

YOUR MAJESTY THE INDLOVUKAZI,
EMAKHOSIKATI,
YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESSES,
PRIME MINISTER,
COUNCILLORS,
CHIEFS,
CHIEF JUSTICE,
DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER,
CABINET MINISTERS,
MD OF OLD MUTUAL AGRI-FUND,
EXCELLENCIES, MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS,
PRESIDING OFFICERS AND MEMBERS OF BOTH HOUSES OF
PARLIAMENT,
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE MANZINI REGION,
MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF OLD MUTUAL SWAZILAND, PUBLIC
PENSION FUND AND SWAZILAND NATIONAL PROVIDENT FUND,
SWAZI MILK MANAGEMENT AND STAFF,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

SIYANIVUSELA NONKHE BEKUNENE LAPHA ESIDVOKODVO.

INTRODUCTION

IT IS MY GREAT PLEASURE TO BE HERE AT SIDVOKODVO PEEBLES BLOCK FARM TODAY FOR THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE OLD MUTUAL AGRIFUND PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN OLD MUTUAL, PUBLIC SERVICE PENSIONS FUND AND SWAZILAND NATIONAL PROVIDENT FUND, WHICH HAS CULMINATED WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE SWAZI MILK DAIRY.

WE TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO WELCOME YOU ALL TO THIS CEREMONY, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHO HAVE TRAVELLED BEYOND OUR BORDERS TO BE WITH US HERE TODAY.

THIS VENTURE SUPPORTS THE NATION'S QUEST FOR INITIATING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS AND BUSINESS ENTITIES THAT WILL DIVERSIFY OUR AGRICULTURAL SECTOR.

OUR ECONOMY IS LARGELY DEPENDENT IN AGRICULTURE AND EMPLOYS ABOUT 70% OF OUR CITIZENS.

THE DAIRY SECTOR HAS A GREAT POTENTIAL TO CREATE JOB OPPORTUNITIES, GENERATE FINANCIAL RESOURCES FOR THE BUSINESS AND BOOST ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR THE COUNTRY.

HENCE, THIS DAY MARKS A GREAT MILESTONE FOR OUR COUNTRY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND THE DAIRY INDUSTRY.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE DAIRY INDUSTRY IN THE KINGDOM

THE NATION WELCOMES THE GOOD NEWS THAT WE ARE NOW PRODUCING LARGE VOLUMES OF MILK LOCALLY BUT THERE IS STILL A SHORTFALL WHICH NEEDS TO BE CLOSED BY INCREASING OUR LOCAL PRODUCTION.

WE WELCOME REPORTS THAT PARMALAT CURRENTLY COLLECTS MILK FROM 15 FARMERS TOTALING ABOUT **400, 000 LITRES PER MONTH**. SWAZI MILK PROVIDES ABOUT 250,000 OF THAT WITH

THE BALANCE BEING COLLECTED FROM OTHER COMMERCIAL AND SMALL SCALE FARMERS.

THESE NEW DEVELOPMENTS SHOULD ENCOURAGE OUR FARMERS AND THE NATION AT LARGE TO WORK HARD TOWARDS THE PRODUCTION OF SUFFICIENT MILK FOR THE INDUSTRY.

SADLY WE HAVE CONTINUED TO RELY ON FOREIGN SUPPLY IN MANY OF OUR INDUSTRIES BUT WE ARE ENCOURAGED BY THIS PROJECT BECAUSE IT WILL HAVE MULTIPLE SPIN-OFFS FOR THE COMMUNITIES AROUND THIS AREA AND THE NATION AT LARGE, PARTICULARLY OUR SMALL SCALE DAIRY FARMERS.

MASUNDVWINI DAIRY FARM SECTION

IN THE YEAR 2000 WE STARTED DAIRY FARMING AT MASUNDVWINI WITH AN AIM TO ENCOURAGE MORE EMASWATI TO VENTURE INTO DAIRY FARMING AND PROCESSING.

MY VISION WAS TO SEE THE COUNTRY BEING SELF-SUFFICIENT BY PRODUCING ENOUGH MILK AND PROCESSING DAIRY PRODUCTS IN THE COUNTRY FOR LOCAL AND EXPORT MARKETS.

THE FARM CURRENTLY PRODUCES A SIZEABLE AMOUNT OF MILK FOR PROCESSING, THUS CONTRIBUTING TO IMPORT SUBSTITUTION AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY. IT IS WITH GREAT PLEASURE AND JOY THAT SWAZI MILK AND OTHER DAIRY INDUSTRY STAKEHOLDERS ARE PURSUING MY VISION.

