



GOVERNMENT'S PROGRAMME OF ACTION 2008-2013

BY

**HIS EXCELLENCY THE RT. HONOURABLE PRIME MINISTER DR.
BARNABAS SIBUSISO DLAMINI (MP) PRESENTED TO BOTH
HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT**

1. INTRODUCTION

On 16th October 2008 I was both honoured and inspired to have been commanded by His Majesty to lead his Government in this new Administration. It is a privilege now, standing before this august Parliament, to renew my pledge to justify the trust His Majesty has shown in me by performing my duties to the very best of my ability. It is also a pleasure, today, to present to Parliament and the Nation this Administration's Programme of Action at the commencement of its five year term of office.

2. BACKGROUND

The appointment of this Government comes at a time of global economic uncertainty. Last month's Budget Statement set out very clearly the nature of the global economic shadow above us today. In the industrialised world the banking crisis of 2008 has given rise to a recession of, as yet, unknown proportions. In our export markets there is reduced lending for growth, many corporate failures and, inevitably, rising unemployment. In short – reduced purchasing power. Our main trading partner, the Republic of South Africa, has acknowledged that it is facing an economic recession. These factors will impact negatively on our own growth.

In the Budget Statement we were told of the expected downward trend in the size of the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) customs duties pool – in itself partly a function of the recession. This will lead to a reduction in Government revenue in the coming

years. Also sensitive to a fall in the volume of trade is our other main source of revenue – sales tax.

Whilst uncertain about the extent of a recession in the Kingdom our concerns have been somewhat reduced in recent weeks by a fall in interest rates, food and fuel prices. But there could be difficult times ahead and we must be prepared.

3. FISCAL PRUDENCE AND FINANCIAL CONTROL

The external economic circumstances that I have described are outside our control. But there is still much internally that we can control. In his Speech, when opening the First Session of the Ninth Parliament, His Majesty the King and *Ingwenyama* called for fiscal prudence by Government. Given the global economic uncertainties, this command has come at precisely the right time. Government will observe fiscal prudence by keeping budget deficits as low as possible and, in particular, targeting priority areas. This should not be achieved by using under-expenditure on capital projects to cover over-spending on current account, which has been a trend in the past. Our capital budget is for development so there should be no under-spending. This Administration will reinforce the existing initiative to increase the rate of capital project implementation significantly from its present low level.

In parallel, we shall exert tighter financial control, across the board, seeking best value for money in all Government spending. His Majesty announced this year to be the year of "Renewal." With that as the prevailing theme I can say here that 2009 will see a renewed commitment to greater integrity and tighter control in the use of public funds and other resources. We will make the pursuit of value-for-money a primary goal in Government spending. It will apply across the spectrum from education to public works. That is not an empty promise. Government has significantly increased its audit capacity and this Administration will put that to good use.

On the other side of the Government Budget we shall take the necessary steps to ensure that revenue collection – mainly taxes – is maximised. The creation of a Revenue Authority will establish the capacity, and recruitment of the requisite skills is now underway.

Underpinned by our determination to improve the quality of life for the Swazi Nation, there will be a renewal of our country's drive to

create jobs through economic growth since that is the main route to a sustainable improvement in the standard of living for our people.

4. GOVERNMENT PRIORITIES

As this Administration looks ahead to its period of office it is important to have priority areas that focus best on the needs of our people. These were clearly set out in His Majesty's Speech from the Throne last month. Since then, this Administration has prepared performance targets for all Ministries with these priority areas in mind. The vision for the coming five years and specific performance targets for 2009 for all Ministries are captured in this Programme of Action. By way of commitment to that programme, all Ministers and Principal Secretaries are in the process of signing performance agreements in which they undertake to meet the 2009 targets. My Office will monitor and assist in assessing, and reporting on, performance on a regular basis.

The term "business unusual" has been adopted as a keynote of this Administration. It stands for the re-engineering of the usual manner of carrying out Government business into a more efficient form of service delivery. To supplement the Programme of Action is a programme of "quick wins" where Ministries will make a special effort, within a matter of weeks, to illustrate the action orientation of this Administration by achieving immediate service delivery improvements as the longer term programmes get underway.

