

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY**  
**DR ABSALOM THEMBA DLAMINI,**  
**MANAGING DIRECTOR, TIBIYO TAKA NGWANE**  
**AT THE FACULTY OF COMMERCE**  
**MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION LECTURE**

**TOPIC: ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP WITH  
THE GOVERNMENT AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF  
EMASWATI.**

**UNIVERSITY OF ESWATINI**

**Kwaluseni, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

**THE VICE CHANCELLOR,  
HEAD OF THE FACULTY OF COMMERCE,  
PROFESSOR JACKSON AND YOUR TEAM,  
LECTURERS AND STAFF OF THE FACULTY AND OTHERS,  
MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION STUDENTS,  
INVITED GUESTS,  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,  
ALL PROTOCOL OBSERVED**

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- I WISH TO BEGIN BY THANKING THE FACULTY OF COMMERCE FOR INVITING ME TO BE PART OF TODAY'S DISCUSSION.
- IT HAS BEEN A WHILE SINCE I STOOD IN FRONT OF A GATHERING OF ACADEMICS AND STUDENTS, AND I WILL MAKE SURE THAT I USE THIS PRIVILEGE WISELY.
- LET ME EMPHASISE HOW PARTICULARLY MEANINGFUL IT IS FOR ME TO RETURN TO THIS INSTITUTION, WHICH NOT LONG AGO BESTOWED ON ME AN HONORARY DOCTOR OF LAWS, AN HONOUR THAT I WILL ETERNALLY CHERISH.

- I BELIEVE THAT A FORUM SUCH AS THIS ONE CAN BE A CORNERSTONE OF A SOCIETY THAT IS INTELLECTUALLY INFORMED AND RICH WITH IDEAS.
- THE ACADEMIC SECTOR IS A PARAMOUNT PLAYER IN A GLOBAL SYSTEM THAT IS INCREASINGLY DRIVEN BY KNOWLEDGE, INFORMATION AND IDEAS.
- I THANK OUR UNIVERSITY FOR STRIVING TO PLAY THIS ROLE, AND I AM HONOURED TO HAVE BEEN INVITED TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE DISCOURSE ON STRENGTHENING THE SOCIAL CONTRACT BETWEEN SOCIETY, THE STATE AND OTHER PARTNERS, PARTICULARLY THE BUSINESS SECTOR, WHICH I REPRESENT.
- THE TOPIC OF MY PRESENTATION IS **ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE EMPOWERMENT OF EMASWATI.**
- PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, IF EVER THERE WAS A FITTING MOMENT IN HISTORY TO HAVE A DISCUSSION LIKE THIS, IT IS NOW.
- OUR COUNTRY, AND INDEED THE GLOBE, IS FACING ERNOMOUS CHALLENGES AND THREATS TO STABILITY, DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE.

- ECOLOGICALLY, ECONOMICALLY, POLITICALLY AND INDEED SOCIALLY, WE ARE FACING A RANGE OF CRISES, WHICH, IF NOT RESPONDED TO COLLABORATIVELY AND DECISIVELY, WILL THREATEN OUR EXISTENCE.
- THE MARKETS ARE UNSTABLE, THE GLOBAL ECONOMIC SYSTEMS ARE CRASHING, COMPANIES ARE RETRENCHING, AND GOVERNMENTS ARE STRUGGLING TO KEEP UP WITH THE GROWING INFINITE NEEDS OF THEIR PEOPLE.
- WE CERTAINLY ARE NOT EXCLUDED FROM THE STATE OF AFFAIRS.
- OUR OWN SITUATION AS A COUNTRY REQUIRES INTERVENTIONS.

## 2.0 WE HAVE COME SO FAR

- PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, IN UNPACKING MY PRESENTATION, I WANT TO BRIEFLY TAKE US BACK TO WHERE WE COME FROM AS A NATION.
- I BELIEVE THAT ONE CANNOT DO JUSTICE TO A TOPIC SUCH AS THIS ONE WITHOUT PAINTING THE PICTURE OF WHERE THE COUNTRY COMES FROM, WHAT IT HAS GONE THROUGH AND WHERE IT IS NOW.

