

**STATEMENT BY HIS MAJESTY KING MSWATI III KING AND
INGWENYAMA OF THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND**

Your Excellency Barack Obama, President of the United States of America,

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Honourable Ministers,

AU Commission,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen

Excellencies,

This is, indeed, an auspicious occasion; one with special significance. We are grateful to president Obama the government and the people of the United States of America for being the host and organiser of this special Summit and we trust that this summit will bridge the gap between the USA and the African continent. It was just last year when President Obama officially met with the African Union Commission and commence preparations for this historic visit by African leaders to the United States of America.

We believe that President Obama and his team will leave a powerful legacy resulting out of this historic meeting. We welcome the visionary and strategic partnership between the United States and members of the African Union, building upon long standing historic ties between the US and countries across the continent. We are gathered in our diversity to dialogue on ways to improve the lives of the present and future generations of both the African continent and the United States of America.

This summit also gives us the opportunity to express our sincere thanks for all the support America gives us both at multilateral and bilateral level especially on the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

May I say at the outset that the Kingdom of e-Swatini is pleased to be part of this gathering and we shall intervene on issues that are relevant to the sub-theme “Investing in the Next Generation”. We wish to appreciate the strong bilateral relationship we have forged with the United States Government over the years, and through diverse areas of cooperation on peace and security, social and economic matters and appreciate that we have been able to stand together. We also recognize that in this relationship we have experiences of convergence and divergence on policy issues, and for this open and frank dialogue has enabled us to find amicable solutions.

We wish to inform America that Africa is in a position of shaping itself and becoming first world status and we look forward to sharing information with USA who has reached first world status.

We believe that as leaders gathered here we need to send a strong message of solidarity between the US and Africa on creating opportunities for young people, women and indeed all our people to forge a trade and investment partnership that will deliver jobs and hope for our people. We can bear testimony that through the Africa Growth and Opportunity Act and the Third Country Fabric provision, we were able to diversify our economic base to become one of the few African countries with a high manufacturing base, mainly focused on the textile sector. The market access allowed a huge number of job opportunities and wealth creation for our people.

We also recognize that many AGOA beneficiary countries did not benefit from access to about 6,400 product lines that were zero rated and that more should be done through our cooperation for AGOA to have greater impact.

Excellencies, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

We believe that the AGOA framework should evolve into a comprehensive Trade and Investment Partnership at continental level, which should support our integration efforts by ensuring coherence at national, regional and continental levels. We believe that trade capacity building, investment promotion and other

support mechanisms should be strengthened. At the end of the day we strive to produce internationally competitive products and to this end harmonized standards and accreditation is an imperative for boosting intra-African trade and allowing Africa to become a meaningful player in the global economy.

The United States is well known for its sophisticated services sector, which is increasingly becoming important for Africa as we prepare for the Continental Free Trade which we aim to conclude by the indicative date of 2017.

In order to harness opportunities to link trade with sustainable development, we need our cooperation to cut across science and technology, higher education and skills development, infrastructure development, energy as well as industrial cooperation that will help us to transform ourselves from being perpetual consumers to form part of producing along regional and global value chains. We should revive the scholarship and exchange programmes of the 80s and 90s and explore innovative and cost effective means to reach more young people including in rural areas. For this reason I believe that the AU led initiative on a Pan African Virtual University, driven by a stronger continental ICT backbone will be a useful complement to the Pan African University which is already operational.

President Obama, all this points to the fact that tremendous synergies can be harnessed from treating Africa as one. Africa has for time immemorial carried a vision of unity, peace and prosperity. We are making progress in a number of key areas such as the African Peace and Security Architecture, the African Peer Review Mechanism and various conventions and protocols that serve as examples for improved governance on elections on the continent. We also have a more vibrant African Union Commission and we believe Africa is ready to speak and act with one voice. The inspirational Agenda 2063 and the Common African Position on the Post-2015 Development Agenda embody our collective voice and show the new spirit of Africa. The terms of engagement with all our partners must change as we bring challenges and solutions to this visionary partnership. In that regard we salute you and request your continued support to amplify our voice which is shared with all developing countries in multilateral fora such as the United Nations, G7, G20, the World Trade Organisation inter alia.

Finally, I believe and hope that after this dialogue we shall renew a strong partnership with the United States of America.

I thank you - may the Almighty God bless us all.