

**KINGDOM OF SWAZILAND**

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**TO WHOM IT MAY CONERN**

Swaziland is an African country with a population of 1,1 million people. Swaziland needs help. It is desperate for Health Aid due to the Aids Epidemic which is the highest in the world.

Our hospitals are overcrowded, drugs are in short supply and there is a massive shortage of over 400 doctors and nursing staff at present. Critical sectors at hospitals have been closed because of lack of experienced manpower as well as antiquated machinery. It is a desperate situation, particularly for the rural population. When they do arrive at a main hospital or clinic, they face long and never ending queues and are often not attended to for days on end while they wait.

It is a desperate situation as often other diseases go untreated due to the pressure of the Aids epidemic which the country is facing.

The orphan population is growing daily and it is the rural communities that are trying to absorb these children by extending their families to accommodate them. There are hundreds of households that are now headed by children as young as 12 years old as their parents have died.

The Government of Swaziland is under extreme pressure to cope with the present situation. The biggest gap is in the remote rural areas. The service offered by Dr Harry VanderWal and Echo and their team is what is lacking the most in Swaziland as they treat the patients in remote areas. When news is brought to these areas that this team will visit, queues to see them stretch endlessly. The team often work into the early hours of the following day under very difficult conditions ( e.g. using a small transformer for lights) in order to diagnose and treat every patient.

The work being done by Dr Harry VanderWal and Echo and their helpers is highly appreciated by the Government of Swaziland as it is reaching the very people whom the Government does not reach due to lack of vehicles, personel and drugs. Most of the Government funding and aid from outside is presently being concentrated at the main centres in the country and therefore it is the rural areas where the gap is largest and the area where help is most needed.

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I do not believe that there is any other organisation that is willing to undertake the task that Dr Harry VanderWal and Echo are doing. I admire their courage, dedication and continuous loyalty to the Swazi Nation. God knows we need them and their help.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "R. H. Howe". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a solid horizontal line that spans the width of the signature.

SENATOR ROWAN HOWE  
Member of Parliament Portfolio Health Committee