Government is there to serve the people of this country. Thus the quality of service delivery of this Administration shall remain of paramount importance throughout. In observing this, all arms of Government will work in close cooperation with each other. We will consult widely with the stakeholders of our society and work constantly to achieve good and stable industrial relations..

I would like, now, to go into some detail regarding the main thrust of this Administration's targets and, in particular, how the stated Government priorities will be embraced.

5. A HEALTHY NATION

A healthy nation is a happy and productive one. Access to decent health care services is a major contributor to a good standard of living. It is also a basic human right. But Government is currently

failing in its responsibility for health services. There is much to be done. The facilities offered by our hospitals and clinics are the subject of bitter criticism from users and carers alike. Much of the problem clearly lies in the management of resources – money, as well as staff and organisational skills. We can, in the first instance, make much better use of what we do have.

Government will, therefore, as a matter of urgency, review all health facilities, checking the state of equipment and the standard of service delivery. This will be an audit of skills and equipment. New guidelines and appropriate training will be provided as part of a quality improvement programme. We will examine carefully and remedy the continuing problem of losing doctors, nurses and other health professionals to more lucrative employment elsewhere in the world. There is a huge need for their services, we train them at considerable cost, yet then lose them in huge numbers.

The Phalala Fund and Civil Service Medical Referral Facility have provided vital support for those in need of specialist medical treatment not available within the Kingdom. In order to achieve the most cost-effective specialist service, however, we shall, beginning this year, start to roll out a programme of in-country specialists and accompanying facilities which will be available for every hospital in the country.

Our planning and control systems in drugs and equipment will be upgraded. An uninterrupted supply of important drugs will be a national target in 2009 and the years that follow. Proper repair and preventive maintenance programmes will also be put in place to ensure that all equipment in our hospitals and clinics function efficiently.

Although the latest published figures on the HIV prevalence rate do not show a statistical improvement, the rate has, at least, stabilised and our management of the pandemic has improved. We are grateful for the financial assistance given by donors, especially the Global Fund, who have supported us for a number of years. Our deep appreciation is also extended to the Government of the USA for the assistance we receive under the United States of America President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) which is set to increase significantly when we finalise the new partnership framework over the coming months, a framework which will align with our National Strategic Framework, the Health Sector Strategic Plan and other key documents. Government's own contribution to

the fight against HIV and AIDS is also being increased by significant amounts each year.

We shall continue to increase the roll-out of anti-retroviral treatment (ART). This will serve to reduce the mortality rates that have crippled the labour force and caused so much distress and deprivation in the home. We are also developing an enlarged programme of services to provide post exposure treatment.

But avoiding the risk of HIV in the first place should remain paramount in the lifestyle of the individual. And as well as protecting oneself and one's spouse, it is essential that we extend protection to the young and vulnerable in our population. Sexual abuse is highly damaging and even life-threatening. Society's responsibility to help the young and vulnerable in this respect will be augmented by the decentralisation and deconcentration in Government in the fight against HIV and AIDS through the development of the regional and Tinkhundla HIV and AIDS committees.

Our response to HIV and AIDS has been multi-sectoral but we must not underestimate the damage caused to our society by the impact of the pandemic. With many thousands of children orphaned and, currently, only 22% of children growing up in two-parent families, the implications are serious. It must be through protecting, feeding and educating such vulnerable children, at the same time as steadily reducing poverty in our country that we will prevent the emergence of a dysfunctional society.

Our rural health motivators - *bagqugquteli* - have been pillars of the health system, especially in the assistance they have given to those with HIV and AIDS, and it has been through their dedicated implementation of the home-based care programme that suffering has been reduced across the country. They are volunteers but their value must not be underestimated and I expect to see them recognised in the respective legislation and training programmes.

This Administration is aiming for an improvement in all the health indicators. We will reduce the rate of infant mortality through an expansion of the immunisation programme, as well as extended services to prevent mother-to-child HIV transmission at birth. Through an intensified partnership with non-government and private sector stakeholders we shall improve disease control, in

particular, achieve higher rates of detection and treatment of tuberculosis. We intend to eradicate malaria by 2013.

6. AN EDUCATED AND SKILLED NATION

Our children are our future. In meeting the basic rights of our children we map out the future of our society. Education is one of the basic rights and, especially at primary level, it is hugely influential in the development of the individual. Furthermore, an educated and skilled nation is one that can find the fast track to prosperity.