- BUT IMPORTANTLY, WE MUST ALSO LOOK AHEAD, IN PARTICULAR THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES AT OUR DISPOSAL.
- WE COULD SPEND THE WHOLE DAY TALKING ABOUT THE JOURNEY OF THIS COUNTRY IN THE PAST 50 YEARS.
- IT HAS BEEN A PERIOD OF SUCCESSES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES.
- AT INDEPENDENCE, AS A NATION, WE HAD TO BUILD A LOT OF INSTITUTIONS AND INFRASTRUCTURE FROM SCRATCH.
- AT BEST, WE HAD TO TRANSFORM THOSE THAT WE INHERITED FROM OUR COLONISERS, TO ALIGN THEM WITH THE ARCHITECTURE OF OUR NATION.
- A SIMPLISTIC NARRATIVE WILL TELL YOU THAT A LOT OF THE INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WE HAVE TODAY, SUCH AS SCHOOLS, HOSPITALS, FACTORIES, ROADS, BRIDGES AND OTHERS, DID NOT EXIST 50 YEARS AGO.
- MANY ASPECTS OF OUR LIVES SUCH AS HEALTH, EDUCATION, THE ECONOMY, WHICH DEPENDED ON SUCH INFRASTRUCTURE WERE UNDERDEVELOPED.
- TODAY WE SPEAK OF SOME SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN THE AREAS OF EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC ADVANCEMENT, ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTH,

ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN THE ECONOMY BY INDIGENEOUS EMASWATI, AND OTHERS.

- FOR THAT, WE SHOULD BE PROUD AS LEADERS, INSTITUTIONS AND AS THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY.
- PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, WE CANNOT ONLY TALK ABOUT THE SUCCESSES OF THE PAST 50 YEARS. WE MUST ALSO REFLECT ON THE CHALLENGES SO THAT WE MAY IDENTIFY POSSIBLE AREAS OF IMPROVEMENT.
- THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI HAS NOT BEEN EXEMPTED FROM A RANGE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HURDLES.
- AT THE SOCIAL FRONT, WE KNOW THE DEEP LEVELS OF POVERTY AND HIGH UNEMPLOYMENT THAT ARE DRIVEN BY NEGATIVE, STAGNANT AND LOW ECONOMIC GROWTH, THE THREAT OF HIV AND AIDS, AMONG OTHERS.

### **3.0 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

- WE NEED TO REDEEM OUR ECONOMY, TO ENSURE THAT IT DRIVES GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.
- TO PROVIDE CONTEXT TO MY PRESENTATION, I WANT TO GIVE A BRIEF BACKGROUND TO THE LONG-

STANDING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TIBIYO TAKA NGWANE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI, ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE ORGANISATION'S PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATION OF ESWATINI, IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR NATION'S 50 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE.

- LET ME BEGIN WITH A BRIEF NARRATIVE OF TIBIYO TAKA NGWANE'S HISTORICAL PATH WITH THE PEOPLE OF ESWATINI, WHICH WILL ASSIST THE AUDIENCE WITH AN UNDERSTANDING OF OUR BUSINESS MODEL.
- TIBIYO TAKA NGWANE WAS FOUNDED BY HIS MAJESTY KING SOBUZA II, THROUGH A 1968 ROYAL CHARTER.
- HIS VISION WAS THAT OF A NATION THAT WAS PROSPEROUS, STABLE AND SELF-SUFFICIENT.
- FOR THE KING, A FULLY INDEPENDENT NATION WAS ONE THAT WAS IN CONTROL OF ITS OWN ECONOMY, SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, PEACE AND STABILITY.
- THE FUNDAMENTAL PILLARS OF THIS VISION ARE:
  - i. PEACE AND STABILITY
  - ii. CULTURE AND SOCIAL COHESION
  - iii. SKILLS DEVELOPMENT THROUGH EDUCATION
  - iv. ENHANCED LIVING STANDARDS

- PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, I NEED TO POSE HERE AND EMPHASISE THAT THIS IS NOT A TIBIYO PUBLIC RELATIONS EXERCISE, BUT MERELY A DEMONSTRATION OF A HOME-GROWN MODEL AT OUR DISPOSAL AS A COUNTRY THROUGH WHICH WE CAN STRENGTHEN OUR SOCIAL CONTRACT AND STIMULATE OUR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AS A PEOPLE.

#### **4.0 PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GOVERNMENT**

- OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF THIS COUNTRY IS UNDERPINNED BY OUR FOUNDING PRINCIPLES AND THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC PILLARS I HAVE ALREADY MENTIONED.
- THESE CONTEXTUALISE THE MANY PROJECTS THAT WE CONTINUE TO INITIATE AND SUPPORT ACROSS HEALTH, EDUCATION, COMMERCE, THE ECONOMY, CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL COHESION, PUBLIC WORKS AND OTHERS.
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, NO ONE UNDERSTANDS THE POTENTIAL OF THIS NATION IN TAKING CONTROL OF ITS OWN DESTINY THAN WE DO, AS A PEOPLE IN OUR COLLECTIVE.

- THE GOVERNMENT, BEING A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE'S WISHES AND A CONDUIT FOR CONVERTING THOSE WISHES AND NEEDS INTO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, CARRIES THE RESPONSIBILITY TO SET UP A CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR CONVERGING INNOVATIVE IDEAS.
- IT ALSO CARRIES THE HUGE RESPONSIBILITY TO RALLY ALL OF US, AS INSTITUTIONS AND THE GENERAL SOCIETY TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE PUBLIC GOOD.
- IT IS IMPORTANT TO EMPHASISE THAT GOVERNMENT ALONE CANNOT DELIVER ON THE COMPLEX AND CONSISTENTLY SHIFTING AMBITIONS OF THE NATION.
- REAL, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CAN ONLY BE ACHIEVED IF WE UTILISE ALL OUR NATURAL, CAPITAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES PRODUCTIVELY, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME EMPOWERING, IN PARTICULAR, THE POPULATION TO DREAM AND BE ABLE TO ACHIEVE THEIR DREAMS.
- IT IS AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND, PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, THAT OVER THE YEARS, OUR CORPORATE STRATEGY HAS BEEN GRAVITATING AROUND THE

## GOVERNMENT-LED NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL AGENDA.

- OUR BIGGEST AND IMMEDIATE RESPONSIBILITY IS TO CONSISTENTLY STIMULATE THE ECONOMY, SO THAT IT CREATES SUSTAINABLE EMPLOYMENT FOR OUR PEOPLE, CREATE SUSTAINABLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUR SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTREPRENEURS AND BY EXTENSION, SUSTAIN LIVELIHOODS FOR THOSE WHO ARE OUTSIDE OF THE ECONOMIC NET.
- OUR INVESTMENT IN KEY ENTERPRISES ACROSS THE DIFFERENT SECTORS OF THE ECONOMY IS INFORMED BY OUR UNDERSTANDING OF AND COMMITMENT TO THIS COLLECTIVE OBLIGATION.
- TIBIYO TAKA NGWANE HAS, AND CONTINUES TO INVEST PARTIALLY AND FULLY IN AGRICULTURE AND AGRO-PROCESSING, MANUFACTURING, HOSPITALITY, MINING, FINANCIAL SERVICES, MEDIA AND PROPERTY.
- THROUGH THESE INVESTMENTS 20,000 DIRECT AND INDIRECT JOBS ARE CREATED. A HUGE MAJORITY OF THESE ENTERPRISES EMPLOY EMASWATI.
- THE SUGAR INDUSTRY, WHERE WE HAVE INVESTED MASSIVELY, CONTRIBUTES SUBSTANTIALLY TO THE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND SUSTAINABILITY.

