



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

STATEMENT BY

H.E. MR. ZWELETHU MHLAUSI

**AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE
KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND**

**BEFORE THE 55TH 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**

28 FEBRUARY 2011

NEW YORK

Please Check Against Original

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 significant efforts delivered by Namibia in Behan of SADC, Mozambique on behalf of the African Group and Argentina, Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Liberia, 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" 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. We therefore give 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 from others and work with them to address the challenges we face.

In September, 2010 the Kingdom of Swaziland was proud to successfully host the 14th 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 significant role in promoting economic development and growth within the COMESA region and in showcasing our country's capabilities in 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 unemployment, HIV and AIDS, child labour, orphans and vulnerable children, high incidences of poverty and gender based violence as well as high levels of corruption. Our country is also not immune to the ongoing global financial and economic crisis, as its effects and far reaching consequences continue to spiral out of control and push our country down. The effects of climate change and global warming are also evident and have impacted on our food security.

Chairperson,

The Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland recognises gender equality as a key element in the promotion and protection of their human rights. Swaziland is also party to the several crucial human rights instruments, all of which promote gender equality and respect for the rights of women.

We are pleased to inform you of the major strides we have taken in policy, legislation and programme interventions aimed at improving access and participation of women and girls in education, science and technology and in 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 a year of coming into force, the state shall ensure that every child is enrolled in school, beginning with the first grade.

Government committed to the Education for All (EFA) initiative. At the beginning of 2000 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 DP&I recognises the critical role of education in promoting gender equality and provides for equal opportunities for all gender in the implementation of universal basic education. Government is reviewing education policy and legislation.

Furthermore, the children’s policy was introduced and applied 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 national strategy also recognise the need to ensure gender equality especially in issues of national development and Central to these policies is the national policy on gender. The gender approach is a comprehensive framework for the implementation of gender and women’s rights activities. The national policy on gender and women’s rights 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 neighbours in 2010.

Chairperson,

In conclusion, the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland expresses appreciation to our partners for their support through the provision of financial 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 our society.

I thank you.