**KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND**

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**STATEMENT**

**BY**

HIS MAJESTY KING MSWATI III DURING THE 2017 GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER REDUCTION HELD IN CANCUN, MEXICO.

**25th MAY, 2017**

**KING’S OFFICE**

YOUR EXCELLENCY, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED MEXICAN STATES,

YOUR EXCELLENCIES, HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT,

YOUR EXCELLENCY, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY - GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS,

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

**INTRODUCTION**

I AM DELIGHTED TO COME AND JOIN THE OTHER HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT AT THIS 2017 GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR DISASTER REDUCTION, WHICH IS CRITICAL FOR MAKING SURE THAT OUR COUNTRIES AND PEOPLES ARE PROTECTED AGAINST DISASTERS.

I WISH TO THANK THE MEXICAN GOVERNMENT FOR BEING SUCH A GOOD HOST AND ORGANISER OF THIS IMPORTANT PLATFORM, AS WELL AS THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY GENERAL FOR CREATING THIS FORUM.

THIS PLATFORM HAS COME AT AN APPROPRIATE TIME WHEN THE WORLD IS CONFRONTED BY A PLETHORA OF DISASTERS OF DIFFERENT MAGNITUDE AND NATURE.

AFTER THE LAUNCH OF THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK 2015-2030, NUMEROUS DISASTERS HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCED BY THE KINGDOM, AFRICA AND THE WORLD AT LARGE.

THESE INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO; WINDSTORMS AND TSUNAMIS, HAILSTORMS, TROPICAL CYCLONES, FLOODS, DROUGHT AND ARMY WORMS.

SUCH PHENOMENA HAVE TAKEN PEOPLE’S LIVES, DESTROYED CROPS, LIVESTOCK AND INFRASTRUCTURE, WHICH HAS TENDED TO COMPROMISE SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES, SOCIAL SERVICES AND SUFFICIENT FOOD PRODUCTION, AMONG OTHERS.

THE KINGDOM HAS BEEN ABLE TO DEVELOP A NATIONAL STRATEGIC DIRECTION TO COMPREHENSIVELY INCREASE RISK KNOWLEDGE TO THE POPULACE.

THIS HAS ALSO ALLOWED FOR BETTER INVESTMENT OF RESOURCES FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION, WHILE ENHANCING THE RESILIENCE OF OUR NATION.

OUR DISASTER PREVENTION, RESPONSE AND RECOVERY IS PEOPLE CENTRED AND INCLUSIVE TO REFLECT ON DIMENSIONS OF VULNERABILITY AND DRIVERS OF RISKS. THOSE THAT ARE EXPOSED TO RISK ARE BEING MADE AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL HAZARDS AND ALSO HOW TO PREVENT AND TO PREPARE FOR THESE EVENTUALITIES.

REDUCING EXPOSURE TO BOTH NATURAL AND MANMADE HAZARDS IS AT THE TOP OF OUR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA. THIS IS IN LINE WITH THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK AND THE PARIS AGREEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE, TO MENTION BUT A FEW.

IN LIGHT OF THESE HAZARDS, THE REGION HAS ESTABLISHED AN INTEGRATED EARLY WARNING SYSTEM THAT WORKS TOGETHER WITH COUNTRY STATIONS TO POOL INFORMATION TOWARDS ENHANCING COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PROGRAMMES.

IT SUFFICES TO MENTION THAT THE MAGNITUDE AND IMPACT OF DISASTERS FAR EXCEED THE CAPACITY OF REGIONAL AND NATIONAL SYSTEMS TO COPE WITH RESPONSE, MITIGATION, ADAPTATION AND RECOVERY PROGRAMME NEEDS.

WE NEED TO SET UP CENTRES THAT ARE MORE EFFECTIVE IN PROVIDING THE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE AND RESOURCE MOBILISATION STRATEGIES TO BETTER MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF THESE DISASTERS.

THE ABSENCE OF THESE ESSENTIAL REQUIREMENTS HAS TENDED TO DELAY THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR NATIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE, WHICH WAS LAUNCHED IN 2015/16 DURING THE DROUGHT SPELL.

WE REMAIN COMMITTED TO STRENGTHENING OUR PARTNERSHIPS WITH ALL RELEVANT STAKEHOLDERS IN THE KINGDOM, ACROSS THE CONTINENT AND THE WORLD AT LARGE.

**SADC REGION**

THE CHALLENGES RELATED TO ECONOMIC LOSSES FROM DISASTERS ARE CRITICAL TO THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION (SADC), AND HAS SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS TO THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA AND OUR ASPIRATIONS.

