EAST AND SOUTHERN AFRICA REGIONAL BRANCH OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES (ESARBICA) COUNTRY REPORT 2023 JOHANNESBURG, SOUTH AFRICA.

ESWATINI NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE

1. INTRODUCTION

The Eswatini National Archives and Records Service (ENARS) is a Department under the Ministry of Information, Communications and Technology (MICT). The ENARS is mandated by the ENARS Act No.6 of 2023 to acquire records of historical value on behalf of Government by transfer, purchase, donation, bequest or loan. The institution continued to execute its mandate of ensuring proper records management in Government and preserving Eswatini's documentary heritage. Currently Eswatini Government is implementing various records management reforms in-line with the e-Government initiative.

2. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

The Records Management Section conducted records management inspections in various Government Ministries and Departments to assess compliance with the ISO 15489 standard. Four Ministries and twenty five Departments have been assisted with developing their file index in-line with the Uniform Functional File Classification Scheme (UFFCS).

3. ARCHIVES POLICIES

a) Acquisition Policy

The Draft Archives Acquisition Policy has been completed, awaiting validation by stakeholders. The Draft Policy articulates the ENARS' approach to the acquisition of archival records with National significance. It identifies and commits the ENARS to a number of principles, strategic objectives and actions that are required for the effective acquisition of relevant archival records.

b) Access Policy

The Draft Archives Access Policy was completed and submitted to the Government Public Policy coordination Unit for consideration and submission to Cabinet. The Policy seeks to facilitate the effective implementation of daily operations of the ENARS in providing access to the collections under its custody. The policy shall apply to all records in the custody of the Eswatini National Archives and Records Service repositories in any format, that have been appraised as permanent and may be released for public access.

4. ARCHIVES LEGISLATION

The Eswatini National Archives and Records Service Act No.6 of 2023 has been endorsed by the Head of State into Law after going through all the necessary processes in both Houses of Parliament. The Act aims to bridge the technological gap by harnessing the changes brought by electronic records management, as well as, the records continuum model. It further seeks to regulate the environment under which records and archives are created, used, maintained and disposed throughout their life cycle.

5. ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT

The ENARS is in the process of acquiring a consultant for appraisal, arrangement and description of records that have completed their retention periods. The ENARS needs to appraise and organize public records ranging from 1944 to 1990. This exercise is envisaged to assist in ensuring maximum usage of space resources through the preservation of only records of important value

and discarding ephemeral ones. This will further allow the transfer of records from Ministries which is currently impeded by unavailability of space at the National Archives.

6. INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

The Eswatini National Archives in collaboration with the Eswatini National Library embarked on a project of collecting and preserving Indigenous Knowledge and oral history. ENARS was able to collect and document the history of eight emaSwati clan names and the history the World War II Veterans in Eswatini in the current financial year. This IK is digitized and transferred to the National Data Center (NDC) for preservation.

7. PRESERVATION OF AUDIO VISUAL RECORDS

The ENARS has collaborated with two national broadcast media houses in Eswatini (ETVA and EBIS) for the acquisition and digitization of audio visual archives. These AV archives shall be digitized and stored at the NDC, the original formats shall be preserved under controlled environmental conditions at the ENARS for posterity. These records include speeches of Their Majesties and other royal and cultural events.

8. DIGITISATION PROJECT

The ENARS is in the process of digitizing the Resident Commissioners Series archives dating from 1908 to 1945. The digitized archives shall be selected for uploading into the ENARS website to be accessed by researchers and also stored at the NDC for preservation.

9. DISASTER MANAGEMENT PLAN

The ENARS is in the process of developing the National Archives Disaster Management and Mitigation Plan. The draft plan has been completed awaiting validation with stakeholders. The aim of the plan is to enable the implementation of a risk management program to reduce the likelihood of a disaster or incident. It shall further enable the ENARS to act swiftly to minimize damage to buildings and holdings.

10. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDRMS

The Eswatini National Archives continued the rollout of the EDRMS in Government Ministries and Departments. The ENARS has configured the EDRMS in ten Government Ministries and Departments. The ENARS has trained two Ministries on the use of the EDRMS. The system currently has technical support challenges, hence the ENARS shall seek assistance from the National Archives of Tanzania on the rolling out of the system in government.