



UNITED NATIONS
COMMON COUNTRY ANALYSIS OF
THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI
APRIL 2020



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ESWATINI



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Upon receipt of comments issued by the Development Coordination Office (DCO) Africa Regional Office in Addis Ababa and the Regional Peer Support Group (PSG) on 15 April 2020, a CCA Editorial and Review Team was set up, led by an Editor/Consultant and comprised of members of the PPSG, in addition to Fanele Chester-Fakudze, Resident Coordinator's Office, and Antoinette Phiwa Manana, UNFPA & Resident Coordinator's Office

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Members of the UN Eswatini Country Team pictured with Prime Minister H.E. Ambrose Mandvulo Dlamini



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This Common Country Assessment (CCA) analyses the current state of the Kingdom of Eswatini and its standing with regard to the three dimensions of sustainable development. It provides a strategic overview of the main political, human rights, economic, social and environmental trends; takes stock of achievements towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); and identifies the most vulnerable groups in the country. Furthermore, the CCA outlines Eswatini's commitments under international conventions and legal frameworks, while also analysing regional and transnational trends and their impact on SDG implementation. Finally, the CCA addresses the financing landscape, risks and gaps as well as challenges to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

The analysis shows that the development landscape of Eswatini is informed by geographical limitations, rising inequality, unemployment, and poverty. While Eswatini is classified as a lower middle-income country, its economy is growing at an average of 4.4 percentage points less per annum than it was between 2012 and 2014. Approximately 59 per cent of the population live below the national poverty line and 20.1 per cent below the extreme poverty line. Estimated life expectancy in Eswatini is 58.9 years for males and 63.5 for females. Gender-based violence, sexual abuse and discriminatory sexual behaviour and practices affect one in three girls by the age of 18, and almost half of all women have experienced some form of sexual violence in their lifetimes. Finally, the country has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world, at 27 per cent among the sexually active population.

At the economic level, Eswatini is dependent on Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU) revenues, a situation which is a continuous source of vulnerability for the country. There is a limited base for domestic revenue generation. The total public debt is increasing steadily and remains a key area of concern in Eswatini's efforts to boost its long-term economic growth.

This report uses five main factors to identify the vulnerable groups that are left furthest behind: discrimination, geography, vulnerability to shocks, governance and socio-economic status. Two approaches are also used: cross-cutting

vulnerabilities and life cycle. The life cycle approach identifies children, adolescents, youth and women as the most vulnerable, taking into account regional disparities and socio-economic status; while the cross-cutting approach identifies persons with disabilities; persons living with HIV and AIDS; persons living with albinism; persons living with autism; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) persons; and persons deprived of liberty.

Regional and sub-regional challenges and opportunities are also analysed. In recent years, climate change has seriously and very regularly impacted the region, impeding agricultural production, water resource availability and food security. In addition, Eswatini is affected by international crime, as a source, destination and transit point for women and children trafficked internally and transnationally.

Lastly, the CCA report highlights achievements and challenges in SDG implementation. The Government of Eswatini presented its Voluntary National Review in 2019, emphasizing Goals 2 (Zero Hunger), 3 (Good Health and Well-being), 4 (Quality Education), 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), 9 (Industry Innovation, and Infrastructure) as high priorities for countries. Progress has been made on SDGs 3, 7, 13, and 17, while indicators for SDGs 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, and 15 are either regressing or stagnating.

Key risks for attainment of SDGs include socio-economic, political and governance factors, as well as the climate and environmental landscapes. Challenges are primarily found in the economic sector; the country has a limited GDP growth rate, an overdependence on the volatile Southern African Customs Union, and declining private sector participation. Other challenges include the potential disconnect between the 2030 Agenda and national plans (which end in 2022) and the lack of disaggregated and reliable data on the SDGs.

Opportunities include multi-sectoral approaches and coordination, partnerships for private sector development and growth, the energy sector and the United Nations Delivering as One (DAO) model.



INTRODUCTION



As the current United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2016-2020 is coming to an end and will transition to the 2021-2025 United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2021-2025), the United Nations development system in Eswatini commissioned a Common Country Analysis (CCA). The CCA, an independent, impartial and collective assessment, identifies multidimensional risks that could affect the development trajectory of the country, covering a full spectrum of development, humanitarian and human rights issues. It also integrates analysis of relevant regional, sub-regional and cross-border dynamics, and their effect on achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The analysis also includes the financial landscape for sustainable development.

Under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, with support from the UNCT and the Policy and Programmes Support Group (PPSG), an internal process was initiated as early as April 2019 in order to create 'contextual evidence' on issues central to Eswatini's sustainable development. United Nations normative mandates and SDG implementation were thoroughly reviewed, and issues that are shaping Eswatini's development scenarios and ultimately affecting progress towards the SDGs were identified and analysed.

The development of the CCA involved consultations with multiple stakeholders from the Government, the private sector, civil society, communities, academia, media and development partners, as implementation of UNSDCF 2021-2025 will require an acceleration in strategic partnership building with those partners and others, inside and outside the country.

A two-pronged approach was adopted by UNCT Eswatini to develop the CCA:

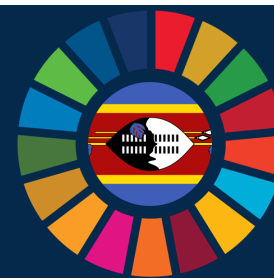
- **Component 1:** Two consultants conducted an extensive document review and a series of consultations with national stakeholders to create 'contextual evidence' for the CCA;
- **Component 2:** There was an extensive UNCT-led process to analyse evidence of the country context and to design programming instruments for the UNSDCF, the next phase of the process.

As the CCA is the foundation of the UNSDCF, a new and key instrument under the 2019 United Nations development reform, the Development Coordination Office (DCO) provided the necessary guidance and external quality assurance throughout the development of this CCA.





CHAPTER 1: COUNTRY CONTEXT



This chapter provides a synopsis of the country's situation and its standing with regard to the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. It also provides an overview of major political, human rights, economic, social and environmental trends, as well as challenges that are influencing achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the Kingdom of Eswatini, and the transmission channels and impact of COVID-19.

The population of Eswatini is 1,093,238 (2017), of whom 51 per cent are women. The country's young population has a median age of just 21.7 years. Recent population censuses show that the age structure of the population is changing due to a consistent decline in fertility, from 6.4 children per woman in 1986 to 3.2 children per woman in 2017.

This has led to an increase in the working age population, which is projected to reach 61 per cent by 2030. A national study on the Demographic Dividend (2018) indicates in this regard that Eswatini has the potential to harness the demographic dividend and ultimately boost its socio-economic development.

The majority (79 per cent) of the population lives in rural areas and is dependent on subsistence farming. Over the last two decades, the country has experienced increasing internal migration within its regions. The Manzini and Hhohho regions, the industrial hub and administrative capital respectively, have experienced population influx from rural areas.

1.1 GOVERNANCE

The Kingdom of Eswatini has a dual governance structure, the modern system and the traditional system. The Constitution is the supreme law of the land and provides for three organs or arms of governance: the Executive, a bicameral Legislature and the Judiciary. Each of these organs is independent of the others.¹ The Constitution includes a Bill of Rights that promotes participation, accountability and gender equity.

Constitutionally, the King (iNgwenyama) holds supreme executive power and appoints the Judiciary² and the Prime Minister, who is Head of Cabinet. The Queen Mother (Indlovukazi) is traditionally the mother of the King and the symbolic Grandmother of the Nation.

The King appoints 20 members of the Senate and 10 members of the House of Assembly, and approves all legislation passed by the Parliament. To fulfil the constitutional requirement for quotas for enhanced representation of women and marginalized groups in the Parliament, in 2018, the Government passed the Election of Women Act,³

and as a result four additional female members were elected to the House of Assembly, increasing the total number of members to 73 from the previous 69.

The Constitution provides for equality before the law, but also places the King and the Queen Mother above the law.⁴ The rule of law and the availability of various means to ensure checks and balances against potentially arbitrary and/or unlawful exercise of power remain restricted, with instances of use of public order and anti-terrorism laws as well as defamation proceedings to silence and intimidate dissenting political opponents, human rights defenders and journalists.

¹ Government of Eswatini 'Governance' <http://www.gov.sz/index.php/about-us-sp-15933109/governance>, accessed 1 July 2020

² Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland Act 2005, Section 139

³ Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland Act 2005, Section 229

⁴ Human Rights Watch (2017) World Report

Checks and balances are further undermined by powers of appointment to key justice sector positions, and mechanisms responsible for judicial appointments, that ultimately remain vested in the King.⁵

The Government has put in place national and sectoral policy and legal frameworks conducive to good governance and respect for human rights. These include the Public Finance Management Act (2017), the National Anti-corruption Policy (2012), the Promulgation of the Small Claim Court Act (2012), and the Sexual Offences and Domestic Act (2018); as well as establishment of the Anti-Corruption Commission, and the Commission for Human Rights and Public Administration and the Public Service Procurement Unit.

Section 24 of the Eswatini Constitution allows for freedom of expression.⁶ However, this right should be seen in the context of a 1973 Decree,⁷ which states in section 13, “ Any person who forms or attempts or conspires to form a political party or who organises or participates in any way in any meeting, procession or demonstration in contravention of this decree shall be guilty of an offence and liable, on conviction, to imprisonment not exceeding six months”. In addition, there continue to be restrictions to freedom of expression, assembly and association and the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs in Eswatini, with trade unionists, civil society organizations, political opponents, journalists and human rights defenders continuing to face political interference and attacks.

The constitutional reforms that led to the adoption of the 2005 Constitution, which guarantees various freedoms and rights including freedom of assembly and association have not taken effect in practice. For example, counter-terrorism laws have been used to counter political opposition and social protests instead of addressing legitimate terrorism threats.

A number of United Nations Special Procedure Mandate holders have been engaged on the continued arrest, detention and harassment of civil society actors and human rights defenders through the communications procedure.

There is a need to promote use of the Guidelines for States on effective implementation of the right to participate in public affairs adopted by the United Nations Human Rights Council in 2018 (A/HRC/39/28), and relevant treaties ratified by Eswatini that protect this right.

Political interference in the judiciary is another challenge in Eswatini. The country has received recommendations to put in place specific constitutional guarantees to protect judges and prosecutors from any form of political influence in their decision-making and to effectively ensure that they are free of pressure and interference in the performance of their work. In addition, the traditional justice system does not operate in accordance with the international fair trial standards.⁸

Eswatini is ranked 47 out of 55 African countries in the latest Mo Ibrahim Index (2019), measuring governance performance. Further, in the sub-category that makes up Participation and Human Rights, the country ranks 52/54 (for participation), 45/54 (for rights), and 44/54 (for Gender), showing a steady decline. Eswatini’s Corruption Perceptions Index score was 34 in 2019, down from 38 in 2018, a fall of 10.53 per cent.⁹

The traditional system is anchored on *Tinkhundla*. The country has 59 Tinkhundla, each encompassing several chiefdoms, which are headed by chiefs appointed by the King. The Chiefs work with the Advisory Council to His Majesty the King, in close collaboration with the *Inkhundla* Council. The modern-type governance system follows a bicameral Parliament model consisting of the House of Senate and the House of Assembly. The House of Assembly comprises 73 members, 59 from Tinkhundla/Constituencies, 10 members appointed by the King and 4 women voted for regionally.

⁵ International Commission of Jurists (2018) Achieving Justice for Gross Human Rights Violations in Swaziland: Key challenges

⁶ The Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland Act 2005, Section 24

⁷ Proclamation by His Majesty King Sobhuza II on 12 April 1973

⁸ United Nations Human Rights Committee (2017) CCPR/C/SWZ/CO/1 available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CCPR/C/SWZ/CO/1&Lang=En

⁹ Transparency International (2019) Corruption Perceptions Index

The House of Senate comprises 30 members, 10 elected by the House of Assembly and 20 appointed by the King. The Prime Minister is appointed by the King and presides over the Cabinet in his capacity as the Head of Government.

The King appoints Cabinet members in consultation with the Prime Minister and the Advisory Council. National general elections are conducted every five years, with the most recent national elections held in 2018. The National Elections Boundaries Commission presides over the elections. Male and female citizens over the age of 18 years participate in elections.

1.2 ECONOMIC SITUATION

Eswatini is classified as a lower middle-income country with a Human Development Index of 0.608 (2019) putting the country in the medium human development category, at 138 out of 189 countries and territories. The economic growth rate is below the 5 per cent necessary to eradicate poverty and achieve Agenda 2030. Economic growth is affected by, among other factors, prolonged drought and a sharp decline in Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU) revenues, from E7.1 billion in 2017/18 to E5.1 billion in 2018/19.¹⁰

A number of national policy documents – including the National Strategic Development Plan (2018/19–2022/23), the Comprehensive Agricultural Sector Plan (CASP) (2005) and the National Agricultural Investment Plan (2015) – all indicate that the agriculture sector is the backbone of Eswatini's economy, contributing an estimated 8.2 percent of GDP.

These national documents also concur that approximately 77 per cent of the population comprises rural smallholders, who are responsible for producing most of the domestic food supply. Maize crop covers 84 per cent of cropland and is mostly rainfed. Low agricultural production and productivity are attributed to structural factors such as a lack of financial resources, which obstructs access to agricultural inputs; and a need for improved technologies and improved land-use practices, the lack of which results in insufficient marketable surpluses. Post-harvest losses are estimated to be 30 per cent of all food produced, and inefficient supply chains contribute to high costs that discourage smallholder production.

Macroeconomic conditions have deteriorated in recent years, from a high in GDP growth of 6.4 per cent in 2013.

After a period of subdued growth, real GDP growth picked up somewhat in 2018, as the impact of the 2015/16 El Niño drought (which cost at least 7 per cent of GDP) faded, and public spending remained elevated.¹¹ Real GDP grew by 2.4 per cent in 2018, up from 2 per cent in 2017, partly driven by a stronger recovery in the primary and services sectors.¹² Despite the upturn in the economy, fiscal policy remained a key concern in 2019.

Estimated at 1.9 per cent, economic growth in 2019 was driven by increased economic activity in wholesale and retail trade and higher exports. The medium-term outlook is 1.8 per cent.¹³ This is below the 5 per cent annual growth necessary to eradicate poverty and achieve Agenda 2030. Economic growth is affected, among other factors, by the prolonged drought and a sharp decline in Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU) revenues, from E7.1 billion in 2017/18 to E5.1 billion in 2018/19.¹⁴

An accumulation of domestic arrears constrained the economic activity of companies that supply services to the Government and affected the industrial sector's productivity.

¹⁰ The country has completed an election in September 2018.

¹¹ International Monetary Fund (February 2020) Eswatini Article IV IMF Country Report No. 20/41

¹² World Bank (updated 10 October 2019) The World Bank in Eswatini: Overview, available at <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/eswatini/overview#1>, accessed 2 July 2020

¹³ World Bank. 2020. Global Economic Prospects, June 2020. Washington, DC: World Bank. DOI: 10.1596/978-1-4648-1553-9.

¹⁴ United Nations Children's Fund (2017) Overall Budget Swaziland 2017/2018. Available online at: [https://www.unicef.org/esaro/UNICEF_Swaziland_-_2017_-_National_Budget_Brief\(1\).pdf](https://www.unicef.org/esaro/UNICEF_Swaziland_-_2017_-_National_Budget_Brief(1).pdf)



Moderate economic growth rates are likely to contribute to stagnation in poverty. As the Government continues to face non-financeable high fiscal deficits and depletion of foreign reserves these will have a significant bearing on Eswatini's ability to 'leave no one behind'.

Eswatini's public debt reached 35.24 per cent of GDP in 2018,¹⁵ which is relatively low despite having risen rapidly since 2015 driven by large primary deficits. IMF projections foresee increases up to 38.1 per cent in 2019 and 41.6 in 2020.¹⁶ External debt also remains low and is mostly public debt. Following an increase in 2015, mainly due to the depreciation of the South African Rand, in 2016, the stock of external debt increased from 0.2 per cent of GDP to 13.3 per cent of GDP. The economy's productivity lies mainly on agriculture, mining and textile manufacturing. Eswatini's major trading partner is South Africa. Other trading partners are the European Union and the USA under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).¹⁷

Cross border trade within the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), the Common Market for East and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is still in its infancy. Currently, cross-border facilities, regional policy implementation and preparedness have not yet matured to sustain sustainable trading by informal and formal traders and/or institutional corporate companies.

Although Eswatini has the productive workforce required to leverage and effectively engage in cross-border trade, monetary policies, immigration and customs laws are not yet fully facilitative and enabling to traders. For example, improvements are still required for safe passage and movement of persons within trade-related value chains.

The national unemployment rate was 23 per cent in 2016.¹⁸ However, there are disparities between regions, age and sex groups. The highest unemployment rates are found in Lubombo (28.6 per cent) and Shiselweni (24.5 per cent). Unemployment rate among young people aged 15 to 24 year, is 32.4 per cent. The Kingdom of Eswatini's Gross National Income (GNI) per capita increased by about 34.7 per cent between 1990 and 2017/18.

However, inequality is still very high, with a Gini coefficient of 51.¹⁹

Employment is a key instrument for national development, and the participation of both men and women can create the necessary multiplier impact for poverty reduction, productivity and revenue for economic growth. In Eswatini, the Integrated Labour Force Survey reveals that women have historically been and continue to be at a disadvantageous position in terms of labour force participation and employment rate compared to their male counterparts, as shown in the graph on the next page.

