



## PRESS RELEASE

### **EU provides 5 million Euros for rehabilitation of Malkerns Canal**

On 8 April 2014 the European Union and the Government of Swaziland signed a Financing Agreement wherein the EU will provide Euros 5 million (approx. SZL 73 million) to finance the rehabilitation of the Malkerns Canal which supplies bulk water to the community of Malkerns and surrounding areas.

The project seeks to refurbish the infrastructure of the canal which has been in existence for the past 60 years and is currently in a bad state so as to achieve maximum flow of water and also guarantee undisturbed water access for domestic, industrial and agricultural purposes. This will be done by, amongst other things, replacing leaking and weakened flumes and installing a new siphon to avoid water loss.

*"The EU remains committed to its long-term partnership with the Kingdom of Swaziland and this project is a demonstration of that commitment to support Swaziland's development initiatives," said EU Ambassador to Swaziland, Mr Nicola Bellomo.*

The signing ceremony was held at the St. Clements Farm in Malkerns. Ambassador Bellomo signed on behalf of the EU whilst the Principal Secretaries of the Ministries of Agriculture (Dr. Robert Thwala), Ministry of Economic Planning and Development (Mr. Bertram Stewart) signed on behalf of the Government of Swaziland.

The concept of upgrading the Malkerns Canal was initially conceived in 2008 and it was identified as one of the key bulk water infrastructure projects under the EU Accompanying Measures to Sugar Protocol.

For the past 6 years, the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development, together with the EU local Delegation have been in constant consultations with regard to availing the much needed financial resources for the Malkerns Canal project. The risks associated with the breaking down of the Malkerns canal infrastructure were found

to be enormous, with direct negative impact on the livelihood of the Malkerns populace and all the institutions located within the vicinity of the canal.

"As Government, we fully recognized the effects of such socio-economic instability and its hindrance to the country's Vision 2022 proclaimed by His Majesty," said Mr Bertram Stewart, Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Economic Planning and Development.

The rehabilitation of the canal will see the replacement of leaking and weakened flumes, installation of a new siphon to avoid water loss around the forestry loop, de-silting and sand trapping at the canal intake, canal path cleaning and installation of water metering systems.

The scope of the project also involves issues of governance in line with the provisions of the Water Act (2003) which promotes efficient and effective water management practices. The Act calls for the transformation of water managing entities into Irrigation Districts.

Given the fact that the Malkerns Canal has, over the years, been managed by the Malkerns Irrigation Development Company (MIDC), this then called for the transformation of the company to become an Irrigation District so as to fulfil the obligations set in the Water Act.

The government, through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Energy took the initiative to transform MIDC and was eventually successful in her endeavors as evidenced by Legal Notice No. 12 of 2014, which proclaimed the establishment of the Malkerns Irrigation District.

Commenting on behalf of the Government of the Kingdom of Swaziland, Mr. Stewart, , said:

- The support towards rehabilitating the Malkerns Canal infrastructure is greatly appreciated as there will be enormous socio-economic spin offs associated with such a lucrative investment.
- The support is in line with government's efforts of alleviating poverty and ensuring better livelihoods for communities. We hope all the stakeholders associated with the canal will take full advantage of this investment and empower themselves.

- The Government and the people of the Kingdom of Swaziland are thus very grateful for all the support provided by the European Union under the Cotonou Partnership Agreement – a partnership that is truly built on mutual respect and cooperation.

For more information on the support provided to Swaziland by the EU, please contact:

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