

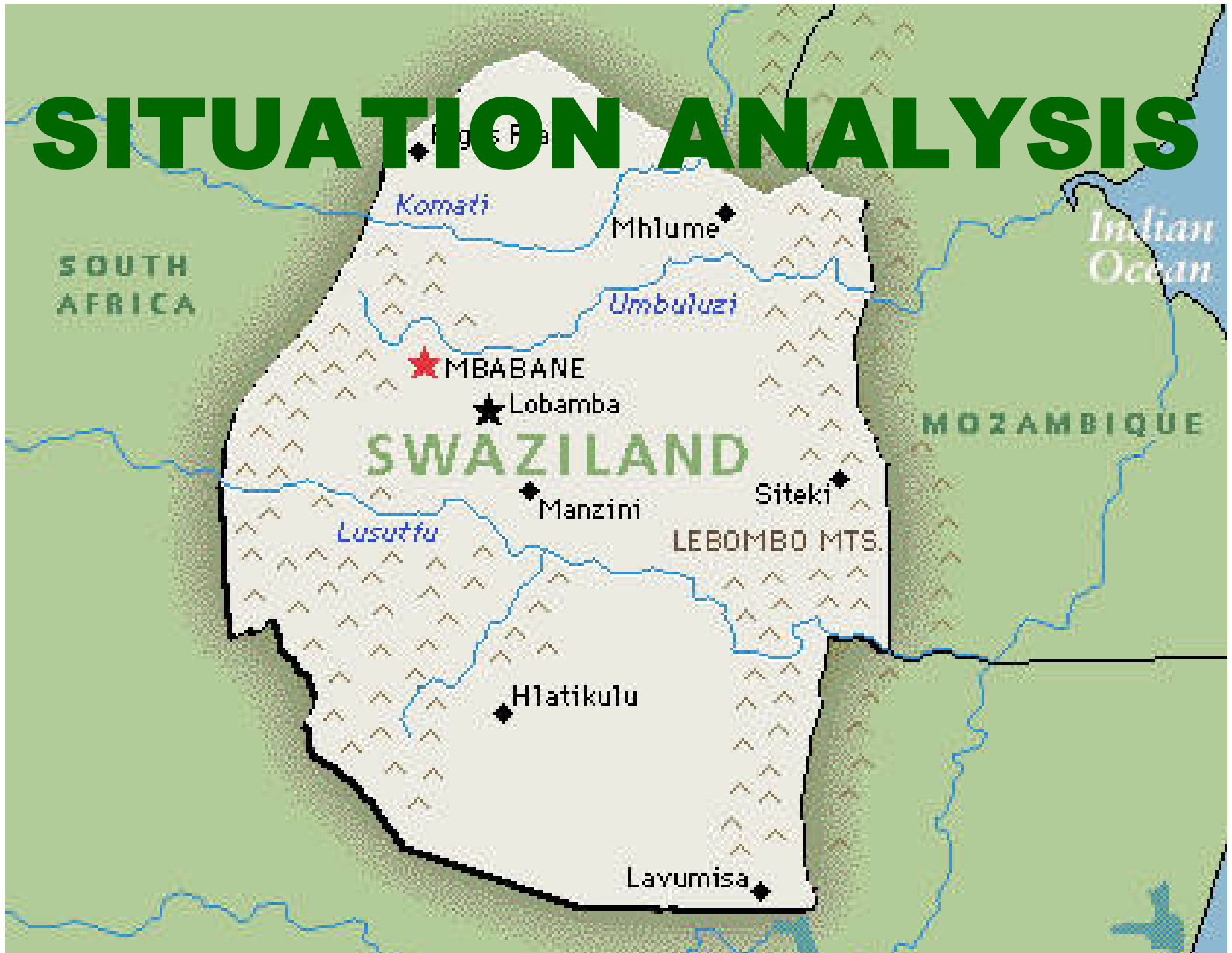
**Episcopal Diocese of Iowa
A Clergy Conversation with Bishop Meshack Mabuza
23rd July 2010**

THE ROLE OF FAITH IN BRINGING ABOUT PEACEFUL CHANGE

Presentation by:

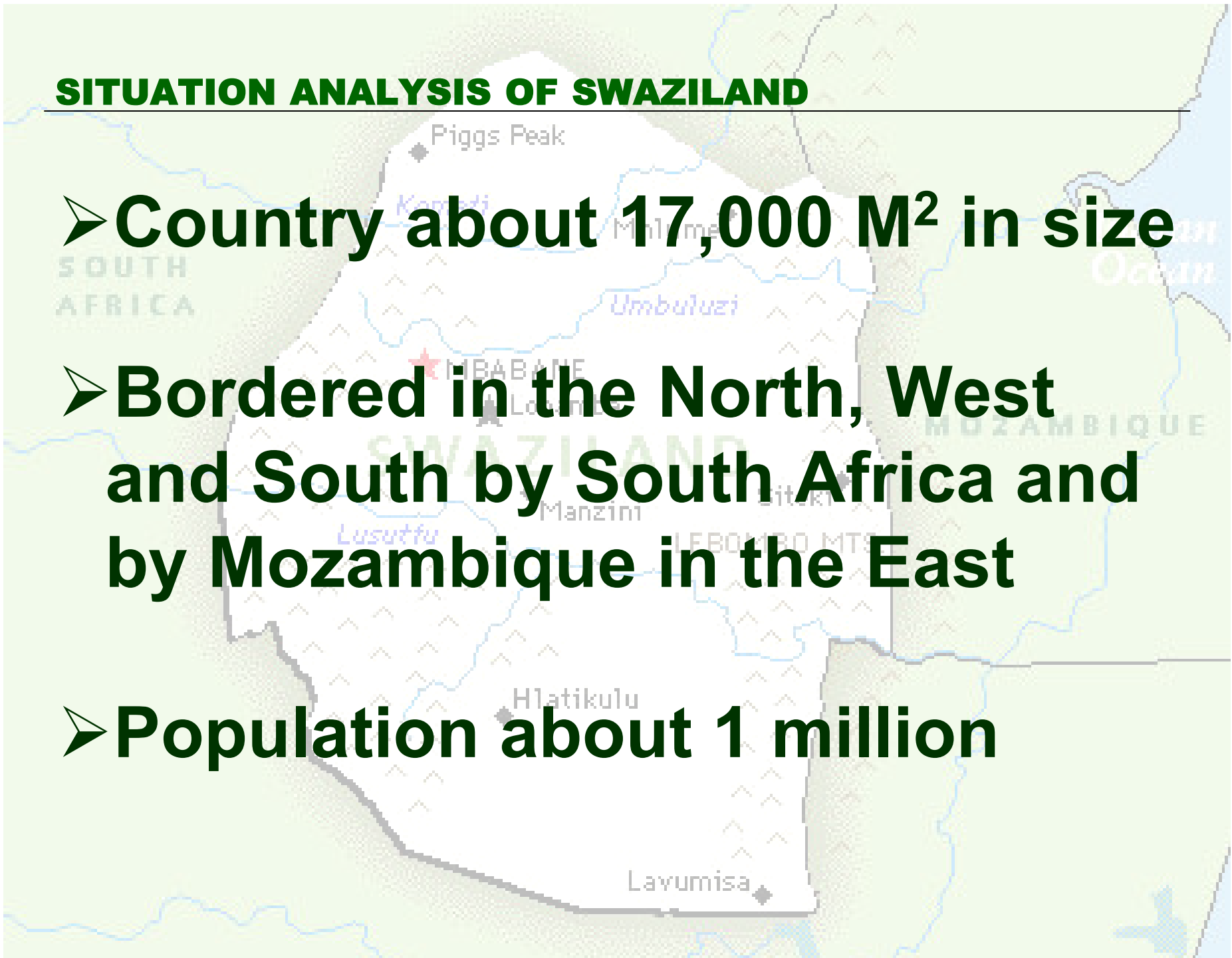
**Right Revd. Meshack Mabuza
Anglican Bishop Of Swaziland**

SITUATION ANALYSIS



SITUATION ANALYSIS OF SWAZILAND

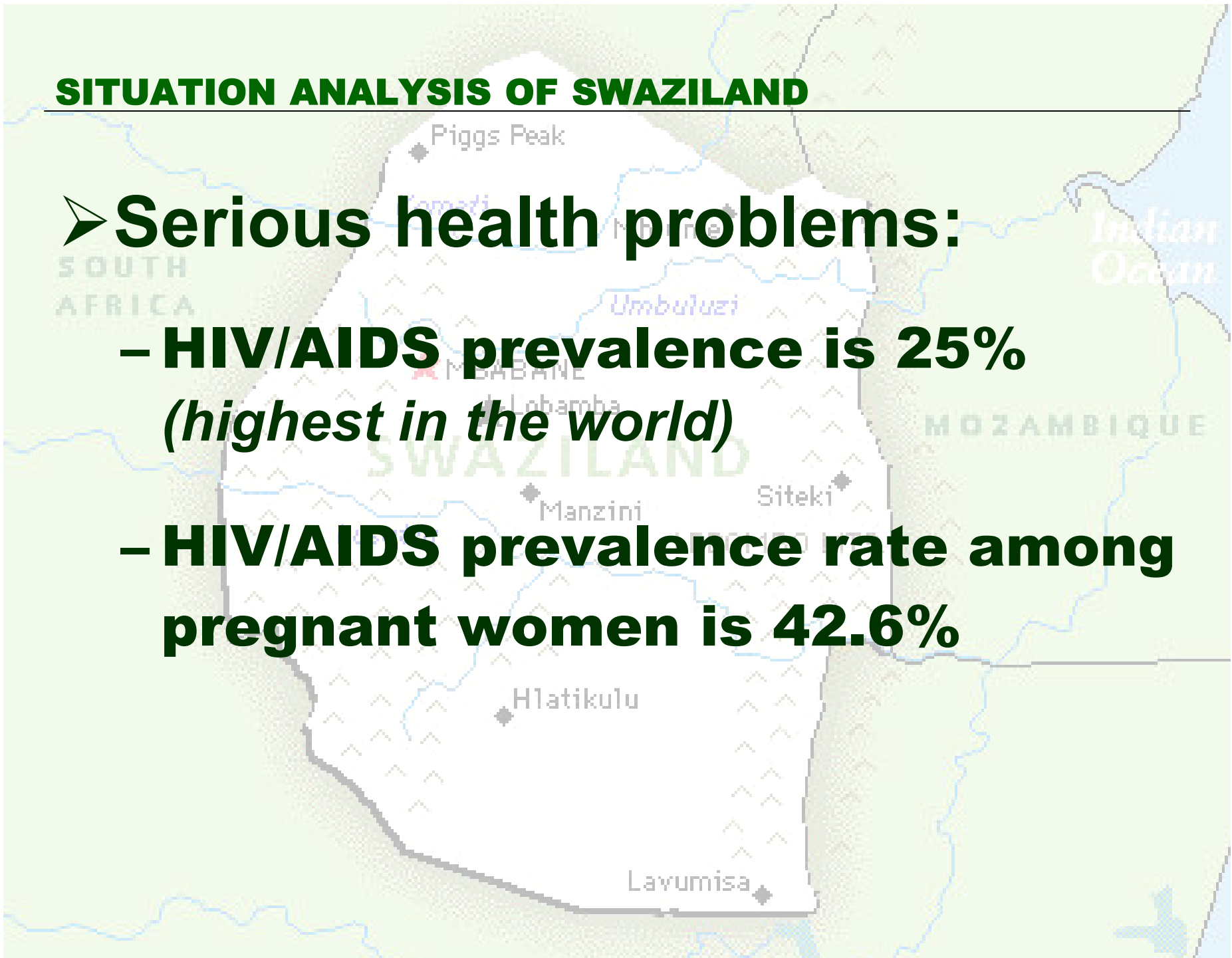
- **Country about 17,000 M² in size**
- **Bordered in the North, West and South by South Africa and by Mozambique in the East**
- **Population about 1 million**



SITUATION ANALYSIS OF SWAZILAND

➤ **Serious health problems:**

- HIV/AIDS prevalence is 25%**
(highest in the world)
- HIV/AIDS prevalence rate among pregnant women is 42.6%**

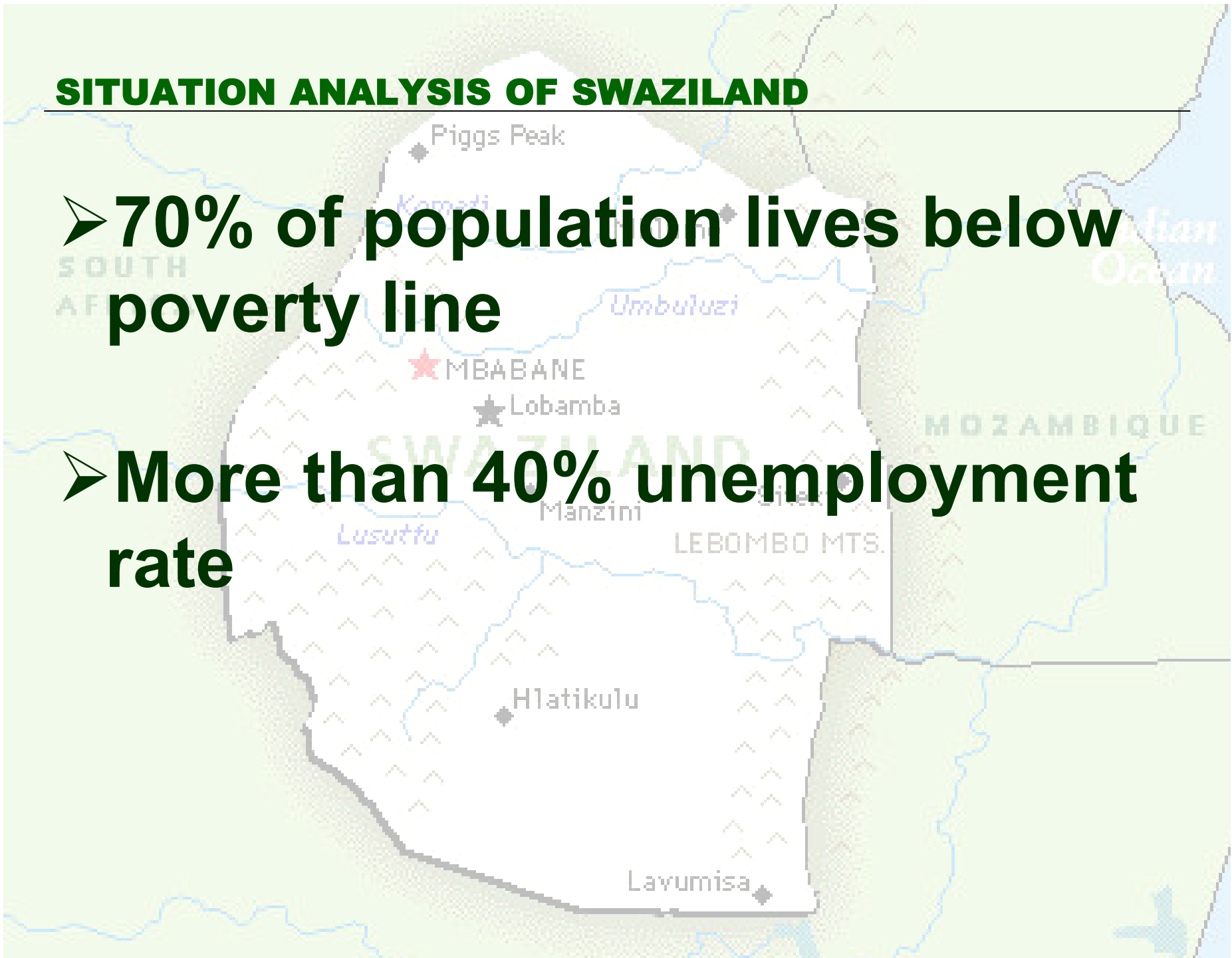


SITUATION ANALYSIS OF SWAZILAND

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- The background of the slide is a map of Swaziland. The map shows the country's borders with South Africa to the west and Mozambique to the east. Key geographical features include the Indian Ocean to the east, the Lebombo Mountains in the south, and the Umfolozi and Umbuluzi rivers. Major cities and towns are marked with diamonds, including Piggs Peak, Mbabane (the capital, marked with a red star), Lobamba, Siteki, Hlatikulu, and Lavumisa. The word 'SWAZILAND' is written in large, light green letters across the center of the map.
- **Life expectancy is 31 years**
 - **According to Guinness World Book:**
 - **Swaziland has highest mortality rate**
 - **22.1 deaths per 1,000 over 2005-2010**
 - **Life expectancy 39.6 years**

SITUATION ANALYSIS OF SWAZILAND

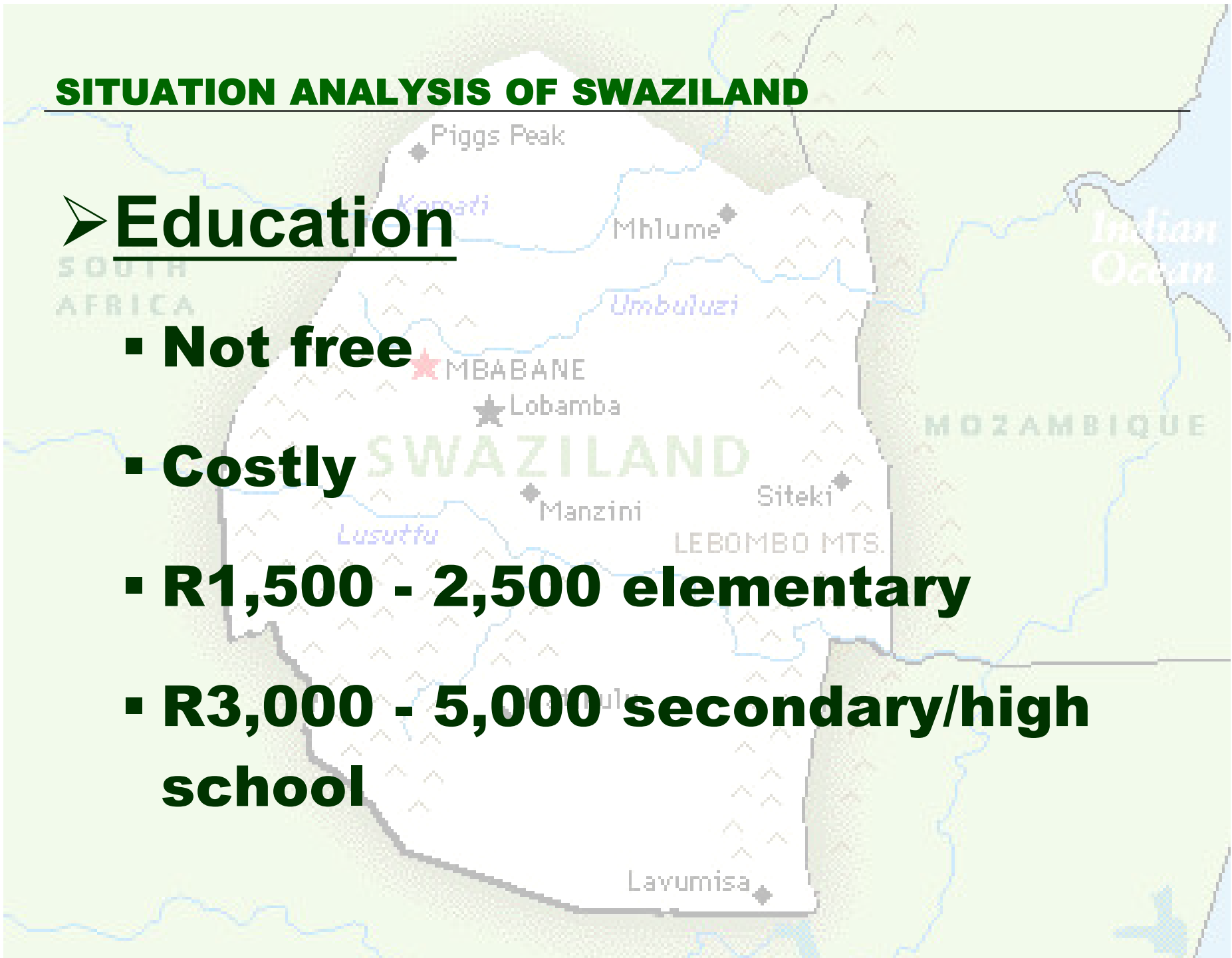
- **70% of population lives below poverty line**
- **More than 40% unemployment rate**