GOVERNMENT ASPIRATIONS

ONE OF THE ASPIRATIONS OF GOVERNMENT IS TO HAVE A VIABLE, SUSTAINABLE AND COMPETITIVE DAIRY INDUSTRY TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OUR POPULACE ADEQUATELY WITH MILK AND DAIRY PRODUCTS AND POSSIBLY EXPORT TO OTHER COUNTRIES.

WE THEREFORE ENCOURAGE GOVERNMENT, PRIVATE SECTOR AND OUR FARMERS TO COME TOGETHER AND DEVELOP

STRATEGIES THAT WILL SUSTAIN THIS SECTOR FOR OUR BENEFIT AND THAT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS.

IT IS IN THIS REGARD THAT WE WELCOME AND CONGRATULATE OLD MUTUAL, THE SWAZILAND NATIONAL PROVIDENT FUND AND PUBLIC SERVICE PENSION FUND, FOR COMING UP WITH THIS NOBLE PROJECT.

THEREFORE, THE JOINT VENTURE BY THESE INSTITUTIONS AIMED AT CREATING VALUE FOR EMASWATI, PARTICULARLY IN THE PRIMARY SECTOR WHERE MOST COMMUNITIES ARE VULNERABLE, IS HIGHLY APPLAUDABLE.

WE ALL KNOW THAT FOOD SUFFICIENCY IS THE PILLAR OF OUR STRENGTH. COMING FROM A SEVERE DROUGHT THAT AFFECTED OUR FOOD PRODUCTION CAPACITY AND DESTROYING OUR LIVESTOCK, AS A COUNTRY WE HAVE A HUGE GAP TO FILL IN REPOSITIONING THE AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAIN.

VISION 2022

WE HAVE SET THE TARGET WHERE WE WANT THE COUNTRY TO BE BY 2022 AND AMONGST OTHER THINGS WE WANT TO ACHIEVE FOOD SUFFICIENCY, INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT, ADEQUATE HEALTH FACILITIES AND EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

ACHIEVEMENT OF THESE GOALS REQUIRES STRONG COMMITMENT FROM THE WHOLE NATION PARTICULARLY THE POPULACE, GOVERNMENT AND THE CORPORATE COMMUNITY TO EXECUTE THE VISION.

WE ALL NEED TO PUT OUR HANDS ON THE DECK AND COME UP WITH BANKABLE PROJECTS THAT WILL ADD VALUE TO OUR PRODUCTS. VALUE ADDITION IS CRITICAL IF WE ARE TO REALIZE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, ECONOMIC GROWTH AND JOB CREATION.

WE URGE SWAZI MILK TO SHARE THEIR EXPERTISE WITH OUR LOCAL SMALL DAIRY FARMERS SO THAT THE IMPORTATION OF MILK TO THE KINGDOM COULD BE A THING OF THE PAST.

WE ALSO ENCOURAGE OLD MUTUAL TO CONTINUE WITH THE PROPOSED INVESTMENT TO OTHER AGRICULTURAL SECTORS SO THAT WE CAN BE SELF-SUFFICIENT IN FOOD PRODUCTION.

THE OLD MUTUAL AGRIFUND PARTNERSHIP - E100 MILLION INVESTMENTS

WE WERE PLEASED TO HEAR THAT AGRIFUND MANAGED TO RAISE CAPITAL COMMITMENT OF E100M IN ITS INCEPTION, COMPRISING OF OLD MUTUAL (E25M) PUBLIC SERVICE PENSION FUND (E25M) AND SWAZILAND NATIONAL PROVIDENT FUND (E50M).

THE MANDATE OF THE FUND IS TO INVEST IN AGRICULTURAL ASSETS INCLUDING FARM LAND, FARM IMPLEMENTS AND AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION. THE INVESTMENT FOR SWAZI MILK INTO THE PROJECT IS ABOUT E40 MILLION.

THE PARTNERSHIP THAT HAS BEEN FORMED BY THE FOUR INSTITUTIONS IS A CLEAR SIGN THAT INDEED WE SHALL HAVE LOCAL PRODUCTS PRODUCED BY EMASWATI.

IT IS ENCOURAGING THAT THE FUND HAS ALREADY LINED UP A NUMBER OF PROJECTS RANGING FROM CROPS, DAIRY AND BEEF AND SUCH COMMITMENTS SHALL ADDRESS THE CHALLENGE OF FOOD SECURITY IN THE KINGDOM.

