

A Regional Perspective on the Role of Youths in Achieving Good Governance, Leadership and Sustainable Development on the Continent: Case of Swaziland



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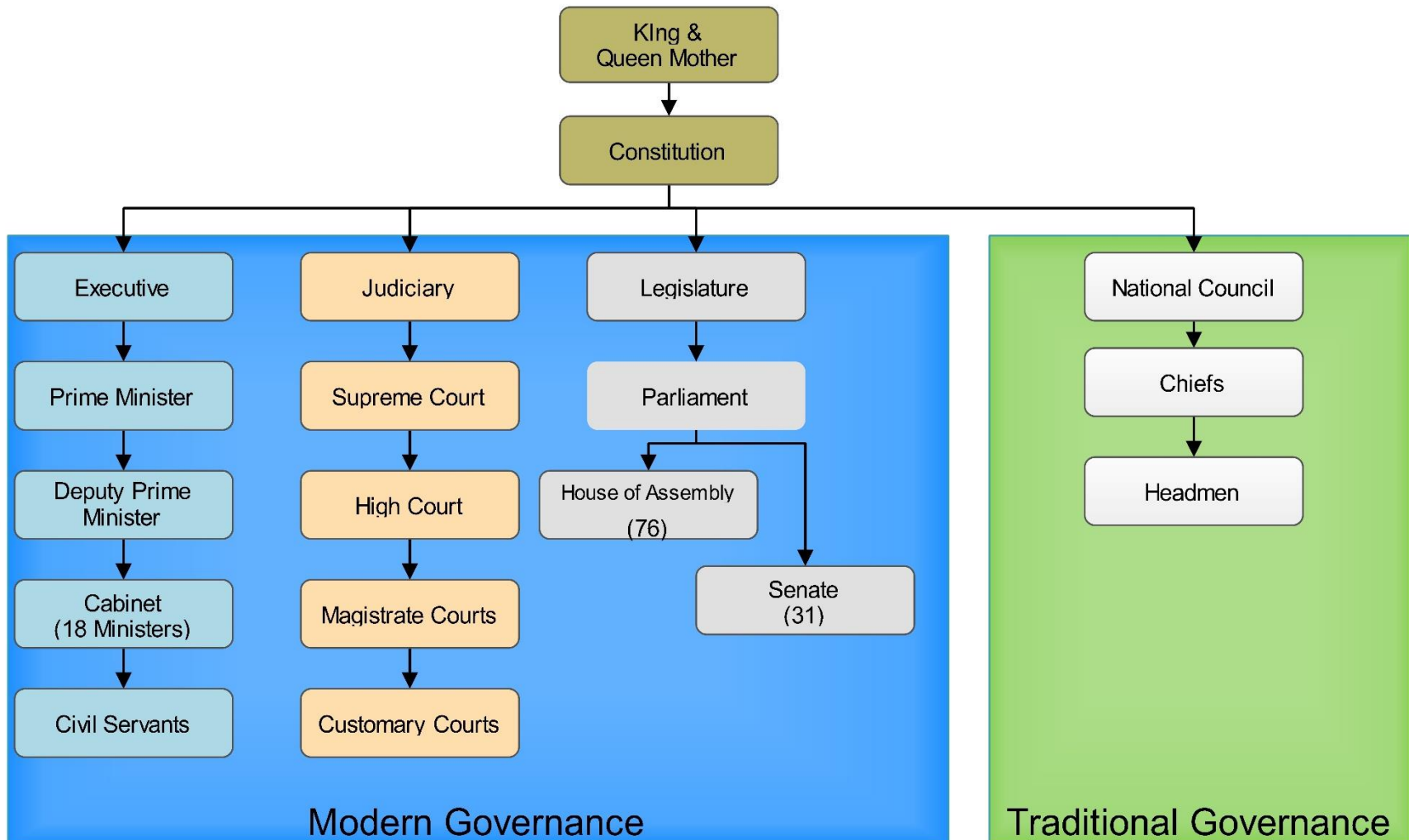


1. Country background

- ❑ The Kingdom of Swaziland is a small country (17436skm) in southern Africa and has an estimate population of 1.343 million as of 2016 rising from 1.018 million people (2007 census)
- ❑ About 43% of the Swazi population is youthful
- ❑ A dual (traditional and modern) system of administration exists
 - The King, Queen Mother and chiefs form the traditional system
 - The Prime Minister and parliament form the modern system with the 55 Tinkhundla centres (local administration constituencies) forming the basic unit of modern political administration



2.1 Political structure





2.2 Translation to good leadership

- ❑ Stimulate community development at grassroots level, coordinating and promoting a good relationship between Government and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) working at the tinkhundla level.
- ❑ They further provide a link between communities and government as well as other development agents to ensure the responsiveness of all national policies to the needs of the people.