AS THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY IS AWARE, SADC HAS FACED A HUMANITARIAN CRISIS AS A RESULT OF THE EFFECTS OF THE 2014/16 EL NIŇO EPISODES. THIS HAS OVERWHELMED THE DISASTER PREPAREDNESS CAPACITY IN MOST SADC AFFECTED MEMBER STATES.

THE ACUTE DROUGHT MANIFESTED ITSELF THROUGH A 28% INCREASE IN THE FOOD INSECURE POPULATION ACROSS THE REGION, LEADING TO A REGIONAL HUMANITARIAN SUPPORT REQUIREMENT OF U$2.9 BILLION TO COVER THE NEEDS OF ABOUT 40 MILLION VULNERABLE PEOPLE OF THE REGION’S 257 MILLION.

THIS FURTHER LED TO THE REGION LAUNCHING AN APPEAL TO SUPPORT THE AFFECTED POPULATION.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY FOR SUPPORTING OUR CALL BUT MORE RESOURCES ARE STILL REQUIRED TO MEET THIS NEED.

SADC HAS A DEDICATED REGIONAL DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE STRATEGY ALIGNED TO THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (DRR) 2015-2030. THIS CONTRIBUTES TO EFFORTS AIMED AT STRATEGIC SUPPORT FOR OUR MEMBER STATES IN MINIMIZING ECONOMIC LOSSES AND IMPACTS OF DISASTERS AMONG OTHER ISSUES.

**APPLAUD SUPPORT FROM PARTNERS**

AT THIS JUNCTURE MAY I ALSO COMMEND THE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ALL OUR PARTNERS AND THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY TOWARDS ENSURING A DISASTER FREE WORLD.

THIS SUPPORT HAS GONE A LONG WAY IN CONTRIBUTING TO SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCING THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY DISASTERS ACROSS THE WORLD, AS WELL AS DIRECT ECONOMIC LOSSES.

IN THE KINGDOM, MEANINGFUL PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE IN THE TRACKING AND QUANTIFICATION OF DISASTER LOSSES AND DAMAGES, WHICH IS AN IMPORTANT INDICATOR TO BENCHMARK DISASTER RISK FINANCING.

**CONCLUSION**

LET ME CONCLUDE BY INDICATING THAT THE AFRICAN CONTINENT REMAINS SEIZED WITH NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF NATURAL AND MAN-MADE DISASTERS.

THEY HAVE HAD A GREAT EFFECT IN DENTING THE HUGE GAINS WE HAVE MADE IN RECENT TIMES, MUCH TO THE DETRIMENT OF OUR CONTINENTAL AGENDA 2063 AND THE ATTAINMENT OF OUR GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS 2030.

THEREFORE, ADDRESSING DISASTER LOSSES IS CRITICAL AND IT NEEDS THE UNDIVIDED ATTENTION OF US ALL.

I AM CONFIDENT THAT AT THE END OF THIS GLOBAL PLATFORM, AS LEADERS WE SHALL COME UP WITH STRATEGIES TO SAVE LIVES, REDUCE LOSSES, IMPROVE THE MANAGEMENT OF DISASTER RISK AND ENHANCE APPROPRIATE KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS TRANSFER.

THIS IS KEY TO ADDRESSING ISSUES OF POVERTY, ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION, CONFLICTS, EPIDEMICS AND OTHER INHUMANE OUTCOMES.

WE ARE ENCOURAGED TO SEE THE UNITED NATIONS TAKING A LEAD IN ADDRESSING GLOBAL ISSUES AFFECTING PEOPLE’S LIVES.

WE ENCOURAGE THE GLOBAL BODY TO FURTHER SPEARHEAD THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPING AN EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE TO THESE DISASTERS.

THIS IS NECESSARY BECAUSE THE PROBLEMS BROUGHT ABOUT BY CLIMATE CHANGE NEED A PROGRAMME THAT IS WELL COORDINATED IF THEY ARE TO BE SUCCESSFULLY OVERCOME.

FINALLY I WISH TO EXPRESS OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION AND GRATITUDE TO THE PRESIDENT, GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF MEXICO FOR THE WARM AND EXCELLENT HOSPITALITY EXTENDED TO ME, INKHOSIKATI AND MY ENTIRE DELEGATION SINCE OUR ARRIVAL HERE IN CANCUN -MEXICO.

**MERCI BEAUCOUP.**

**MUITO OBRIGADO**

**GRACIAS**

**I THANK YOU - MAY THE ALMIGHTY GOD BLESS US ALL.**