

KINGDOM OF ESWATINI



NATIONAL STATEMENT

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE PRIME
MINISTER, RUSSELL MMISO DLAMINI DURING THE 79TH
SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL
ASSEMBLY
NEW YORK, USA**

27TH SEPTEMBER 2024

**Your Excellency, Mr. Philemon Yang, President of the
79th Session of the United Nations General Assembly,**

Your Majesties,

Distinguished Heads of State and Government,

The United Nations Secretary-General,

Honourable Delegates,

Ladies, and Gentlemen,

INTRODUCTION

Mr. President, it is with profound gratitude and a deep sense of responsibility that I stand before you today at this pivotal gathering of the 79th United Nations General Assembly.

I bring you the warmest greetings from His Majesty King Mswati III, the Queen Mother, Government, and the People of the Kingdom of Eswatini, who regrets not being able to attend this Assembly due to pressing national commitments.

We are convened here not merely as representatives of our nations but as stewards of a shared global community, united in our commitment to peace, security, and sustainable development.

As we gather under the theme, "**Leaving No One Behind: Acting Together for the Advancement of Peace, Sustainable Development, and Human Dignity for Present and Future Generations**", we are reminded of our shared duty to create a world where every individual has the opportunity to

thrive. Our obligation is to leave this planet in a better place for our posterity.

The Kingdom of Eswatini joins this global Assembly with unwavering dedication to the principles of peace, sustainable development, and human dignity. We recognize that the challenges we face today—marked by unprecedented crises—are deeply interconnected.

It is only through collective action, innovation, and a firm commitment to multilateralism that we can forge a path towards a more just and equitable world.

Summit of the Future: A Historic Opportunity

We commend the Secretary-General for convening the recently concluded Summit of the Future, which has provided a unique opportunity to reinvigorate multilateralism, enhance global solidarity, and reform our international governance structures.

Eswatini fully supports the Summit and its outcomes, as they resonate with our belief in a fairer and a more inclusive world. Since the establishment of the United Nations in 1945 there are concerns that it's no longer addressing adequately the issues faced by the global community.

There is a need to reconsider the operations of the multilateral institutions such as the IMF and World Bank and particularly the Security Council.

The Kingdom of Eswatini stands by its efforts to call for reforms in the United Nations. In 2005, we hosted the African Union meeting that resulted in the Ezulwini Consensus, which articulated Africa's common position on the reform of the UN, including the call for greater African representation on the Security Council.

While it has taken nearly two decades for this conversation to advance, Eswatini is proud of her early role in championing this cause. We urge the global community to implement these long-standing commitments and ensure that all regions and peoples have a voice in shaping our collective future.

Accelerating Progress: The Spirit of Nkwe

Mr President, in Eswatini, we have embraced the spirit of "Nkwe," which means "run." This national ethos symbolizes our collective resolve to accelerate progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

It is a call for urgent action, for picking up the pace, and for ensuring that every effort is made to meet the needs of our people and our planet.

With only a few years left until 2030, time is not on our side. We must double our efforts to bridge the gaps in development, combat poverty and inequality, and address the climate crisis. Nkwe is our rallying cry to run faster, to work harder, and to leave no one behind. We invite the global community to join us in this accelerated drive towards a better future for all.

Youth Empowerment: Investing in the Future

Africa is the youngest continent in the world, brimming with potential and promise. The Kingdom of Eswatini is committed to harnessing this demographic dividend by investing in our youth.

Our Youth Empowerment Programme, supported by Government, the UN in Eswatini and other friends of the Kingdom, aims to equip young people with the skills and resources they need to succeed in a rapidly changing world. We believe that by creating opportunities for employment and entrepreneurship, we are laying the foundation for a more prosperous and inclusive society.

Addressing youth unemployment and providing our young people with meaningful opportunities is not just an economic imperative but a moral one. We must act now to ensure that our youth can participate fully in building the Africa we want, an Africa of peace, prosperity, and dignity.

Poverty Eradication and Social Protection

Poverty remains one of the greatest challenges facing our continent. In Eswatini, we are committed to eradicating poverty through inclusive growth and robust social protection programmes.

We have prioritized policies that provide safety nets for the most vulnerable in our society, including women, children, and persons with disabilities.

We urge the international community to support these efforts by promoting fair trade, increasing development assistance, and fostering partnerships that create jobs and uplift communities. Let us work together to build a world where no one lives in poverty, and every person can achieve their full potential.

Sustainable Development

Mr. President, Sustainable development is not a choice but a necessity for the survival and prosperity of our planet. The Kingdom of Eswatini remains dedicated to advancing our development agenda as aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

We have made significant strides in promoting poverty eradication, renewable energy, the protection of our natural resources, and ensuring equitable access to education and healthcare for all Emaswati.

Our National Development Strategy aligns with global development goals, focusing on economic diversification, poverty reduction, and human capital development.