WE ARE HAPPY TO LEARN THAT THE FUND HAS ALREADY SECURED THREE FARMS AND AIMS AT INVESTING ABOUT **E400M IN AGRICULTURE** AND FURTHER GROW IN SCALE IN THE NEXT COMING YEARS.

TOURING OF THE DAIRY OPERATION

THE CONDUCTED TOUR OF THE MILKING FACILITY GAVE US AN INSIGHT OF THIS STATE OF THE ART INFRASTRUCTURE THAT WE HAVE NOT SEEN IN THE COUNTRY BEFORE AS IT IS THE **3RD MOST TECHNOLOGICALLY ADVANCED IN AFRICA.**

WE WERE PLEASED TO BE INFORMED THAT THE MACHINE **MILKS ABOUT 600 COWS WITHIN AN HOUR** WITH THE COWS PRODUCING ABOUT **9000LTS OF MILK A DAY** AND THIS IS A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT FOR THE COUNTRY.

THE DAIRY PROJECT HAS NOW CREATED AN OPPORTUNITY TO REPLACE RAW MILK IMPORT WHILE CREATING EMPLOYMENT FOR THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES WHERE ALREADY 40 PERMANENT STAFF HAS BEEN EMPLOYED.

WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT THERE ARE CURRENTLY OVER A THOUSAND COWS (1000) IN THE FARM AND THAT THE PROJECT SHALL BE EXTENDED TO ACCOMMODATE MORE CATTLE AND DAIRY INFRASTRUCTURE TO MEET THE COUNTRY'S REQUIREMENT.

WAY FORWARD

NOW THAT LARGE VOLUMES OF MILK ARE PRODUCED HERE, WE NOW IMPLORE THE CREATION OF A FULL VALUE CHAIN WHICH SHALL SEE THE CREATION OF EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES, PROCESSING OF DAIRY PRODUCTS IN THE COUNTRY AND BENEFITS TO OTHER SMALLER UPCOMING FARMERS.

CONCLUSION

WE ENCOURAGE ALL SECTORS INVOLVED IN THE DAIRY BUSINESS TO SUPPORT OUR FARMERS. WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED THAT THIS PROJECT IS RUNNING BEHIND AND EXPERIENCING CHALLENGES IN GROWING FASTER AS IT HAD INITIAL PLANNED.

WE ENCOURAGE GOVERNMENT TO APPRECIATE THE DYNAMICS OF THE INDUSTRY AND FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SECTOR AT THIS CRUCIAL STAGE.

WE WISH TO SEE THE GROWING OF LOCAL SKILL IN SUCH A SPECIALIZED INDUSTRY TO ENSURE THAT MORE COMMUNITIES CAN START THEIR OWN OPERATIONS.

THE NATION WILL AGREE WITH ME THAT, IF SUCH AN INDUSTRY IS WELL NATURED IT CAN BRING HANDSOME DIVIDENDS TO OUR PEOPLE.

WE ENCOURAGE OUR FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS TO SUPPORT DAIRY FARMING BECAUSE THE MARKET IS AVAILABLE FOR THEIR PRODUCT.

THE NATION IS LOOKING FORWARD TO THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OLD MUTUAL AGRIFUND AS IT VENTURES INTO OTHER SECTORS OF AGRICULTURE ON THE OTHER FARMS SUCH AS; THE HORSE SHOE FARM AT NTONDOZI MEASURING 950 HECTARES TO GROW BLUE BERRIES AND BABY VEGETABLES AND THE MORULA RANCH MEASURING 600 HECTARES HERE AT SIDVOKODVO, FOR OTHER AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES.

WE WELCOME THE E700 MILLION PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF THE POWER GENERATION PROJECT HERE AT SIDVOKODVO ALONG THE USUSHWANA RIVER BY THE THREE PARTNERS; AGRIFUND, PSPF AND SNPF BECAUSE IT WILL BE A KEY CATALYST SINCE ELECTRICITY IS THE BACKBONE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

WE WISH TO THANK EVERYONE THAT HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE PREPARATIONS OF TODAY'S EVENT. WE THANK YOU FOR THE WONDERFUL GIFTS PRESENTED TO US.

DECLARATION

IT IS NOW MY PLEASURE TO OFFICIALLY DECLARE THAT THE OLD MUTUAL SWAZILAND AGRIFUND PARTNERSHIP IS OFFICIALLY

LAUNCHED AND SWAZI MILK IS ALSO BLESSED UNDER MY HAND TODAY.

THANK YOU - MAY THE ALMIGHTY GOD BLESS US ALL.