

FELLOW CITIZENS OF SADC MEMBER STATES

IT IS WITH GREAT HONOR AND HUMILITY THAT I PRESENT TO YOU MY MESSAGE AS THE SADC CHAIRPERSON ON THIS OCCASION OF SADC DAY, WHICH SADC COMMEMORATES ANNUALLY ON 17TH OF AUGUST.

THIS IS A DAY WHEN WE REFLECT ON THE PROGRESS WE HAVE MADE AS WE IMPLEMENT THE SADC REGIONAL INTEGRATION AGENDA AND LOOK INTO THE FUTURE FOR PROSPERITY.

LET ME START OFF BY PAYING TRIBUTE TO THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF SADC FOR THEIR VISION FOR A COMMON FUTURE FOR THE SADC ORGANIZATION TO IMPROVE THE LIVES OF THEIR PEOPLES. SINCE 1980, THE INSTITUTION THEY CONCEPTUALIZED AND ESTABLISHED HAS NOT ONLY STOOD THE TEST OF TIME, BUT ALSO GROWN FROM STRENGTH TO STRENGTH.

I AM HAPPY THAT SOME OF OUR FOUNDING FATHERS ARE STILL WITH US AND THEY CONTINUE TO BE A VALUABLE SOURCE OF WISDOM FOR SADC AND FUTURE GENERATIONS TO COME.

AS WE COMMEMORATE THIS SPECIAL DAY FOR SADC, I AM ENCOURAGED BY THE GROWING AWARENESS AND PARTICIPATION OF OUR PEOPLE IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SADC PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS.

I DO HOPE THIS WILL GRADUALLY MOVE THE REGION TOWARDS THE GOALS FOR WHICH SADC WAS ESTABLISHED TO REDUCE THE LEVELS OF POVERTY AND IMPROVE THE STANDARD OF LIVING OF THE PEOPLE IN THE REGION.

LET ME ACKNOWLEDGE THAT IN THE PAST FEW YEARS WE HAVE ENDEAVOURED TO ACCELERATE THE PACE OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION BY REVIEWING OUR REGIONAL INDICATIVE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN (RISDP), REVIEWING THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE ORGAN, DEVELOPMENT OF A REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE MASTER PLAN FOR ALL INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS WHICH WAS ADOPTED IN 2012 AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SADC INDUSTRIALISATION STRATEGY AND ROADMAP (2015 - 2063) IN 2015 AND ITS COSTED ACTION PLAN ADOPTED BY THE RECENT EXTRA-ORDINARY SADC SUMMIT IN MARCH, 2017.

THESE ARE INDEED MILESTONES WHICH CANNOT GO UNNOTICED YET THERE IS STILL A LOT OF EFFORT WE NEED TO PUT TO REALIZE MORE FRUITS FOR THE FUTURE GROWTH OF OUR REGION.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INDUSTRIALIZING THE SADC REGION, HAS BEEN EMPHASIZED IN MANY FORUMS AND THIS CALLS FOR FAST ACTION IN ENSURING THAT SADC MACROECONOMIC POLICY ENVIRONMENT IS IMPROVED, DEVELOPING CAPABILITIES AND CAPACITIES TO UNDERPIN TRANSFORMATION AND STRENGTHENING COMPETITIVE PRODUCTION, THE NEED TO REMOVE INFRASTRUCTURAL IMPEDIMENTS TO INDUSTRIALIZATION AND IDENTIFYING KEY VALUE CHAINS FOR THE GLOBAL MARKETS.

IN THIS REGARD, THERE IS NEED TO CLOSELY COLLABORATE WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR AS THE ENGINE OF GROWTH AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS SUCH AS OTHER OPERATORS SUCH AS THINK TANKS AND ACADEMIA.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE PROCESS OF INDUSTRIALIZATION IS VERY IMPORTANT AND IS REQUIRED TO SUPPORT REGIONAL INTEGRATION AS WELL.

IN THIS REGARD, FOR THE 36TH ORDINARY SADC SUMMIT IN 2016, THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI DECIDED TO PRESENT THE THEME TO PROMOTE AND WORK ON RESOURCE MOBILIZATION BY ENGAGING INTERNATIONAL, REGIONAL AND NATIONAL INVESTORS AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS TO INVEST IN SUSTAINABLE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR INDUSTRIALIZATION.

HENCE, THE THEME WAS **“RESOURCE MOBILISATION FOR INVESTMENT IN SUSTAINABLE ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE FOR AN INCLUSIVE SADC INDUSTRIALISATION FOR THE PROSPERITY OF THE REGION”**. THE THEME WAS ADOPTED WITH THE REALIZATION THAT OUR SADC REGIONAL AGENDA AND PLANS NEED TO BE IMPLEMENTED AND THE LACK OF FUNDS TENDS TO STALL PROGRESS ESPECIALLY IN THE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT.

SADC IS NOW ENGAGING TO EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS AND INNOVATIVE APPROACHES OF SUSTAINABLE FINANCING AND BROADENING THE RESOURCE BASE TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS FOR REGIONAL INTEGRATION.

