



**HARNESSING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND
INNIVATION FOR A MORE PEACEFUL AND
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

YOUR EXCELLENCY PRESIDENT OF THE IPU, DR. TULIA
ACKSON,

SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE IPU ASSEMBLY, MR.
MARTIN CHUNGONG,

EXCELLENCIES PRESIDING OFFICERS AND
HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF THE ASSEMBLY,

DISTINGUISHED PANELISTS,

INTRODUCTION

WE ARE DEEPLY HONOURED TO ADDRESS THIS ESTEEMED GATHERING OF THE 149TH IPU ASSEMBLY.

THEME

THE THEME "**HARNESSING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR A MORE PEACEFUL AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**" RESONATES PROFOUNDLY WITH THE PIVOTAL ROLE THAT SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION PLAY IN FOSTERING A MORE PEACEFUL AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

ADVANCEMENT OF THESE ELEMENTS

THERE IS NO BETTER TIME THAN THIS TO ADVANCE AND DEEPEN THE EMPLOYMENT OF THESE ELEMENTS TO NAVIGATE SOCIAL CHALLENGES, ENHANCE GOOD GOVERNANCE AND TO PROMOTE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT FOR THE SAKE OF HUMANITY AND THE PLANET.

LINGERING EFFECTS

THE PROFOUND IMPACT OF ISSUES, SUCH AS THE LINGERING EFFECTS OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE, FOOD SECURITY, CLIMATE-RELATED DISASTERS, COVID-19 PANDEMIC, ESCALATING MILITARY TECHNOLOGICAL

COMPETITIONS AND CONFLICTS IN VARIOUS CORNERS OF THE GLOBE ARE A CALL FOR THE ALIGNMENT WITH THE UNITED NATIONS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs) IN HARNESSING SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION FOR A MORE PEACEFUL AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.

THE ESWATINI EXPERIENCE

WE BRING TO THIS ASSEMBLY OUR UNIQUE PERSPECTIVES AND EXPERIENCES ABOUT TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION TOUCHING ON SOCIAL CHALLENGES AND ENHANCING GOVERNANCE.

SOCIAL MEDIA DURING TIMES OF CRISIS.

DURING THE YEAR 2021 THE COUNTRY EXPERIENCED A CIVIL UNREST. THE UPRISING, WAS LARGELY MOBILISED THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS. THIS UNDERSCORES THE DUAL-EDGED NATURE OF TECHNOLOGY IN MODERN GOVERNANCE EFFECTIVELY.

MISINFORMATION MAY COMBAT EFFORTS OF PEACE.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAN BE A POWERFUL TOOL FOR EMPOWERMENT AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION; HOWEVER, IT CAN ALSO CONTRIBUTE TO THE RAPID

SPREAD OF THE SCOURGE OF MISINFORMATION, WHICH COMPLICATES EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN PEACE GLOBALLY.

NEED TO REGULATE DIGITAL COMMUNICATION.

THIS EXPERIENCE REVEALS THE NEED FOR A DUAL FRAMEWORK THAT RESPONDS TO INFORMATION PROCESSING IN THE ERA OF POST-TRUTH AND FAKE NEWS WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY INVESTING IN DIGITAL LITERACY PROGRAMS TO EMPOWER CITIZENS EFFECTIVELY.

MOBILE APPLICATIONS DURING NATIONAL ELECTIONS.

IN A CONTRASTING YET COMPLEMENTARY SCENARIO, THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI SUCCESSFULLY LEVERAGED MOBILE APPLICATIONS DURING THE 2023 NATIONAL ELECTIONS.

EBC

THE ELECTIONS AND BOUNDARIES COMMISSION (EBC), UTILISED TECHNOLOGY TO DISSEMINATE ELECTION RESULTS IN REAL-TIME, ENSURING TRANSPARENCY AND REDUCING THE POTENTIAL FOR DISPUTES.

THE SWIFT COMMUNICATION OF RESULTS HELPED TO REINFORCE PUBLIC TRUST IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, LEADING TO PEACEFUL OUTCOMES AND A CONSIDERABLE REDUCTION IN POST-ELECTION TENSIONS.

BEST PRACTICE.

THIS CASE SERVES AS BEST A PRACTICE FOR OTHER NATIONS, SHOWCASTING THE ESSENTIAL FUNCTION OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY IN PROMOTING DEMOCRACY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT.

COVID-19.

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC PRESENTED YET ANOTHER CHALLENGE THAT NECESSITATED THE SWIFT ADAPTATION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY IN ESWATINI.

INNOVATIONS

THE GOVERNMENT EMPLOYED INNOVATIONS SUCH AS CONTACT TRACING APPLICATIONS, TELE-HEALTH SERVICES AND DIGITAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES TO DISSEMINATE IMPORTANT HEALTH INFORMATION.

THE RAPID DEPLOYMENT OF SUCH TECHNOLOGIES, COUPLED WITH EFFECTIVE DISEASE SURVEILLANCE NOT ONLY MITIGATED THE PANDEMIC'S IMPACT BUT ALSO UNDERSCORED THE IMPORTANCE OF A ROBUST HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE AND THE TIMELY SHARING OF INFORMATION WHICH ARE KEY TENETS FOR A PEACEFUL SUSTAINABLE SOCIETY.

95-95-95 MILESTONE

IN THE HEALTH SECTOR, ESWATINI IS ONE OF THE FIRST COUNTRIES TO ATTAIN THE 95-95-95 MILESTONE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST HIV & AIDS.