2.2 Translation to good leadership

- According to the Swaziland constitution and the Decentralization policy, Tinkhundla are now local governments and will be instrumental in the bottom-up planning process. The major role is the development of a participatory and integrated development plan.
- In November 11, 2004 Tinkhundla Computerization Programme was launched at Nhlambeni Inkhundla for an effective, efficient, vibrant and sustainable people driven socio-economic transformation.

2.3 Youth roles in good leadership and governance



- Youths in Swaziland, especially those with membership to political formations, are involved in trying to promote good leadership in the country
 - The youth also has **equal opportunities to voice out their views** on how the country has to be governed and their complaints about unsatisfactory leadership by those in political positions through platforms such as **Sibaya** (National Council)
 - Can and do occupy high decision-making offices as chiefs, CEOs, parliamentarians etc



2.4 Active involvement of youths

- ❑ Youth stand a fair chance to vote for and be voted as members of parliament
 - Older people dominate to political and decision-making landscapes because of societal preference of older people compared to the youthful
 - However, last elections (2013) saw House of Assembly with predominantly youthful (below 40 years) members.
 - ❑ Five were below 35 at elections period while the youngest ever legislator was 26 years
 - ❑ Out of 20 who agreed to reveal their age, 14 were less than 40 years
 - ❑ Shiselweni region had 14.3% of its MPs below 35 years as of 2014



2.4 Active involvement of youths

- ❑ Traditional leadership (including both the mornach and chieftaincies) actively involve the youth:
 - Current king (i.e. HMK Mswati III) took office at 18 while his father (i.e. HMK Sobhuza II) officially assumed office at 21.
 - Numerous chiefs were installed into office below the age of 35

- ❑ Numerous youths are in high decision-making offices such as CEO of organisations like municipalities

- ❑ However, youths are seldom appointed to board membership thus making this decision-making platform to be significantly old people dominated.

2.5 Encouraging youth participation in governance



- ❑ Currently, RCE Swaziland is mostly focused with environmental and parts of social sustainability issues rather than core-political agenda.
- ❑ No deliberate encouragement of youths to actively participate in governance

2.6 Shaping youth activities towards governance and good leadership



- Albeit the limited focus on core-political issues, RCE Swaziland capacitates youths (through skills gained from running their organizations) with good governance principles with the anticipation that they will exhibit those qualities when they join national decision-making and leadership.
- RCE Swaziland also coordinates the funding for leadership and ESD trainings e.g. Rhodes University in 2012, Lesotho in 2016 and Nelspruit in 2017



2.7 Deliberate and active transition policy (programme)

- National Development Strategy (NDS) emphasizes the importance of youth capacity building in the socio-economic development of Swaziland
 - NDS is operationalized by the Poverty Reduction Strategy and Action Plan

- National Youth Policy is aimed at empowering the youth to contribute to the social, economic and political transformation and good governance



2.8 Evaluation of transition policy

- ❑ Despite all these policy instruments on youth inclusion, evidence of their meaningful contribution to improved youth participation in governance is minimal. For example, the national youth policy highlights as an issue the silence of the constitution on youth participation in governance but does not offer any way forward.

2.9 Championing leadership, youth participation and good governance



- ❑ Organizing/facilitating consistent trainings on leadership and governance for youths
- ❑ Motivating youths to stand for election into political and other decision-making offices and also building their trust in themselves so as they can ably vote some of them into political office.
- ❑ Increasing engagement with out-of-school youths



3. Recommendations

- ❑ Establishing a platform/forum (e.g. a National Youth Service Corps) through which youths can be brought together to share ideas and receive trainings
 - Technical difficulties in establishment of such platforms may be an obstacle
 - So may be the lack of universal access to information and communication infrastructure

- ❑ In the short-term, use already existing institutions to facilitate capacity building on leadership and governance



Conclusion

- ❑ Theoretically, youth participation in governance can be seen in Swaziland but, practically, very few youths are in key decision-making position despite the fact that they (youths) are the largest population bracket
- ❑ For a more active youth role in governance, there is need for youth trainings and other forms of capacity building on leadership and enlightenment of the potential power the youth has regarding decision-making and governance



Thank you