Medium, small and micro enterprises (MSMEs) provide a critical source of employment, currently employing about 21 per cent of the labour force. The 2017 Incomes and Expenditure survey reveals that 27.7 per cent of households had members who were entrepreneurs, and of these 66.4 per cent had a decision maker who was female.²⁰

Despite their ownership of MSMEs, women are less likely to be employed than men. This is largely because in common law women who have reached the age of majority (21 years), forfeit their majority status on contracting a civil rights marriage in community of property (merging their assets and liabilities into a joint estate) or a marriage out of community of property with marital power (under which a women cannot deal with the marital assets without the knowledge and consent of her husband, yet her husband can do so without seeking and obtaining her approval).²¹

¹⁵ International Monetary Fund Executive Board (11 February 2020)

¹⁶ IMF Executive Board Concludes 2019 Article IV Consultation with the Kingdom of Eswatini. News release. Ibid.

¹⁷ Eswatini National Development Plan 2019/20 – 2021/22

¹⁸ Labour Force Survey 2016.

¹⁹ United Nations Development Programme (2019) Human Development Report

²⁰ Central Statistics Office (2017) Eswatini Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016/17

²¹ Africa Times (2019) High court in eSwatini rules in favor of married women's rights

	2007	2010	2014	2016
Labour force participation_Male	59.2	58.8	55.3	55.5
Labour Force participation_female	45.2	55.2	46	46.5
Unemployment rate_Male	25.7	38	24.4	21.2
Unemployment rate_female	31.2	30	32.2	24.8

Electricity makes up the rest of the primary energy, with more than 60 per cent imported from South Africa, Mozambique and the Southern African Power Pool (SAPP) Day-Ahead Market (DAM). Power generation in Eswatini was 326.7GWh in 2019,²³ mainly from the hydropower owned by Eswatini Electricity Company.

The 2015/16 El Niño-induced drought, the worst in 30 years, reduced hydropower production to 10 per cent of total energy sent out in 2015/2016, accentuating the dependence on imports. In total, 60.4GWh was produced and sold to the grid by Ubombo Sugar Limited. Ubombo Sugar Limited and the Royal Swaziland Sugar Association Corporation (RSSC) have a combined power generation capacity (bagasse and woodchips) of approximately 106MW,²⁴ most of which is used for their own consumption.

²⁴ Eswatini Electricity Regulatory Authority (2018) Electricity Sector. Available at www.sera.org.sz/electricity-sector.php

1.3 SOCIAL DIMENSION

Eswatini allocates 12 per cent of its GDP to social expenditures, including education and health. About 2.2 per cent of the GDP is spent on the social assistance system for income support to the elderly, disability grants, and a pilot social grant for OVC represents less than 1 per cent.¹ Although the Government of Eswatini has introduced significant social protection reforms, gaps in coverage remain.

There is no comprehensive social protection and insurance policy framework in place that addresses the needs of vulnerable groups. Welfare schemes are underdeveloped and wanting in terms of harmonization between programmes and administrative systems.

According to the Swaziland Household Income and Expenditure Survey (SHIES, 2016/17), about 58.9 per cent of Eswatini lives below the national poverty line, and about 20.1 per cent below the extreme poverty line. Poverty in Eswatini is largely a rural phenomenon.

Most of the rural population (75 per cent of the total population) is poor, with a poverty incidence rate of 70 per cent compared to 20 per cent in urban areas.² Almost 6 in every 10 children (56.5 per cent) are multidimensionally poor, with the multidimensional child poverty rate more than twice as high in rural areas (65 per cent) as in urban areas (23 per cent). The rate is slightly higher for boys (60 per cent) than for girls (54 per cent).

In recent years, the country has experienced prolonged droughts, which have affected food security. The 2019 Vulnerability Assessment Committee report estimated that 230,000 people would face acute food shortage between October 2019 and March 2020.³ Food insecurity situation was likely to deteriorate rapidly from April 2020 and beyond, particularly in areas with limited or no humanitarian assistance and limited social safety nets. Drought has directly affected smallholder farming, the backbone of rural livelihoods in Eswatini with over 70 per cent of the country's total population, 60 per cent of whom are women relying on subsistence farming.⁴

1.4 HEALTH SECTOR

The estimated life expectancy in Eswatini is 58.9 years for males and 63.5 for females.⁵ Eswatini is going through an epidemiological transition and is experiencing a double burden of disease. While communicable diseases remain a serious challenge, non-communicable diseases (NCDs) – particularly hypertension, diabetes and cancer – are growing problems, especially reproductive organ cancers.

The country's health care system comprises the informal and formal sectors. The informal sector comprises traditional health practitioners and other unregulated service providers. The health service based on western medicine is formal and comprises public and private health services. The health care system is organized in a decentralized manner, providing health care at primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

Access to health care facilities is generally good, with up to 85 per cent of the population living within 8 kilometres of a health facility. The health sector is one of the top three sectors in terms of Government's budgetary allocations. The Government funds all antiretroviral and other medicines, as well as laboratory supplies and vaccines.

¹ International Monetary Fund (2017) Expenditure Assessment Tool. www.imf.org/en/Publications/TNM/Issues/2017/04/27/Expenditure-Asset-Tools-44797

² Central Statistical Office. Swaziland Household Income and Expenditure Survey (SHIES) 2010 - 2017

³ United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2019) Eswatini Vulnerability Assessment Committee Results. Available at https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SADC_Eswatini_snapshot_July2019.pdf

⁴ Food and Agriculture Organization. Swaziland looks to a revitalized agriculture sector. No date (accessed 2 July 2020). Available at <http://www.fao.org/in-action/swaziland-looks-to-a-revitalized-agriculture-sector/en/>

⁵ Central Statistics Office, Kingdom of Eswatini, 2017 Population and Housing Census

Eswatini has one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world, at 27 per cent among the 15-49-year-old population. In total 210,000 people were living with HIV in 2018. New HIV infection is higher among females (4,500) than males (3,300).⁶ In 2017, new infections are very high among young females (15-24 years) at 2,400 compared to 400 among young males.⁷ HIV incidence was reduced by 46 per cent to 1.39 per cent in 2017 from the 2.58 per cent recorded in 2011. Prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV coverage is 95 per cent.⁸

Eswatini has high incidence of, prevalence of and mortality from tuberculosis including multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and extensively drug resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB). The HIV and AIDS epidemic has also given rise to the concurrent tuberculosis epidemic in the country, which is a major public health problem. Tuberculosis incidence declined by 46 per cent from 733 to 397 per 100,000 population between 2015 and 2017.

Eswatini achieved a 92 per cent malaria case reduction between 2002 and 2016, and ranks among 21 countries globally with the potential to eliminate malaria by 2020. Other diseases of public health importance include major neglected tropical diseases such as soil-transmitted helminthiasis and schistosomiasis. According to a mapping survey conducted in 2014 schistosomiasis, with a prevalence of 15 per cent and soil-transmitted helminthiasis, with a prevalence of 6 per cent, are endemic to Eswatini.

Eswatini has been performing well in maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health (MNCAH) with indicators such as the high antenatal care (ANC) coverage (98 per cent), postnatal care coverage (98 per cent), skilled birth attendance (88 per cent) and institutional deliveries (87 per cent).⁹ However, the maternal mortality ratio continues to be unacceptably high at 452 per 100,000 live births.¹⁰ This is the result of a major disconnect between coverage and the quality of care provided. The country has reduced its unmet need for family planning from 24 per cent in 2007 to 15.2 per cent in 2014, though unmet need among rural, less educated and poor girls and young women remains high (27 per cent for 15- 19 year olds, and 17.4 per cent for 20-24 year olds.

This may contribute to the high adolescent birth rate (87/1,000 live births). The under-5 mortality rate is 67 per 1,000 live births, infant mortality is 50 per 1,000 live births; and neonatal mortality 20 per 1,000 live births.¹¹

In Eswatini, the probability of dying between the age of 30 and 70 years from the four main NCDs (cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and diabetes) is 21 per cent. Contributing factors include tobacco use, alcohol use, physical inactivity and unhealthy diets, all of which fall under the category 'modifiable factors'.

Overall, the prevalence of undernutrition in children under five as measured by stunting, wasting and underweight was 26.3 per cent, 4 per cent and 1.5 per cent, respectively. Hhohho Region had the highest rate of chronic malnutrition (28.6 per cent) and underweight (4.8 per cent) whereas Shiselweni had the highest prevalence of wasting (2 per cent). In 2014, Hhohho and Manzini's chronic malnutrition rates were above the national average. The national prevalence of overweight was 13.9 per cent. In addition, Hhohho region had rates of over nutrition (16.4 per cent) above the national average.

⁶ UNAIDS (2018) Eswatini Country Fact Sheet. Available at [www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/swaziland#:~:text=In%20Eswatini%20in%202018%3A,49%20years\)%20was%2027.3%25](http://www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/swaziland#:~:text=In%20Eswatini%20in%202018%3A,49%20years)%20was%2027.3%25).

⁷ Ministry of Health (2018) HIV annual report

⁸ UNAIDS Country Fact Sheet

⁹ Government of Swaziland et al., Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey: final report, 2014.

¹⁰ Population and Housing Census, 2017

¹¹ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014 MICS, 2014



1.5 WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Despite improved figures of population accessing water, access is not consistent and noteworthy disparities remain. For example, urban areas have far greater access to improved sources of drinking water (92.5 per cent) than rural areas (67.4 per cent), and only 30 per cent of households have functional access to water through the Swaziland Water Services Corporation grid. Only 16.8 per cent of household members use unimproved drinking water and employ appropriate water treatment methods.¹²

Nationally, 7 out of every 10 households report washing hands with soap or ash at critical times (e.g. after using the toilet, and before and after serving and eating meals). However, regional variations exist, with the rate of the above practices as high as 86 per cent in Manzini and as low as 51 per cent in Shiselweni.

Differences between regions in the extent of poor handwashing (30 per cent in Hhohho, 24 per cent in Lubombo, 14 per cent in Manzini and 49 per cent in Shiselweni) suggest the need for tailored strategies that address the drivers and determinants of handwashing in different settings.

The water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) impact of the drought has previously been documented in Eswatini. For example, in rural parts of Lubombo and Shiselweni regions, protected springs and boreholes produced low yields which, in turn, led to low access to domestic water supply during the most-recent drought the country experienced in 2016/17. Institutional WASH, not just WASH in domestic settings, is also a shortcoming.

¹² Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014



1.6 EDUCATION SECTOR

The national literacy rate was 95.3 per cent for women and 91.8 per cent for men in 2014.¹³ Only 30 per cent of children aged three to six years¹⁴ have access to early learning opportunities. About 14 per cent of public primary schools have pre-primary classes for 5-6 years old pupils (80 of 594 public primary schools).

Eswatini has achieved near-universal net enrolment in primary education (94 per cent in 2017 with female 93.5 per cent and male 94.5 per cent)¹⁵ but a very high proportion of adolescents are currently excluded from the secondary education system. Net enrolment at lower secondary school level was 32.3 per cent in 2017 (male 26 per cent and female 38.7 per cent)¹⁶ and 11.8 per cent at upper secondary education in 2015 (male 9.9 per cent and female 13.6 per cent). Only 20 per cent of students who attend primary school move on to lower secondary (Forms 1-3). Grade repetition is common, highlighting inefficiencies within Eswatini's education system. About 67 per cent of learners were over-aged in Grade 1 in 2017, whilst the repetition rate was 15 per cent, with less than 10 per cent of learners completing primary school without repeating a grade. School dropout rates are highest between Grades 6 and 7, between Forms 2 and 3, and between Forms 4 and 5.¹⁷

Households contribute about 14 per cent and 30 per cent of primary and secondary school expenditure respectively, despite the free primary education programme. Despite the higher secondary-school-age population, there are far fewer secondary schools (236) than primary schools in the country (594).¹⁸

Only 5 per cent of students reach tertiary education level,¹⁹ within the three main universities, all government-sponsored. Eswatini has a National Technical and Vocational Education and Skills (TVET) Development Policy; however, TVET is not perceived as a prestigious avenue, and the 2018-2022 National Education and Training Sector Policy identifies a need to reposition and market TVET. The current education management information system (EMIS) does not include data from TVET or non-formal education providers.

Weak implementation of national policy guidelines and strategies to reduce repetition and dropping out, low access to early learning, and poor quality of teaching are the main causes of primary school repetition and ultimately drop out. Poor quality teaching is linked to the teacher qualifications and the quality of teaching methods, with 25 per cent of primary school teachers not adequately qualified.

The lack of secondary schools (294, compared to 622 primary schools), the cost of secondary education (not free), the high level of repetition and out-of-age learners are key contributors to the dropping out of and low enrolment in secondary and tertiary education.

The key driver of school dropouts among females is adolescent pregnancy, which is behind the decision for 52 per cent of all senior secondary school females who drop out. A stronger interface is required between formal education providers (the Ministry of Education and Training), key actors offering alternative education/non-formal education options, and the labour market/employers to ensure alignment between skills-building, certification, and the marketplace. There is also a need for greater focus on accredited, flexible alternative options, with strong wrap-around services such as internships and job shadowing.

¹³ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014

¹⁴ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014

¹⁵ Education Management Information Service (2017), Annual Education Census (AEC)

¹⁶ AEC 2017

¹⁷ AEC 2017

¹⁸ AEC 2017

¹⁹ AEC 2017



1.7 JUSTICE SYSTEM—RULE OF LAW

The country has a dual justice System, which includes courts based on Roman-Dutch law and traditional courts using customary law. The Judiciary is an independent body. At the apex of the Eswatini Justice system is the Supreme Court, which is the final court of appeal on all matters. It has a supervisory and review jurisdiction over all the Courts of Eswatini. Below the Supreme Court exist in parallel the High Court, and the Industrial Court and Industrial Court of Appeal (which are specialist Courts dealing exclusively with industrial and labour matters). The 1998 Swazi Administration Order set up Chiefs Courts.

The 2005 Constitution departed from the position laid down by the 1973 Decree, which vested all judicial, executive and legislative powers in His Majesty the King. Under Section 140(1) of the Constitution, Judicial power now exclusively vests in the judiciary. The Constitution provides that no organ or agency of the Crown should be conferred with final judicial power. The Constitution further provides that justice shall be administered in the name of the Crown by the Judiciary, which should be independent and subject only to the Constitution.

Section 139(1) provides that the Judiciary should consist of:

- a. The Supreme Court of Judicature comprising the Supreme Court and the High Court; and
- b. Such specialised, subordinate and Swazi Courts or Tribunals exercising a judicial function as Parliament may establish by law.¹

The number of Judges, Magistrates and other Judicial Officers is still not sufficient to cover the backlog of cases. Part 2 of the 2005 Constitution provides for the establishment of the Commission on Human Rights and Public Administration (SCHRPA) with the duty to investigate complaints of violations of fundamental human rights and freedoms, injustice, corruption, abuse of power and unfair treatment of any person by a public official in exercise of his duties.

Furthermore, SCHRPA has the duty to promote fair, efficient and good governance in public affairs, and to promote and foster strict adherence to the rule of law and principles of natural justice in public administration. There is still no human rights Ombudsperson to investigate and resolve complaints.

Although the Constitution provides for three separate organs of government, the powers of all three organs are vested in the King. The concentration of power in the King gives him excessive powers of appointment over the Government, Parliament and the Judiciary. Furthermore, political parties are unable to register, contest elections, field candidates or otherwise participate in the formation of government.

This continues to impede the full and effective exercise of the right to participate in public affairs. In addition, neither the Elections and Boundaries Commission nor the Anti-Corruption Commission is adequately independent, impartial or effective.

The lack of political pluralism means there are limited checks and balances to ensure accountability, rule of law and realization of human rights. Moreover, Eswatini's Commission on Human Rights and Public Administration does not operate in accordance with the Paris Principles relating to the status of National Human Rights Institutions.²

¹ Constitution of the Kingdom of Swaziland Act (2005) Chapter VIII The Judicature Section 139

² United Nations Human Rights Committee (2017)

1.8 VIOLENCE

In Eswatini, there are major barriers achieving justice for gross human rights violations. These include widespread occurrence of sexual and gender-based violence (33 per cent females have experienced sexual violence as a child and 25 per cent intimate partner violence)¹, with discriminatory practices based on customary laws and traditional beliefs still undermining equality between men and women, the access by victims of such violence to effective remedies and reparation, as well as the holding to account of perpetrators of such violence.

The 2018 Sexual Offences and Domestic Violence (SODV) Act may assist in combating the increasing violence.

Although the SODV Act has implications for the ability of young people consensually engaging in sex below 18 to access any preventive health services and information, it does not provide for a close-in-age exemption and places young people at risk of criminalization. Violence against women and women rights continue to be issues of concern.

Violence against children is also an ordinary occurrence in Eswatini. The 2014 MICS estimated that 88 per cent of children aged 1-14 years had experienced at least one form of psychological or physical punishment by household members during the previous month. The rate of violent discipline is higher among children aged 3-9 years (90-91 per cent) than among younger children (83 per cent) or older children (87 per cent).

1.9 CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY

CLIMATE CHANGE

Eswatini, like many countries in Africa, has contributed least to greenhouse gases (GHG) concentrations in the atmosphere, and yet faces some of the worst consequences and generally has the least capacity to cope with climate change impacts. The country is highly vulnerable and exposed to the impacts of climate change due to its socioeconomic and environmental context.

Climate variability, including the increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events, disproportionately affects the poor. Furthermore, climate change has adverse effects on water, food, fuel, health, education and access to social services. Climate change also impacts negatively on livelihoods and key sectors of the economy. It affects the biodiversity and ecosystems (forests and wetlands) on which rural populations heavily depend. It impacts the agriculture sector, which contributes approximately 9.5 per cent to the country's GDP.

Over 75 per cent of smallholder farmers are vulnerable as they rely on rain-fed agriculture, and climate change is projected to reduce availability by 40 per cent in river flows, which will impact on food security, the agriculture sector and human health.

The increasing frequency and intensity of droughts is also affecting crop and livestock productivity, with the 2015/16 El Niño drought resulting in a loss of some E3.843 billion (7.01 per cent of GDP / 18.58 per cent of government expenditure in 2016). The health sector, by its cross-sectoral nature, is also dependent on the climate resilience of the agriculture, water, biodiversity and ecosystems sectors.

