**Remarks by Ambassador Lisa Peterson**

**Launch of Mpenjane Multi-Purpose Cooperative Electrical Diamond Mesh Maker Project**

**Wednesday, July 12, 2017 – Mpenjane, 9:00am**

Protocols

Siyanivusela Bekunene (Greetings)

Kuyangijabulisa kakhulu kuba nani namuhla (*I am so excited to be here with you today*) at Bhadzeni II as we officially launch the Mpenjane Multi-Purpose Cooperative’s Electrical Diamond Mesh Maker Project. The United States Government and the American people are proud to partner with such a diverse group of men, women and youth to improve the efficiency of your cooperative and also to help in the fight against poverty in Swaziland.

Through the Ambassador’s Special Self-Help Program, we have contributed more than 56,000 Emalageni to realize your vision. And with those funds, you were able to purchase the electrical diamond mesh-making machine and galvanized wire that we see here today.

This machine will enable you to produce diamond mesh not only to fence your garden but also for commercial purposes to generate income. This, in turn, will help meet the needs of your children, your families, and your community. It’s great to see that you have already started making some fence through this machine. And I want to encourage the relevant stakeholders, including government institutions and the business sector, to full support the Cooperative’s efforts to produce high-quality fencing and create a sustainable business plan.

In the long term, as Mpenjane Multi- Purpose Cooperative expands its market, we hope that it will create job opportunities for youth and adults, eventually benefiting many people across several chiefdoms.

The Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland and the United States of America has a long history of productive and sustained cooperation in the field of community development. Today, we are again grateful to have assisted the people of Swaziland through this cooperative project.

We also appreciate the Ministry of Commerce and Trade, Cooperatives department, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Tinkhundla Administration and Development and the other different stakeholders that have contributed in the realization of this project. This level of collaboration is what we need to achieve our mutual goals, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the Vision 2022 objectives.

As we approach the 50th anniversary of the U.S.-Swaziland partnership, I feel heartened by the successes we’ve shared and I look forward to fifty more years of shared prosperity. On behalf of the American people, I would like to say ‘Nginifisela Imphumelelo’ (I wish you success/prosperity).

Ngiyabonga Kakhulu Maswati Lamahle (Thank you very much beautiful Swazi people)