

**STATEMENT BY THE RT HON PRIME MINISTER OF THE
KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND**

AT THE 4TH AFRICA-ARAB SUMMIT

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

THURSDAY 24 NOVEMBER 2016

Your Excellency, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea and Chairperson of the Fourth Africa-Arab Summit,

Your Highness, Sheik Sabah Al Ahmad AL Jaber Al Sabah, Amir of the State of Kuwait,

Your Excellency, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania - Co-Chairperson of the Fourth Africa Arab Summit, Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz,

Your Excellency, Hailemariam Dessalegn, Prime Minister of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia - Co-Chairperson of the Third Africa Arab Summit,

Your Excellency, Idriss Deby Itno, President of the Republic of Chad - Co-Chairperson of the Fourth Africa Arab Summit,

Your Excellency, Ahmed Aboul-Gheit, Secretary General of the League of Arab States,

Your Excellency, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission,

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Representatives of International and Regional Organizations,

Honourable Ministers,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen

Chair

May I start by conveying the greetings, and best wishes for successful Summit deliberations, from His Majesty King Mswati III who had wished to attend this Summit but unfortunately could not do so owing to other important state duties. I wish also to express the gratitude of my delegation for the warm hospitality of His Excellency, President Mbasogo, and of the people of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

The Africa-Arab co-operation has, over three productive decades, evolved into a highly creative strategic partnership. Guided by its principles and objectives this partnership has made a significant difference in areas such as politics, trade, finance, agriculture, infrastructure, food security and socio-cultural cooperation. The modalities of implementation and follow-up have ensured that no *grass grows beneath the feet*, so to speak.

Chair

I take the opportunity to thank the Council of Ministers for the excellent product that is the Draft Malabo Declaration of the Fourth Africa-Arab Summit. It captures strongly and comprehensively the *ethos* of goodwill and mutual respect that underpins the Africa-Arab partnership. It also highlights the key importance of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. It draws attention to, and provides encouragement in, a number of issues, whether regional or global, on which our partnership provides guidance or takes a position. It articulates clearly the wide-ranging objectives set out under political, economic and social and cultural cooperation.

The Kingdom of Swaziland wishes to also use this platform to express our deep appreciation for what we have received in the infrastructure development programme of the Africa-Arab co-operation "wave."

Chair

A Loan Agreement was signed between the Kingdom of Swaziland and the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development whereby the Fund made a loan of around USD 14 million to help finance the Manzini-Mbadlane Highway Project in the Kingdom. That state of the art highway has been completed, thus finalizing an important new link with the neighboring countries of Mozambique and South Africa.

That is, in fact, the third loan from the Fund to the Kingdom of Swaziland, the previous two loans having amounted to around USD 23 million. Those funds enabled our country to implement a project in the transport sector, engage technical assistance for the feasibility study for the National Specialized Hospital in our capital city, Mbabane, and to construct and equip a sports emporium within the main campus of the University of Swaziland.

Furthermore, high level talks with the Governor of the State of Qatar Central Bank are currently proceeding that include the proposal to establish an Islamic Commercial Bank branch in Swaziland. This, we believe, will encourage and facilitate investment in Swaziland by companies from the Arab world.

Chair

The State of Qatar has awarded aviation scholarships to Swazi citizens -a valuable initiative which dovetails with the ongoing talks with the Qatar Civil Aviation Authority (QCAA) to partner with Swaziland in the running of the King Mswati III International Airport and, we hope, give rise to Qatar Airways using that airport as its hub in Southern Africa.

Chair

Upgrading the health systems in Swaziland is of immense importance to us and, in this regard, we are in discussions with the Qatar Red Crescent on two proposals. One is for the Advancement of Swaziland's Diagnostic Capability, Hospital Sterility and Medical Waste Treatment Systems (SDCHSMWS). The second is for various projects within the Government

Hospital located in the capital city, Mbabane.

All of these projects are making, or will make, a substantial contribution to the economic and social development of the Kingdom of Swaziland to an extent that would not be possible without the very generous assistance provided by the respective Arab countries. I would like to place on record our deep gratitude for that assistance.

Chair

I conclude by informing this august house of the continuing commitment of the Kingdom of Swaziland to the spirit and word of the declarations that have underpinned this unique Africa-Arab partnership.

Thank you.