The Government of Eswatini's response to the impacts of climate change have been integrated into the country's social and economic development. Interventions are aimed at enhancing adaptation in vulnerable sectors (integrated water resources management, climate-smart agriculture, early warning and risk management, energy efficiency and energy security, and biodiversity conservation).²

¹ UNICEF (2007) A National Study on Violence Against Children and Young Women in Swaziland

² Kingdom of Swaziland (2016) National Climate Change Policy

Eswatini's Sixth National Report (6NR) to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UNCBD)³ highlights the progress made towards attainment of the national biodiversity goals. For example, biodiversity awareness (Target 1), biodiversity mainstreaming (Target 2) and Protected Area increasing activities (Target 11) are on track to achieve targets.⁴ There is need for great improvement towards the other sixteen targets, with progress at an insufficient rate.

Therefore, enhancing adaptive capacity, building resilience and reducing the vulnerability of the populace and the economy are of utmost priority if Eswatini is to achieve its quest for sustainable development and poverty eradication.

ENVIRONMENT AND BIODIVERSITY

Eswatini is rich in biodiversity with inordinately large plant and animal diversity. The biodiversity resources of Eswatini have great cultural and economic significance. The presence of indigenous biological resources and their diversity provide a wide range of direct benefits as they generate products that are used for subsistence income and employment purposes.

However environmental degradation – characterized by high deforestation, soil erosion, habitat loss and wildlife depletion – are seriously eroding the country's rich biodiversity and ecosystems. Approximately 25 per cent of each of the terrestrial ecosystems have however been lost to some form of other land use. A total of 4,280 km² of biodiversity⁵ rich ecosystems have been converted to industrial timber plantations, sugarcane plantations and urban areas.

Other causes of environmental degradation and biodiversity loss include conversion of natural habitats to other land uses; invasion by invasive alien species; expansion of settlements and urbanization; indiscriminate use of fires destroying ecosystems and altering habitats; climate change; and unsustainable use of natural resources. Environmental degradation and biodiversity loss have consequences for the availability of water resources for hydropower generation, crop and livestock production, and economic activities such as tourism.

ENERGY

Sources of total primary energy supply (TPES) in Eswatini include hard coal, renewables and waste, hydropower, electricity and petroleum. Eswatini is reliant on imports for petroleum products including petrol, diesel, paraffin, LPG and lubricants. The country imports all of its petroleum product requirements and around 70 per cent of its power from South Africa and Mozambique, despite being well endowed with conventional and renewable energy resources.⁷

These resources would potentially be able to meet the entire national electricity demand if fully exploited, as well as potentially provide for the export of excess energy to Eswatini's neighbours. The high dependency on power imports contributes greatly to the country's account deficit, and increases Eswatini's exposure to energy supply risks, in terms of both supply security and price shocks. Almost 100 per cent of the electricity generated in Eswatini is from hydropower and sugarcane-based co-generation.⁸

Energy development in Eswatini is guided by the National Energy Policy of 2018 and the Energy Masterplan 2034, as well as the Short-Term Generation Expansion Plan.⁹ Since then, the country's energy sector has been undergoing rapid transformation with the liberalization of the electricity sector to encourage private sector investment. With the recent promising development of locally sourced renewable energy, Eswatini has opportunities to reduce its excessive reliance on imports for energy products and improve energy security.

³ The 6NR is a compilation of the contributions that have been made by the different stakeholders that are working on the issues that are in relation to the country's customized Aichi Targets, as highlighted in the National Biodiversity Strategy Action Plan, Two (NBSAP 2)

⁴ Ministry of Tourism and Environmental Affairs (2019) Eswatini 6th National Report to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity Project

⁵ <https://www.cbd.int/countries/?country=sz>, Convention on Biological Diversity

⁶ In 2014 renewables and waste contributed 60 per cent of the TPES. Of the total supply of renewables and waste, 46 per cent is from domestic wood and 54 per cent from domestic bagasse. Hydropower contributed 3 per cent and imported electricity 7 per cent of TPES. Coal (imports) contributed 6 per cent and petroleum (imports) 24 per cent.

⁷ Eswatini Electricity Company (2020) Annual Report, 2019/20

⁸ Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy (2018) Eswatini Energy Masterplan 2034

⁹ Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy (2018) Short-Term Generation Expansion Plan, 2018

To enhance energy security, affordability and environmental sustainability, Eswatini needs to develop domestic energy supply capacity and diversify its national energy mix towards renewable supply options. Specifically, the long-term goal of energy sector development is a well-diversified energy mix that will provide sufficient energy supply to support the country's developmental goals, contribute to poverty alleviation and improve the quality of life by providing access to clean energy technologies; foster industrialization to bring about linkages with other sectors; and ensure security of energy supply to support economic growth and attract foreign direct investment.

The national access rate to electricity as of March 2020 is 80 per cent, which has been catalysed by a robust rural electrification programme. While access rates are high and rural areas are increasingly being electrified, increasing electricity tariffs, coupled with low disposable income and high unemployment rates, results in fuel switching. Rural households in particular still rely heavily on wood fuel as a primary source of energy, and 88 per cent of poor households use wood as their main fuel for cooking.¹¹



¹¹ Eswatini Household Income and Expenditure Survey, 2016/17

1.10 AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Agriculture is defined as the mainstay of the Eswatini's economy, although its contribution to GDP has declined over the years. Agriculture and forestry accounted for 8.6 per cent of Eswatini GDP in 2017. According to the Central Bank of Swaziland, the agricultural sector contracted by 11.2 per cent in 2016, as a result of reduced outputs due to the severe 2015/2016 drought that led to an overall production output decline by 30 to 40 per cent.

The sector's performance is mainly influenced by the value of sugar exports, which account for over 70 per cent of the value of agricultural production. The sector is also supporting agro-based industries and manufacturing, which contribute about 27 per cent of Eswatini's GDP. Exported agricultural commodities include sugar, wood products, citrus fruits, canned fruits, meat and meat products and textiles. These sectors are the main sources of foreign currency earnings.¹

Smallholder agriculture remains the backbone of rural livelihoods in Eswatini, with over 70 per cent of the country's total population, 60 per cent of whom are women relying on subsistence farming.² Most of the smallholder producers are found in rural areas on Swazi Nation Land (SNL) where agricultural land is under serious threat due to sprawling uncontrolled human settlement development, resulting in the fragmentation of agricultural land into small land holdings, which are becoming non-viable for entrepreneurship production.



Range lands are suffering the “tragedy of the commons” due to incomplete property rights and free access for all. Unpredictable weather patterns and climate change remain major threats to agricultural productivity. Issues of water harvesting and efficient water use are key for agricultural development.

Eswatini is a net importer of food, and it imports virtually 22 per cent of its cereal requirements from South Africa.³ Other trading partners are the European Union, and the USA under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

There is very limited investment by the private sector in poor rural communities, specifically in the area of agriculture.

The Government is financing rural communities using resources from its coffers, as well as funds from development partners.

The challenge for inclusive growth can be summarized as: i) lack of commercialization and diversification of the activities of small-scale producers; ii) exclusion of the smallholder rural communities from the mainstream economy due to the fact that they are disaggregated and difficult to conduct business with; and iii) the absence of an enabling environment for the private sector to conduct business with poor rural disaggregated farmers. The private sector has significant potential for directing financing towards investments that would lead to achievement of the SDGs. However, this capital is still largely untapped.

¹ Ministry of Agriculture (2018) Strategic plan (2018-2023), p.8. Available at http://www.dairyboard.co.sz/images/MOA%20STRATEGIC%20PLAN_WP_2020.pdf

² FAO (n.d.) Swaziland looks

³ Food and Agriculture Organization (22 April 2020) Global Information Early Warning System (GIEWS), Country Briefs: Eswatini. Available at: www.fao.org/giews/countrybrief/country.jsp?code=SWZ

1.11 TRANSMISSION CHANNELS AND IMPACT OF COVID-19

Beside its human cost, COVID-19 is significantly affecting economic growth. The effect on the economy is felt from both the supply and the demand sides, as both international and domestic supply chains of goods and services will be disrupted. While movements of people are being restricted in several countries, trade across borders has continued in a very limited way, at least for now. However, restrictions placed on the movement of people will eventually put a lot of strain on supply chains and logistics between and across national boundaries.

The supply shock will, in turn, affect household consumption, which will have a ripple-on effect on demand. As demand falls, the economy will experience a slowdown. IMF reviewed 2020 global growth projections to -3.3 per cent (January 2020 projections) from 3.4 per cent (October 2019 projections) in light of the slow performance in emerging market economies.⁴ His Majesty the King, in his February 2020 State of the Nation Address (SONA), had announced that the economy of Eswatini was projecting a growth rate of 2.8 per cent in 2020.⁵

Obviously economic growth of the country is now affected with a slowdown in private consumption and investment fuelled by a decline in consumer demand due to disrupted economic activity and uncertainty. The United Nations has estimated, in line with government and Central Bank estimates, that the economy will contract because of COVID-19, with growth between -1.9 per cent and -6.2 per cent, far from the 5 per cent growth needed to sustain progress on socio-economic development.

Disruption of supply chains and delays in both food and non-food items that are both imported and locally sourced. The disruptions are worsening food insecurity, with a further reduction from the already lower-than-normal food production in 2020 season.

Quarantine measures will result in a sharp supply-side shock, hitting working hours and productivity. Manufacturers will suffer from a disruption to global supply chains after exports to China contracted by more than 17 per cent in the first two months of the year.

Supply-side disruptions will be short lived, but demand effects will be long lasting. Manufacturers' activities have been restricted, save those that produce essential products such as food, sanitizers and protective clothing and masks. Manufacturers, especially in labour-intensive textile factories, have been allowed to resume production to fulfil international orders.

Business owners that experience lower than expected revenue and employees losing their wage employment will be forced to reduce household expenditure.⁶ With lower demand, businesses may be forced to cut down on production and let go of some of their workers. Jobs losses and lower demand for businesses tend to reinforce each other, risking the creation of a vicious cycle.

In Eswatini, a vast majority of businesses can be categorized as micro and small enterprises. It can be assumed that, in the event of economic slowdown in the country, owners of such businesses may not have the necessary and sufficient cushions or safety nets to resist the shock. In addition, structural challenges of access to credit and finances to sustain businesses make it extremely vulnerable for the women who make up most of the sector to sustain businesses.

At present, 58.9 per cent of Swazi are living below the nationally defined poverty line.⁷ Those in poverty will be even more vulnerable to the economic shocks emanating from COVID-19.

⁴ International Monetary Fund (October 2019) World Economic Outlook Update, October 2019; International Monetary Fund (January 2020) World Economic Outlook Update.

⁵ Government of Eswatini (February 2020) Speech From The Throne). Available at: www.gov.sz/images/CabinetMinisters/SPEECH-FROM-THE-THRONE-2020.pdf

⁶ Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (24 March 2020) Macroeconomic Analysis and Research Unit E-Bulletin, Quarter 4 of 2019

⁷ World Bank Eswatini Overview

Among the poor, levels of deprivations and vulnerabilities vary. For those just above the poverty line, COVID-19 may easily bring them further below the poverty threshold. In Eswatini, 20.1 per cent of the population is living in extreme poverty. Even before the crisis struck, IMF analysis projected extreme poverty already reaching 40 per cent in 2020,⁸ and with COVID these extreme poverty rates will rise further.

Food insecurity among households is another manifestation of vulnerability. Eswatini as a whole is extremely food insecure, and since the 1990s the country has shifted from being a net exporter of food to net importer.⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Food Programme (WFP) argue that in addition to climate change, HIV and AIDS in Eswatini is the main underlying driver of food insecurity at household level.¹⁰ The COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to worsen the situation, and women and the rural population will suffer the most.

Eswatini is a landlocked country that is almost totally reliant on South Africa for all its imports and exports. The Kingdom sources almost 80 per cent of its guaranteed electricity supply from South Africa, shares a common currency regime in the Rand Monetary Area and common customs under the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU).

The two countries are so integrated in economic, social and political policies that changes in South Africa are adopted and integrated into domestic systems with minor adaption for domestic flavour. The pandemic is having ripple effects on small businesses and wage employment in both the formal and the informal sector, especially the service sector.

For example, a consignment of handicrafts was ready for export but could not move to the EU via ORT International Airport in Johannesburg. Whilst the value of this consignment was only E250,000, its impact on the livelihoods of hundreds of low-income rural households was severe.¹¹ Geographically, Manzini – the commercial and transport hub of the country – registered higher number of infections. This has serious implications for the labour force's ability to cope with the COVID-induced crisis.

Society is defined by its economic and cultural activities. Activities banned as part of the measures to control the spread of coronavirus include sports, including much-loved football, as well as entertainment for both youth and adults, meaning the entertainers and sports stars are not performing. Among the hardest hit is the international Bushfire Festival normally held in May but now postponed indefinitely

The greatest blow will be to the thriving tourism sector, which depends heavily on visiting South Africans, and transiting visitors who comprise about two-thirds of all visitors (about 80 per cent of all tourists who visit enter from South Africa). The lockdown has ensured that these flows have now come to a halt. Another major impact of the virus on Eswatini's struggling economy is the spill over effects of the virus's impact on South Africa, the dominant economy and major driver of growth in the region.



⁸ International Monetary Fund (February 2020) Eswatini Article IV IMF Country Report No. 20/41

⁹ Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (24 March 2020) Macroeconomic Analysis and Research Unit E-Bulletin, Quarter 4 of 2019

¹⁰ Tevera, Daniel & Simelane, Nomcebo & Gracina, Peter & Salam, Abul. (2012). The state of food insecurity in Manzini, Swaziland.

¹¹ United Nations (May 2020) A Rapid Socioeconomic Assessment of COVID-19 in Eswatini (draft)



CHAPTER 2: KINGDOM OF ESWATINI

NATIONAL VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



This chapter presents an analytical overview of Eswatini's National Vision for Sustainable Development, as well as the country's progress towards implementation of Agenda 2030.

2.1 ESWATINI NATIONAL VISION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Kingdom of Eswatini is committed to implementation of Agenda 2030 and the African Union Agenda 2063. The country views implementation of the SDGs as essential for eradicating poverty, promoting shared prosperity and improving environmental sustainability. The long-term development trajectory is defined in the National Development Strategy (NDS) 1999, and the Strategy for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth 2030 (SSDIG).

The NDS Vision 2022, which contains the nation's desire to be among "the top 10% of the medium human development group of countries founded on sustainable economic development, social injustice and political stability", articulates strategies covering eight thematic areas namely (1) economic prosperity, (2) education, (3) health, (4) service delivery, (5) infrastructure, (6) agriculture and environmental sustainability, (7) governance, and (8) corruption. In 2017, the Government reviewed the NDS and developed the SSDIG, which is intended to articulate the vision of the country from the year 2022 onwards. The SSDIG accommodates the new dimensions emerging from the global arena, including the post-2015 development agenda and the African Union Agenda 2063, amongst others.

His Majesty King Mswati III, when addressing the opening of 11th Parliament in 2020, emphasized the Kingdom's commitment to the SDGs and NDS 2022. The latter is translated into the National Development Plan 2019-2022 with the theme: "Towards Economic Recovery". The 2019-2022 NDP, which is premised on the NDS, is the policy document that guides the allocation of resources to identified national priorities.

The NDP outlines the following national outcomes as central to achieving progress towards sustainable development: good governance, economic recovery and fiscal stability; an enhanced and dynamic private sector supporting sustainable and inclusive growth; enhanced social and human capital development; efficient public service delivery that respects human rights, justice and the rule of law; well-managed natural resources and environmental sustainability; and an efficient economic infrastructure network.

In 2019, the Government launched the Strategic Road Map (SRM) covering the period 2018-2023 to address the deterioration of the economic situation in the country. The SRM outlines five key growth sectors that have potential to have a high impact on GDP. The sectors are: (1) Agriculture; (2) Education and ICT; (3) Energy; (4) Tourism; and (5) Manufacturing and Agro processing. The 2018-2023 SRM has short, medium- and long-term targets aimed at measuring progress towards economic recovery and growth. The NDP and SRM provide the national vision to guide the development of the 2021–2025 UNSDCF.

As the key national strategies – Vision 2022, NDP and SRM – end in 2022/2023: this provides an excellent opportunity for the United Nations development system in Eswatini to engage with the Eswatini leadership on progress achieved and to assist in developing appropriate policy responses for the post-2022 period. Indeed, the United Nations should plan its next generation engagement strategies to build on the progress made by Eswatini. This engagement is critical to shape the development discourse after 2022, at a critical time for accelerating and achieving SDG implementation.

The central elements of this are: (1) Agricultural Productivity with climate smart technologies; (2) Value-chain development in agriculture, technology, tourism; and (3) MSMEs as engines for growth. The central elements of the enabling environment are: (1) addressing core bottlenecks in creation of enabling environment; (2) rule of law, justice and service delivery systems (including corruption); and (3) digital technologies for governance.

In addition to the plans and visions mentioned above, in 2019, the Government launched a Development Cooperation Policy (2021 -2025) to strengthen partnerships for sustainable development in the country.

In Eswatini, the SDGs are the integrated and indivisible transformative agenda for national development. The Government has localized and institutionalized the SDGs.