Our Constitution provides for free primary education to be made available for all our children in public schools. This Administration respects the recent High Court judgment on the issue. Our understanding is that implementation of the Constitution is a process rather than an event. Prior to the Court judgment – indeed, some years before – Government had started the process of free primary education. In recent years that process had accelerated. In order, therefore, that there is no chaos arising from a precipitate implementation of the High Court judgment, Government will now proceed urgently with drafting the necessary legislation for the approval of Parliament. This will provide us with clarity on interpretation of the issue of free primary education and a definitive programme of implementation.

Through curriculum development and training we will create an effective framework for the delivery of pre-school education. Our secondary schools will be extended to eliminate the existing problem where many primary school leavers are unable to gain admission at secondary level. In all age groups the private sector has filled gaps in the public sector education provision. We have valued that contribution but Government will now need to draft legislation that defines monitoring and control procedures to ensure that standards maintained, and fees charged, are at reasonable levels. We shall establish an Accreditation Authority which will ensure that private institutions are assessed as meeting the necessary standards before being licensed to operate.

We shall go further and improve the quality and relevance of education, seeking to ensure that school leavers are well-equipped in practical and business skills that can be utilised in productive and self-sustaining enterprise. We have, in the past, produced too many humanities graduates. To meet the needs of our modern

economy we shall shift the emphasis to technical and scientific skills. We shall draft legislation to accommodate the establishment of new universities.

And to ensure, whatever the subject, that standards are sustained throughout the education system, we shall launch an enlarged programme of schools inspection.

While talking of standards we will recognise the contribution of the church mission schools to character-building by encouraging the development of mission schools in our system. They will be given more management authority within the parameters of prevailing Government policy.

This Administration is concerned at the recurring evidence of misuse of funds within the education system. That will be redressed as a matter of urgency through a much enlarged programme of audit. This initiative will greatly assist in identifying fraud and other forms of misuse of resources, as well as creating a significant deterrent within a sector that now contains around 900 Government-owned institutions.

Government will continue to meet the education costs of the orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs) of our country. His Majesty has announced an increased allocation of money to the OVC Bursary Fund and the audit initiative will be extended to cover this area of funding to ensure that the needs are correctly met. Government will collaborate with communities to ensure that the Fund benefits those who are in need.

Education takes the *lion's share* of the annual Government Budget. But it is still not enough to meet the needs of our children. For some years we have pursued a policy of a greater contribution to fees being made by the beneficiaries of tertiary education. This cannot have an impact unless all contributions are received. This Administration will improve the collection of such revenues as a matter of urgency.

7. A FOOD-SECURE NATION

Being self-sufficient in food is a driving ambition for our country. We will build capacity among our farmers to increase yields per hectare in our food crops. We will also work out a subsidy strategy to most effectively encourage higher production. Output is not

security unless it can be stored. We will train more farmers with a view to increasing individual storage. Expanding our national storage facilities has a substantial price tag attached to it but we will, this year, examine how best to meet our target of doubling storage capacity over the coming five years.

His Majesty has described agriculture as the backbone of our economy. To keep that backbone robust we need to diversify. That means adding other food crops to our maize production. It means adding other cash crops to our sugar industry, as well as developing agro-processing industries. This policy serves the purpose of not only creating greater food security, not only hedging against the risks inherent in the commodity markets of the world, but also adding value to our primary produce. Fundamental changes are taking place in the European Union, which is our main export market for sugar. Whilst we shall use the ongoing EU-funded adaptation strategy to guide us in this respect, we intend in the meantime to assist in the development of a number of agro-industries, including food processing, in communities across the country. Our livestock industry will also receive a boost. We shall revive the poultry industry, including the Mfumbaneni Hatchery Project in the Manzini Region, mainly through intensified promotion and training and we shall aim for a significant increase in chicken output. We shall also encourage our cattle livestock industry to develop further by growing its own fodder which, until now, has been imported at ever increasing cost.

Our extension service is not the force that it once was, so Government will take steps to restore its capacity and credibility for the benefit of our farmers. We shall also expand the tractor pool project. What is important is to be able to provide tractors without causing planting delays for farmers. This will necessitate using the private sector for which subsidies from Government will be necessary to ensure the rates charged to farmers are the same as for Government-owned tractors.

