AND TURN THIS SITUATION AROUND.

BY THIS TIME NEXT YEAR, I EXPECT TANGIBLE RESULTS THAT WILL DEMONSTRATE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN MOVING FORWARD AS A COUNTRY.

I CHARGE GOVERNMENT AND PARLIAMENT TO SEE TO IT THAT ALL THESE PRIORITY AREAS ARE ACTIONED AND THERE ARE VISIBLE DELIVERABLES. THERE IS NEED FOR FULL COOPERATION BY ALL PARTIES IF THIS GOAL IS TO BE ACHIEVED.

CONCLUSION

IN CONCLUSION, MAY I ALSO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO THANK ALL EMASWATI FOR YOUR TOLERANCE AND SUPPORT TOWARDS EACH OTHER DURING THESE VERY TRYING TIMES.

THE UNITY AND SPIRIT OF NATIONHOOD DISPLAYED DURING THIS PERIOD IS MOST COMMENDABLE, ESPECIALLY WHEN LOOKING AT THE DEVELOPMENTS IN OTHER COUNTRIES.

SUCH SITUATIONS EASILY BRING ABOUT CONFUSION, ANGER, VIOLENCE, AND OTHER NEGATIVE DEVELOPMENTS.

WE MUST HOLD ON TO THIS SPIRIT IN EVERYTHING THAT WE DO AND IT WILL SEE US THROUGH TO ANY CHALLENGE THAT MAY COME OUR WAY.

MESSAGE TO PARLIAMENTARIANS

TO OUR PARLIAMENTARIANS, YOU MUST KNOW THAT THE COUNTRY IS LOOKING UP TO YOU TO PLAY YOUR PART IN THE ECONOMIC RECOVERY PROCESS.

YOU NEED TO PASS THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION THAT WILL FAST TRACK THIS PROCESS. YOU SHOULD ALSO MAKE LAWS THAT WILL IMPROVE THE SOCIAL WELLBEING OF THE SWAZI PEOPLE.

WE NEED MORE SUCCESS STORIES TO COMPLEMENT THE IMPROVED SACU RECEIPTS IN THE YEAR 2012, AND THIS CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED THROUGH HARD WORK AND COOPERATION BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

THIS POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT SHOULD SERVE AS THE CATALYST FOR MANY SUCCESS STORIES TO COME IN THE NEW YEAR AND WE TRUST THAT THE LORD ALMIGHTY WILL BE WITH US IN OUR EFFORTS.

THE THEME FOR THIS YEAR IS **"TURNING CHALLENGES INTO DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROSPERITY THROUGH FOCUSED COMMITMENT AND HARD WORK"**.

ONCE AGAIN I WISH PARLIAMENT A SUCCESSFUL 4TH SESSION AND LOOKING FORWARD TO A DYNAMIC YEAR OF REGULATORY AND LEGISLATIVE DEBATES.

MAY I ALSO THANK EVERYONE WHO HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE PREPARATIONS OF TODAY'S OCCASSION.

DECLARATION

**I NOW WISH TO DECLARE THAT THE 4TH
SESSION OF THE 9TH PARLIAMENT OF THE
KINGDOM OF ESWATINI IS OFFICIALLY OPEN.**

I THANK YOU, MAY ALMIGHTY GOD BLESS US ALL.