

SPEECH FOR THE MEDIA LAUNCH OF THE ESWATINI ENVIRO-CLIMATE & TOURISM SYMPOSIUM AND TEMVELO AWARDS 2020

4thSeptember 2020

MANTENGA CULTURAL VILLAGE – 09h00

Recognitions and acknowledgements: (partners Noble Expressions, portfolio committee member, partnering/sponsoring organizations represented, ministry officials, the hosts ENTC, the media)

The Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs has the mandate to promote and support sustainable tourism for social equity, economic efficiency and environmental preservation. In its quest to achieve the latter, it is hosting a nationwide Environ-Climate and Tourism Symposium and Awards in partnership with Noble Expressions Investments as a follow up to similar symposia in 2016 and 2018.

The hosting of this project is a clear demonstration of Government's commitment to promote a clean, safe and healthy environment; and kick start activities that seek to replenish the already depleted environmental resources during and post the COVID-19 crisis, within the objects of Vision 2022. It involves the engagement of communities' short, medium and long term environmental and eco-tourism initiatives, leaving no one out.

It promotes environmental sustainability, showcases best practices in the environmental space and rewards those that are making an effort. This will unearth the challenges and opportunities that exist within diverse sectors during the current COVID-19 era. It will motivate the private sector to invest in environment and tourism, mitigating the impact of the worldwide lockdowns that have severely limited travelling, bringing devastating effects on the Kingdom of Eswatini's tourism industry.

The symposium will further establish an incentive scheme where businesses and institutions that prioritize environmental initiatives in their Corporate Social Investment will be awarded with a nationally recognized green stamp. The green stamp will strengthen promotion of green corporate practices and empower stakeholders with information and skills for promoting projects that are commercially viable while ensuring that they benefit from the E2 billion Green Climate Fund (GCF) established by the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA).

This will address market constraints in the Kingdom of Eswatini while playing a catalytic role in blended finance approach. It will enhance the use of the Climate Financing Facility (CFF) as a credit and financial development tool for empowering communities and strengthening the means for:

- accelerating incident management plans,
- improving workforce operations and supply chains,
- the development of liquidity, tax, trade and regulations strategies.

This day marks the start of the processes, which include regional symposia to be conducted in the four regions of the country during the month of October 2020 as follows:

- 19 October 2020:Lubombo Regional Symposium
- 21 October 2020:Shiselweni Regional Symposium
- 26 October 2020:Manzini Regional Symposium
- 28 October 2020:Hhohho Regional Symposium

This will be followed by a national symposium coupled with the Temvelo awards to be held on the 18th&19th November 2020. The Nationwide Symposium is aimed at creating awareness, building capacity, acknowledging, recognizing and honoring businesses, organizations, communities and individuals that have demonstrated exceptional environmental stewardship, dedicating themselves, their talents and resources to the protection of the environment and promotion of eco-tourism.

The regional and national dialogues and the awards will be graced by top government leaders and speakers from various institutions that support environmental & climate initiatives. Such speakers include: Royal Eswatini Sugar Corporation Managing Director, Mr Nick Jackson; Eswatini Water and Development Enterprise Chief Executive Officer, Mr. Sam Sithole; Commissioner General of the Eswatini Revenue Authority, Mr. Dumisani Masilela, to name a few.

The Kingdom of Eswatini's achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development which fosters Economic Growth, Job creation, Poverty and Inequality Eradication has been greatly jeopardized by the COVID –19 pandemic. This symposium will increase opportunities and diversify the economy for strategic economic sectors like the tourism and agro industries; creating jobs through community engagement and fostering innovative eco-tourism to improve livelihoods. It will strengthen partnerships with the private sector, promote Public Private Partnerships and support the development of SMMEs and Cooperatives while exploring innovative and technological approaches and gains to waste management.

I urge community members to participate in these activities for promoting sound, economically and socially sustainable environmental policies and practices; and development programs that meet appropriate national and international standards. This should be motivated by the fact that the Kingdom of Eswatini was ranked by **Lonely Planet** as 5th of the top 2020 travel destinations in the world. This has placed a huge challenge on the ministry and the nation, making it necessary to keep pushing the standards higher, as some countries may want to benchmark by bringing more tourists to experience this status.

As a reminder, there is need to note that the foundation for this nationwide project has been laid through the “**Clean Eswatini Campaign**” which fosters a consistent culture of cleanliness, innovativeness and vigilance. This will provide an opportunity for our communities to handle the fast-moving

and unexpected variables of the COVID-19 pandemic that cannot be easily handled by the existing crisis plans.

The 2020 Temvelo Awards have 27 categories recognizing the following sectors: Agriculture, Aviation, Construction, Finance, Forestry, Government Ministries, Health Facilities, Hospitality, Ports of Entry, Manufacturing, Municipalities, Parastatals, Petroleum, Retail, Transport, Media and Education.

There is no entity or individual that does not impact or is impacted by the environment, and therefore, we urge everyone to participate at every level to contribute to the preservation and restoration of our environment. We further request business to partner financially and in-kind in advancing this noble cause and we plead with the media to promote this project and also participate in the awards as there are relevant categories specifically for the media.

This will create opportunities for networking and building strong business friendships to support conservation with equity; interaction and incubation of local community initiatives and integrating economic empowerment for sustainable tourism.

The symposium will provide tailored sponsorship packages designed for maximum exposure and visibility for each organization before, during and after; based on individual

budget, business goals and envisaged return on investment. It will greatly enrich the public and private sectors, traditional structures, the youth, civil society, development partners and other institutions as they deliberate their roles in preserving the environment.

I therefore, would like to appeal to the private sector and our development partners to partner with us in this important initiative by way of financial and in-kind sponsorship, all the way from the regional to the national events. We also count on the requested eloquent and knowledgeable speakers to honour us by sponsoring their time and intellect in the quest to educate the nation and save the environment.

May I also take this opportunity to request professional men and women of integrity to answer to a soon to be published call for expression of interest to form part of the adjudication panel for the awards.

I now declare the **2020 Eswatini Enviro-Climate & Tourism Symposium And Temvelo Awards** officially launched and encourage the public and all eligible contestants to log into the symposium website to learn more about it and begin the registration process. More information will be available in the Environmental Department at the Ministry and with our partners, Noble Expressions.