We shall make better use of our Government-owned farms. There is considerable expertise at our disposal in the ranks of the Civil Service and we intend to put those skills to practical effect by showing communities how to farm effectively using the Government-owned farm land that is currently under-utilised.

Some countries have reverted highly cost-effectively to the traditional organic fertilisers of our forefathers. We intend to learn from such developments.

8. IMPROVED AVAILABILITY AND ACCESS TO WATER

Water - whether for human consumption, for growing crops or for industry itself - is a resource the supply of which is as challenging as it is important. This Administration will embark on a substantial programme of water harvesting through the building of dams and reservoirs. We will also drill boreholes and instal micro-supplies to serve communities. Within the urban areas, unaccounted for water remains excessively high and steps will be taken to reduce this through improved maintenance and identification and removal of illegal connections. We will also expand the existing water recycling programme to make better use of modern technologies. The mapping and preservation of our wetlands will be an initiative to protect an important part of our heritage.

9. IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY THROUGH DECENTRALISATION

Whilst the decentralisation to regional offices has been implemented for numerous Government services, there is a need to introduce with some urgency a further deconcentration of services from regions to communities. By providing easier access to services Government will be reducing the cost to those users. This Administration will introduce one-stop community centres to take on a number of the services, a process to be taken to completion over the coming years. A pilot scheme of approximately eight one-stop community centres will commence once sites have been selected. The centres will also serve to provide advice on enterprise development.

10. GREATER ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION

The expansion of business, whether large, medium or small in scale, creates higher output and economic growth. It also creates jobs, and an expansion of large-scale industries is the quickest and most substantial creator of jobs. We shall remain committed to an open and competitive economy in which the private sector will be

the power-house in achieving growth, in an increasingly conducive environment provided by Government.

10.1 Domestic and Foreign Direct Investment

Foreign direct investment (FDI) and locally-sourced investment in our private sector are hugely important to us. FDI itself is particularly attractive since it invariably represents a source of new technologies, products and markets, as well as capital and management skills. Its value cannot be overestimated. At the same time it must be investment that is responsive to our laws and employment practices. We shall encourage investment that is not only labour-intensive but also increases economic activity through the use of local supplies and services, particularly from linkages with our small, medium and micro-scale enterprises (SMMEs). We shall launch a more vigorous investment promotion campaign to attract precisely that kind of investor.

To maximise the effectiveness of our investment promotion campaign we will require our diplomatic missions abroad to play an active part in the process. What has historically been a facilitation role will be extended to one of vigorous promotion of the advantages of investing in our economy.

Government will attach a great deal of importance to these linkages between big and small business, whether in relation to new or existing commercial and industrial investment. We shall also provide the necessary support to ensure that our local SMMEs are able to meet the world-class standards that such linkages require.

We have recognised the importance of the commercial exploitation of our mineral resources in creating economic growth. We shall pursue private sector investment in this industry as actively as other forms of investment.

10.2. Small, Medium and Micro-Scale Enterprise (SMME) Development

The development of our SMME's will be at the core of this Administration's programme. We shall develop a directory of opportunities and, through one-stop centres, give advice in the rural areas on opportunities and the acquisition of finance, as well as technical and business skills. We shall take training for trades out to communities in an expanded skills outreach programme. It

was the vision of King Sobhuza II that the Swazi Commercial Amadoda would play a commanding role in the development of business on Swazi Nation Land. Government will give support and training to this institution as well as engaging it more in the creation of employment. It will be a stakeholder in the development of SMME legislation.

We also intend to increase the development of cluster and cooperative groups of small and medium scale enterprises across the country. Cluster groups have two common characteristics – product or sector specialisation and geographical location. They enjoy the economies of scale and they foster teamwork and cooperation because they work together towards a common goal – getting into the global value chain. We shall study urgently their potential and the challenges experienced in a number of African countries.

It is Government's responsibility to provide an environment that is stable and attractive to enterprise development. We need to make our system investor-friendly. Government will, therefore, take a further look at the trade licensing system as well as the process by which we issue work permits. We need to ensure that such processes are efficient and equitable.