Table 1. SDGs National Alignment



























Government Priority Areas	SDGs
Good Governance, Economic Recovery and Fiscal Stability	     SDG10, 11,12?
Enhanced and Dynamic Private Sector Supporting Sustainable and Inclusive Growth	  SDG10,11,12
Enhanced Social and Human Capital Development	     
Well Managed Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability	      
Efficient Economic Infrastructure Network	  
Enhanced Efficient Public Service Delivery that Respects Human Rights, Justice and the Rule of Law	  

Table 2. Sustainable Development Goal Prioritization

Prioritized Goal	Cross cutting	Enablers
2. Zero hunger 3. Good health and well-being 4. Quality education 6. Clean water and sanitation 7. Affordable and cleaning energy 8. Decent work and economic growth 9. Industry innovation and infrastructure	1. No poverty 5. Gender equality 11. Sustainable cities and communities 12. Responsible consumption and production	10. Reduced inequalities 13. Climate action 15. Life on land 16. Peace justice and strong institutions

Implementation of the SDGs in Eswatini is coordinated by the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, with the Cabinet providing oversight. Implementation is spearheaded by a Steering Committee composed of Principal Secretaries who supervise a Technical Team of representatives of the Government, the private sector, civil society organizations, academia and experts to ensure inclusiveness.

The Technical Team is clustered into four categories, namely poverty, (SDGs 1, 2, and 10), social (SDGs 3, 4, 5 and 16), economic (SDGs 8, 9, 12 and 17) and environmental (SDGs 6, 7 11 13, 14 and 15).

Government cluster: Poverty	
SDG	Status
SDG1: <i>End poverty in all its forms everywhere</i>	The proportion of the population living below the poverty line improved from 63% in 2010 to 58.9% in 2017. Poverty is more pronounced in rural areas (70.2%) than urban area (19.6%) and slightly more females (59.4%) than males (58.4%) are poor. The rate is highest in Lubombo and Shiselweni regions, at 71.5% and 67.3% respectively (2017).
SDG 2: <i>End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture</i>	Prevalence of stunting among children under 5 years of age has declined from 25.5% to 19.9%. The country is now within the world food security requirement of below 20%.
SDG 10: <i>Reduced inequalities</i>	The Human Development Index (HDI) of the country stood at 0.608 in 2018. When the value is discounted for inequality, (in income, education and life expectancy at birth) the HDI falls to 0.430, a loss of 29.3%. The 'loss' in human development due to inequality is the most central risk associated with the SDGs in the country and this is further compounded by increasing trends of urbanization and degradation of natural capital. In addition, the Gini co-efficient is 0.51 with the poorest 40% of the population sharing just 10% of wealth.

Government cluster: Environmental	
SDG	Status
SDG 6: <i>Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all</i>	National coverage of nationally managed water resources for households was 72% in 2014, including 96% of urban households and 63% of rural households. The proportion of the population using safely managed sanitation services, at national level was 53% (78% in rural areas and 94% in urban areas). However, there are discrepancies between coverage and access to the services.
SDG 7: <i>Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all</i>	The proportion of household with access to electricity nationally increased from 69% in 2014 to 78% in 2018.
SDG 13: <i>Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts</i>	The country developed the National Climate Change Policy and Strategy 2016, and the National Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (2014-2019). In addition, the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and the National Resilience Strategy and Disaster Risk Reduction Plan of Action (2017 – 2021) were developed

Government cluster: Social	
SDG	Status
SDG 3: <i>Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.</i>	The maternal mortality ratio has fallen from 593/100,000 in 2012 to 452/100,000 in 2017. The under 5 mortality rate fell from 80 per 1,000 live births in 2012 to 67 per 1,000 in 2014. Skilled birth attendance improved from 82% in 2010 to 88.3% 2014. The adolescent birth rate fell from 111/1,000 in 2007 to 87/1,000 in 2014. Incidence of HIV is 1.36/100,000 population in 2017, and tuberculosis has fallen from 565/100,000 in 2016 to 398/100,000 in 2017, while malaria has stabilized and approaching the elimination phase. The unmet need for family planning is 15.2%.
SDG4: <i>Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</i>	Eswatini has introduced a free primary education programme. As a result, net completion of primary education increased from 93.5% in 2014 to 106.1% in 2016 and of secondary education from 49.6% to 61.5% in the same period. The national literacy rate was 95.3% for women and 91.8 % for men in 2014.
SDG 5: <i>Gender equality</i>	The 2018 HDI value for Eswatini is 0.595 for females and 0.618 for males, resulting in a Gender Development Index (GDI) value of 0.962. The Gender Inequality Index (GII) value was 0.579, ranked at 145 out of 162 countries, in 2018. In 2018-2023, 21% of parliamentary seats are held by women. About 31.3% of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 33.9% of their male counterparts. Female participation in the labour market is 41.4% compared to 65.9% for men. The child marriage rate was 4% in 2014.
SDG16: <i>Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</i>	Eswatini has insignificant cases of conflict-related deaths, at about 0.0017%. The number of victims of intentional homicide per year in the country increased by 8.6% between 2016 and 2018.

Government cluster: Economic	
SDG	Status
SDG 8: <i>Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</i>	According to Labour Force Survey reports, there was a 10% increase in the proportion of informal employment in the non-agriculture sector nationally between 2013 and 2016 (from 54.3% to 65.2%).

The coordination mechanism provides an opportunity for delivery of the SDGs. However, there is also a potential for the United Nations to provide tools and technical expertise, and further strengthen platforms for multi-stakeholder engagement (thematic teams).

In order to implement Agenda 2030, there is a need for multi-stakeholder partnerships. With the monitoring of SDGs implementation, there is a need for transformative partnerships among the different arms of the State and with key stakeholders in society.

In the 2021-2025 UNSDCF, the United Nations system should consider enhancing multi-stakeholder partnership platforms that facilitate continuous engagement on the SDGs in the country. It is important to encourage institutions with accountability and oversight mandates (such as the Parliament) and institutions with high standing among citizens (like the Tinkhundla) to be part of SDG implementation and monitoring.

While the Kingdom of Eswatini has not conducted a comprehensive analysis of all the SDGs, the country presented its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) Report to the 2019 High Level Political Forum in New York. The Report highlights achievements and challenges in implementation of the country's prioritized SDGs.

In addition to the child poverty analysis, the Government of Eswatini launched the Household Income and Expenditure Survey 2016/17. These reports provide some of the evidence of the progress presented.

VNR reporting on progress towards the SDGs was based on a classification that is premised on domestication of SDGs by the country into four clusters: poverty, social, economic and environmental. In Table 3 below, progress per Government cluster and SDG is presented.





CHAPTER 3: LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND



This Chapter is an analysis of the specific groups that have been left behind or are at risk of being left behind. The five factors for Leaving No One Behind from the CCA Companion Piece (discrimination, geography, vulnerability to shocks, governance and socio-economic status) have been used to identify the most vulnerable populations per stage of the life cycle.

The vulnerable life cycle stages include young children (0-9 years), adolescents (10-19 years), youth (20-24 years) and women.

Some issues cut across life cycle stages, such as persons with disabilities; persons living with HIV and AIDS; persons with albinism; persons living with autism; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender queer and intersex (LGBTQI) persons; forcibly evicted persons; persons awaiting sentencing; and prisoners. The rural poor, less educated and women-headed households are identified as a populace being left behind.

3.1 GROUPS THAT HAVE BEEN LEFT BEHIND OR ARE AT RISK OF BEING LEFT BEHIND

Poverty, discrimination, inequality and exclusion are some of the main causes of the lack of enjoyment of human rights by all population groups. Eswatini's recent slow growth has manifested itself in high rates of poverty and inequality in the country. About 59 per cent of the population live below the national poverty line and about 29 per cent below the extreme poverty line. In 2019, inequality was very high,¹ with a Gini coefficient of 0.51.²

The 2018 female Gender Disparity Index value for Eswatini was 0.595 in contrast with 0.618 for males, resulting in a GDI value of 0.962.³ It is important to note that regional disparities continue to persist and are different for different vulnerabilities. Discrimination is a key driver affecting vulnerabilities, especially for LGBTQI persons as well as persons living with disabilities, albinism, autism, and HIV and AIDS.

Food security has always been a challenge in Eswatini over the years, causing many vulnerable groups to be left behind. Geographic location of the vulnerable groups within the four main agro-ecological zones (AEZs)⁴ determines agricultural productivity, and ultimately food security. In addition, the number of the food insecure population is closely related to the poor rainfall seasons, mostly caused by country's vulnerability to climate change.

The resultant droughts result in people being disproportionately affected, particularly in the regions of Lubombo and Shiselweni. For example, in the long term, the Highveld will be unsuitable for growing maize, sorghum, beans and potatoes by the year 2050, and this will hit these vulnerable groups hard.⁵ An estimated 301,762 people (27 per cent of the population) are at risk of food insecurity.

Of these, about 178,544 people (16 per cent of the population) are chronically food insecure while an estimated 123,218 people (11 per cent) are additionally at risk of food insecurity⁶ due to the impact of a below-average season and this anticipated effects of COVID-19, which are exacerbating the humanitarian situation in the country.

¹ United Nations Development Programme (2019) Human Development Report 2019

² Ibid.

³ United Nations Development Programme (2019) Human Development Reports: Kingdom of Eswatini. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SWZ>

⁴ Highveld, Middleveld, Lowveld and Lubombo Plateau

⁵ Ministry of Environment and Tourism (2016) National Climate Change Policy

⁶ COVID-19 Emergency Agriculture and Food Security Technical Working Group (2020) Eswatini Food Security Outlook: April-December 2020

People living in extreme poverty

People living in extreme poverty are central to Leaving No One Behind Agenda in the country. The NDP, as a strategy under National Outcome 3, calls for re-prioritizing poverty reduction as an area of national focus and, building on the lessons gained from the Poverty Reduction Strategy Taskforce (PRTF of 2000), it calls for establishment of a Poverty Observatory Forum drawing on experts from all relevant sectors.

This renewed push in the current NDP is a key strategic entry-point for United Nations engagement on SDG 1. This is especially critical in the light of the impact of COVID-19 impact. Evidence points to a higher number of infections emerging in the commercial and transport hub of Eswatini. This will most likely spike extreme poverty in country.

People living with HIV and AIDS

Over the years, Eswatini has made commendable efforts to fight HIV and AIDS. However, a high number of HIV infections, along with the persistence of stigma and discrimination against such persons, continue to pose challenges. In 2017, the UN Human Rights Committee recommended that Eswatini steps up a human rights intervention initiative to address the needs of key HIV and AIDS populations: women, youth, sex workers and LGBTQI persons, including persons in rural areas.

Persons with disabilities

Persons with disabilities are left behind as they experience worse socioeconomic outcomes than persons without disabilities. As a result, about 83.7 per cent of persons with disabilities in Eswatini are economically inactive.⁷

The 2017 National Population Housing Census indicated that 13 per cent of Emaswati had difficulties or limitations in performing certain functions at the time of the census, equivalent to 146,551 persons with disabilities.

Whilst this number indicates a decline from the figure recorded in 2007 (16.8 per cent and 171,347), persons living with disabilities still have poor health outcomes, lower educational achievements, lower levels of employment and economic participation, and high rates of poverty.

The SDG framework includes seven targets that explicitly refer to persons with disabilities, and six further targets on persons in vulnerable situations, which includes persons with disabilities. The Kingdom of Eswatini ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2012, developed a National Policy on Disability in 2013 and passed the Persons with Disability Act of 2018. The Disability Unit within the Department of Social Welfare is under-resourced, and this affects the implementation of programmes for persons with disabilities.

During the second UPR cycle in 2016,⁸ Eswatini supported three recommendations regarding implementation of the CRPD, including taking new measures to end cultural practices that discriminate against children with disabilities, putting in place relevant laws that prohibit discrimination in employment against persons with disabilities, and providing access to health care and other services for persons with disabilities. In addition, the CEDAW Committee has recommended that Eswatini pay special attention to the needs of women with disabilities to ensure that they enjoy equal access to health care, training, employment and other rights; and collect disaggregated data on the status of women with disabilities, focusing on the forms of discrimination that they encounter in society.⁹

⁷ Government of Swaziland: Central Statistics Office (2010) 2007 Population and Housing Census Volume 4. p. 47.

⁸ Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2016) Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review – Swaziland (UPR) United Nations Document A/HRC/33/14

⁹ CEDAW Committee (2014) CEDAW/C/SWZ/CO/1-2 available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/SWZ/CO/1-2&Lang=En

Persons with albinism

Persons with albinism face discrimination and violence in Eswatini, including killings and murders for ritual purposes. Eswatini has received recommendations to ensure that persons with albinism are protected, in law and in practice, against all forms of violence and discrimination.¹

During the second cycle of the UPR in 2016, Eswatini supported six recommendations regarding the protection of persons with albinism against violence, ritual crimes and killings, through investigation, prosecution and punishment of perpetrators, active awareness campaigns and partnerships with local communities to combat impunity, and improved data collection and disaggregation through the creation of a national registry of persons with albinism.²

However, despite these UPR commitments, the request of the Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of Human Rights by Persons with Albinism to visit Eswatini and assess the human rights situation of persons with albinism has been pending since 2015, as the State has not accepted the request.

Persons deprived of liberty

Regarding persons deprived of liberty, it is concerning that prison conditions and regulations are not in line with international standards, and numerous deaths have been reported in custody in Eswatini. Prisoners do not always receive adequate medical care, detainees do not always have access to lawyers and their families are not properly informed of their detention.

A specific concern is the lack of a judicial framework for minors, the low age of criminal responsibility for children, as well as the detention of adults and children together on the same premises. While the Constitution prohibits torture, it is not specifically criminalized and there is no independent body mandated to investigate complaints of torture and ill-treatment by law enforcement officials.

Excessive use of lethal force and arbitrary killings by law enforcement officers and game wardens have also been reported in Eswatini.

Therefore, Eswatini has been recommended to ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment; improve detention conditions; bring the regulations governing prison conditions into line with international standards including the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (the Nelson Mandela Rules); and establish a system for regular and independent monitoring of all places of detention, as well as a confidential mechanism for receiving and processing complaints lodged by persons deprived of their liberty.

Further, Eswatini has been encouraged to ensure that law enforcement personnel receive training on torture and ill-treatment, that all deaths in custody are promptly investigated, that perpetrators are prosecuted and punished, and that full reparation is provided to victims. Data collection could also be improved regarding the number of deaths in custody, the number of resulting investigations and prosecutions, and any reparation made to victims.³

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex persons

Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity is not clearly prohibited in Eswatini under the Constitution, nor in domestic laws. While Eswatini's common law criminalization of same-sex relations between men is not enforced in practice, it is worrying that the State intends to retain the law that has a discriminatory effect on LGBTI persons. In Eswatini, LGBTI persons frequently face violence and discrimination, particularly in accessing adequate housing and employment.

¹ United Nations Human Rights Committee (2017)

² UPR report (2016)

³ United Nations Human Rights Committee (2017)

On the other hand, LGBTI activists successfully held the first ever “Eswatini Pride” in 2018 in Mbabane. Eswatini has been recommended to: (a) Combat harmful stereotypes and negative attitudes towards persons on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity; (b) Train and sensitize police officers, prosecutors and members of the judiciary to identify discrimination and violence against LGBTI persons; (c) Adopt legislation explicitly prohibiting hate crimes against LGBTI persons; (d) Adopt robust measures to effectively prevent acts of discrimination and violence against such persons and ensure that all acts of violence against them are effectively investigated, perpetrators are brought to justice and punished with appropriate sanctions and victims are compensated; (e) Collect comprehensive data on cases of violence against persons on the basis of their sexual orientation or gender identity; and (f) Criminalize the rape of men and repeal the common law crime of sodomy.⁴

Forcibly evicted persons

Although the Constitution prohibits arbitrary eviction without compensation, it is concerning that people have been forcibly evicted in Eswatini, in particular from land vested in trust for the Swazi nation, without access to prompt and adequate compensation.

For example, in April 2018, armed police and the Mbabane High Court Deputy Sheriff evicted 61 people in Malkerns town, rendering them homeless. Although the eviction was carried out on the orders of the country’s Supreme Court, those evicted were not given adequate notice prior to the demolitions of the homes they had occupied for 57 years.

The Eswatini Constitution requires evictions to be carried out with sufficient notice and the payment of adequate compensation, in accordance with the law. In July 2018, the Eswatini Supreme Court ordered the forceful eviction within 21 days of another 150 long term residents of the Malkerns farming settlement. The Court did not address issues related to compensation, assistance during and after the eviction, or provision of alternative accommodation.

Therefore, it would be important to ensure that the Constitution is applicable and effective remedies are available for all persons within its jurisdiction. Eswatini has been recommended to ensure that persons evicted from non-registered land or land vested in trust for the Swazi nation have access to alternative land or prompt and adequate compensation.⁵

3.2 YOUNG CHILDREN (0—9 YEARS OF AGE)

Key issues affecting children include multi-dimensional poverty (including urban-rural disparities), deprivation of health services, nutrition, lack of early childhood development opportunities, HIV and AIDS, and violence. Discrimination is a key driver of child vulnerabilities. Whilst the enabling environment for vulnerable children has improved over recent years, child participation could be further strengthened.

According to a multiple overlapping deprivation analysis (MODA) conducted in 2018, almost 6 in every 10 children in Eswatini (56.5 per cent) are multidimensionally poor, experiencing deprivations in dimensions such as health, nutrition, education, protection, and water, sanitation and hygiene

(WASH). The rate of multidimensional child poverty (MCP) is more than twice as high in rural areas (65 per cent) as in urban areas (23 per cent). The MCP rate is also higher for boys than for girls (60 per cent and 54 per cent respectively). Regional variations also exist, with children in Shiselweni, followed by Lubombo, fearing the worst. The proportion of the population aged 0-9 years is 24 per cent (50.7 per cent are boys); of 0-9 -year-old children, 45 per cent (90,000) are orphans and vulnerable children (OVCs).

⁴ United Nations Human Rights Committee (2017)

⁵ United Nations Human Rights Committee (2017)

Only 54 per cent of children under the age of five years are registered and, of these, only 37 per cent actually have birth certificates.⁶ The contributing factors to these low figures include the weak linkages between health facilities and the Ministry of Home Affairs to facilitate the registration process, a lack of appreciation of the importance of birth certificates, parents lacking necessary documents and cultural practices related to naming of children. The lack of birth certificate affects their access to social protection, education and the right to an identity.