PREP-RING

ONE OF THE SALIENT INNOVATIONS IN THIS AREA HAS BEEN THE USE OF THE PREP RING, WHICH HELPS TO PREVENT HIV TRANSMISSION.

PREP-RING TECHNOLOGY

THIS IS A VERY POTABLE AND ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGY THAT HAS MADE A HUGE IMPACT TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS ESPECIALLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN.

HEALTH OUTCOMES.

THE HARNESSING OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR DESIRABLE HEALTH OUTCOMES WILL HELP TO ACCELERATE ATTAINMENT OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS.

INTEGRATION

THE INTEGRATION OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION IN HEALTH RESPONSE MECHANISMS IS A MODEL THAT OTHER AFRICAN NATIONS CAN EMULATE AS THEY PREPARE FOR FUTURE HEALTH CHALLENGES.

RECOMMENDATIONS THAT EMERGE

WE MAKE THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:-

1. INVEST IN DIGITAL LITERACY AND INCLUSION:

GOVERNMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD PRIORITIZE PROGRAMS THAT ENHANCE DIGITAL LITERACY, ENSURING THAT CITIZENS ARE EMPOWERED TO NAVIGATE THE COMPLEXITIES OF TECHNOLOGY RESPONSIBLY.

THIS CAN ALSO ASSIST IN MITIGATING THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH MISINFORMATION AND FAKE NEWS DURING CRISIS.

2. FOSTER TRANSPARENT COMMUNICATION CHANNELS:

DURING ELECTIONS AND GOVERNANCE PROCESSES, ADOPTING TECHNOLOGIES THAT FACILITATE REAL-TIME REPORTING CAN BOLSTER TRANSPARENCY, REDUCE TENSION AND BUILD TRUST BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE CITIZENS.

3. ENCOURAGE COLLABORATIVE INNOVATION:

INNOVATION THROUGH COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS, BUSINESSES AND CIVIL SOCIETY WILL MAXIMISE RESOURCES AND ENHANCE THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY IMPLEMENTATION. EMPHASISING PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS CAN DRIVE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES ACROSS ALL SECTORS.

4. STRENGTHEN HEALTH INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGH TECHNOLOGY:

NATIONS SHOULD EMBRACE INNOVATIONS THAT ENHANCE HEALTHCARE DELIVERY AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT, AS DEMONSTRATED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

INVESTING IN TELE-HEALTH SERVICES, DATA ANALYTICS AND RESEARCH IS CRUCIAL FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC HEALTH OUTCOMES.

5. ENGAGE YOUTH IN GOVERNANCE:

DRAWING FROM OUR SIBAYA ASSEMBLY'S SUCCESS (WHICH IS THE GATHERING OF THE NATION TO TALK TO POLITICAL LEADERSHIP), GOVERNMENTS SHOULD ACTIVELY SEEK TO INVOLVE YOUNG PEOPLE IN POLICYMAKING PROCESSES.

UTILISING DIGITAL PLATFORMS TO FACILITATE ENGAGEMENT CAN CREATE A DYNAMIC THAT FOSTERS ACCOUNTABILITY AND INCLUSIVENESS.

6. GREEN TECH.

THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE ARE LOCKED IN FOR THE NEXT 20 TO 30 YEARS, ONE OF THESE IMPACTS IS THE INCREASINGLY NEGATIVE EFFECT CLIMATE CHANGE HAS ON THE UNDERLYING DRIVERS OF VIOLENT CONFLICT AND NEED FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE.

GOVERNMENTS SHOULD SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT PEACEBUILDING EVEN AS

CLIMATE CHANGE CONTINUES TO EVOVE AND STRESS FRAGILE ENVIRONMENTS.

MULTI-SECTORAL CLIMATE RESILIENCE PROGRAMMS ARE NEEDED TO IMPROVE GOVERNANCE AND ULTIMATELY AVERT VIOLENT DISPUTES.

CONCLUSION

AS A GLOBAL COMMUNITY, WE NEED TO ACCELERATE OUR EFFORTS TO LEVERAGE ON SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION IN ORDER TO ENHANCE FOOD SECURITY AND SUSTAINABLE EDUCATION OUTCOMES.

THE ADOPTATION OF GREEN ENERGY PROVIDES A REMARKABLE OPPORTUNITY TO ENHANCE THE DELIVERY OF QUALITY EDUCATION, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITIES IN REMOTE LOCATIONS, WHICH CAN NOW ACCESS THE INTERNET AS WELL AS E-LEARNING PLATFORMS.

THIS ENHANCED ACCESS ELIMINATES MARGINALIZATION OF RURAL SCHOOLS AND CLOSES THE RURAL-URBAN DIVIDE IN LEARNING AND LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES.

INDEED, THE HARNESSING OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION OFFERS A PATHWAY TOWARDS A PEACEFUL AND SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL FUTURE.

THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI'S EXPERIENCES HIGHLIGHT THE NEED FOR PROACTIVE STRATEGIES THAT EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY'S CAPABILITIES WHILE SAFEGUARDING DEMOCRATIC VALUES AND SOCIETAL HARMONY.

FOR THIS JOURNEY TO BE SUCCESSFUL, COLLECTIVE EFFORTS AT EVERY LEVEL, LOCAL, NATIONAL, AND GLOBAL ARE ESSENTIAL.

I THANK YOU – MAY THE ALMIGHTY GOD BLESS US ALL.

