



Remarks by the Right Honourable Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Eswatini, His Excellency Russell M. Dlamini, at the 23rd COMESA Summit

Theme: "Accelerating Regional Integration through the Development of Regional Value Chains in Climate-Resilient Agriculture, Mining, and Tourism"

Your Excellencies, Distinguished Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is both a pleasure and an honour for Eswatini to be present at this significant gathering and I bring with me warm greetings from His Majesty King Mswati III.

Allow me to begin by extending our sincere gratitude to the Government and people of Burundi for their warm hospitality in hosting us here—a reflection of the unity and solidarity that COMESA stands for. We commend Zambia for its steady, insightful work as outgoing chair, guiding our efforts with purpose and a vision for prosperity across the region.

Mining Value Chains: Sustainable Resource Use and Beneficiation

As we gather under the theme of accelerating regional integration, Eswatini is committed to ensuring that our natural resources truly serve our people. In the mining sector, this means prioritizing the beneficiation and processing of minerals within our borders rather than exporting raw materials.

This approach not only maximizes economic benefits but also fosters job creation and skill development right here at home. We are excited to announce the establishment of a national mining company that will act as a gateway for responsible partnerships and substantial investments, amplifying our shared commitment to sustainable, community-centered mining within COMESA.

Revitalizing Tourism through Strategic Infrastructure and Accessible Travel

Eswatini's unique cultural heritage and biodiversity hold tremendous potential to captivate the world. To unlock this, however, we need to address structural gaps in accessibility., particularly in the area of transport and logistics. Developing tourism means making our sites appealing and easily reachable, which requires direct flights from established global travel hubs and a more flexible visa regime to welcome more visitors.

Within the COMESA region, collective steps like harmonizing visa requirements. promoting and strengthening regional travel can transform our individual destinations into a unified, sought-after tourism corridor. This vision supports our shared aim to build resilient, climate-conscious

tourism industries that empower local communities and drive sustainable economic growth.

Eswatini’s Commitment to Climate-Resilient Agricultural Value Chains

For Eswatini, agriculture has long been a fundamental sector, sustaining our people and driving economic growth. However, as climate change affects rainfall patterns, crop yields, and food security, Eswatini is implementing adaptive measures to strengthen climate resilience. We believe in moving beyond subsistence farming by encouraging commercial agriculture, in particular contract farming of high-value crops, that embraces climate-smart solutions, including water-efficient irrigation systems and sustainable farming practices.

To further enhance our agricultural resilience, Eswatini recognizes the value of regional cooperation. By collaborating with COMESA Member States, we can expand access to climate-tolerant crop varieties and improve cross-border trade for agricultural products. The development of a regional agricultural value chain can link producers to broader markets, stimulate agribusiness, and ultimately improve food security across our region. For Eswatini, this approach aligns with our aim to transform agriculture into a driver of rural development and poverty reduction.

The Nkwe Spirit: Accelerating Implementation and Regional Impact

In Eswatini, we are guided by the principle of “Nkwe”—an ethos of running quickly to implement and expedite impactful change. This spirit of urgency aligns perfectly with COMESA’s mission to fast-track integration and realize shared goals swiftly and effectively.

We hope to inspire the same momentum within COMESA, emphasizing that timely action and collaborative efforts are essential for regional resilience and prosperity. With this collective resolve, we are confident that our ambitions will transition from plans to meaningful impact for our nations.

Investment Opportunities: A Gateway to COMESA and African Markets

Eswatini is primed for investment, with opportunities across key sectors that position us as a strategic entry point into the wider COMESA and African markets. We have worked to create an enabling environment, equipped with targeted reforms and support structures, to welcome investors who share our vision for sustainable growth.

By partnering with us, investors can not only benefit from a market ripe with potential but also contribute to the transformative journey of Eswatini and the COMESA region. Our doors are open to partners who see Africa's promise and are eager to help us realize our shared dreams of economic advancement and regional integration.

Peace and Stability: The Foundation for Trade, Economic Growth, and Development

The foundation of all these ambitions, however, lies in peace and stability. Without them, our shared vision for robust trade, economic growth, and development within COMESA cannot be realized. Peace and stability create the confidence that encourages investment, allows businesses to thrive, and facilitates the free movement of goods and people across our borders.

Eswatini is committed to maintaining and promoting peace within our borders and throughout the region because we understand that sustainable development depends on it. As a bloc, we must prioritize collaborative peace-building efforts, ensure strong governance, and work actively to resolve conflicts, as only then can we cultivate an environment where trade and economic progress flourish.

Conclusion

In closing, Eswatini's unwavering commitment to COMESA's vision is reflected in every sector we invest in—from sustainable mining and accessible tourism to resilient agriculture and a welcoming investment landscape. By deepening our integration across these areas and upholding peace and stability, we are laying the foundation for a stronger, more interconnected, and prosperous region. Together, through COMESA, we are capable of achieving the resilience and prosperity our citizens deserve, forging a legacy that uplifts all members of our community.

I thank you.