- SUGARCANE CONTRIBUTES 74% OF THE COUNTRY'S TOTAL AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT, AND FURTHER CONTRIBUTES 35 PERCENT OF THE TOTAL AGRICULTURE WAGE EMPLOYMENT.
- THE SUGAR INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTES 13 PERCENT TO THE COUNTRY'S GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT.
- IN A COUNTRY LIKE SWAZILAND, EMPLOYMENT PROVIDES A SOCIAL SAFETY NET FOR THE POOR AND THOSE WHO ARE EXCLUDED FROM MAINSTREAM LABOUR MARKETS AND OTHER ECONOMIC ACTIVITY.
- AS A LANDLOCKED COUNTRY, WE NEED TO INVEST AGGRESSIVELY IN ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE, WHICH IS OUR PRIMARY VEHICLE FOR IMPORTS AND EXPORTS.
- TIBIYO TAKA NGWANE HAS PARTNERED WITH THE GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP SOME STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE.
- ONE CAN MENTION THE OVERHEAD BRIDGE ON THE MR3 HIGHWAY ABOVE THE MAHHALA TRAFFIC CIRCLE IN MATSAPHA WHERE TIBIYO PAID A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT.
- THERE ARE ALSO SEVERAL FOOTBRIDGES ACROSS THE COUNTRY, WHICH WE FUNDED TO ENSURE THAT OUR NATION MOVE EASIER TO DO BUSINESS AND OTHER TASKS.

- WE ALL KNOW THE ROLE PLAYED BY MATSAPHA IN THE ECONOMY AS THE NATION'S INDUSTRIAL HUB AND A LINK BETWEEN THE TWO CITIES OF MBABANE AND MANZINI.
- AT THE CENTRE OF A NATION'S IDENTITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IS ITS TRADITIONS AND CULTURE.
- TIBIYO CONTINUES TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT TO NATIONAL CULTURAL EVENTS, BECAUSE WE ARE AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING AND DEVELOPING OUR TRADITIONS.
- WE BELIEVE THAT A NATION MUST BE EMPOWERED TO REALISE ITS FULL POTENTIAL THROUGH A WIDE RANGE OF OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE THE FORMAL EMPLOYMENT NETWORK.
- THAT IS WHY WE INVEST IN THE FINANCING OF INDIGENOUS ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH OUR INVESTMENT IN FINCORP, WHICH OFFERS LOANS TO SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES.

## **5.0 INVESTMENT IN YOUNG PEOPLE**

- PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, INVESTING IN YOUNG PEOPLE NEEDS TO BE PRIORITISED, BECAUSE THEY ARE AN ASSET TO THE ECONOMY AND SOCIETY IN GENERAL.
- WE NEED TO EMPOWER THEM WITH SKILLS, AND TO ALSO OPEN UP SPACES FOR THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES, TO BREATHE IN NEW IDEAS, FRESH AND INNOVATIVE IDEAS TO THE WAY WE DO BUSINESS.
- EDUCATION SUPPORT IS A CORE FUNCTION OF OUR CORPORATE STRATEGY, WHICH COMPLEMENTS THE GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAMME ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING.
- WE DO THIS BECAUSE WE BELIEVE YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT JUST THE FUTURE OF THIS COUNTRY, BUT THEY ARE A VITAL RESOURCE FOR TURNING THE ECONOMY AROUND TODAY.
- EVERY YEAR, WE PROVIDE BURSARIES TO AT THOUSANDS EMASWATI TO PURSUE SECONDARY AND TERTIARY EDUCATION.
- THIS EFFECTIVELY CONTRIBUTES TO THE SKILLS POOL IN THE ECONOMY, EITHER THROUGH EMPLOYMENT OR ENTREPRENEURSHIP.
- OUR ECONOMY IS INCREASINGLY GETTING EXPOSED AND LINKED TO THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, WHICH IS CHARACTERISED BY AN

INFUSION OF TECHNOLOGIES THAT IS BLURRING THE LINES BETWEEN THE PHYSICAL, DIGITAL AND BIOLOGICAL SPACES.

