



Remarks of the UN Resident Coordinator, Mr. Musinga T. Bandora at the Commemoration of the 64th Anniversary of the United Nations: UN Day-2009-The Prince of Wales Grounds - 23rd October 2009.

The Right Honorable Prime Minister;

Your Royal Highnesses

Honorable Ministers

Honorable Members of both Houses of Parliament,

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Members of Civil Society,

Colleagues, Members of the UN Family

Invited Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A warm welcome to you all- to the 64th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations-UN Day- 2009. Allow me to extend a special welcome to you- Prime Minister for once more sparing time to join the UN family in commemorating this day. We recall- that last year- you accepted our invitation and joined us -in celebrating the birth of the organization- despite the fact that you were- at the time- just assuming your high office- and fully preoccupied- with the task of forming your cabinet. This only underlines the commitment of His Majesty's government and your own, to the values, ideals and principles of the UN—those of peace and international

understanding, of development and regard to the worth of the human being-which we are here to celebrate and re-affirm.

Last year we spoke to you. A year later, we would like to hear your perspective on our partnership-how the UN can add value to the national effort and how we can partner better in supporting development.

Honorable Prime Minister, Ladies and gentlemen

This annual event is an opportunity for us all- citizens of the world- to reflect on our United Nations, the values upon which the organization is founded, the progress it has made in delivering peace and security, in promoting and protecting human rights, in delivering development and advancing international cooperation as well as-indeed- the many challenges it faces.

In peace and security, challenges abound. While we have not seen another world war, many internal and regional conflicts are still claiming lives-and many of these are in Africa. There are now 17 peacekeeping missions around the world, manned by over 115,000 brave men and women from over 100 countries. In Africa, peace keepers are deployed in Darfur, in Southern Sudan, in Somalia, Liberia, Sierra Leone and DRC. In these areas, the UN is working closely with the African Union and regional bodies such as ECOWAS and IGAD in keeping peace and promoting durable political solution to the conflicts.

Happily, Swaziland has enjoyed peace and stability. Unfortunately, sluggish economic growth, high poverty levels, high unemployment, and the burden of disease- are undermining development- as more resources are assigned away from wealth generation to meeting social emergencies.

Elsewhere, poverty, disease, drought and hunger among others are threatening lives. The UN has responded and mobilized assistance, and averted the loss of lives. However, the global economic crisis is undermining resource mobilization for food and placing needy people- especially those in conflict areas- in danger.

Of course, we need no reminder of the impact of the HIV and AIDS pandemic in the world –especially in Africa. In this country, we know the effect of the crisis to all aspects of human life. The UN is supporting national effort and working with NERCHA and the Ministry of Health -to render its contribution. To do so effectively, we have elaborated a Joint UN Programme of Support through which all the agencies are channeling their resources in support of the fight against HIV and AIDS.

In the control of the H1N1 influenza too- the UN is providing technical support and medicine.

Climate change is an urgent challenge that must be met. In this respect, the UN Secretary General has urged governments to seal the deal on climate change. The Climate Change Summit that is due to take place in Copenhagen in December, - presents an

opportunity to governments to make the right choice-the choice to save mankind from climatic disaster.

We continue to be deeply concerned at the impact of the global economic crisis. Even though there are signs of recovery in some parts of the world, overall, and especially in developing countries such as Swaziland, the crisis may linger. I wish to commend the decision of His Majesty's government, despite the crisis, to proceed with implementation of key social policies- including rolling out free primary education beginning next year and allocating 15% of its national budget for health.

Honorable Prime Minister

It is worth noting that one of the enduring achievements of the UN is the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. The Declaration has inspired constitutions of many countries and spawned laws that have expanded the space for human rights.

While political, institutional and systemic challenges to human rights, in the country remain, we note progress. We commend the Government for fast-tracking approval- of key policies and legislations- that entrench rights- in conformity with the constitution. The recent establishment of the Human Rights and Public Administration Commission is a major milestone in the strengthening of the institutional framework for human rights and integrity in the country. The UN looks forward to facilitating the operation of the Commission.