Despite progress in reduction of under-five mortality in Eswatini, neonatal mortality still remains high at 20 per 1,000 live births. The major contributing factor has been the quality of care provided in health facilities. In addition, cultural practices have affected timely access to services. Up to 75 per cent of under-five deaths occur during the first year of life. HIV and AIDS-related mortality among children and adolescents is high due to late and low access to antiretroviral treatment. Up to 47 per cent of children living with HIV aged 0 to 4 years, 35 per cent of children living with HIV aged 5 to 9 years and 27 of adolescents living with HIV aged 15 to 19 years are not receiving ART.⁷

It is estimated that one in every four children under the age of five years is stunted, with up to 35 per cent of children aged 18 to 23 months stunted and not having optimal nutritional status. Age and geographical disparities persist, with Manzini (28 per cent) and Shiselweni (23 per cent) regions having the highest rates. Leading factors contributing to the situation include low rates of exclusive breastfeeding (58 per cent in 2018), low dietary diversification (41 per cent in 2019) and increased rates of diarrhoea related to hygiene and sanitation practices. In addition, the increased rate of women employed in low-paid work in manufacturing industries has led to children being left in informal day care centres from as early as one month of age, affecting breastfeeding practices. Poor nutrition (and consequential stunting) and poor parental care practices have contributed to poor early childhood development, including low stimulation and nurturing care. Data from the Swaziland Household and Income Survey (SHIES 2017) shows that only 21 per cent of 5-year-olds have attended at least one year of school readiness.

Regional differentials are minimal, with the exception of the Lubombo region. In the other three regions, the percentage of children attending first grade who had attended pre-school in the previous school year averaged about 65 per cent, while in Lubombo it was only 43 per cent. Low access to ECD has an impact on the cost of education, the levels of repetition and the quality of graduates produced by the education sector, and ultimately it affects human capital development and productivity.

While children in Eswatini are affected by multiple protection issues, violence is, by far, the most prominent child protection concern, especially for girls. It is estimated that 88 per cent of children aged 1-14 years had experienced at least one form of psychological or physical punishment by household members during the previous month.⁸ Social and gender beliefs and norms are structural factors that underpin violence: 66 per cent of household respondents believe that physical punishment is a necessary part of child upbringing.⁹ Research and anecdotal evidence also show that social and gender norms perpetuate violence (including against girls) and fuel a culture of silence, even when legislation and 'up-stream' actors try to promote an enabling environment for violence prevention, reporting and timely mitigation responses. While the Children's Protection and Welfare Act abolished the use of corporal punishment as a judicial sentence for children, corporal punishment is still lawful in the home, alternative care, day care, schools and penal institutions. Meanwhile, children have been recruited by chiefs into forced labour and orphans, in particular, have been forced into sex work and domestic servitude.¹⁰

⁶ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014

⁷ Ministry of Health Report, 2018.

⁸ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ United Nations Human Rights Committee (2017)

Discrimination is a major driver of vulnerabilities among children. Children with disabilities, children with albinism, orphans, children living with HIV and AIDS, and LGBTQI children face discrimination in society.

Social beliefs can foster discrimination and marginalization of various types of children. For instance, stigma is still attached to disability, which perpetuates children with disabilities' status as a 'hidden' population within families and communities.

3.3 ADOLESCENTS (10—19 YEARS OF AGE)

Key issues affecting adolescents include poverty, lack of education and alternative ways of skills acquisition, teenage pregnancies, HIV and AIDS, and violence. Discrimination is a key driver for adolescent vulnerabilities. Across all issues, girls are the most affected and hence the most vulnerable adolescents.

A sizeable proportion of adolescents are not in education, employment or training (NEET): only 50 per cent of secondary school aged children attend school.¹ In contrast to primary education, for which Eswatini has achieved near-universal net enrolment, a very high proportion of adolescents are currently excluded from the secondary education system. Net enrolment at secondary school level is less than 34 per cent, and there are several reasons for this attrition. First, despite the higher number of secondary-school-age population, there are far fewer secondary schools than primary schools in the country (236 compared to 594).

Second, the phenomena of over-age and school repetition result in it taking an average of 11 years to complete the entire primary education cycle, far longer than the intended seven years.² One key driver of school dropout among females is teenage pregnancy, accounting for 52 per cent of all senior secondary school females' reasons for dropout.

Urban areas actually have a higher proportion of out-of-school adolescents than rural areas (12.2 per cent and 8.8 per cent respectively). This pattern may be attributed to the greater income-generation prospects in urban than in rural settings, although the relationship has not been previously examined. The tangible vulnerabilities of out-of-school adolescents are evident. For example, HIV incidence and prevalence are almost four times higher among out-of-school adolescent girls and women than among those in school.

Out-of-school adolescents do not have much choice except to enter the labour market, even if under-skilled, as few alternative vocational training options exist. Adolescents in poor households face severe hunger and risk of dropping out of school. The vulnerabilities are exacerbated by lack of harmonized, adolescent and youth-sensitive approaches to social protection, including health service delivery in Eswatini.

Rural, less educated, poor girls are left behind. Adolescent birth rate has remained high in Eswatini between 2010 and 2014 (89 and 87 per 1,000 respectively).³ This is evident in the unmet need for family planning, which is 22 per cent among less educated girls and 6 per cent among young women with tertiary education. Adolescent birth rates in Manzini and Lubombo increased between 2010 and 2014 (from 90 to 107 per 1,000 in Lubombo, and from 63 to 82 per 1,000 in Manzini⁴).

Factors contributing to high teenage pregnancies include early sexual activity, low access to adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health services, and high sexual violence and abuse. About 28 per cent of females aged 13–18 years have experienced sexual violence during their lifetimes.⁵ Teenage pregnancies contribute to school dropout⁶ and account for 52 per cent of all senior secondary school dropout rates.

¹ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014.

² Education Management Information System (EMIS), Annual Education Census Report 2017

³ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014

⁴ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014

⁵ UNICEF (2007)

⁶ Ministry of Sports, Culture, and Youth Affairs, (2015) State of the Youth Report , p. 18



Notably, 26 per cent of maternal deaths occur among youth aged 15-24 years.⁷ and increased unsafe abortions. Early sexual activity and violence also contribute to high sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

HIV incidence remains high among adolescents, especially for girls (1.7 per cent compared to 0.5 per cent for boys)⁸. Girls are more vulnerable due to poverty, early sexual activity, sexual violence and abuse and intergenerational sex. HIV prevalence is also higher among adolescent girls (7.2 per cent compared to 3.9 per cent of boys). Access to antiretroviral therapy and retention in care still remain challenges. There is poor adherence to treatment among adolescents living with HIV combined with poor health seeking behaviours by adolescents. Contributing factors include social stigma, lack of friendliness of HIV services, self-stigma and weak supportive environment. Lastly, there is limited data on the extent to which adolescents living with HIV are referred for treatment.

Substance use and drug use among adolescents is an emerging challenge. About 53 per cent of students are reported to have used drugs before the age of 14 years.⁹

Adolescents, particularly those in rural areas, are disadvantaged in terms of access to justice. The legal aid framework to improve access to justice for those with limited resources is still under development. There is no routine tracking and reporting on children and adolescents in pre-trial detention, nor is there gender-disaggregated data. The reporting system for victims is complex, of poor quality and not always free of charge. Nonetheless the Government has provided information on physical barriers (e.g. availability and accessibility of police stations, courts, age-appropriate correctional facilities), financial and other types of barriers that prevent adolescents to access the justice support they need. Children and adolescents in rural areas appear to be particularly disadvantaged in terms of access to justice for children services.

3.4 YOUTH (20—24 YEARS OF AGE)

Young people are affected by similar issues to adolescents (notably HIV and AIDS, and violence specifically against girls), but they face specific issues which make them more vulnerable, such as unemployment and poverty. HIV is particularly prominent among young people, with a prevalence of 12.8 per cent (male 4.2 per cent and female 20.9 per cent). Unemployment is 50 per cent among young women, compared to 44 per cent among young men.¹ Unemployment is mainly due to a mismatch between skills supply and demand in the labour market.²

Rural, less educated and poor girls and young women are left behind. Discrimination is a key driver for vulnerabilities among young people. The primary and secondary school education system does not fully empower learners with practical life and entrepreneurial skills to explore different ideas and make positive contributions to the economy. The mismatch between skills possessed and skills required is a result of following traditional education pathways that require young people to enter formal employment without giving due attention to the skills required by the labour market/enterprises.

Furthermore, access to tertiary education is constrained for financial reasons among poor households. The fact that funding for tertiary education has dwindled in the last five years, particularly in relation to the Government scholarship programme, means that youth are left behind.

There is lack of an enabling environment for innovations with limited funding, technical support and platforms, which would enable young people to come up with innovations – inclusive of, but not exclusive to information and communications technology (ICT) – to develop new business models and commercialise them in the economy. The quality of ICT³ infrastructure is poor, which makes innovations and entrepreneurship lag behind.

⁷ UNFPA Eswatini National context <https://eswatini.unfpa.org/en/national-context-0>

⁸ Justman, J., Reed, J. B., Bicego, G., Donnell, D., Li, K., Bock, N., Koler, A., Philip, N. M., Mlambo, C. K., Parekh, B. S., Duong, Y. T., Ellenberger, D. L., El-Sadr, W. M., & Nkambule, R. (2017). Swaziland HIV Incidence Measurement Survey (SHIMS): a prospective national cohort study. *The lancet. HIV*, 4(2), e83–e92

⁹ Ibid.

¹ ILOSTAT Database 2016 https://www.ilo.org/shinyapps/bulkexplorer49/?lang=en&segment=indicator&id=EMP_DWAP_SEX_AGE_RT_A

² Ministry of Sports, Culture and Youth Affairs (2015) Swaziland State of the Youth Report 2015. Available at: <https://eswatini.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/Youth%20Report%202015%20with%20covers.pdf>

³ The Kingdom of Eswatini Strategic Road Map: 2019-2022

3.5 POOR RURAL SMALLHOLDER FARMING POPULATION

Smallholder agriculture remains the backbone of rural livelihoods in Eswatini with over 70% of the country's total population, 60% of whom are women relying on subsistence farming (FAO, 2020) ^[1]. Most of the smallholder producers are found in rural areas which are on Swazi Nation Land (SNL) where agricultural land is under serious threat due to sprawling uncontrolled human settlements development, resulting in the fragmentation of agricultural land into small land holdings, which are becoming non-viable for entrepreneurship production. Range lands are suffering the "tragedy of the commons" due to incomplete property rights and free access to all. Unpredictable weather patterns and climate change remain major threats to agricultural productivity.

The rural poor population is left behind because about 75 per cent live in rural areas where the poverty rate is about 70 per cent, compared to 20.1 per cent in urban areas.² Poverty is more prevalent among girls aged 15-17 years old who are, or have been, pregnant. In addition, poverty varies according to the educational levels attained by the head of the household or the mother of the children. The more educated the household head and/or the mother of the child, the better off their children are in terms of multidimensional poverty. For example, around half the children whose mother achieved higher or secondary education are multidimensionally poor, compared to more than two-thirds of children of mothers with no educational attainment.³

3.6 WOMEN

Eswatini has made significant strides in addressing gender inequalities. Based on the Gender Status Index (GSI) and the Africa Women Progress Scorecard (AWPS) – an African Union measurement framework for ascertaining progress made towards the attainment of gender equality – the country had a GSI at 75.5 per cent in attainment of gender parity in all sectors of development.

The highest score was attained in the social power block, with 1.093, whilst the political power block had 0.331. The overall score for the AWPS was recorded at 65 per cent with the social power block scoring the highest at 71.33 per cent and the political power block the lowest at 55 per cent. Political power block lags in both the GSI and the AWPS.¹

Pervasive structural disparities, deep-rooted harmful gender stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes have led to gender inequalities that disadvantage women, while the country's dual legal system – which is based on a constitutional legal framework and traditional and customary laws – provides women and girls with limited protection.

Customary law and practices perpetuate inequality between men and women, in particular with regard to inheritance and property rights, economic opportunities, productive assets, limited access of women to the agricultural value chain, education and health care. Some cultural practices including polygamy, abduction of girls, child, early and forced marriage and bride inheritance also disadvantage women.

Rural poor, less-educated and women-headed households are the furthest left behind, the worst affected by poverty, poor access to the labour market and unemployment, HIV and AIDS, violence, unmet needs for family planning, maternal mortality and lack of empowerment.

¹ <http://www.fao.org/in-action/swaziland-looks-to-a-revitalized-agriculture-sector/en/>

² Swaziland National Housing Population Census, Preliminary Results 2017.

³ UNICEF Eswatini (2018) Multidimensional Child Poverty in the Kingdom of Eswatini

¹ Deputy Prime Minister's Office (2017) Eswatini Gender and Development Index Report

For example, over 25 per cent of women aged 25 years and older and 50 per cent of girls and women aged 15–24 years are unemployed. Female-headed households, children and the elderly are disproportionately affected by poverty, food insecurity and disease.

Access to the labour market remains a challenge for women, as it stands at 42.7 per cent compared to 67.2 per cent for men.² Poverty has been linked to increased risk of HIV infection, decreased adherence to antiretroviral therapy and high rates of malnutrition. Poor women and adolescent girls are more likely to engage in negative coping mechanisms, such as high-risk sexual practices, than wealthy women.³

Women are underrepresented in leadership and decision-making positions in the public and private sectors, with only 21 per cent of parliamentarians being women. Gender-based violence (GBV), sexual abuse and discriminatory sexual behaviour and practices affect one in three women by the age of 18, and almost half of all women have experienced some form of sexual violence in their lifetimes.

Maternal mortality is high at 452 deaths per 100,000 live births due to septic abortions (23 per cent), factors related to health workers (63 per cent), and factors related to the mothers themselves (20 per cent).

The lack of clarity regarding the circumstances in which voluntary termination of pregnancy is legally available, and the cumbersome procedural requirements, including requirements of court orders, and refusal to perform abortion on grounds of conscientious objection, have obstructed access to women or girls seeking lawful abortions.⁴

Intrapartum and postpartum maternal deaths account for 76 per cent of maternal deaths.⁵

Women are disproportionately affected by HIV, with an incidence rate around 1.7 times higher than that of men; and a prevalence of 35 per cent compared to 19 per cent for men. Key factors influencing the high HIV incidence include poverty, early sexual debut, sexual violence and abuse.

Eswatini has been recommended to pay special attention to the most disadvantaged groups of women – such older women, women with disabilities and widows – to ensure that they enjoy equal access to health care, training, employment and other rights, and to collect disaggregated data in order to understand the forms of discrimination they encounter in society.⁶

Smallholder agriculture remains the backbone of rural livelihoods in Eswatini, with over 70 per cent of the population (60 per cent of whom are women) relying on subsistence farming. Despite having a prominent role in the food system, women enjoy limited access to – and control over – the benefits accrued from production. Customary practices restrict their access to land, agricultural extension services, credit, infrastructure, technology and markets that are crucial to enhancing their productivity and livelihoods. Most smallholder farmers engage in labour-intensive farming practices, which result in high opportunity cost that further disadvantages women in the agricultural sector.

² United Nations Development Programme (2019) Human Development Reports: Kingdom of Eswatini. Available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/SWZ>

³ Rebecca Fielding-Miller and others (2014) “There is hunger in my community”: a qualitative study of food security as a cyclical force in sex work in Swaziland. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/24460989>

⁴ United Nations Human Rights Committee, 2017

⁵ Ministry of Health (2017) Report on the Third Triennial Confidential Enquiry on Maternal Deaths, Kingdom of Eswatini: 1 January 2014 - 31 December 2016

⁶ CEDAW Committee, CEDAW/C/SWZ/CO/1-2 (2014), available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/treatybodyexternal/Download.aspx?symbolno=CEDAW/C/SWZ/CO/1-2&Lang=En



CHAPTER 4: ESWATINI'S COMMITMENTS TO INTERNATIONAL NORMS AND STANDARDS



This Chapter analyses international norms and standards in relation to the status of their implementation in Eswatini in the context of values in the Charter of the United Nations and the 2030 Agenda.

4.1 HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORKS

The Kingdom of Eswatini is a member of regional, continental and United Nations inter-agency mechanisms. Eswatini has ratified seven out of the nine core international human rights treaties.¹ The core treaties and protocols that Eswatini is yet to ratify are the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers, and the International Convention on the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearances.

The Optional Protocols which the country is yet to ratify are the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture, and the Second Optional Protocol to International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

At the regional level, Eswatini has ratified the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (Maputo Protocol), and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. However, Eswatini has not yet ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Older Persons, and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Africa.

The key challenges in Eswatini include the insufficient domestication of international and regional human rights treaties as well as the inconsistency between customary law and statutory law.

Eswatini has ratified a number of core human rights treaties, but the country is lagging behind in its reporting obligations and in the implementation of recommendations emanating from the international and regional human rights mechanisms. On a positive note, Eswatini has established an Inter-Ministerial Committee with a Secretariat within the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs that serves as a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up on the country's human rights commitments.

The Inter-Ministerial Committee plays a critical role in coordinating reports between government ministries and implementing recommendations from the international and regional human rights mechanisms. The Committee would, however, benefit from a fully capacitated permanent secretariat with the knowledge and tools needed to facilitate implementation of the recommendations and collaborate closely with civil society, the national statistical office and the national SDG coordination structure.

