

DRAFT

**DRAFT SPEECH DELIVERED BY MR. BERTRAM STEWART
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY
MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT,
SWAZILAND AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE MEFMI FELLOWS
FACILITATION AND CONSULTANCY SKILLS WORKSHOP: MONDAY,
2ND MAY 2016, ROYAL SWAZI SPA RESORT AND CONVENTION
CENTRE, MANZINI, SWAZILAND.**

Dr. Caleb M. Fundanga, MEFMI Executive Director,
Resource Persons,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to officiate at this important workshop for MEFMI Fellows. May I take this opportunity at the outset to extend a warm welcome to you all to Swaziland. A special welcome goes to the first time visitors. Swaziland is a friendly country, rich in culture and gifted by nature. I am sure you will have very fond memories of our country when you go back home.

I am informed that this training workshop is meant to prepare you for graduation as experts in your various fields of specialisation, and equip you with soft skills to enable you become effective consultants and facilitators for the region.

As a reminder to most of you, the MEFMI Fellows Development Programme was conceived to address the capacity needs of the region in terms of the development of local and regional expertise. Specifically, the programme was set up to meet the following objectives:

- i) To develop a critical mass of regional expertise in the priority areas of sovereign debt, macroeconomic and financial management, as a means to gaining sustainable and self-generating capacity;
- ii) To create sustainable regional capacity for delivery of MEFMI capacity building products and services; and
- iii) To create regional capacity for complementing MEFMI's capacity building efforts at in-house level in MEFMI member state' institutions.

As MEFMI Fellows, you are first and foremost expected to use your acquired skills by contributing to your respective institutions and not to wait for MEFMI to give you assignments. In this way you will have returned to your country, the investment placed in your development and the implementation of sound practices nationally and regionally.

It is in this regard that as part of imparting the needed skills for delivery of the capacity building activities, the workshop for the next few days is intended to transfer to you skills and knowledge in the conduct of training and consultancy activities within the region as well as your respective countries.

The workshop will focus on empowering you to manage your own learning process through hands on, audio, visual and explorative learning activities. These will relate to aspects of facilitation and consultancy skills. I have been assured that the workshop is going to be very participatory and practical to allow you all to bring out your potentials and talents, and also discover yourselves in terms of possibilities that you have never perceived.

I note that the facilitators, ESAMI are very experienced and capable experts, well known within the region. We welcome them to this workshop. We thank you for availing yourself to facilitate this workshop. I assure you of the cooperation and active participation of the Fellows.

I therefore urge all participants to utilize every opportunity by asking relevant questions and seeking clarifications so that you return home with the much sought after skills. I believe the workshop will no doubt meet your expectations of being on the Fellows Development Programme.

Ladies and gentlemen, I call on you to take the objectives of this workshop seriously. Explore the advantage of any synergies existing amongst you. It is my expectation that when you return to your offices, you will take it as your responsibility, to pass on the skills obtained here to those working with you.

Lastly, I encourage you to sample our exceptional hospitality and embrace the culture and diversity of Swaziland; tour the market and Rural Village in Manzini.

I wish you all a fruitful stay, and declare the workshop open.

I THANK YOU.