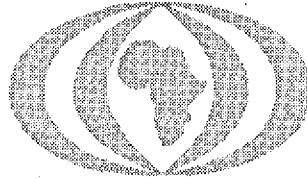


# DIE SUID-AFRIKAANSE INSTITUUT VAN INTERNASIONALE AANGELEENTHEDE THE SOUTH AFRICAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS



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Brief Report No. 45

## SWAZILAND AT A CROSSROAD.

On August 21, 1982, King Sobhuza II died at the age of 83. His sixty-one years of continuous rule, unparalleled in modern history, ensured Swaziland political stability and economic prosperity. However, the very length of the reign now presents the country with profound problems: who will succeed him; and can the new ruler maintain the unique combination of constitutional and political status built up by Sobhuza since independence?

This Brief Report prepared by the Research Staff at Jan Smuts House, discusses the following:

1. Background Information and Statistics;
2. History and Recent Political Developments;
3. Recent Economic Developments; and
4. Foreign Policy and the Ingwavuma/KaNgwane Land Deal.

### 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND STATISTICS.

**Political Status:** Formerly the British Protectorate of Swaziland and one of the three High Commission Territories; gained independence from Britain as an independent Monarchy on 6 September, 1968.

**Leader:** Until a new King is chosen, the Queen will rule. The Prime Minister is Mabandla Dlamini.

**Form of Government:**

- a) National: Executive authority is vested in the Monarch and is exercised through a Cabinet presided over by a Prime Minister. All Ministers are nominated by the Crown. The Parliament consists of the Senate and

House of Assembly. The Assembly has 50 members, of which 40 are elected by an 80-member Electoral College and 10 appointed by the King. The Senate has 20 members, 10 elected by the Electoral College and 10 appointed by the King.

b) Local: The country is divided into 40 Chieftancies (Tinkhundla); each of which elects 2 members to the Electoral College. Each of the country's 4 regions has a council made up of members of the Electoral College which co-ordinates activities at a regional level and implements central government policies.

Defence: The Army, created in 1973, is estimated at a strength of 2,600 troops (November 1982). Swaziland also has a small para-military Police Force. (figures unknown).

Population: 557 000 (1981 estimate).

Languages: English and Siswati are both official.

Currency and Exchange Rates: Swazi and South African currency are the legal tender.

Swazi currency: 100 cents = 1 lilangeni (Plural: emalangeni. E).

Economy:

Trading Trend:

(E million)

	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>
Exports	166,2	156,9	170,9	195,3	263,9
Imports	174,1	194,8	270,8	366,0	463,5
Balance	-7,9	-37,9	-99,9	-170,7	-199,6

Budget Estimates:Trend

(E million)

	<u>1977/78</u>	<u>1978/79</u>	<u>1979/80</u>	<u>1980/81</u>	<u>1982/83</u>
Recurrent records	79	87	115	139	190
Recurrent expenditure	62	61	68	98	190
Capital expenditure	62	108	99	101	103

Consumer Price Index : Trend

(1975 = 100)

	<u>1976</u>	<u>1977</u>	<u>1978</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1980</u>
Index <sup>a</sup>	110	119	129	144	164
Index <sup>b</sup>	105	127	136	159	188

a Index reflects changes in the cost of living facing middle and high income groups in Mbabane;

b Index reflects changes in the cost of living facing low wage earning Swazis in Mbabane and Manzini.

GNP: per Capita E 750 (1982 est).

GDP: E 340,7 million (1978).

Exports: Sugar, woodpulp, asbestos, iron ore, canned fruit, citrus fruit, meat and meat products, hides and skins.

Imports: Machinery and transport equipment, petroleum and petroleum products, chemicals, food and live animals, beverages and tobacco.

2. HISTORY AND RECENT POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS.

Sobhuza became Ngwenyama (Paramount Chief) in 1899, but his mother acted as Regent until 1921 because the late King was then only a few months old. In 1903 Swaziland became a British Protectorate and in 1907 was made one of the British High Commission Territories.

Swaziland's first Constitution was introduced in 1963, and elections to choose the members of the first Legislative Council were held the following year. The Imbokotvo National Movement, a conservative party, which supported the traditional Swazi way of life, won this election. Internal self-government was granted in April, 1967, and Swaziland gained independence on 6 September, 1968. Prior to independence, Sobhuza ensured he would retain all power; he used an entrenched tribal structure to create grassroots backing for a modern nationalist party, which was in effect an instrument of the Monarchy.