In providing the conducive environment, Government will expand the land available for industrial building investment at the same time as establishing the Royal Science and Technology Park which will contribute to future economic growth through technology advancement and innovation.

10.3 Tourism

The tourism industry is generally recognised as the sector which generates more employment than any other. Swaziland is blessed with natural scenic beauty, a comfortable climate and a unique culture. These are hugely attractive to the tourist but Swaziland remains merely a transit stage rather than a destination of choice to tourists. Developing our tourist industry can, and shall, be done without spoiling our countryside or disturbing our communities. Government will, therefore, intensify its drive to attract investment in facilities that will appeal to the discerning tourist. We will seek, at the same time, to encourage the bigger facilities to use our small-scale entrepreneurs. In tourism, as in industry and commerce, and indeed agriculture, this Administration is committed

to strengthening those linkages and, in so doing, create many more jobs.

Our diplomatic missions abroad will be required to include the promotion of tourism and tourism investment in their day-to-day duties.

10.4 Infrastructure Development

With agriculture the backbone, our infrastructure can be viewed as the skeleton, or framework, on which the economy is built. Within that framework the transport system represents the arteries – the conduit for trade with the outside world, as well as the means by which tourists can take in the beauty of our countryside.

In addition to completing the Ngwenya to Manzini road link we shall embark on a substantial programme of tarred and all-weather roads including feeder roads linking communities with the main highways. This will be in parallel with an improved programme of road maintenance and a public/private partnership in the introduction of a tolling system for the Mvutshini to Ngwenya section of highway.

Completion of the new international airport at Sikhupe within the next two years will represent possibly the most exciting infrastructure development. The airport will make our country more accessible to goods and people alike, as well as placing our exports closer to the global marketplace. There will be a new road highway link to the airport – a link that will in due course extend through Hlane as far as Lomahasha. That programme will include the re-settlement of residents around the airport area. Other components of the Millennium Project, in particular the roads and factory shells, will also increase our competitiveness in attracting new investment.

There are similarly exciting developments ahead in communications technology. The Next Generation Network project will lay an optic fibre ring across the country and match some of the most advanced communication and data transfer networks in the world.

We shall not overlook the importance of our rail system and the extent to which an extension would provide a more efficient and cost-effective route to our regional markets. It is expected to provide an additional link to the new Sikhupe airport. Such extensions would serve to reduce wear and tear on our roads. I

expect the rail system to play an important part in the future commercial exploitation of our mineral resources, a sector in which there is the potential for a significant amount of growth. The Dry Port in Matsapha, which is now congested, will be expanded, with work commencing this year.

10.5. Energy

Recent events have given cause for increasing concern in the Kingdom regarding our dependence on imported energy. In the first instance we need to create more electricity and use less. Government will, therefore, take measures to encourage the more efficient use of electricity while embarking on an intensive drive to attract private sector investment into domestic thermal power generation. We expect the development of our coal mining industry to play a crucial role in this initiative. At the same time we shall steadily increase the energy provided from renewable sources as a proportion of the total supply. As we move towards greater self-sufficiency and more renewable energy we shall at the same time increase electricity distribution into communities in the rural areas. This latter programme is being supported by assistance from the Republic of China on Taiwan as well as from Government's own Regional Development Fund.

While we remain dependent on fossil fuels, Government will actively seek the necessary resources to increase our storage facilities above the present untenably low level.

11. PROTECTION AND EMPOWERMENT OF VULNERABLE AND DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

No decent society turns its back on the vulnerable and disadvantaged. In addition to the many thousands of orphans there are other vulnerable children in the Kingdom as well as adults disadvantaged by age or disability. Our support of OVCs will go beyond assistance with schooling and extend to a closer attention to their welfare through more Neighbourhood Care Points across the breadth of the country. In addition to inspection visits for all alternative (foster home) care centres, new standards and guidelines will be drawn up together with setting up the necessary arrangements to bring all privately-run homes within the ambit of Government inspection. Plans will also be drawn up this year for the provision of shelter for vulnerable adults.

His Majesty has announced an increased allocation to the elderly in the coming financial year. Government will, at the same time, examine ways of improving the delivery mechanisms to ensure prompt payment and safer custody of the funds allocated to the elderly. Historically, Swazi society has been a caring one, with communities using traditional methods of extending help and protection to the needy. Government will seek to revive this.

