

**SPEECH BY THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ON THE INTERNATIONAL
DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD – MEDIA CONFERENCE – 10th OCTOBER
2016 – DPMO**

Directors of ceremony,

UN agencies representatives,

Government representatives,

Private sector representatives,

Civil society representatives,

All media houses,

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen.

It is my honor and privilege to be part of this important gathering to launch the ***2016 International Day of the Girl Child***. This day is very important in the growth and development of a Girl Child since it recognizes her potential to positively change her life and the lives of those around her.

On December 19, 2011, United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to declare October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child, to recognize girls' rights and the unique challenges girls face around the world.

The theme for the 2016 International Day of the Girl Child is ***“Girls Progress= Goals’ Progress: What Counts for Girls”***

which speaks to the role of data in measuring progress in relation to issues pertaining to girls.

Information about current conditions is only disaggregated by sex, excluding any possibility of understanding gender differences. Girls are among the most invisible, because some of the data that is currently being collected fail to accurately reflect the specific challenges they face and other data relevant to their lives are not being captured at all. For example; we may know how many girls are in school, but we do not adequately measure how many leave school for various reasons, such as early marriage, pregnancy, sexual violence, and or school fees. How can we hope to increase every girl's access to education if we do not track some of the most important factors that limit their opportunities?

Improving data on girls and addressing the issues that are holding them back is critical for fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals

The Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland commits itself to the full implementation of the SDG in particular Goal 5 which is on Gender Equality and major focus on proper data collection, analysis and dissemination of sex disaggregated data

As we are gathered here to roll-out the media campaign, the actual commemoration of the 2016 International Day of the Girl Child will be held on the 13th October 2016 at Erick Rosenberg in Gege (Shiselweni Region).

The event will provide an opportunity for girls to share experiences on issues relating to adolescent stage, render poems, drama and engage with motivational speakers, young women who will be sharing their experiences as they climb the social ^{and} ~~or~~ economic ladder. This approach shall ensure active participation of girls in driving the event.

I would further invite all media houses to participate in the commemoration on the 13th October 2016 and to share the issues with the entire nation through respective channels.

I would also like to applaud the Government, Civil Society, UN Agencies and Partners for the maintaining such a very strong partnership and enormous support to ensure that the country join the entire world in commemorating this day. Special thanks go to all organizations that have provided financial and technical support and in particular, UNFPA, UNICEF, Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Health, CANGO, PACT, URC and PEPFA. Such partnership should continue from time to time.

With these remarks, it is my honour to declare the **2016 *International Day of the Girl Child*** officially launched.

I thank you all.