We have taken significant steps to promote renewable energy through investments in solar, wind, and hydropower projects, such as the Eswatini Electricity Company's initiatives to increase the share of renewable energy in the national grid.

These efforts are complemented by our progress in providing access to quality education through the Free Primary Education program and improving healthcare services as outlined in our National Health Strategic Plan.

However, as a small, middle-income country, we face unique challenges, including limited access to international financing, vulnerability to climate change, and economic shocks. We call on the international community to support the developmental aspirations of countries like Eswatini, ensuring that our path towards sustainable development is not hindered by structural inequalities in the global system.

In response to these challenges, Eswatini has put forth a comprehensive SDG Recovery and Acceleration Plan, valued at over E30 billion (about US\$ 1.6 billion), covering diverse areas

including digital transformation, renewable energy, agriculture, industrial expansion, and social protection.

This plan prioritizes implementation over the development of new frameworks, emphasizing sectors such as job creation—specifically under SDG 8, target 8.5, which focuses on creating jobs across industries as a multiplier for achieving other SDGs.

By investing in employment opportunities, we believe we can address multiple dimensions of development, including reducing food insecurity, enhancing access to essential services, and minimizing social ills like crime and substance abuse.

Financing Sustainable Development

The implementation of the SDGs requires substantial financial resources. However, many developing countries, including those in Africa, face significant barriers to accessing affordable finance.

The current global financial architecture is not fit for the purpose and must be reformed to make the financing more accessible and equitable. We call for the implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Plan, which emphasizes the need for innovative financing mechanisms and global solidarity.

We also urge the international community to support the reform of global financial mechanisms that have seen developing countries pay much higher costs than developed nations to

access the much-needed funds. This unfair practice must end. The Summit of the Future provides a critical opportunity to address these disparities and ensure that all nations have the means to achieve their development goals.

Promoting Peace and Security

Mr President, peace is the foundation upon which sustainable development and human dignity rest. The Kingdom of Eswatini, guided by its long-standing tradition of peaceful coexistence, continues to advocate for dialogue and peaceful resolution of conflicts. We condemn all forms of violence and support efforts aimed at silencing the guns across the world, particularly in Africa.

We call upon the international community to support the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the AU Master Roadmap for Silencing the Guns. It is imperative that if we are not to leave anyone behind, we must address the root causes of conflict, including poverty, inequality, and lack of opportunity, which drive instability and undermine development efforts.

Health Challenges

Mr. President, health is a fundamental pillar of sustainable development, and its challenges are multidimensional, impacting not just individual well-being but also national productivity and social stability.

The Kingdom of Eswatini recognizes that achieving universal health coverage is integral to the broader agenda of "Leaving No One Behind." Despite our efforts to improve healthcare access through initiatives such as the National Health Strategic Plan and investment in health infrastructure, Eswatini, like many other countries, continues to grapple with significant health challenges.

These include a high burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases, inadequate health financing, and the complexities of delivering equitable healthcare in rural and remote areas. Furthermore, the ongoing threat of pandemics, such as COVID-19, and emerging health threats, such as the M-Pox, exacerbated by climate change, underscore the need for adequate preparedness and resilient health systems.

We call upon the international community to support collaborative efforts in strengthening health systems, enhancing disease surveillance, improving access to essential medicines, and building capacity for rapid response to health emergencies. Only through such global solidarity and shared commitment can we ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages, as enshrined in SDG 3.

Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability

Mr President, climate change poses an existential threat to our future. In Eswatini, we have taken decisive steps to address this crisis.

We have developed a comprehensive strategy to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, investing in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and disaster risk reduction.

We are also proud to announce that Eswatini has recently adopted a ban on single-use plastics. This decision, supported by UNDP and the Eswatini Environment Agency through initiatives like "**Phatsa Sakho Nawe,**" is part of our broader commitment to environmental sustainability.

However, our efforts alone are not enough. We call upon developed nations to honour their commitments to climate finance and technology transfer. It is only through collective action that we can ensure a sustainable future for all.

Mr. President, the theme of this year's UN General Assembly is "Leaving no one behind: "acting together for the advancement of peace, sustainable development and human dignity for present and future generations", Ironically Taiwan and its 23.5 million people continue to be left by the United Nations and its specialized agencies.

We wish to make a call for their inclusion, they need to be a part of this global platform so that they can also fully participate in the global development and growth of our goals.

Conclusion

Mr. President, the road ahead is fraught with challenges, but it is also filled with hope and opportunity. Let us seize this moment to reaffirm our commitment to the ideals of the United Nations and to the vision of a world where peace, sustainable development, and human dignity are realities for all. The Kingdom of Eswatini stands ready to work with all nations in this noble endeavour.

May we all embrace the spirit of Nkwe, and let us run together with accelerated speed towards our shared goals, and ensure that no one is left behind.

I thank you all.