

**WELCOME REMARKS BY MANZINI MAYOR HIS LORDSHIP CLLR KHETHOKUHLE DLAMINI DURING  
THE SEMI-FINALS OF THE T55 NATIONAL TALENT SEARCH PROJECT – 10<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2015 – NEW  
YORK CITY CLUB**

- HONOURABLE MINISTERS
- MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT
- SWAMA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
- SPONSORS
- ARTISTS
- MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA
- LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

ON BEHALF OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF MANZINI, I WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS OUR SINCERE GRATITUDE FOR INVITING US TO BE PART OF THIS EXCITING EVENT WHEREIN WE SHALL WITNESS OUR CREATIVE YOUNG BROTHERS AND SISTERS SHOWCASING THEIR TALENT IN THE FORM OF ART.

AS COUNCIL WE ARE EXCITED TO LEARN THAT THE OBJECTIVE OF THE T55 NATIONAL TALENT SEARCH PROJECT IS TO IDENTIFY, UNEARTH AND PROMOTE LOCAL TALENT; THE ULTIMATE GOAL BEING TO DEVELOP SWAZILAND'S ART INDUSTRY.

THE ART INDUSTRY FORMS PART OF COUNCIL'S IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDERS AND, AS A MUNICIPALITY, WE BELIEVE THAT THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND, IN PARTICULAR MANZINI, IS BLESSED WITH A LOT OF TALENT WHICH, IF UNEARTHED AND PROMOTED, CAN PUT OUR BELOVED COUNTRY ON THE WORLD MAP.

AS THE MAYOR OF MANZINI I HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING THE T55 NATIONAL TALENT SEARCH EVERY FRIDAYS ON SWAZI TV AND HAVE BEEN OVERWHELMED BY THE AMAZING TALENT THAT EXISTS IN SWAZILAND.

INDEED, TIME HAS COME FOR SWAZI ARTISTS TO REALISE THAT ART IS A SPECIAL PRODUCT OUT OF WHICH THEY CAN EARN AN INCOME – BOTH LOCALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY. IN OTHER WORDS, THE T55 TALENT SEARCH INITIATIVE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO CONTRIBUTE TO MINIMISATION OF THE IMPACT OF UNEMPLOYMENT IN THE COUNTRY.

THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL OF MANZINI ALSO BELIEVES THAT THE PROMOTION OF ART WILL CONTRIBUTE TO THE REALISATION OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING'S VISION 2022. THAT IS WHY WE WISH TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CALL ON THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS TO FULLY SUPPORT THIS INITIATIVE.

ONE KEY CHALLENGE THAT STILL NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED AS A MATTER OF PRIORITY IS THE ISSUE OF PIRACY. AS COUNCIL WE CONDEMN PIRACY IN THE STRONGEST TERMS AND WE DO CONTRIBUTE TO THE FIGHT AGAINST THIS CANCER IN ONE WAY OR THE OTHER. COUNCIL MAKES AN EFFORT TO CLEAN THE CITY STREETS OF ILLEGAL STREET VENDING AND MOST OF THOSE THAT ARE CAUGHT AND ARRESTED ARE FOUND TO HAVE BEEN SELLING PIRATED CDs AND DVDs.

IN CONCLUSION, WE WISH TO WELCOME ALL OF YOU TO THE BEAUTIFUL AND VIBRANT CITY OF MANZINI. WE FURTHER WISH YOU A SUCCESSFUL SEMI-FINALS EVENT.

I THANK YOU