¹ Eswatini has ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. More information available at: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx

Eswatini has been urged to adopt legislation that enables the Commission on Human Rights and Public Administration to legally undertake activities as a National Human Rights Institution (NHRI) in accordance with the Paris Principles. Currently, the Commission lacks sufficient independence as it operates as an extension of the Ministry of Justice. In addition, the Commission continues to face human and financial resources challenges to fulfilling its mandate, establishing an effective complaints mechanism and ensuring that cases are promptly investigated and resolved by the Commission, with full reparation to victims.²

It is also important to note that while 89 per cent of United Nations Member States have been visited by at least one of the special procedure mandate holders, Eswatini has not accepted any request for a visit nor issued a standing invitation to special procedures mandate holders. In 2015, the Independent Expert on the Enjoyment of Human Rights by Persons with Albinism as well as the Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights to Safe Drinking Water and Sanitation requested visits to Eswatini, but the requests have not been approved by the state.

In 2012, the Special Rapporteur on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers requested a visit, and, in 2003, the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression requested a state visit without a positive response from Eswatini.³

Eswatini uses the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) to assess the state's compliance with its international obligations related to human rights. Through this mechanism the performance of all United Nations Member States is reviewed after four and a half years, with the aim of improving the human rights situation in all countries and addressing human rights violations wherever they occur. Eswatini was reviewed in the 25th session of Universal Periodic Review (second UPR cycle), in May 2016.

The country received 181 recommendations in total, most of which related to SDG 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions) and SDG 5 (Gender Equality). Thirty-one of the 37 recommendations on SDG 16 enjoy the support of Eswatini, whereas 35 of the 36 recommendations on SDG 5 were supported by the Government.⁴

4.2 GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMENS EMPOWERMENT

The Department of Gender and Family Issues in the Deputy Prime Minister's Office has a mandate to ensure gender mainstreaming across government sectors and ensure that the policy and legislative framework is conducive to the realization of gender equality.

In addition, the Government has created Gender Focal Teams in all government ministries to address and report on progress related to gender issues. The Gender Focal Teams are coordinated by the Department of Gender and Family Issues.

The Department of Gender and Family Issues is, however, under-resourced in both human and financial terms, and the gender focal points in line ministries have multiple duties and responsibilities that affect their effectiveness as gender focal points.

Enhanced gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting as well as the collection, use and analysis of sex-disaggregated data would support the advancement of women in Eswatini and allow the Government to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Action Plan of the National Gender Policy of 2010. Eswatini has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and adopted the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD).

² UPR report (2016)

³ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (no date) Country visits of Special Procedure on the Human Rights Council since 1988, Eswatini. No date (accessed 1 July 2020). Available at <https://spinternet.ohchr.org/ViewCountryVisits.aspx?visitType=all&lang=en>

⁴ UPR report (2016)

Despite the constitutional provisions for the equal treatment of women and men, several domestic laws contain discriminatory provisions towards women; these include the Marriage Act, which assigns the woman a disadvantaged status in relation to her husband, and chapter 4 of the Constitution, which differentiates between men and women in the acquisition and transfer of Swazi citizenship. In addition, customary law and practices perpetuate inequality between men and women, in particular with regard to inheritance and property rights.¹

In addition, the complex legal procedures, exorbitant legal fees and the geographical inaccessibility of courts impede women's access to justice. The absence of enabling legislation for the Commission on Human Rights and Public Administration also hampers the protection of women's rights. The establishment of a Paris Principles-compliant national human rights institution would legally grant the Commission a mandate to provide legal services to women and address issues relating to gender equality.

Eswatini has several policies to protect and promote gender equality and women's empowerment. For example, the 2018 National Water Policy recognizes the need to ensure women's access to water resources. However, implementation of these policies remains slow, scattered and weak. Significant challenges remain for women in Eswatini to access economic opportunities. For example, female labour market participation is 42.7 per cent, compared to 67.2 per cent for males.

¹ United Nations Human Rights Committee (2017)



4.3 RESILIENCE AND ENVIRONMENT

Eswatini has ratified the Convention to Combat Desertification (CCD); the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants; the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade; the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution (CLRTAP); and the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal.

Furthermore, in 2016 the Government signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement. In 2015, the country also submitted its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) as part of its commitment to contribute to addressing the climate change challenge. This is a concrete step towards developing a climate-resilient and low-carbon economy.

Eswatini has also gone further to domesticate the climate change international frameworks through its National Climate Change Policy in 2016, which aims to provide an enabling policy framework to guide the country in addressing the challenges posed by climate change. The policy provides an enabling environment for communities and investors to take advantage of the opportunities presented by climate change to invest in activities that eliminate poverty and build a climate-resilient Eswatini.

Eswatini subscribes to the International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (ISDR), a strategic framework adopted by the United Nations Member States in 2000 that guides and coordinates the efforts of a wide range of partners to achieve a substantive reduction in disaster losses and build resilient nations and communities, as an essential condition for sustainable development. Eswatini has developed a National Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Policy and National Resilience Strategy and DRR Plan of Action (2017 – 2021) that has domesticated the Sendai Framework on DRR to ensure a comprehensive response to disaster risks while building the resilience of its people and its economy.

The following resilience capacities are central to sustain progress towards the SDGs:

(Economic) Regional integration is a key strength of the country. Close to 40 per cent of the revenue base is accrued from regional sources. However, COVID-19 has exposed the country to risks posed by regional weaknesses, such as recession within the countries of the region, reduced SACU receipts and so on. Economic recovery that is sustainable can be built through a focus on greater regional integration, embedded with capacities for increased resilience to regional weaknesses.

(Food Security) Climate-related extremes and drought conditions exacerbate the country's risk to increased food insecurity. Building resilience to climate extremes and drought will be central to sustaining progress on the SDGs. As a net importer of food, the country faces serious food insecurity risks arising from regional-level climate extremes and drought.



CHAPTER 5: TRANSBOUNDARY, REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES



This Chapter provides an analysis of relevant regional, sub regional and transboundary factors and trends, and their impact on Eswatini's progress towards the SDGs. The Chapter also provides an overview of the country's engagement in South-South and triangular cooperation, as well as regional and continental frameworks and strategies, and how they can potentially support the country's progress towards achieving Agenda 2030.

5.1 REGIONAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES AFFECTING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGS

A number of regional challenges – such as economic sustainability, climate change, migration and trafficking, as well as peace and security – affect the Kingdom of Eswatini.

Economic Sustainability

The region's sectoral characteristics suggest a need for greater structural transformation, more manufacturing, more value addition, and job-creating growth. Dynamic economies of scale can be developed through manufacturing if productive development policies are deployed. Services dominate the region's economy, largely due to the influence of South Africa, which on average contributed about 60 per cent of GDP between 2010 and 2017, followed by mining and quarrying at 14.4 per cent and manufacturing at 11 per cent.¹ The region's development seems to be associated with a high debt ratio. Over the period 2010-18, the average public debt increased by half from 40 to 59% of GDP. Key economic issues and challenges are summarized below.

- a) **Production base and economic growth:** Southern Africa's economic production base is dominated by raw materials from agriculture and mining. There is limited value addition to minerals, and sub-regional trade largely revolves around a single country, South Africa.
- b) **Income inequality and employment:** Countries with high per capita income in the subregion seem also to have the highest income inequality between rich and poor. Unemployment, especially youth unemployment, has been increasing despite the reported economic growth.

Where youth unemployment exists alongside high vacancy rates, this reflects a mismatch between education skills and the job market. In many cases, however, unemployment is simply due to a lack of employment opportunities.

- c) **Infrastructure and markets:** Provision of good infrastructure (especially for transport), energy supply and markets (through sub-regional integration) remains an important factor in the economic development of countries in Southern Africa. Many of them are landlocked and small. The availability of well-functioning markets with unconstrained access has an impact on peoples' livelihoods, social relations and well-being, as well as on their relationship to natural resources.
- d) **Energy:** Energy is a key driver for economic growth. Southern Africa is rich in renewable and non-renewable energy resources, including coal, oil and natural gas hydrocarbon resources, and has significant deposits of uranium, a source of nuclear energy. Despite these rich natural resources, energy access and utilization are low by world standards. The development and supply of energy in many parts of Southern Africa is still a critical resource constraint on development. Tackling it involves developing infrastructure (in terms of transmission networks) and energy in sufficient quantities to meet demand.

¹ Southern Africa Economic Outlook 2019



- e) **Regional integration:** Trade integration is potentially a powerful driver of economic growth in Southern Africa, particularly if it creates export opportunities and promotes value addition in manufacturing sectors. In particular, as the subregion includes a combination of countries with different income levels as well as a mix of coastal and island countries, sub-regional integration offers possibilities to leverage and extend economic comparative advantage at a sub-regional level in ways not accessible through national or bilateral trade programmes. The low level of intra-regional trade, however, reflects limited progress towards implementing the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Trade Protocol, eliminating transport bottlenecks and improving trade facilitation, including customs administration. Key challenges are inadequate local capacity, limited financial resources, weak political commitment to sub-regional integration, and poor alignment of national planning and budget allocation priorities with sub-regional integration efforts.²
- f) **Urbanization:** Urbanization has also been on the increase over the past decade. The high urbanization rates are largely due to rural-urban migration driven by perceived job and economic opportunities, better infrastructure and housing in urban areas, as well as shortage of land and declining returns from agriculture in rural areas.

Climate change

In Eswatini, climate change is linked to the increased frequency of extreme events like droughts, and it is impacting negatively on livelihoods and key sectors of the economy. The problem is manifested through environmental degradation, reduced agricultural productivity, the reduced availability and inefficient use of water, as well as reduced access to energy.

The most recent catastrophic example of this is the 2016-2017 regional drought resulting from El Nino in Southern Africa in 2018 and 2019,³ which has been an impediment to agricultural production, water resource availability and food security.

The decline in agricultural production, accompanied by sharp increases in headline inflation, is having a severe impact on the welfare and living conditions of the Eswatini.

Migration and trafficking

Migration and human mobility have become the megatrend of the twenty-first century and one of the most topical and controversial issues of our time.⁴ With almost 250 million international migrants around the world, migrants constitute some 3 per cent of the world's population, and all indications show that the phenomenon is most likely to increase for the decades to come.

Migration is a vital economic and social feature of Eswatini, and the Government's commitment to fully implement the Global Compact on Migration in 2018 was a clear indication that migration is seen as a key aspect for development in the country. As a country of origin, transit and destination, Eswatini has benefited and can benefit further from labour migration by attracting skilled migrants, but also by engaging its highly skilled diaspora. In this regard, the country is committed to scaling up data collection efforts to inform its policies and harness the benefits of migration to contribute further to the national development priorities of economic growth, reduced unemployment and increased income equality.

These policies, in turn, will help to strengthen the Government's capacity to manage its borders, and build confidence among its diaspora thereby increasing their interest to actively contribute to the country's social and economic development through remittances and, above all, by transferring their knowledge to their country of origin.

Eswatini is also a country of source, destination, and transit for women and children trafficked internally and transnationally for the purposes of commercial sexual exploitation, domestic servitude, and forced labour in agriculture.⁵

² United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, AU Commission and African Development Bank (2015) Sustainable Development Goals for Southern Africa

³ North American Space Agency (2019) Drought Threatens Millions in Southern Africa. Available at: <https://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/images/146015/drought-threatens-millions-in-southern-africa#:~:text=Southern%20Africa%20is%20suffering%20through,acutely%20in%20Zambia%20and%20Zimbabwe>.

⁴ International Organization for Migration (2019) IOM Regional Strategy for Southern Africa 2019 – 2023. Available at: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iom_regional_strategy_for_southern_africa.pdf

⁵ United States Department of Labor (2017) Findings on the Worst Forms of Child Labor: Eswatini

Eswatini girls, particularly orphans, are also trafficked internally for commercial sexual exploitation and domestic servitude to South Africa and Mozambique.

Eswatini boys are trafficked for forced labour in commercial agriculture and market vending. Despite its significant efforts, the Government of Eswatini has not fully complied with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking. The Government has been unable to provide evidence of increasing efforts to address human trafficking, particularly on protecting the victims. Therefore, there is a need to increase efforts in all three key areas (prevention, protection and prosecution) to effectively combat trafficking in persons in the country.

Peace and security

Eswatini is a relatively peaceful and stable country. Bordered by South Africa and Mozambique, there has been minimal incidence of uprisings and conflicts. Eswatini has established and sustained healthy relations with its neighbouring countries, as may be witnessed through healthy trade relations.

The country's security is largely maintained by the Eswatini Umbutfo Defence Force, the Royal Eswatini Police Service and, to a large extent, the Correctional Services. While citizens have the right to vote in parliamentary elections, it is important to note that some labour unions and elements of civil society continue to call for a broadening of political participation through a political system that ensures greater accountability.

5.2 PARTICIPATION IN REGIONAL AND GLOBAL MECHANISMS TO BOLSTER THE 2030 AGENDA

Eswatini is a member of global, continental and regional bodies, including the United Nations and its subsidiary bodies, the African Union (AU), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC), and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

These bodies provide frameworks for human rights, economic development and social justice, in addition to good practices for South-South learning and cooperation. Eswatini's participation in such mechanisms therefore creates a framework for monitoring progress towards Agenda 2030, in comparison with other countries of similar developmental status.

5.3 ESWATINI'S ENGAGEMENT IN SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

The focus of these relationships is to strengthen partnerships to achieve the SDGs. In Eswatini, South-South and triangular cooperation, between Eswatini and partners such as Pakistan and Morocco; for agricultural development, food security and nutrition; have yielded positive results. Data for development comprises all disciplines related to managing data as a valuable resource for sustainable development.

In Eswatini, the Central Statistical Office (CSO) is empowered by the Statistics Act of 1967 to collect, analyse and publish the country's official statistics. The mission is *"to effectively coordinate the National Statistical System, provide high quality statistical data and information required for evidence-based policy, planning and decision-making for national socio-economic development,*

administration, accountability, and to promote a culture of using statistics".

Such statistics include conducting the population census and other nationally-commissioned research studies. Eswatini has benefitted in the area of data for development through South-South engagement with countries such as Senegal and South Africa on the conducting of national census to advance to a digital census compared to the previous paper-based censuses. Since 2017, Eswatini has benefited from the experience of the Brazil Centre of Excellence and started a pilot implementation project on a Home-Grown School Feeding model.



CHAPTER 6: FINANCING LANDSCAPE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND RESOURCING OPPORTUNITIES



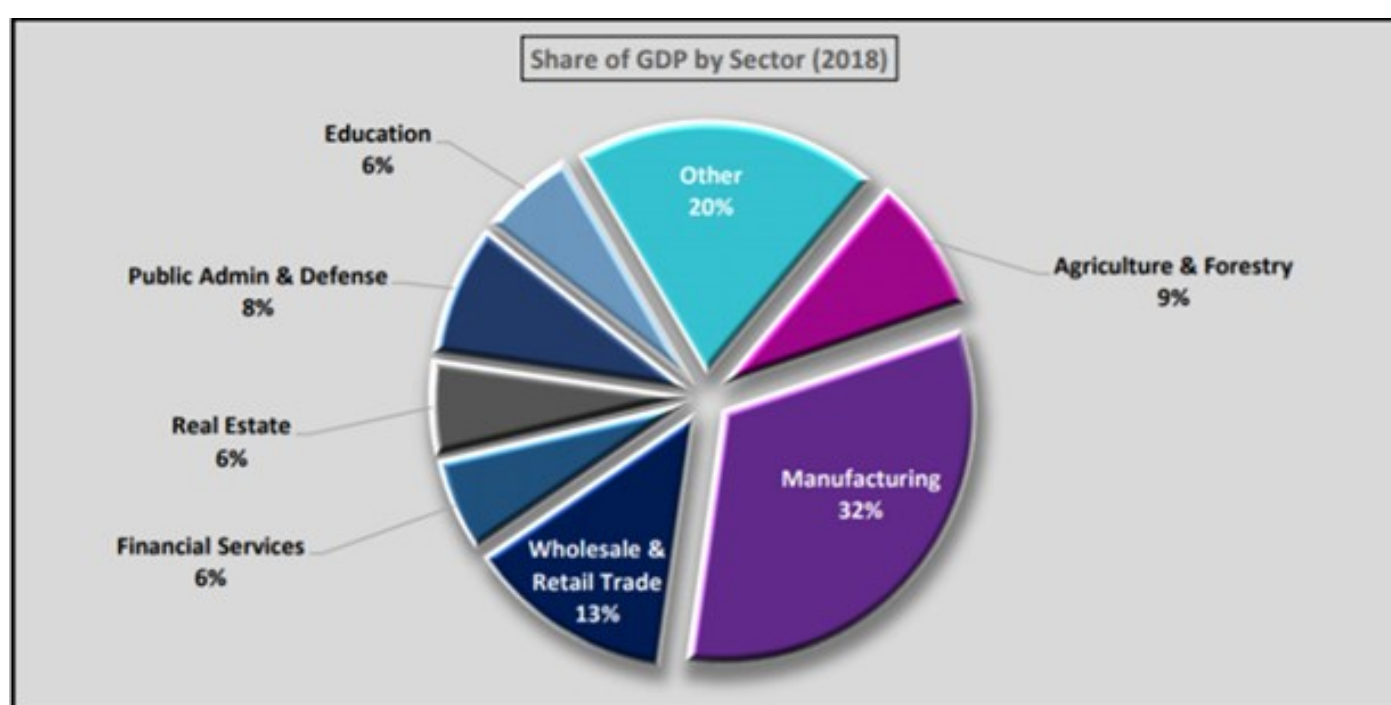
This Chapter examines Eswatini's financial landscape for sustainable development, based on mapping and analysis of financial flows to the country, including domestic resources, foreign resources and public and private investment. National budgetary allocations are identified as opportunities for leveraging finances.

6.1 DOMESTIC RESOURCES FOR SDG FINANCING

Domestic resources through the national budget are the main source of SDG financing in Eswatini. This includes SACU receipts, non-tax revenues and domestic taxes (company and individual taxes, as well as VAT).

