

**Embassy of the United States of America**

**Mbabane**

**PRESS STATEMENT**

March 24, 2017

**Five Swazi High School Students to participate in a U.S. Exchange Program**

This April, five Swazi high school students and a mentor will take part in the Pan-Africa Youth Leadership Program (PAYLP), a three-week, intensive exchange program in the U.S. that includes leadership training and service, community site visits, oral presentations, conflict resolution guidance, cultural activities, and homestays with local American families. When they return to Swaziland, they’ll help develop community-based projects in their own communities to affect positive change. The students are Temantungwa Khumalo, Malaika Maseko, Mphumelelo Khaba, Namile Hlongwane and Andile Khumalo. Their mentor, Mr. Titus Sihole, is a teacher at Lusoti High School and founder of the Swaziland STEM Foundation.

Here is a short bio on each of the students:

**Temantungwa Khumalo** is a 16 year-old high achieving student in Form 3 at Nkiliji High school. With a maturity beyond her years, she has already demonstrated determination and leadership skills. She is active in her community and also an athlete, serving as the captain of her school soccer team, which she lobbied her principal to create. She says participating in PAYLP will give her the opportunity to improve her leadership skills and help her find creative ways of helping people to better themselves.

**Malaika Maseko** is a 16 year-old student from St. Theresa’s High School. Malaika has a real passion for dance and understands that it can contribute to a healthier and more empowered generation of youth. She teaches dance in her school and at local gyms and participates in national aerobics events. She is also very passionate about women’s empowerment and would like all women to understand their importance and know their own self-worth. “Women need to show that their place is not just in the kitchen but they can tackle anything, be it corporate or even their own enterprises.”

**Mphumelelo Khaba** attends KaBoyce High School and is passionate about youth development in the country. He sees entrepreneurship as a solution to some of the problems facing youth. He has an insatiable curiosity about how U.S. businesses achieve success and sustain their operations. His ability to think creatively about business and entrepreneurship is but one part of his leadership capacities.

**Namile Hlongwane** is a 16-year old student at St Michael’s High School. She is a high achieving pupil in her class, having been in the top 5 students in her class throughout the 2016 school year. The Times of Swaziland featured her as part of a series on the highest scoring students in the country for the Junior Certificate (JC) Examinations. Namile is all about community service and helping young people, which is why she runs a study group and tutoring program for her peers. As a leader of the agriculture club, Namile says she faced various challenges but turned them into learning opportunities by thinking innovatively to find solutions to problems and to manage conflict.

**Andile Khumalo** is a 17-year old student at Nkiliji High School. Nature preservation and sustainable development are close to Andile’s heart. He is deeply concerned about the drought that is impacting negatively on his hometown and he is part of the leaders in his community leaders that are trying to find a solution to this national problem. Andile has also been a school prefect (class monitor) for three years. Being a class monitor helped him to cultivate good leadership skills such as communication and information sharing. He believes that a good leader understands the importance of sharing and disseminating useful information to peers, which in turn will result in peers seeing him as a role model.