

**CLOSING SPEECH OF THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND
CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, H.R.H. PRINCE DAVID DLAMINI
AT THE
43RD ORDINARY SESSION OF THE AFRICAN COMMISSION ON
HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS
EZULWINI, KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND**

Honorable Madam Chairperson. Vice Chairman and Honorable Commissioners of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, Honorable Ministers of State present here, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen,

On behalf of the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to make a few comments right in the middle of a very tight schedule of the 43rd Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights.

May I begin by firstly tendering my apologies for my conspicuous absence during the official opening of this the 43rd Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights by his Excellency, the Right Honorable Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Swaziland.

In the same breath I am equally dismayed that I have all along been unable to attend this session due to other pressing state duties which I have had to attend to. However, I am sure that in spite of your tight schedule in this meeting, you are all enjoying your stay and your deliberation in this beautiful Kingdom of Swaziland.

May I also echo how graciously honored we are to have been allowed to host this the 43rd Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples Rights, we feel very honored indeed.

The Kingdom of Swaziland has experienced major democratic growth in the sphere of governance, accountability and popular participation within the last few years. The desire by the country to maintain its characteristic peace in a concerted political effort to avoid the internal civil strifes which have characterized the continent of Africa, has inevitably deemed it politically necessary for the country to take the quantum leap in its political governance and constitutionalism

Hence the paradigm shift to a constitutional dispensation in terms of which the principles of separation of powers, democracy, participation. Effective realization and enjoyment of fundamental rights and freedoms were entrenched and protected by a supreme law of the land.

Democracy and Human rights are therefore inseparable which is why the institution of a democratic society comprising accountability, transparency, deliberation, equality and justice are essential.

Also, Swaziland by virtue of being a member state of the African Union has had to meet its obligations in terms of instruments which the country has voluntarily signed, acceded to or ratified as the case might be.

The adoption of the Constitution was the greatest step in the right direction with regards to human rights and freedoms. Swaziland is fully aware of the bitter fact that peace, particularly in Africa is a fragile commodity and therefore the need to embrace it at all times.

Which is why the Kingdom is totally committed to living up to the spirit of the Constitution to ensure that democracy, good governance and the rule of law are a reality at all level of government. In that direction the Government of Swaziland opens its doors to responsible, honest and constructive dialogue from all citizens of the country, stakeholders comprising interalia, civic organizations, the media institutions, lawyers for human rights, churches and other religious organizations and other human rights defenders. We are very appreciative that Swaziland has

a large and rich reservoir of these organizations involved in diverse fields of expertise and activities.

In the same spirit of constructive human dialogue, we believe it might have lasting results to tap into the skill, experience and resources that these organizations have available to them, particularly within the field of civic education, sensitization and dissemination of information to name just a few.

The kingdom is as much committed to the human rights agenda as it has committed its limited resources to the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic, malaria, tuberculosis (TB), cholera, inflation, food price hikes, currency devaluation, climatic fluctuation, crime, poverty, hunger and many other socio-political challenges.

In that way the promises brought about by the Constitution, of good governance, respect for the rule of law, transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs and of course respect for human rights will not only be a state project, but a matter of our collective responsibility and a tradition for generations to come.

Once again Madam Chairperson, thank you for your valuable time and may your deliberations proceed to the end peacefully.

I thank you all.