IT IS MY HOPE THAT BY 2063, IN LINE WITH THE SADC INDUSTRIALIZATION STRATEGY AND ROADMAP 2015-2063 AS WELL AS THE AGENDA 2063 OF THE AFRICAN UNION, THE SADC REGION'S INDUSTRIAL LANDSCAPE WILL COMPLETELY BE DIFFERENT FROM WHAT IT IS AT PRESENT.

SADC IS OPENING HER WINGS WIDER TO CREATE MARKETS FOR OUR PEOPLE TO TRADE AND DEVELOP IN THE COMESA AND EAC MARKETS HENCE THE LAUNCHING OF THE SADC-COMESA-EAC FREE TRADE AREA IN 2015 DURING THE 3RD TRIPARTITE SUMMIT IN EGYPT.

WITH THIS WE HOPE THAT THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES WILL CREATE JOBS AND REDUCE THE LEVELS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND POVERTY.

I AM PROUD THAT THE SADC REGION CONTINUES TO ENJOY RELATIVE PEACE AND STABILITY AS OUR CITIZENS AND POLITICAL LEADERS CONTINUE TO RESOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES AMICABLY THROUGH CONTACT AND DIALOGUE, RECOGNIZING THAT WE ARE BOUND BY COMMON HISTORY, SHARED ANCESTRY AND ABOVE ALL, A COMMON FUTURE AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

PEACE AND SECURITY FOR SADC IS AT THE TOP OF THE PRIORITIES BECAUSE WE RECOGNIZE THAT WITHOUT IT THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT WILL ALWAYS BE STALLED. THIS CONTINUES TO BE WITNESSED AS WE HAVE JUST SEEN THAT THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO HELD THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS PEACEFULLY AND AS SADC WE WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THEM TO ENSURE LASTING PEACE, SECURITY AND POLITICAL STABILITY FOR THE BASOTHO NATION.

WHILE OUR SADC REGION CONTINUES TO BE PEACEFUL AND STABLE, ON THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FRONT THERE HAVE BEEN FEW OTHER POTENTIAL ISSUES THAT REQUIRES REGIONAL AND NATIONAL PREVENTATIVE AND MITIGATION MEASURES.

THESE ARE FOOD, WATER AND ENERGY INSECURITY, TRANSNATIONAL DRUGS, HUMAN TRAFFICKING, SMUGGLING, MONEY LAUNDERING, CYBER SECURITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION TO MENTION JUST A FEW.

IN THIS REGARD, WE WILL CONTINUE TO STRENGTHEN THE REGIONAL AND NATIONAL EARLY WARNING CENTRES ON THE NEED TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION AND DATA THROUGH SECURE COMMUNICATION INFRASTRUCTURE.

THROUGH THIS INITIATIVE SADC WILL BE ABLE TO RESPOND QUICKLY TO ANY DISASTER AS WAS OBSERVED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF THE OUTBREAK OF THE FALL ARMYWORM IN THE SADC REGION.

THE CHALLENGES OF UNEMPLOYMENT ESPECIALLY AMONG OUR YOUTHS IN THE REGION NEEDS TO BE TACKLED THROUGH A CONCERTED EFFORT FROM ALL SECTORS TO EMPOWER THEM.

THE INDUSTRIALIZATION PROCESS IN SADC SHOULD BE INCLUSIVE TO INVOLVE THE YOUTH AS WELL AS WOMEN SO THAT THEY CAN BENEFIT DIRECTLY FROM THE PROCESS OF ECONOMIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION.

ONE OF THE STRATEGIES TO INVOLVE THE YOUTH IS THROUGH SADC EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES ESPECIALLY VOCATIONAL SKILLS IN THE FIELDS OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION WHICH ARE RELEVANT AND KEY FOR INDUSTRIES.

EDUCATION IS KEY TO CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT AND FOR SADC TO GRADUATE TO A COMPETITIVE KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY HIGH LEVEL SPECIALISATIONS WILL BE CRUCIAL, NOTABLY TERTIARY EDUCATION AND SPECIALIZATIONS IN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING DISCIPLINES.

I AM PLEASED TO MENTION THAT THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SADC UNIVERSITY OF TRANSFORMATION ARE PROGRESSING WELL AS IT IS AIMED AT ENHANCING THE HUMAN CAPITAL OF THE SADC REGION IN THE AREAS OF TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, INNOVATION AND DELIVERING GRADUATES WHO ARE EMPOWERED WITH REQUISITE SKILLS FOR THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT.

AS WE COMMEMORATE THE 2017 SADC DAY LET US ALL REFLECT ON THE GAINS WE HAVE MADE AS A REGION AND PAY PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTERVENTIONS TO ADDRESS OUR CHALLENGES.

IN ORDER TO MAKE SURE THAT OUR PEOPLE LIVE IN A BETTTER ENVIRONMENT THAT WILL CREATE CONDUCTIVE STANDARDS OF LIVING WHILST PROMOTING PROSPERITY AND INCLUSIVE GROWTH FOR OUR CITIZENS. WE SHOULD BE MINDFUL OF THE VISION OF THE SADC FOUNDING FATHERS AND THRIVE TO WORK TOWARDS ***“THE SADC WE WANT”***

I WISH YOU ALL A HAPPY SADC DAY AND PROSPERITY OF THE REGION.

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

HIS MAJESTY, KING MSWATI III AND CHAIRPERSON OF SADC.

KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND