CENTRAL BANK OF ESWATINI
UMNTSHOLI WEMASWATI

Welcome Remarks by the Deputy Governor
Launch of the FinScope Eswatini 2026 Consumer Survey
CBE Complex, Ezulwini, 24 July 2026

- Programme Director,
- The Governor of the Central Bank of Eswatini, Dr. Phil Mnisi,
- Representatives of Government Ministries,
- Representatives of FinMark Trust (joining virtually and in physical attendance),
- Representatives of Eswatini Economic Policy Analysis and Research Centre,
- Representatives of Central Statistical Office,
- Members of the Survey Steering Committee,
- Representatives of our Development Partners,
- Representatives of the Financial Sector,
- Members of the Media,
- Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Good morning!

1. It is my pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of the Central Bank of Eswatini, to the launch of the FinScope Eswatini 2026 Consumer Survey.
2. Your presence here today reflects the collective commitment of Government, the financial sector, academia, development partners, and other stakeholders to better understand how emaSwati access, use, and experience financial services and products.

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3. It also demonstrates a shared recognition that sound decisions are grounded in strong evidence, and that by working together we can generate the insights needed to advance financial inclusion in Eswatini.

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to begin by placing today's launch in its proper context.

4. The FinScope Consumer Survey is not new to Eswatini. Our country has undertaken this study before, the last one conducted in 2018. Each cycle has left a lasting imprint on how we understand our financial sector and the people it serves.

5. Beyond our borders, FinScope has been implemented in numerous countries across Africa and beyond, making it one of the most widely used and trusted instruments for measuring financial inclusion from the consumer's perspective.

6. An additional advantage of the Survey is that it can be benchmarked against those of our peers across the region. This enables us not only to measure the progress we have made, but also to assess how we compare ourselves with others operating in similar environments.

7. It is this valuable consumer perspective that makes the survey such an important tool, providing insights that help us better understand our performance and identify opportunities for continued improvement.

8. As a Central Bank, we are rich in supply-side data. Our regulated institutions report to us on accounts opened, loans extended, transactions processed and premiums collected. Whilst this data gives us many insights, it only tells us half the story, mainly what financial system has provided.

9. What it does not tell us is:

- how that supply is experienced by the wider population,
- why an account sits dormant,
- why does a vendor at the Manzini market still prefer to save in cash,
- why a smallholder farmer in Shiselweni has never considered insurance,
- or what a young person entering the world of work needs from a financial service provider.

10. These are the insights that the data from financial institutions cannot provide, yet they are critical to understanding how people engage with the financial system and where the barriers to inclusion still exist. That is where FinScope makes a real difference.

11. The survey takes us into homes and communities across all four regions of the country, giving us the opportunity to hear directly from the people we ultimately seek to serve. It provides valuable insight into the realities of everyday financial life including people's needs, behaviours, challenges, and aspirations.

12. Most importantly, it ensures that the voices and experiences of ordinary emaSwati are reflected in the policies we develop and the services and products that the financial sector brings to market. In doing so, it helps us build a financial system that is more responsive, inclusive, and aligned with the needs of the people it serves.

Ladies and gentlemen,

13. The 2026 survey introduces a stronger focus on financial health, assessing whether financial products help people manage daily needs, withstand

financial shocks, and achieve their financial goals as well as track progress over time, while reflecting the significant changes in the financial landscape since 2018.

14. The survey will further assess the adoption of digital financial services and consumers' exposure to financial and cyber fraud as more financial activity moves to digital platforms.

15. The survey will generate disaggregated data by gender, age, disability, income, and geography to uncover disparities hidden by national averages and support more targeted, effective interventions for underserved groups by the financial system.

Ladies and gentlemen,

16. The survey's success depends on strong collaboration among key institutions, led by the Central Bank of Eswatini and implemented in partnership with ESEPARC, the Central Statistical Office, and FinMark Trust, whose regional expertise in FinScope surveys has been instrumental over the years.

17. The Survey Steering Committee, comprising representatives from key stakeholder groups, comprising government, regulators, academia, financial institutions, mobile network operators, development partners, and other stakeholders, will provide oversight and guidance to ensure the survey remains relevant, accurate, and reflective of Eswatini's context.

18. Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, let me conclude with a simple observation;

    - Data only creates value when it is used to inform better decisions, and the true success of the FinScope Eswatini 2026 Consumer Survey will be measured by its impact on policymaking and financial sector decisions.

19. It is now my pleasure to invite to the podium a leader who has been a dedicated champion of financial inclusion and whose support has been instrumental to this important national initiative.

20. Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming the Governor of the Central Bank of Eswatini, Dr Phil Mnisi, to officially launch the FinScope Eswatini 2026 Consumer Survey.

I thank you all for your attention!