12. A SAFE AND SECURE NATION WITH REDUCED CRIME

Tough on crime and terrorism. That will be our policy. In the first instance, however, our aim is to deter. Our policing will be more visible, with increased foot and vehicle patrols in the urban areas. We shall engage with community police forums to improve crime prevention and detection in the rural areas. We shall embark on public education programmes. As the saying goes – “to be fore-warned is to be fore-armed.”

Service targets, including emergency call-out times, will be set and how our police perform against those targets will be regularly displayed in the main police stations. Increased vigilance by the public will be encouraged through the establishment of neighbourhood watch schemes.

For many years the number of prisoners on remand has been unacceptably high. Justice delayed is justice denied, not only to the accused but also the victim. Existing processes will soon be overhauled to ensure a more rapid and efficient processing of court cases. The remand numbers will fall substantially. We shall strengthen counselling and life skills training in our prisons to seek more successful rehabilitation and a reduction in re-offending rates.

Our courts must operate freely and fearlessly. Government will continue to support the judiciary both financially and in other respects as important measures to promote and protect its independence.

We encourage freedom of speech to an extent that many countries of the world cannot match. But where such speech corrupts or incites violence or civil disorder, our Government will act to stop it. We owe that to the peaceful members of our society who represent by far the majority. The same applies to the freedom to associate. We respect that, except where violence is anticipated. Then we

must intervene to protect the innocent in our society which is our priority. Regarding out-and-out terrorism, this Administration will intensify our defences. The vigilance of our security forces is being intensified, numerous counter-terrorism measures are in the process of being implemented and the security of our borders is being reinforced. There will be public awareness campaigns on the dangers of terrorism and the importance of individual vigilance.

Corruption is crime. Those who engage in corrupt activities are criminals. Over the past few years, corruption has become increasingly deep-rooted in our society. There is now widespread scepticism about the effectiveness of Government's institutional arrangements to deal with, and deter, corruption. This Administration is building the necessary capacity in our Anti-Corruption Commission and other institutions across Government, at the same time as setting targets for the speedy resolution of all outstanding cases and future corruption allegations. Whether corruption allegations give rise to prosecution or are dismissed for lack of evidence, they must be brought to swift and fair resolution.

To set an example in this initiative, Government has included in its own targets a Code of Conduct for politicians and a Public Service Charter for civil servants, both instruments being to set, and obtain commitment to, high standards of integrity.

It is important that our children learn at the earliest possible age of the evil and perils of a corrupt and fraudulent way of life. For this reason, the subject of ethics, with a special emphasis on fraud and corruption, is to be incorporated in the primary schools curriculum. This initiative will be extended into a public education programme so that all members of our society are both informed factually and reassured of the protection, including the necessary legislation, to be afforded to *whistleblowers*.

In the meantime we shall instruct Commissions of Enquiry and forensic audits, as appropriate, in areas that give cause for concern and, in particular, ensuring that there is full subsequent accountability where this is warranted.

13. THE ENVIRONMENT

Global concern about the environment has increased dramatically over the past decade. The Kyoto Agreement of 1992 represented the first broad international accord on measures needed to reduce

the emission of greenhouse gases and, therefore, the pace of global warming. Mindful of the international protocols, we shall launch a programme this year to sensitise our people further on issues such as climate change so that each of us can play a responsible part in reducing carbon emissions. We will also launch a substantial tree planting programme and restore degraded land. Government will show respect to the environment by launching a pollution reduction and waste management programme.

14. DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Disaster strikes at a place and a time known only to itself. But being prepared for disaster, as well as taking all available measures to mitigate the effects of disaster when it happens, are priorities for this Government. We shall carry out campaigns to reduce the risk of fire. We will transport potable water to the areas severely affected by drought. We will increase our capability to be able to react quickly and incisively to disaster when it strikes.

15. PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

In addition to seeking excellence in service delivery, Government intends to have a well-managed public service, including the parastatal sector. Government expects civil servants to be committed to their work and non-political as they proceed with implementation of Government policies, including this Programme of Action. In addition to extensive training for performance improvement we will look for alternative forms of delivery – mainly outsourcing to the private sector – where this assures Government of improved service standards. This will be embraced within a Government-wide performance management system. We shall continue to review the size of the public service and develop revised plans for early retirement options to facilitate rightsizing where this is necessary.