Simultaneously, Sobhuza made skilful use of the overwhelmingly pro-South African White local minority, (8000 in 1976). To ensure their support, he offered them special privileges, but reinforced his own position subsequently by adopting a "one man - one vote" pre-independence constitution, within the legal framework of non-racialism. While this deprived the Whites of political power, it allowed them the right to retain their economic privileges. Such manoeuvres ensured Sobhuza's control over both the post-independence National Assembly and the country at large.

In the 1972 general election, Imbokotvo lost 3 seats. With an excessive show of force, the King abrogated the Constitution maintaining it was contrary to traditional institutions. From this point on he virtually ruled alone, assisted only by the Swazi National Council (SNC) and his personal advisers.

He retained, for example, the power to veto any proposed legislation, thus Parliament was left with few powers other than those of an advisory nature. The SNC is a traditional body, with an inner caucus composed largely of Chiefs who wield considerable influence. As the embodiment of the Swazi Nation, the King holds complete control over sensitive issues such as land and mineral rights. Such a feudal system often complicated clear public policy lines and inhibited quick decisions; as many foreign construction and mining companies have discovered.

Under the revised Constitution in 1978, all opposition parties were banned and a number of the King's political opponents jailed. In 1980, fifteen political detainees were released and various opposition leaders were absorbed into the broad government structure; others went into exile.

At present there is no effective opposition and no channels exist for the expression of dissent. However, dissatisfaction is reported to be widespread among urbanised and salaried Swazis. The youth are said to be politically aware and conscious of developments in neighbouring Mozambique and also in Zimbabwe. There also appears widespread dissatisfaction with patronage and nepotism, which is the rule rather than the exception in Swaziland.

While there have been sporadic labour strikes, the only remaining union, the Bank Workers Union, is hardly a political force. (In 1970, however, there were nine unions). It is apparent that even in this field, vehicles for dissent are non-existent, and it seems that the initiative to institute such vehicles is lacking.

In recent years, accusations of widespread corruption and embezzlement of funds caused the Prime Minister to appoint a commission of investigation; it was however, squashed by the Monarchy before it could implicate any senior officials.

The crucial question for the country's future is, of course, the succession. In the short term there is no hope for the resurgence of democratic opposition; "the Monarch has gone but the Monarchy remains in control". Thus no radical challenge to the monarchical structure is possible.

The task which faces the inner circle of fifteen royals elders and senior chiefs (the Ligoqo), guided by Queen Dzeliwe, is to choose a new King. This is an awesome task and one which may take some time, for the last time Swaziland had to choose a King was in 1911. Recent press speculation has tipped Prince Makhosemvelo, an 11 year-old son of the late King. The same sources reported that workmen had already begun building a new village for the new King. In the event of this choice, however, it is likely that a Regent will rule for some ten years.

### 3. RECENT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS.

Fifty-five percent of the country is held in trust by the Royal Family, as national land. Subsistence farming is the main source

of livelihood in these areas, while the remainder is devoted to tenure farming, mainly by Whites and commercial companies. Agricultural production, which provides employment for approximately 75% of the workforce, accounts for about 30% of GDP and 70% of export earnings.

Swaziland has prospered since independence, with a sensible mix of export promotions and policies aimed at maintaining full production. Though recent drought has affected parts of the country, the crops have so far been saved. A bouyant sugar crop, (Swaziland's principle agricultural product), enabled the country to survive depressed economic times, but its future prosperity will increasingly depend upon the world sugar prices, a highly volatile commodity. In 1981, 50% of export revenue was derived from sugar. Not only is the world sugar market in a depression, but the United States has drastically cut its import quota from Swaziland and alternative markets will be very difficult to find in the current international glut; despite Swaziland's access to the European market through the Lomé Convention. Swaziland has considerable mineral resources, especially chrysolite asbestos, which has been extensively exploited, and also coal, with estimated reserves of a thousand million tons.

The country's manufacturing sector provides one quarter of the GDP. Although originally an extension of the modern agricultural sector, manufacturing activities now also include cotton, confectionery, packaging cement, brewing, garments and agricultural machinery. Recent developments in manufacturing are in the electronics field, such as the production of television sets, hi-fi equipment and radios.

In 1979, for the first time, Swaziland's balance of payments went into a small deficit, of over E 1,4 million. The Third National Development Plan (1979 - 1983) envisaged a 7% annual growth rate. However, it is clear now that Swaziland may have achieved only 2,5% growth in 1981. Most of the recorded growth occurred in the modern commercial sector of the economy, rather than in the subsistence area in which the majority of the Swazis work.