In 2018, domestic economic activity, as measured by real GDP, remained weak in Eswatini at 1.3 per cent. GDP for 2019 is estimated at 1.4 per cent.¹ The improvements, relative to the earlier projections, mainly resulted from better performance in the agriculture, agro-processing subsectors and wholesale and retail. This table indicates Eswatini's GDP by sector in 2018.

Figure 1. Share of GDP by Sector in Eswatini



Source: Central Statistics Office, Macro-forecasting Team

¹ Central Statistics Office (2019) August Projection Macro Forecast Team, 2019

6.2 FOREIGN RESOURCES FOR SDG FINANCING

Eswatini has a limited number of partners providing external assistance. These include the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), the European Union (EU), the Global Fund, India, Japan, Kuwait, the OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID), the Republic of China-Taiwan (RoC), the United Arab Emirates (UAE), the United Nations, the United States of America (USA) and the World Bank. The multilateral and bilateral partners resident in the country are the United Nations, the USA, the EU and the RoC.

In 2017/18, Eswatini's external assistance was equivalent to 15.3 per cent of the Government's revenue and 5.7 per cent of Eswatini's GDP. About 55 per cent (US\$108.1 million) of the total external aid to Eswatini in 2017/18 was in the form of multilateral assistance. Bilateral aid amounted to 45 per cent (US\$87.1 million) of Eswatini's total aid for the 2018 fiscal year. When compared with previous years, multilateral and bilateral aid have been on the decline.

The United States (at US\$34.0 million) was the largest provider of external assistance to Eswatini in 2017/18, followed by India (at US\$27.3 million). The Global Fund (at US\$24.2 million) and the European Union (at US\$21.9 million) provided the third and the fourth highest amounts, respectively. Those four partners accounted for more than half (55.5 per cent) of the country's external assistance during 2018.

Foreign resources mainly financed the SDGs social cluster, particularly SDG 3. However, the flow of foreign resources to the social cluster – education in particular – have declined in recent years. For the past six years, health, poverty and agriculture received more foreign resources than other sectors. Foreign resources were also injected into the economic cluster, especially infrastructure, governance and ICT. The environmental cluster received lower financing than other SDG clusters, and most resources in that sector were allocated to water, sanitation and hygiene.

6.3 PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDING FOR SDG FINANCING

Financial flows received by Eswatini from regional organizations are mostly trade-related and clustered around the integration processes of which Eswatini forms part through SADC and COMESA. Flows managed by the Ministry of Commerce, Industry & Trade (International Trade Department) averaged around US\$3 million under the SADC Trade Related Facility Project.¹

Eswatini has secured USD387.6 million, from the Regional Integration Support Mechanism (RISM) under COMESA, which will be used to construct the Manzini Trade Hub. External aid is given for promoting economic development and welfare in the form of grants and concessional loan financing. For Eswatini, grants predominate despite the country's middle-income status, which precludes it from accessing some grant financing instruments. In total, 62.9 per cent (US\$122.9 million) of the country's assistance in 2017/18 was in the form of grant aid, as the majority of Eswatini's partners preferred this method of support.

While loans represent a smaller proportion of overall external assistance, there has been an upward trend, with the Government securing new loans to finance development projects. For the infrastructure, governance and ICT sectors, loan financing represented the dominant form of external financing in 2017/18. At the end of March 2017, Eswatini's public external debt stock amounted to US\$5.219 million, equivalent to around 9.6 per cent of its GDP at the time.

Given the economic contraction expected in 2020 and 2021, as well as the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 in Eswatini, now more than ever there is a need to expand the sources of funding for the SDGs, as well as the actors acting on SDGs.^{2,3}

¹ External Assistance in Swaziland 2017/18

² Interagency Task Force on Financing For Development (January 2020) Integrated National Financing Frameworks: Inception Phase (Working draft)

³ Speech by His Majesty the King, United Nations Secretary General High-Level Event on Financing for Development (May 2020)

Non-traditional sources of funding can include: funding by the private sector with an emphasis on local companies, and mobilizing donations locally and through remittances, as well as setting up infrastructure to receive these funds and administer them.

In addition, actively engaging with global philanthropic organizations that do not currently work in Eswatini could generate another source.⁴ Eswatini can further engage at the regional level with other SADC countries to better mobilize resources from these philanthropic and other organizations through regional strategies and initiatives.⁵

In addition to identifying new resources for financing the SDGs, there is an opportunity to better track grassroots and community-based actions, as well as direct the available, non-fiscal resources in Eswatini.

This could be done by launching an SDG Partnerships Platform in Eswatini, in partnership with the Government of Eswatini, for effective coordination and cooperation with all partners.⁶

Implementation of the SDGs is currently organized at governmental level, and private sector, civil society and individual actions are not properly or fully integrated into a unified country effort to achieve the SDGs by 2030. Therefore, launching an SDG call to action for these actors, for example the United Nations Global Compact for the private sector, would better align efforts nationwide, and further allow better data collection and better sharing of knowledge and non-financial resources. More detailed mapping of partners would reveal more information and inform a multisectoral strategy for engagement.⁷

6.4 NATIONAL BUDGET ALLOCATION AND ALIGNMENT WITH SDGS

Eswatini is committed to implementing Agenda 2030 and the African Union Agenda 2063. The substance, goals and targets of the SDGs are in line with Vision 2022, and also contained in the National Development Strategy (NDS) and the national Strategy for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth 2030 (SSDIG).

Achieving the SDGs requires an enabling policy environment that will result in the deployment of resources towards more productive investments to create jobs and employment for youth. Health and education are the sectors that have received the largest share of the national budget in recent years.

In the 2019/20 budget speech, achieving environmental sustainability was closely linked to achieving the SDGs. This includes safeguarding the environment, conserving wildlife and heritage, ensuring sustainable management of natural resources, mitigating the impact of climate change, and building resilience to climate-related shocks. Combining environmental sustainability with the other dimensions of the SDGs (economic and social), the United Nations system could be instrumental in ensuring that the SDGs are mainstreamed in all policies, strategies and plans at

national, sub-national and sector levels, to enable the SDGs to be achieved by 2030.

In the health sector, the Government is accelerating steps towards universal health coverage for all citizens and developing an integrated health management information system. Overall, the Government has allocated E2.2 billion¹ (US\$151.7 million) to implement priority programmes in the health sector. The United Nations system through UNICEF, WHO and UNFPA is supporting the Government in the sector, especially in the procurement of vaccines, thus creating a saving for the Government of E25 million (US\$1.7 million). Efforts could be made to forge strategic partnerships with the private sector, especially in the area of universal health coverage.

The Government has allocated about E1.119 billion (US\$82.1 million) for the most vulnerable groups in society (the elderly, orphans and vulnerable children, poor households, and persons with disabilities).

⁴ Financing the SDGs and Funding the Cooperation Framework, Companion Guide

⁵ United Nations (2017) Swaziland Resource Mobilization and Partnership Strategy

⁶ SDG Partnerships Platform, UNDAF (2018 – 2022), Kenya

⁷ United Nations Resource Mobilization and Partnership Strategy Cabo Verde, 2012 - 2016

¹ Ministry of Finance (March 2019) Eswatini National Budget Speech 2019/20

6.5 OPPORTUNITIES FOR LEVERAGING SDG FINANCING

The CCA articulates the highest priorities and most sustainable development choices for Eswatini to achieve Agenda 2030. It advises on pathways to maximize synergies across the SDGs and minimize the opportunity costs of leaving people behind. It recommends a decisive shift from the siloed approach of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to a more integrated approach under Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

The UNCT is a partner of choice for convening and facilitating transformative national development processes, as the United Nations can leverage its comparative advantages of access to global and regional expertise and is the repository of global best practices in the areas of poverty reduction, environment, HIV and AIDS, governance and gender equality.

The 2021-2025 UNSDCF therefore provides an opportunity for the UNCT to support the Government of Eswatini to craft innovative resource mobilization strategies, spend available and mobilized resources efficiently, and develop efficient oversight and monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. There is also an opportunity to develop new partnerships and strengthen existing ones through leveraging of partner resources, knowledge and skills with a focus on data for development, statistics generation and advocacy; maximizing South-South and triangular cooperation; and co-financing the SDGs with the Government of Eswatini and the private sector.

Eswatini's limited resource base provides an opportunity for the UNCT investments to be structured to go for depth rather than breadth in an integrated manner to achieve the best impact, focusing on leaving no one behind. For example, there is an opportunity to target the Shiselweni and Lubombo regions for poverty reduction interventions as they have the highest poverty incidence; and the Manzini region for climate and environmental change interventions as it has the highest urban concentration and ecological footprint. This will help build synergies across programme components. The 2021-2025 UNSDCF also provides an opportunity for the UNCT to increase the piloting of innovative interventions and refocus and/or establish direct linkages

between upstream and downstream interventions, so that advocacy and advisory support are informed by lessons from downstream pilots, while ensuring that community programmes put policies into practice. Overall, United Nations programming should be narrowed to the most excluded groups left behind or at risk of being left behind, including rural poor children, adolescents, youth smallholder farmers and women. Persons living with HIV, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI individuals, as well as orphaned and vulnerable children are the cross-cutting groups whose participation and engagement for the achievement of sustainable development should be improved.

The United Nations system in Eswatini has the opportunity to focus on: (i) advisory support to improve the macroeconomic environment and support national research to enhance availability of data for evidence-based decision-making; (ii) supporting implementation of decentralization policy by strengthening institutional capacity at local level and revitalising policy implementation frameworks and guidelines; (iii) strengthening national resilience by supporting adaptation and mitigation to climate change and disaster risk management; and (iv) supporting the development of livelihood opportunities for excluded groups through innovative approaches based on South-South and triangular cooperation partnerships.

UNSDCF 2021-2025 provides the UNCT with an opportunity to support the macroeconomic theme with a focus on advisory services to diversify the economy away from the country's dependence on sugar and SACU revenues. This will include supporting the development of South-South and triangular cooperation, mainly within SADC, in sectors with growth potential such as tourism, renewable energy and global agricultural value chains. Eswatini's economy offers opportunities for economic diversification. Possible sub-sectors that could be used to drive economic diversification include agro-processing and value chains, aquaculture and tourism. This diversification could be a success if strategically undertaken with the private sector, global financial markets, good economic governance and a guarantee of human rights and civic participation.

It is important to include a development component in those programmes, whereby persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups will be supported with entrepreneurial skills, so they may become independent and fully productive through business enterprises instead of continuing the path of institutional dependency with an already narrow fiscal space.

This Chapter provides an analysis of the multidimensional risks and threats that could potentially impact Eswatini's development trajectory. It aims to provide a foundation for a well-coordinated, coherent and integrated Cooperation Framework that takes a system approach to development that builds resilience and reduces risks.

The CCA discusses socio-economic, political and governance risks, as well as climate and environmental risks, while taking into account the twelve risk areas from the United Nations' SDG-based risk framework: democratic space; displacement and migration; economic stability; environment and climate; food security; agriculture and land; internal security; infrastructure and access to social services; justice and rule of law; political stability; public health; regional and global influences; and social cohesion, equality and non-discrimination. This analysis also includes the underlying drivers of risks, vulnerabilities and needs, and whether they are economic, political, social, environmental or governance-related.

6.6 SOCIO-ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND GOVERNANCE RISKS

Socio-economic risks

Until recently, and since the 2010 fiscal crisis, Eswatini has experienced a period of macroeconomic stability and recovery. The economy is reliant on regional growth and Southern African Customs Union (SACU) inflows, which represent 35 per cent of total revenue in the 2019/20 financial year. SACU revenues have been declining in recent years, putting pressure on the Government's fiscal policies. Increased social expenditure and improved spending efficiency, particularly in the health and education sectors, could lead to a reduction in inequality; and well-designed, expanded and appropriately targeted social safety nets could reduce poverty.

A rebound in SACU revenues, expansionary policies and the pegging of the Eswatini currency (Lilangeni (SZL)) to the South African Rand contributed to rebuilding buffers and supported a growth recovery. However, despite Eswatini's middle-income status, structural impediments have hindered private investment and kept unemployment high, contributing to persistently high poverty and income inequality.

Eswatini's overall economic stability and macroeconomic conditions deteriorated when, in 2016, shocks stemming from a prolonged drought and a sharp decline in SACU receipts severely hit the economy.

Growth stagnated in 2016, as agricultural production declined, and headline inflation increased sharply, mostly due to rising food prices. Although Eswatini remains quite vulnerable to external shocks and highly dependent on SACU revenues, the negative impacts of the el Niño-induced drought have been superseded by improved weather conditions, which have in turn boosted the country's agricultural performance. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the country to immense vulnerability, with the economy expected to shrink by 6.7 per cent in 2020,¹ and this will negatively impact implementation of the SDGs.

The reducing private sector space in the economy is a challenge that requires both economic and governance reforms. Enforcement of human rights, law and order and adherence to constitutionalism standards will create the enabling environment necessary for economic recovery and private sector-led growth.

¹ Ministry of Finance (March 2019) Eswatini National Budget Speech 2019/20

Ease of doing business holds the key to increasing the role of the private sector in economy, and the CCA identifies the need to avail accountability and rule of law solutions by creating necessary institutional structures like the commercial bench, addressing corruption by implementing a national anticorruption strategy, strengthening access to justice for the vulnerable and improving the ease of doing business in country.

Agriculture is a mainstay of the economy. About 77 per cent of the population derives its livelihoods from subsistence farming. Investments in agriculture are, therefore, critical if the country's overall goal is to reduce poverty and inequality and transform the structure of the economy. Investments in resilient agriculture are also critical given the sector's high levels of vulnerability to climate change; agriculture was severely hit by the 2015/16 drought, which affected GDP growth.

Subsistence agriculture is rain-dependent, which makes most of the people highly vulnerable to climate shocks. Structural and policy gaps render investments in agriculture ineffective. With only 51 per cent of Eswatini's land designated for commercial agriculture, investments in the sectors have not, so far, yielded the expected returns on investment.

Corruption continues to pose a challenge for social service delivery in Eswatini. Eswatini ranks 113 out of 180 on the 2019 Corruption Perceptions Index. There is a perceived lack of transparency and accountability in the sharing of the country's wealth.

Eswatini's urbanization rate stands at 24 per cent in 2019 but is projected to reach 34 per cent by 2050.² Internal migration from rural to urban areas is changing the dynamics of urban areas and the locus of need and vulnerabilities. Understanding the drivers of rural-urban migration, the dynamics of informal settlements in urban/peri-urban settings, and the profile of women, children and families who live in those settings is critical to improving the well-being of people in Eswatini. Expanding the analysis to include the concept of 'children on the move' sheds light on how migration patterns can introduce or exacerbate vulnerabilities in children and adolescents.

There is a paucity of data on children on the move in Eswatini but compelling anecdotal information on child migration between Eswatini, South Africa and Mozambique, and the elevated vulnerability of children on the move to exploitation and other adverse outcomes. Public health remains a risk in the light of current global disease outbreaks and regional shocks. Readiness and resilience have not been addressed systematically.

Political and governance risks

Eswatini is a kingdom. Internally, Eswatini is politically stable and safe, despite high crime rates in neighbouring countries. For justice and rule of law, the United Nations Human Rights Committee (2017) pointed out some areas of concern, such as prison conditions, poor access to lawyers and the use of violence.

A specific concern was voiced around children in conflict with the law. During the CCA consultations process, non-government actors raised concern about the Government's closure of space for civil society, human rights defenders and the media to play their role efficiently, independently and transparently. Furthermore, non-government actors mentioned the risk of exclusion and inequity in participation.

Civil society and civic participation in development and decision-making are key elements in the promotion of good governance. Civil society remains relatively weak in terms of financial and human capacity, and this poses a challenge to SDG implementation and monitoring. Civic space is also unduly restricted, affecting access to public information and the exercise of fundamental freedoms such as the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association, and the right to participate in public affairs. Undue restrictions on exercise of freedoms of expression and assembly have meant that a number of civil society actors, including media practitioners, are constrained in their engagement on various national issues, particularly those that relate to human rights, good governance and accountability.

² CIA World Factbook, Africa: Eswatini (no date, accessed 1 July 2020). Available at: www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/print_wz.html.

Journalists have often engaged in self-censorship due to genuine fears of reprisals if they fall foul of the Government. Laws and policies that unduly restrict participation and engagement by civil society activists.

These acts include the 2008 Suppression of Terrorism Act and the 1928 Sedition and Subversive Activities Act, should be revised in order to promote a safe and effective environment for civil society actors. Equally, exercise of governmental power under these laws should be subjected to independent judicial oversight in order to curb abuse.

6.7 CLIMATE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

Eswatini is vulnerable to recurrent climate-related and external shocks. Drought, dry spells, heat waves, flash floods, hailstorms and a heavy burden of epidemics (HIV and AIDS, cholera, diarrhoea and malaria) pose the highest risks, and drought, windstorms, hailstorms, wildfires and tropical cyclones are widely spread across the country. About 50 per cent of the national land area is communal land, of which 75 per cent is affected by degradation and indiscriminate deforestation. The exposure levels of the country's population to various hazards vary with the ecological zone.

Eswatini's vulnerability to natural disasters and the effects of climate change contribute greatly to inequalities within the country. The adverse impact of climate change, particularly droughts and severe flooding, undermines poverty eradication efforts, increases food insecurity, and particularly affects vulnerable groups such as child-headed households, women and youth.

Between October 2019 and March 2020, about 230,000 people will be in urgent need of food.¹ Those shocks cause extreme vulnerabilities and negatively affect households' capacity to meet their daily livelihood needs. Social protection schemes therefore play an important role in shock mitigation and attainment of basic levels of sustenance.

Government-introduced non-contributory social protection programmes are estimated to account for 2.2 per cent of GDP.² These include old age grants, public assistance funds, orphaned and vulnerable child education grants, school feeding, input subsidies and fee waivers.

