

**STATEMENT BY
H.E. HONOURABLE SENATOR THEMBA N. MASUKU
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF THE
KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND**

**BEFORE THE 56TH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN**

**ON THE PRIORITY THEME:
THE EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN AND THEIR ROLE IN
POVERTY AND HUNGER ERADICATION, DEVELOPMENT AND
CURRENT CHALLENGES**

**27 FEBRUARY 2012
NEW YORK**

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CHAIRPERSON
HEADS OF DELEGATIONS
COUNTRY REPRESENTATIVES
MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS FAMILY

CHAIRPERSON,

FIRST ALLOW ME TO CONGRATULATE YOU AND THE BUREAU UPON YOUR ELECTION TO STEER THIS IMPORTANT COMMISSION.

MY DELEGATION ALIGNS ITSELF WITH THE STATEMENTS DELIVERED BY ALGERIA ON BEHALF OF THE G77 & CHINA, TUNISIA ON BEHALF OF THE AFRICAN GROUP AND ANGOLA ON BEHALF OF SADC.

CHAIRPERSON,

THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND IS PLEASED TO ADDRESS THIS HONOURABLE GATHERING AT THE 56TH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN. THE PRIORITY THEME FOR THIS YEAR WHICH IS

HOWEVER, THIS POSES A CHALLENGE DUE TO THE SCARCITY OF RESOURCES.

CHAIRPERSON,

THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND HAS A LEADERSHIP THAT SUPPORTS RURAL DEVELOPMENT. FOR EXAMPLE, HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN MOTHER WHO IS THE LEADER OF ALL WOMEN IN SWAZILAND, HAS LAUNCHED SEVERAL DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS TARGETING WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS. THESE INCLUDE A MUSHROOM PRODUCTION, VASELINE MAKING, AND THE MARULA SKIN PRODUCTS TO NAME A FEW. SHE IS CURRENTLY INTRODUCING A WOMEN'S BANK, IN SWAZILAND, WHICH WILL BE THE FIRST OF ITS KIND. THIS BANK WILL CATER FOR ALL WOMEN BOTH RURAL AND URBAN,

CHAIRPERSON,

THE GOVERNMENT OF SWAZILAND IS PLEASED TO INFORM OF THE MAJOR STRIDES THAT HAVE BEEN TAKEN IN POLICY, LEGISLATION AND PROGRAMMATIC INTERVENTIONS AIMED AT THE EMPOWERMENT OF RURAL WOMEN AND THEIR ROLE IN POVERTY AND HUNGER ERADICATION, AND DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES.

TO ADDRESS THE DISPARITIES BETWEEN THE RURAL AND URBAN AREAS GOVERNMENT HAS COMMITTED THROUGH SECTION 59(2) (D) OF THE NATIONAL CONSTITUTION TO, *'UNDERTAKING EVEN AND BALANCED DEVELOPMENT OF ALL REGIONS AND IN PARTICULAR IMPROVING THE CONDITIONS OF LIFE IN THE RURAL AREAS, AND GENERALLY, REDRESSING ANY IMBALANCE IN DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN THE RURAL AND URBAN AREAS'* . GOVERNMENT HAS ALSO CREATED AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT THROUGH THE DECENTRALISATION POLICY ADOPTED IN 2005. THIS POLICY ENSURES THAT DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICES ARE PROVIDED AT ALL LEVELS. IT IS ENVISAGED THAT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS POLICY, THE SITUATION OF WOMEN IN THE RURAL AREAS WILL GRADUALLY IMPROVE. THE DECENTRALIZATION POLICY ENVISAGES A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT, THAT OF ENSURING THAT NEEDS EMANATE FROM THE "BOTTOM UP" AND GOVERNMENT IS IN THE PROCESS OF ENSURING THAT LOCAL AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES COMPRISED OF COMMUNITY MEMBERS ARE ESTABLISHED AND SUPPORTED.

CHAIRPERSON,

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