



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

**STATEMENT BY  
H.E. MR. ZWELETHU MNISI  
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE  
KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND**

**BEFORE THE 55<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE  
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

**ON THE PRIORITY THEME:  
ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS TO EDUCATION, SCIENCE  
AND TECHNOLOGY, INCLUDING FOR THE PROMOTION OF WOMEN'S EQUAL  
ACCESS TO FULL EMPLOYMENT AND DECENT WORK**

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**Chairperson,  
Distinguished Delegates,**

I congratulate you and the bureau for the excellent manner in which you are conducting these important deliberations. My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by Namibia on behalf of SADC, Mozambique on behalf of the African Group and Argentina on behalf of the G-77 and China.

**CHAIRPERSON,**

The priority theme **“Access and participation of women and girls to education, science and technology, including for the promotion of women’s equal access to full employment and decent work”** is very close to our hearts and the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland is working tirelessly to attain equal access of women and girls to education, science and technology and decent work. This meeting therefore gives us an opportunity to review progress made on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and to strengthen our strategies where they are wanting. It also allows us to share our experiences, learn and interact with all member states represented here.

In September, 2010 the Kingdom of Swaziland was proud to successfully host the 14<sup>th</sup> Summit of the Authority of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) under the theme **“harnessing science and technology for development”**

As Chair of the Summit, our country played a major role in facilitating further sustainable economic development and growth within the COMESA region especially within the context of science and technology.

**Chairperson,**

Despite many successes, the Kingdom of Swaziland, like many other countries is faced with a myriad of challenges that include high levels of HIV and AIDS linked with the rapid increase in the numbers of orphaned and vulnerable children, high incidences of poverty and gender based violence as well as high levels of unemployment. Our country is also not immune to the ongoing global financial and economic crisis, as its effects and far reaching consequences continue to spiral our national economy further down. The effects of climate change and global warming are also evident and have impacted deeply on our food security situation.

**Chairperson,**

The Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland recognises women as equal citizens and has committed to the promotion and protection of their human rights. Swaziland is also party to the several critical human rights instruments, all of which promote gender equality and respect for the rights of women.

We are pleased to inform of the major strides we have taken in policy, legislation and programmatic interventions aimed at improving access and participation of women and girls to education, training, science and technology, including for the promotion of women’s equal access to full employment and decent work.

**Chairperson,**

Our constitution reinforces access to education stating in Section 60 (8) that, “*without compromising quality the state shall promote free and compulsory basic education for all*” and Section 29(6) stipulates that within 3 years of its coming into force, free education will be provided in public schools at least up to the end of primary school, beginning with the first grade.

Government committed herself to the Global Education for All (EFA) initiative. At the beginning of 2009, Swaziland began rolling out free primary education. There have been significant increases in the budgetary allocations for education, in particular the provision of educational grants to assist orphaned and vulnerable children to go to school. In addition, the Government through the PRSAP recognises the critical role of education in promoting gender equality and provides for equal opportunity for children of all gender in the implementation of universal basic education. Government is also in the process of reviewing education policy and legislation.

Furthermore, the children’s policy was finalised and adopted in 2009 and it contains a comprehensive section on interventions for the girl child. It stresses the importance of education for all in particular the girl child. The national development strategy and poverty reduction strategy and action plan also recognise the need to ensure gender equality especially in issues of national development and poverty. Central to these policies is the national policy on gender. It provides a comprehensive framework for the implementation of gender and women’s rights activities in Swaziland and has ten thematic areas that are modelled around the Beijing Platform for Action, one of them being women’s education and training. The national gender policy also stipulates that the government shall provide equal opportunities for quality education for all children, boys and girls to complete the education system and ensure that men and women have equal access to training opportunities.

At regional level we are also part of the consensus that resulted in the SADC Regional Qualifications Framework which was adopted by our Minister of Education and Training in 2010.

**Chairperson,**

In conclusion, the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland expresses appreciation to our development partners for their support through the provision of financial, technical and other resources towards our quest for gender equality and the full recognition, promotion and protection of the rights of women. We further reaffirm our commitment to the advancement of our women in all sectors of society.

I thank you!