Swaziland has a population growth rate of 3% per annum and the literacy level is increasing steadily. Thus, although the work force is becoming increasingly sophisticated, job creation is slipping behind the number of job seeker by about 7 000 per annum.

#### 4. FOREIGN POLICY AND THE INGWAVUMA/KANGWANE LAND DEAL.

Swaziland is a member of the UN, the OAU and the Southern African Development Co-ordinating Conference (SADCC). On independence, she made a great effort to gain acceptance by other African governments, strongly rejecting any close identity with Pretoria. She supports, for example, the UN position on Namibia and relations with Black Africa are of considerable importance to her. Trade agreements exist between Swaziland and Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia; while technical assistance programmes with Uganda provide for sending teachers to Swaziland. Diplomatic links with socialist Mozambique were established in 1975, and Swazi goods are exported through the port of Maputo.

Relations with black Southern African states have improved since the formation of the SADCC, for Swaziland is one of the member states responsible for Manpower and Training. The SADCC goal of lessening economic dependence on the Republic of South Africa is not seen as conflicting with Swazi relations with Pretoria.

King Sobhuza and the Swazi Government have repeatedly ruled out the use of force against South Africa, but at the same time opposed the sale of arms to South Africa. Swaziland officially regards itself as one of the Non-Aligned nations, and associated itself with the Lusaka Manifesto.

While South Africa and Swaziland have strong economic links, tensions do arise from time to time. For instance, in 1972, South African business interests put pressure on Pretoria to prevent Swaziland from establishing a fertilizer factory and tyre manufacturing plant, for these may have undercut prices in the Republic. Such political-economic tensions increasingly complicate relations between Mbabane and Pretoria. (Swaziland is, of course, a member of the Southern African Customs Union).

Swaziland recently re-negotiated the terms of its monetary agreement with South Africa, which was heavily weighted in favour of Pretoria in fiscal and credit policies. Although in September, 1974, it had issued its own currency so that some measure of independence would be established from Pretoria.

While no decision on the exchange of diplomatic missions has been taken, Swaziland has a Representative in South Africa.

The question of South African refugees has always been a thorny issue for Swaziland. Prior to independence, it was alleged that South African security forces had pursued and captured refugees inside Swaziland. In 1975, talks were held between Sobhuza and the African National Congress (ANC) to secure safe passage for South African refugees in Swaziland. In 1978, refugee members of the Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) were accused by the Swazi Government of attempting to set up guerrilla training camps within its territory and were subsequently expelled. Detention laws introduced in 1973 were being used increasingly in 1979 to end the activities of the PAC and ANC. Some members were even deported to South Africa. However, at Sobhuza's funeral the ANC President, Oliver Tambo, was in attendance as was the South African Foreign Minister, Pik Botha.

King Sobhuza's ideal of regaining Swazi territory, lost in the colonial days, is under discussion in terms of the controversial land deal proposed between Pretoria and Mbabane. This deal involves the homeland of KaNgwane and Ingwavuma, part of KwaZulu. If implemented it will result in doubling the Swazi population, while increasing its land area by only a third. More importantly, by acquiring Ingwavuma, Swaziland would gain access to the sea and the potential harbour of Kozi Bay, near the Mozambique border. Press reports claim the land deal will go through despite Sobhuza's untimely death. However, the South African appeal court ruling in favour of the Government of KwaZulu has left Swaziland and Pretoria on the defensive.

Reports indicate that the land deal issue has split enlightened Swazis into three camps. The older generation tends to support it for they argue that Swaziland can thus gain by peaceful means increased land and more citizens. A second group acknowledges the logic of accepting Ingwavuma as part of Swaziland, but not KaNgwane, since they argue it is a piece of waste land with no economic potential. A third group (mainly younger, educated Swazis) see a political principle at stake here. They believe that the two areas in question would create another labour reservoir for Pretoria, and consequently strip the remaining population of these homelands, of their claim to South African citizenship. Thus, Swaziland should reject the deal.

There is anger over the land deal in South Africa itself, and the respective homeland leaders have come out strongly against it. Pretoria's view on the matter will now have to be reassessed because of the adverse court ruling, the death of Sobhuza, and opposition within South Africa. Sobhuza's death means, of course, that the condition for the deal may well be dissipated.

However, if the deal goes ahead there seems little doubt that Swaziland will pay a high price in terms of its independence, its relations with Africa and the international community, and also in terms of feeding its population and the stability of Southern Africa.

JAN SMUTS HOUSE

October 1982.