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PM0.21/76

31st July, 1986

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T.143A.i./86

Your Excellency,

PROPOSED SANCTIONS AGAINST THE
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Swaziland is concerned by the threat to impose comprehensive economic sanctions on South Africa and not having had the opportunity to make representations to the E.P.G., I feel it necessary to place Swaziland's position on record.

Swaziland reiterates her abhorrence and rejection of apartheid in all its forms. It has, in this region, created instability which is affecting the entire international community.

Swaziland upholds its policy of peaceful negotiation as a means of solving problems and conflicts. Swaziland believes that parties in conflict should be brought together without pre-conditions, prescriptions or prejudice to work out a mutually acceptable solution by which they are prepared to abide.

We in Swaziland have always been active in promoting the philosophy of dialogue. Our late King Sobhuza II achieved a number of successes in pursuance of this policy. We are still committed to, and actively engaged in this policy. Our contribution towards peaceful change in the region will be made our traditional in method of unpublicised diplomacy.

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The international community is imposing economic sanctions against South Africa. We in Swaziland, however, cannot support actions which will eventually threaten our own survival. Unless comprehensive economic sanctions against South Africa are accompanied by a large inflow of aid and investment into Swaziland, our survival will be endangered.

The economy of Swaziland is small, open and dependent on that of South Africa. Reducing this dependence without serious disruption of our economy is a difficult and slow process.

Most of our foreign trade is with South Africa with whom we have had no trade barriers since 1910. In order to stabilize trade in the long term, our currency is tied to the South African Rand and has consequently experienced enormous depreciation over the past months as a result of international action against South Africa.

Our foreign trade is also highly dependent on South African roads, railways and seaports. Our traditional harbour, Maputo, is no longer a reliable alternative port to our international markets. Our economy would therefore be highly vulnerable both to South African actions and to an international embargo on supplies to South Africa. A large proportion of our food and all our fuel is imported from South Africa and they also supply a significant share of our electricity and water requirements.

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Many of our citizens work in South Africa both in the mines and elsewhere. An expulsion of these workers for political or economic reasons would create enormous hardship in Swaziland. The loss of remittance income and the worsening of the unemployment problem would further depress an economy already battered by recession, cyclone, drought, a large influx of refugees and low world commodity prices. Per capita incomes are already falling significantly in Swaziland.

Swaziland and South Africa, by virtue of history and geography, are economically inter-dependent to such a degree that sanctions against South Africa will seriously damage Swaziland. Indeed retaliatory action (as threatened) by South Africa would endanger the economic and political survival of Swaziland.

In conclusion, I make this submission confident that Swaziland's position will be considered in the course of your deliberations, and if further economic sanctions are imposed.

Yours sincerely,

PRINCE BHEKIMPI

PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND

The Right Honourable
H.E. Mrs. Margaret Thatcher,
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