In the same vein, we also congratulate his Majesty's government for joining international efforts and enacting the Prevention of People Trafficking and People Smuggling Act. Human trafficking is one of the fastest-growing criminal industries -and whose victims are mainly women and children.

We also echo the urgency of the Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence Bill that is currently being piloted in parliament. Once in place, it will extend legal rights and protection to victims of gender-based violence-especially women and children. Also, the anticipated Leadership Code will strengthen transparency and accountability in public service and complement the work of the Anti-Corruption Commission.

These reforms will promote the empowerment of women-which is critical to the fight against poverty and achieving the MDGs. In July, the UN supported a dialogue on the legal impediments to economic empowerment of women in the country. The dialogue underlined that- while progress has been made -and the constitution confers equal rights on all citizens- there are laws that still prevent economic empowerment of women-such as those which categorize women as Minors. We were encouraged by the commitment of government to pursue the required legal reforms in this area.

Honorable Prime Minister, Ladies and gentlemen

We have found it exciting to work in expanding partnership with civil society and the structures of elected officials. In July, the UN held consultations with Parliament on enhancing cooperation and strengthening the institution- through capacity support to Members of Parliament. We are pleased that Parliament has established Sessional Committees in both Houses to oversee the collaboration between our two sides. I want to sincerely thank both-the President of the Senate Honorable Chief Gelane Zwane and the Speaker of the House, His Royal Highness Prince Guduza for the leadership they are providing to this partnership.

This collaboration is already having positive effect- in terms of facilitating UN support to Government -for advocacy and dialogue with legislators on draft bills - prior to formal debate in parliament. We are highly encouraged by this novel homegrown process which promotes consultation, and consensus building in developing national laws.

Last week, we launched the UN Civil Society Advisory Committee, which will be responsible for advising the UN Country Team and ensuring that the views of civil society are reflected in our development programming. We are excited at the prospects that this committee holds in strengthening cooperation between government, civil society and the UN.

Honorable Prime Minister, in response to global developments and to the Paris Declaration on the changing aid environment, the UN

system is implementing reforms for improved development effectiveness through greater coherence and Delivering as One. In implementing these reforms - this year, and for the first time, the UN Country Team developed a Joint Annual Work Plan -with a consolidated resource envelop. This has enabled us to quantify the totality of our resource contribution to the country's development effort. In this respect, I am happy to note- that during 2009 alone- the collective of the UN in Swaziland -will be disbursing over \$40million on development programmes- in the country.

The current United Nations Development Assistance Framework – UNDAF-which outlines the areas of UN work in the Kingdom is lapsing in 2010. Accordingly, during the year we have undertaken extensive consultations with government, international partners and civil society on the successor UNDAF- to cover the period from 2011to 2015. The agreed new UNDAF will focus on HIV and AIDS, Poverty and Sustainable Livelihoods, Human Development and Basic Social Services as well as on Governance. I am happy to note- that we hope to sign the new UNDAF in the next couple of weeks. Again, I wish to thank the government for providing strategic leadership and support to the process of developing the new UNDAF.

Honorable Prime Minister

Honorable Prime Minister, Ladies and gentlemen

Before I conclude, allow me to thank the Government and people of the Kingdom of Swaziland-for their unfailing support and partnership. In particular, and on behalf of the UN family, I wish to extend our most profound gratitude -to His Majesty, King Mswati III and his government- for the decision to allocate land and to undertake to build a dedicated UN-House in Mbabane. I wish also to thank you-Prime Minister- for your personal role and commitment in sustaining the momentum for this initiative. On completion, the project will permit the UN to strengthen its operational presence in the country. Again, we ask you, Prime Minister, to convey our gratitude to his Majesty, the King.

I thank you all.