- THE GOVERNMENT, FOLLOWING HIS MAJESTY'S VISION, HAS ESTABLISHED A WORLD CLASS SCIENCE AND BIOTECHNOLOGY PARKS, WHOSE AIMS ARE TO REALISE THE COUNTRY'S FULL POTENTIAL IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.
- WE COMMEND HIS MAJESTY FOR THIS VISION, AND THE GOVERNMENT FOR ENSURING THAT WE DO NOT MISS OUT ON THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT WILL BE PRESENTED BY THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION AS WELL AS THE GREEN REVOLUTION.
- WE NEED TO PREPARE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE FOR THIS, SO THAT THEY TAP INTO OPPORTUNITIES, AND ENABLE THEM TO THINK AND COMPETE WITH THEIR PEERS GLOBALLY.
- IMPORTANTLY, WE NEED TO ENCOURAGE AND EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE TO ENGAGE IN AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISES, TO ENSURE THAT THEY ARE EMPLOYED, BUT AT THE SAME TIME EXPLORE ENTREPRENEURSHIP OPPORTUNITIES.

## **6.0 WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?**

- PROGRAMME DIRECTOR, WE LOOK TO INSTITUTIONS LIKE THE UNIVERSITY TO BE OUR THINK TANKS, AND A MIRROR OF ALL OUR EFFORTS, SO THAT WE ARE NOT ONLY KEPT ABREAST WITH NEW INFORMATION AND IDEAS, BUT WE ARE ALSO ABLE TO BRIDGE THE GAP BETWEEN THEORY, POLICY AND REALITY ON THE GROUND.
- WE HAVE, THUS FAR, BEEN ABLE TO TRANSLATE THE ASPIRATIONS OF THIS NATION AT INDEPENDENCE, TO BE THE AUTHORS OF OUR DESTINY. BUT A LOT MORE REMAINS TO BE DONE.
- WE NEED HONEST, REFLECTIVE CONVERSATIONS SUCH AS THIS ONE, TO CREATE A MARKET OF IDEAS, AND TO REMIND OURSELVES OF THE CHALLENGES AHEAD.
- WE NEED TO EMBRACE PRINCIPLES OF HARD WORK, EXCELLENCE, INTEGRITY AND PATRIOTISM.
- WE NEED TO GUARD OUR PEACE AND STABILITY WITH ALL THAT WE HAVE, BECAUSE, IT IS THROUGH THESE THAT WE WILL CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT THAT IS NOT ONLY ATTRACTIVE FOR INVESTMENT, BUT ALSO SUSTAIN DEVELOPMENT.

- WE NEED TO FIND NEW WAYS OF THINKING, TO ENSURE THAT WE ARE ALIGNED WITH NEW, MEANINGFUL WAYS OF DOING THINGS.
- INSTITUTIONS SUCH AS THE UNIVERSITY MUST PRODUCE MORE EMASWATI RESEARCHERS AND ACADEMICS TO ENSURE THAT WE PROTECT INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE, AND INFUSE THESE WITH WESTERN WAYS.
- WE NEED TO ENSURE THAT WE SAFEGUARD NATURAL RESOURCES AND TRADITIONS, WHICH WE INHERITED FROM PREVIOUS GENERATIONS, AND UTILISE THEM RESPONSIBLY. IMPORTANTLY, WE NEED TO PRESERVE THESE RESOURCES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS.
- ONCE AGAIN, I WISH TO CONVEY MY DEEPEST GRATITUDE TO THE UNIVERSITY FOR INVITING ME, AND THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR ATTENTION.

**END**