



INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS' DAY

10TH DECEMBER 2019, SIBANE HOTEL, EZULWINI

The Chief Justice

Honourable Minister of Justice & Constitutional Affairs

Honourable Members of the Justice Portfolio Committees of both houses
of parliament

The US Ambassador to Eswatini

The EU Ambassador to Eswatini

The UNPD Resident Coordinator

Commissioners of CHRPA

Commissioner General of Correctional Services

National commissioner of Police

Directors from the DPM's office

Representatives of the Law Society, CANGO, UNESWA Legal Clinic;

All protocols observed; distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is my pleasure to welcome everyone to the commemoration of the 71st
International Human Rights Day. First I would like to voice out my sincere

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appreciation to the Chief Justice and minister for finding time in their busy schedules to attend this event. This is evidence of the commitment that their offices have towards the protection and promotion of human rights in the kingdom of Eswatini.

I also want to thank the Justice Portfolio committees of both houses of parliament for setting aside their pressing priorities to attend this event. I also appreciate the presence of the US ambassador, EU ambassador and the UNDP resident coordinator for being with us today against their busy schedules. As a commission we acknowledge their contributions and/or support, technically and financial towards the promotion of human rights in the kingdom.

To every stakeholder in attendance today, I thank you for making time to commemorate this day with us. It is a busy time for the kingdom with the ongoing national prayer (Incwala) and the busy end of year activities in most organisations. The commission is really humbled by the cooperation you have shown not only today but whenever the commission engages your organisations in carrying out its constitutional mandate.

Ladies and gentlemen, International Human Rights Day is observed by the international community every year on the 10th of December. It commemorates the day in 1948 where the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). This year marks the 71st Anniversary of the UDHR and the focus for this year is to foster a global culture of respect for human dignity, tolerance and redress for human rights violations.

The commemoration is held under the theme '***Standing up for Human Rights***' which is aimed at raising awareness on the situation of human

rights in the country, the challenges faced in the protection and promotion of human rights, and to share any information on ongoing interventions address these challenges.

The objective for this year's event is to provide an information sharing forum for the key human rights actors and, to create space for discussing various issues relevant to the aforementioned theme. All stakeholders have a role to play in the protection and promotion of human rights. Parliament is an official stakeholder in human rights and, has an oversight and legislative functions in the implementation of the human rights agenda. More than half of the recommendations under the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) require legislative action, hence the need to strengthen parliamentary engagement in human rights.

All other stakeholders have a role to play in the promotion and protection of human rights in their daily operations, as employers, law enforcement agencies, private and public institutions, and civil society. Therefore, it is imperative for us as a commission to continually engage with these stakeholders in all efforts to stand up for human rights in the kingdom.

As part of today's celebration, the commission will share an outline of a Baseline Survey on the status of human rights in the kingdom which was conducted in 2018. We will also share some of the work that the Commission has done in 2019 in terms of human rights interventions. We have not had the resources to publish or fully disseminate some of the reports we have produced but, we do have some of the reports that we have compiled on some key thematic issues that the commission dealt with through-out the year, and these include reports on Torture, Evictions,

Elections Monitoring, public administration and corporal punishment in schools.

Lastly, let me reiterate my appreciation for your presence today and I sure hope that this commemoration of the 71st International Human Rights day will go a long way towards improving the situation on human rights in the Kingdom of Eswatini.

Let us all unite and stand up for human rights.

THANK YOU.