The Government is becoming increasingly concerned about the sustainability of these social protection programmes. Given that 91 per cent of the population is literate³ and 38.7 per cent are youthful, a level of disaster risk reduction could be achieved with relative ease through awareness-raising and using technology to reduce exposure and vulnerability.⁴

The 2015–2016 El Niño-induced drought, the worst experienced in 50 years, caused a 40 per cent drop in production of maize, the staple food in Eswatini, causing food insecurity and deepening poverty. Drought conditions resulted in serious environmental impact such as vegetation loss, reduced water availability, soil degradation, degradation of aquatic systems, extinction of local fauna, ecosystem changes, and could lead to desertification.⁵

¹ Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (2019) IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis June 2019 – March 2020. Available at: http://www.ipcinfo.org/fileadmin/user_upload/ipcinfo/docs/IPC_Eswatini_AFI_2019June2020March.pdf.

² World Bank (2018) The State of Social Safety Nets 2018. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/29115>

³ Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014

⁴ Eswatini National Disaster Management Agency Strategic Plan (2017) Eswatini National Disaster Management Agency Strategic Plan 2017-2021. Available at https://ndma.org.sz/?page_id=489

⁵ Ibid.



CHAPTER 7: POLICY, CAPACITY AND COORDINATION GAPS AND CHALLENGES FOR THE 2030 AGENDA



This Chapter examines Eswatini's trajectory towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. It includes identification and analysis of the main bottlenecks that prevent the country from accelerating progress on the SDGs, as well as opportunities. The key challenges identified are in the economic sector, the Government's strategies ending in 2022 and the lack of data on SDGs. The opportunities identified are in multi-sectoral coordination, private sector engagement, the energy sector and the United Nations' Delivering as One (DAO) model.

The table below provides a detailed analysis of the SDG challenges and opportunities, organized by Government of Eswatini cluster.

Table 5. Challenges and opportunities by goal cluster

Cluster	Challenges	Opportunities
Poverty SDG 1, 2 and 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Sustainability of interventions which are dependent on grants from both Government and development partners · Targeting of interventions · Availability and consistency of data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Potential for greater role of private sector · Strengthening of Information management systems including social protection registers, farmer registers and linkages to Home Affairs systems · Development of market led systems
Social SDG 3, 4, 5 and 16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Shortage of specialized skills and equipment · Limited capacity in pharmaceutical supply management system · Limited life skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Technical Vocational and Education Training · Harnessing of ICT in education and education infrastructure · Specialized skills development
Economic SDG 8, 9, 12 and 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Limited sector specific incentives and measures for stimulating private sector investments · Limited mechanism/incentives for de-risking investment in small holder famers and MSMEs · Limited investment in promotion of diversification and research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Support in structuring sector specific incentives and measures to stimulate private sector investment · Support in structuring mechanisms and incentives for investment in small holder farmers and MSMEs · Support to improve economic diversification and productivity through technological advancement and innovations
Environmental SDG 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Limited energy generation capacity · Limited capacity to adapt to climate change · Capacity to deal with increasing scarcity of water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Promotion of diversification of energy sources · Support in building adaptive capacity

7.1 CHALLENGES

Economic situation

To achieve the SDGs, a sustained GDP growth rate of at least 5 per cent per annum is required. The economic growth rate of Eswatini in 2019 was estimated at 1.4 per cent, a decline from 2.4 per cent in 2018¹ and, unfortunately, a downward trend since 2013. The decline is attributed to weak recovery in raw material extraction, a slowdown in manufacturing and agriculture, and a contraction in the services sector. The GDP growth rate does not provide the necessary conditions for achievement of SDGs by 2030.

To assess the possible impact of COVID-19 impact on GDP growth, analysis was conducted under two scenarios. Scenario 1 – which is considered moderate or optimistic – assumes that current restrictions are lifted from September 2020. In this scenario, the economic impact is still significant, with GDP shrinking by 1.9 per cent in 2020, compared to 1.3 per cent growth in 2019. Scenario 2 – the more severe or pessimistic scenario – assumes that normalization will occur in 12 months, from January 2021. In this scenario real GDP would fall by 6.2 per cent in 2020.²

Eswatini's economy has been over-dependent over the years on receipts from SACU, and SACU receipts are disproportionately high relative to total revenues. On average, they account for over 50 per cent of total revenue. The country's over-dependence on the declining and unpredictable SACU revenues is one of the main drivers of deteriorating macro fundamentals and a continuous source of vulnerability to external shocks.

Eswatini's exports are worth around US\$2 billion. The declining trend of exports (averaging 1.0 per cent annually) over the years has been responsible for the sluggish growth in the country.³ Eswatini's exports are heavily concentrated in a few commodities. For instance, evidence from the IMF Article IV for 2017 reveals that exports of soft drink concentrates, caramel colour, sugar, and textiles constitute about 70 per cent of Eswatini's total exports, and were mainly directed to South Africa.

Although relatively diversified compared to economies with similar characteristics (landlocked, same size of economy and population), Eswatini's product and export diversification is now more imperative than ever before, in order to accelerate growth, generate jobs, dent poverty and significantly reduce income inequality.

Between 2000 and 2017, the economic sectors that grew as a percentage of GDP were the Public Sector (excluding state-owned enterprises) (from 11 per cent to 17 per cent) and Services (36 per cent to 37 per cent). Meanwhile, the sectors that reduced as a proportion of GDP were Agriculture, Forestry and Mining (13 per cent to 9 per cent); Manufacturing (35 per cent to 32 per cent); and Construction/Utilities (5 per cent to 4 per cent).

These shifts provide conclusive evidence that high public interface sectors are not firing the economy, private sector participation is receding, and public sector spending is increasing. This pattern needs to be broken, especially as a significant percentage of population is in the productive age bracket. Similarly, the role of state-owned enterprises needs to be reviewed to address the shifts noticed in the economy.

Availability and disaggregation of data to report on SDG indicators

Data is key to achieving Agenda 2030. Data measuring key targets and indicators of SDG implementation should be given top priority.

¹ Africa Development Bank (2019) eSwatini Economic Outlook 2019 <https://www.afdb.org/en/countries/southern-africa/eswatini/eswatini-economic-outlook>

² United Nations (May 2020) Rapid Socioeconomic Assessment of COVID-19 in Eswatini

³ UNDP Eswatini (2019) Contributing to Development of an Economic Recovery Strategy for The Kingdom of Eswatini, p.5

In this regard, the United Nations system should work with global and regional organizations such as the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) and the Commonwealth, and national institutions to identify critical gaps in data collection and strengthen national capacities for evidence-based policy making and programming development.

The Central Statistics Office of Eswatini is mandated to effectively coordinate the national statistical system, provide the high-quality statistical data and information required for evidence based policy, planning and decision making for national socio-economic development, administration, accountability, and promote a culture of using statistics.⁴

There is therefore a need to build this institution's capacity through partnerships and cooperation with UNECA.

Strategies expiring in 2022 (Long-term vision)

The Government extended the NDS through SSDIG, which is the guiding framework for achieving the 2030 Agenda. In terms of content and strategic direction, the SSDIG largely retained the NDS' Vision 2022. Given the challenges of achieving the SDGs in the NDS framework, the extent to which the SSDIG will deliver the SDGs by 2030 could be limited. This is also a potential gap in post-2022 strategic policy direction.

7.2 OPPORTUNITIES

Multisectoral coordination capacity to deliver SDGs

Strong multisectoral coordination and participation, and a strong mechanism to ensure effective and efficient coordination, will bring accountability and enhanced transparency. The coordination mechanism established will be required to meet regularly and ensure the participation of all relevant stakeholders. In addition, the Parliament could play a stronger role in ensuring accountability for SDG implementation.

Partnership for private sector development and growth

Inclusive economic growth is central to the country's ability to sustain progress on the SDGs. 'Ease of Doing Business' is a key area for ensuring inclusive economic growth. In order to strengthen the private sector's participation and contribution to sustainable development, concrete efforts will be central through institutional and structural reforms to improve the ease of doing business in the country.

Implementation of a Master Plan initiative, together with addressing the ease of doing business context, would provide support for private sector participation in sustainable development.

The Government is currently engaged in designing a Master Plan, drawing from the NDP and the Strategic Roadmap 2019-2022, and prioritizing key flagship projects to be implemented. Flagship projects are strategic bankable development initiatives and projects expected to generate model solutions to development challenges with short-medium-long term benefits for growth. It also details the roles and responsibilities of key entities and the resources required to ensure effective implementation. This could be a key initiative for the United Nations system and could be nurtured further with the necessary technical expertise and strategic partnerships.

Energy as a key enabler

Energy is a key enabler for economic growth. Achieving the SDGs requires an economy with a GDP growing at a rate of at least 5 per cent per annum.

⁴ Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, Central Statistics Office, Mission Statement. No date; accessed 1 July 2020. Available at <http://www.gov.sz/index.php/ministries-departments/ministry-of-economic-planning>



1. **Country Context:** The development landscape of the country is informed by rising inequalities, unemployment and poverty. This pattern is informed by both a lack of economic growth to sustain progress and institutional, governance and capacity gaps. This complex country context demands greater alignment among the United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, so that different mandates can be strategically leveraged to address the complexities in the country development context.
2. **Limited financial resources:** The United Nations system is a large multilateral player in the country with limited financial resources. This reality makes it mandatory to build strategic partnership, amongst United Nations agencies, funds and programmes, as well as with external partners, to use the scarce financial resources to the maximum impact and mobilize additional resources.
3. **SDG Prioritization of the Government:** the 2019 Voluntary National Review emphasizes Goals 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8 and 9 as high priorities for countries. It is expected that the Government will focus on these Goals, all centred around growth, in the next few years. It is critical that the United Nations system in Eswatini strategically positions itself along this prioritization and brings in its value addition by both supporting the Government in its prioritization, and monitoring progress on the other goals, as the SDGs are indivisible and an integrated agenda with the goals feeding into each other.

UNCT Eswatini operates as a “Delivery as One” country office in Eswatini. However, the collaboration among United Nations agencies, funds and programmes in Eswatini and those resident in South Africa remains limited. There are currently only a few joint activities, even though opportunities exist for stronger cooperation in most UNDAF outcome areas. UNCT offices are located in a “UN House”, where several agencies share common premises, common services, and conference facilities. The shared location should better facilitate formal and informal engagement between agencies, funds and programmes, and reduce some operational costs.

Better coordinated, better aligned, more coherent and more integrated programmes delivered under the Delivering as One approach and the One leadership pillar introduced by the 2019 United Nations Development Reform provide a unique opportunity and are of particular significance and criticality given the following:





DATA POINT	DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS AND FACTS
Land Area	17,364 square kilometres
Bordering Countries	South Africa (90% of border) and Mozambique (10%)
Capital City	Mbabane
Administrative Regions	Shiselweni, Hhohho, Manzini, Lubombo
Municipalities	Manzini, Siteki, Matsapha, Zulwini, Mbabane, Piggs Peak, Mankayane, Nhlangano, Lavumisa, Vuvulane
Political and governance system	Eswatini has a dual governance structure. The traditional system is anchored on <i>Tinkhundla</i> , traditional spaces for community members (both men and women) to discuss issues of national concern under the leadership of chiefs. As of 2018, the number of Tinkhundla centres had increased from 55 to 59. These centres are used for both decentralized service delivery and for parliamentary elections. The modern governance system has a bicameral Parliament consisting of the House of Senate and the House of Assembly with 73 members with 59 from Tinkhundla/Constituencies', and 10 are appointed by the King. The House of Senate has 30 members, 10 elected by the House of Assembly and 20 appointed by the King.
Main ethnicities	Emaswati
Population (2017 census)	1,093,238
Population density	78.2 people per square kilometre (202.5/mi ²) in October 2019
Total fertility rate	3.08 births per woman (2016)
Total adolescent birth rate	87 births per 1,000 girls and women aged 15-19

DATA POINT	DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS AND FACTS
Adolescent pregnancy	16% of girls and women aged 15-19 who have had children or are currently pregnant, a reduction of 8 percentage points from 24.1% in 2007
Mortality rate	13.2 deaths per 1,000 population (2017 estimate)
Maternal mortality ratio (100,000)	452 per 100,000 live births
Neonatal mortality rate	20 deaths per 1,000 live births (2018)
Infant mortality rate	67 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2018, compared to 45.5 deaths per 1,000 live births in 2017.
Crude death rate	9.1 per 1,000 people in 2019, down from 9.4 per 1,000 people in 2018; a reduction of 3.38%.
Child malnutrition, under 5 (2015-2018)	26% of children under 5 years
HIV incidence (youth 15-24) (SHIMS II–2017)	Annual incidence among young people aged 15-24 years: Female (1.67%) and male (0.52%)
HIV prevalence for adults	27.3% of 15-49-year olds were living with HIV in 2018 ¹
Primary school completion rate	93.5%
Primary to secondary transition rate (%)	98.05 (total), 98.11 (male), 97.99 (female) (2016).
Secondary net enrolment	Secondary net attendance is highest in Manzini region (39%); attendance is lowest in Lubombo region (28%). Gender disparity is highest in Lubombo region and lowest in Manzini region.
Completion rate of basic education (Grade 10/Form 3)	Survival to last grade of primary (%): 84.37 (total), 82.34 (male), 86.42 (female) (2016).
Percentage of repeaters in primary education	13.45% (total); 15.64% (boys); 11.04% (girls)
Literacy rate (2012-2018)	91%
Child marriage	4%

¹ UNAIDS, Eswatini Overview. Date unknown; accessed 1 July 2020. Available at: www.unaids.org/en/regionscountries/countries/swaziland

DATA POINT	DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS AND FACTS
GDP per capita	US\$3,914.03
Gini coefficient or index to reflect income inequality	Eswatini is the country in Africa with the sixth highest Gini coefficient (52) ² making it the sixth most unequal country on the continent by this measure
GDP growth rate (annual)	1.3% ³
Annual inflation	Forecast to be 6.27% in 2020 (and 6.78% in 2021) ⁴
Revenue collection	Government revenues in Eswatini increased to E18,858,111,000 (US\$128,145,000) in 2019 from E17,265,490,000 (US\$1.2 million) in 2018. Government Revenues in former Swaziland averaged E11,966,430,000 (US\$825,271,000) between 2006 and 2019, from E5,499,067,000 in 2006 to an all-time high of E18,858,111,000 (US\$1.3 million) in 2019.
Currency	Swazi Lilangeni (E)
Per capita income	Eswatini's GDP per capita was forecast by the IMF to reach US\$11,319.173 PPP in December 2020, an increase on the US\$11,160.81 figure in December 2019 (projections before the COVID-19 pandemic).
Human Development Index	Between 1990 and 2017, Eswatini's HDI value increased from 0.536 to 0.588, an increase of 9.8 per cent. Between 1990 and 2017, the country's life expectancy at birth fell by 2.1 years
Inequality adjusted HDI	Eswatini's HDI for 2017 is 0.588. However, when the value is discounted for inequality, the HDI falls to 0.414, a loss of 29.7 per cent due to inequality in the distribution of the HDI dimension indices.
Human Development ranking	138 out of 189 in the 2019 Human Development Index

² African Union and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2018) *Africa's Development Dynamics: Growth, Jobs and Inequalities*

³ CEIC Data, Eswatini Forecast: Real GDP Growth 1981 -2021. Date unknown; accessed 2 July 2020. Available at www.ceicdata.com/en/indicator/eswatini/forecast-real-gdp-growth

⁴ Central Bank of Eswatini (January 2019) Eswatini Inflation Forecast 2019 – 2021 https://www.centralbank.org.sz/monetarypolicy/forecasts/Inflation%20Projections_2019-2021_Jan-2019.pdf

DATA POINT	DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS AND FACTS
Population living below the poverty line	59% of people live below the national poverty line.
Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI)	42%
People who are multi-dimensionally poor	In Eswatini, 25.9% of the population (309,000 people) are multidimensionally poor, while an additional 20.5% (245,000 people) live near multidimensional poverty
Main sources of revenue	Agricultural sector
Main exports	Soft drink concentrates, sugar, citrus and canned fruit, cotton, beef and soft drink concentrates
5 main export destinations of Eswatini in 2018	South Africa, EU, Mozambique, USA, Taiwan
3 main import origins of Eswatini in 2018	South Africa, Botswana, Namibia
Fiscal deficit	The fiscal deficit has steadily increased and will further reduce international reserves and bring public debt above sustainability thresholds.
Public debt	The public debt-GDP ratio, at 26%, is still within non-crisis levels; however, it rose from 14.3% in 2015 to 25.5% in 2017 because of large primary deficits. This culminated in rising domestic arrears from the Central Bank and local banks, coupled with risks associated with high rollover from short- to long-term maturity structures and exchange rate volatility risks: mostly due to the appreciable size of foreign denominated debts. The debt-to-GDP ratio and liquidity constraints have recently led to delays in loans repayment (by about two weeks).
Human Development Index Score ⁵	0.541
Life expectancy at birth (years) (2016)	57.57
Mean years of schooling	6.8

⁵ The Human Development Index (HDI) is a composite statistic of life expectancy, education, and per capita income indicators. The higher the score the higher the level of attainment in terms of human development.

DATA POINT	DEVELOPMENT INDICATORS AND FACTS
Income inequality, Gini coefficient	51.5
% population below poverty line US\$1.9/day	58.9
Births attended by skilled health personnel (%)	82
Gender Inequality Index (GII)	0.566
Natural resource depletion (% of GNI)	1.4
National unemployment rate	In 2018, the unemployment rate for Eswatini was 22.5%. Over the last 13 years, the unemployment rate in Eswatini fell on average by 1.73% a year, although before that, it grew from 24% in 1999 to 28.3% in 2006.
Youth unemployment rate	44.15% in 2018, a 1.11 percentage point increase from 2017