



Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Swaziland
to the United Nations

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Statement by

His Majesty King Mswati III
Head of State of the Kingdom of Swaziland

at the

High-Level Plenary Meeting of the
60th Session of the United Nations General Assembly

15 September 2005
New York

Co- President,
Your Majesties,
Your Excellencies,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished Delegates,

I bring with me greetings from the Queen Mother and the entire Swazi nation on this auspicious occasion of the 60th anniversary of the United Nations.

United Nations Millennium Development Goals

I am happy to address this High-Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly once again, having done so not so long ago when we, the Heads of State and Government gathered here to adopt the historic Millennium Declaration in 2000.

The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), adopted as a road map to achieve that vision, compelled the international community to commit to working collectively to improve the standard of living of our peoples in a more safer and secure world.

It is good that today, we meet to review progress in our implementation of the MDGs, and to re-affirm our commitment to the millions of people who deserve a better and more decent standard of living in this millennium.

The success of such action requires the political will and firm commitment of both the developing world and our development partners.

Country Report on Millennium Development Goals

I am delighted to report that we, of the Kingdom of Swaziland went back home and immediately acted on the call by the United Nations by setting our priorities for fighting poverty through the creation of jobs in manufacturing, construction, tourism, agro-business and other areas.

This was made possible by the fact that the Declaration coincided with our National Development Strategy, which we had just launched the previous year.

It is encouraging to report that we have, in the past five years recorded some favourable results in our fight to reduce poverty. For example, we have made some progress in developing our infrastructure, communications and rural electrification. Job creation has always been in the centre of our plans and strategies.

It should be noted that through the period under review we managed to work on the majority of our projects without grants. The country is shouldering these projects through loans that we continue to repay. We hope that the international finance institutions will continue helping us with more concessional loans to enable us to meet our targets for achieving the MDGs.

On another note, I wish to thank the developed countries and international finance institutions for their generosity in providing debt relief to some of the developing countries. This noble gesture will go a long way in helping these countries in their efforts to achieve the MDGs.

Our Review of MDGs

Before coming to this meeting, we conducted a review of our Millennium Development Programme, which has clearly shown us that we are still a long way from overcoming the challenges of poverty reduction and human development.

Our gains continue to be eroded by formidable challenges including natural disasters such as droughts, floods, HIV/AIDS pandemic, the reduction of preferential markets for our goods, the liberalization of markets by the World Trade Organization, the ever fluctuating strength of major world currencies and the ever increasing oil prices.

One major outcome of all these factors has been increasing unemployment that continues to pose a serious threat to our economic progress.

New Economic Approach

In order to address this and other problems, we have since embarked on a new economic approach which emphasizes that while we continue to attract and welcome foreign direct investment, we must at the same time create our own vibrant business community that will spearhead economic growth.

To this end we have already crafted and are implementing the National Small and Medium Enterprise Policy, which emphasizes capacity building through the training and funds of our small and medium entrepreneurs.

Job Creation Summit

It was in line with this new economic approach that, at the end of July this year, we held a National Job Creation Summit at which we raised more that E1.6 billion that should enable us to kick-start our economy. This public private sector partnership initiative aims at creating more than 50 thousand new jobs.

I am convinced that having played our part in mobilizing domestic resources as a developing economy, it is proper for us to request our international development partners to meet us half way through grants and other official development support.

It would not be fair to neglect our case just because we have been classified under a higher category. It should be recognized and appreciated that the country is where it is because we have continued to put more effort. We deserve to be supported in order to continue moving forward.

I must emphasize that the main key to our success is the availability of external and in particular preferential markets which are vital for the growth our economy. As an agricultural economy we are determined and have planned to continue diversifying our products with more emphasis on adding value through processing and quality control.

We are aware that the World Trade Organization is working on the removal of preferential markets. However, as small developing economies, we wish to point out that this is causing hardships for us. I am convinced that by continuing to provide us with preferential markets, our

development partners would enable us to grow to levels where we might some day be able to compete on an equal footing.

Constitution of Swaziland

On another note, I am most pleased to report that in pursuit of "larger freedom" the Swazi nation has crafted a new constitution that embodies fundamental human rights. This constitution is a result of extensive consultation at grass-root level.

It was most fulfilling for me when I signed the document in the presence of my people on 26th July this year, after our Parliament had debated and passed the Constitution Bill.

We do not claim to have made a perfect document. But like all nations of the world, we shall continue to grow our constitution through amendments as the need arises. Let me take this opportunity to thank all those who helped us during the drafting process, especially the United Nations Development Programme and the Commonwealth.

United Nations Reform

Let me now briefly comment on the great work we have embarked on to reform the United Nations organization in order to make it stronger, more representative and effective in its noble mandate of managing global affairs. Institutional reform is indeed a necessity if we are to revitalize our organization to meet the many challenges of this millennium.

The African Position

We on the African continent have shared our vision of what we want for Africa, but we also realize that we must look at such reform as a package, bearing in mind the impact of the decisions we take on this matter would have on the global community.

As you are aware, the African Union articulated a common position on this matter following a lengthy debate on the Secretary-General's Report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

Our position states that "Africa's goal is to be fully represented in all the decision-making organs of the United Nations, particularly the Security Council, which is the principal decision-making organ of the United Nations in matters relating to international peace and security". For our representation to be effective, Africa must be allowed to play her role on both the permanent and non-permanent categories.

The Kingdom of Swaziland fully endorses this position as it is in line with the expectations of my country with regard to the proposed reform.

We believe that a more effective UN system should be able to reduce tensions and conflicts within and between states, so that peace as a condition for development and economic growth would prevail. We share the Secretary-General's desire to have a decision taken on this matter at this Summit, as inaction will continue to delay the development agenda.

Mr. President,

In closing, my delegation has observed that we are all determined to conclude the matters before us. This is indeed a chance for us to recast at the image of our organization and regain the confidence of the public.

The results of our meeting should translate into positive and meaningful action. If we are to make headway in "perfecting the triangle of development, freedom and peace" so as to make better the lives of all our peoples.

I thank you. May almighty God bless us all.