16. YOUTH

It is essential that the youth of our country are not disheartened by the lack of job opportunities that currently prevails. His Majesty has increased the allocation to the Youth Fund, and Government will ensure that large numbers of young people are admitted into training programmes that specifically give the skill, motivation and confidence that they need in order to start their own income-generating projects.

17. SPORT ARTS AND CULTURE

An interest in sport, arts and culture is a huge anchor in the lives of the young. Physical activity is mentally and physically beneficial and a programme, already in its pilot stage, will be developed to include a certain amount of physical education in our primary schools in the foreseeable future. We aim, also, to encourage the private sector to get more involved in financial support for sport and cultural activities. This will give our young people the means to excel and compete more successfully on the world stage.

The world stage will see its most celebrated soccer competition take place in South Africa in 2010. Whilst Swaziland will, regrettably, not be sporting participants, Government intends to encourage all potential beneficiaries – whether in sport, business or tourism – to seek the maximum benefit from that event.

18. POVERTY ALLEVIATION

The reduction of poverty is one of the overriding aims of His Majesty's Government. The number of our people living below the internationally recognised *poverty line* is unacceptably high. It is through the creation of sustainable livelihoods that poverty can be significantly reduced. The Poverty Reduction Strategy sets out an action programme to implement not only the job creation strategy but also other measures. This Administration will ensure that a rapid roll-out of that programme is achieved and that progress remains highly visible in the public domain.

One of the basic rights of the individual is shelter. The lack of housing is a common and significant symptom of poverty. This Administration will bring in new initiatives to ensure that the basic right of shelter is observed. This will include the provision of improved and expanded institutional housing for public servants.

19. ROAD SAFETY

It makes no sense to try to better educate, care for and protect our people, if we then leave them so vulnerable to death on our roads. The loss of life that arises from the many road accidents that are reported in the media leaves Government deeply concerned. Our Police will, therefore, increase and tighten its monitoring of the standard of driving on our roads, at the same time as reviewing the

penalties for dangerous driving and the use of unroadworthy vehicles. If, in other countries, automatic penalties such as the withdrawal of driving licences or the periodic re-examination of driver skills and vision are seen to be effective in reducing road accidents we shall consider introducing them.

20. DIALOGUE

We have in place a number of institutions to ensure there is adequate scope for dialogue. The Ministry of Labour and Social Security is the medium through which we expect business and the trade unions to engage in dialogue with Government. The SMART Partnership initiative has established the means for all sectors of society to raise and discuss issues, rather than demands, at a forum where the playing field is level, the table is *round* and discussions take place in an egalitarian manner. In the next meeting of the partnership, we expect health and, in particular, HIV and AIDS to have a prominent place in the discussions. We will ensure that the Hub, or coordinating office, will be set up in the near future to monitor and report on the follow-ups from each previous Dialogue.

21. CONSTITUTION

This Administration is happy that the Programme of Action is guided by the Constitution. As in the case of other countries with a newly crafted document defining the principles by which the state will operate, it will be necessary to review our own Constitution during this Administration's term of office.

22. PARLIAMENT

This Administration, as the administrative arm of Government will work closely with the legislative arm of Government – Parliament. We will effect what is necessary to strengthen the management of our Parliament, at the same time as, this year, drawing up the design for a new Parliament building.

23. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Observing our international obligations and maintaining a warm and cooperative relationship with other countries will be the cornerstone of our position with the world beyond our borders. To achieve this we shall renew the effectiveness of our foreign embassies,

wherever necessary extending the coverage of our embassies to achieve a wider and deeper level of international cooperation.

24. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I wish to repeat how honoured I feel to have been appointed to lead this Administration. With His Majesty's guidance and encouragement the Administration will bring to the task the necessary skill, integrity and determination, doing all in its power to justify the trust and confidence that His Majesty has shown in the Ministerial team that he has appointed.

May God bless and guide His Majesty's Government as it proceeds to implement this Programme of Action.

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

26 MARCH 2009