SITUATION ANALYSIS OF SWAZILAND

➤ **Education**

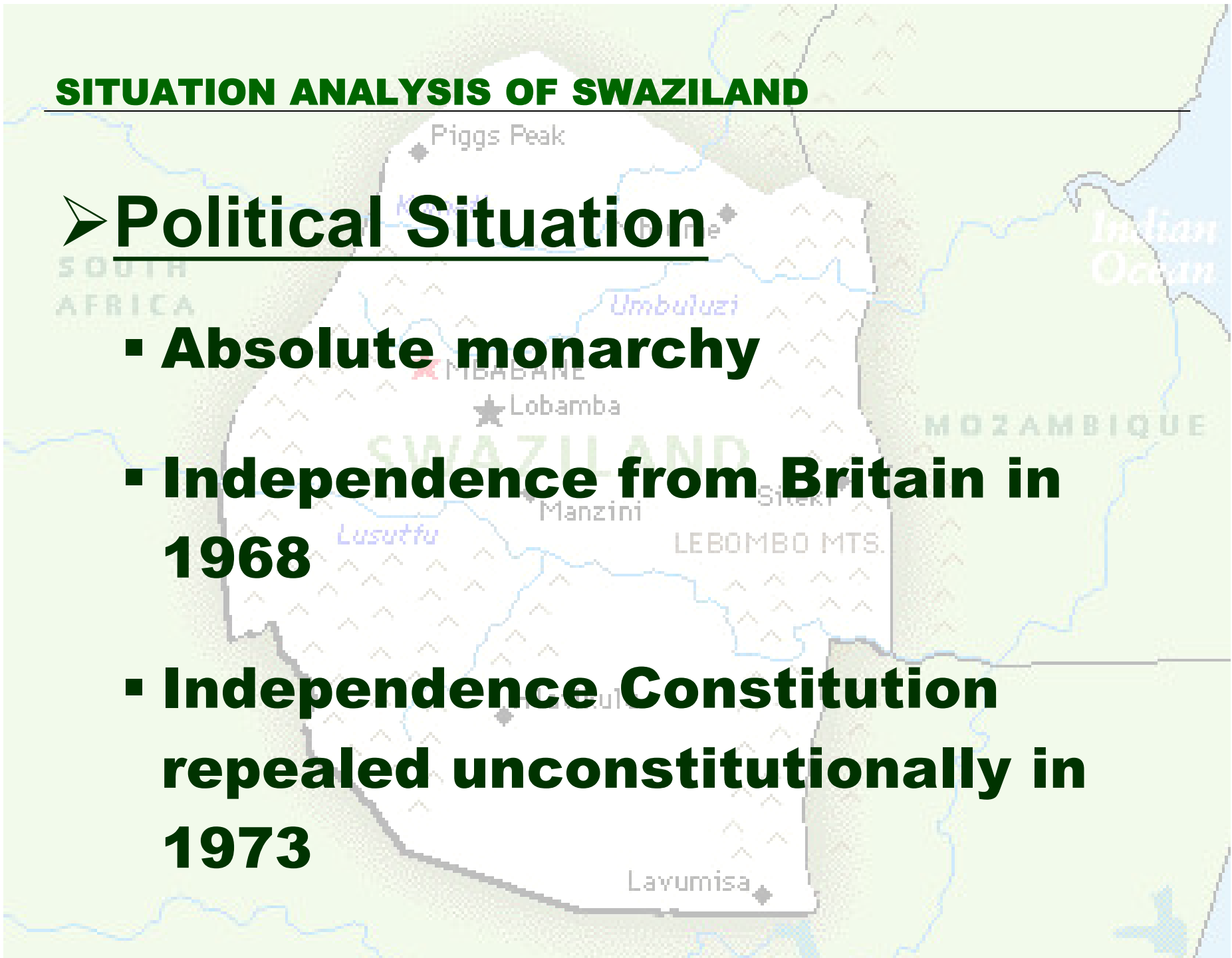
- **Not free**
- **Costly**
- **R1,500 - 2,500 elementary**
- **R3,000 - 5,000 secondary/high school**



SITUATION ANALYSIS OF SWAZILAND

➤ Political Situation

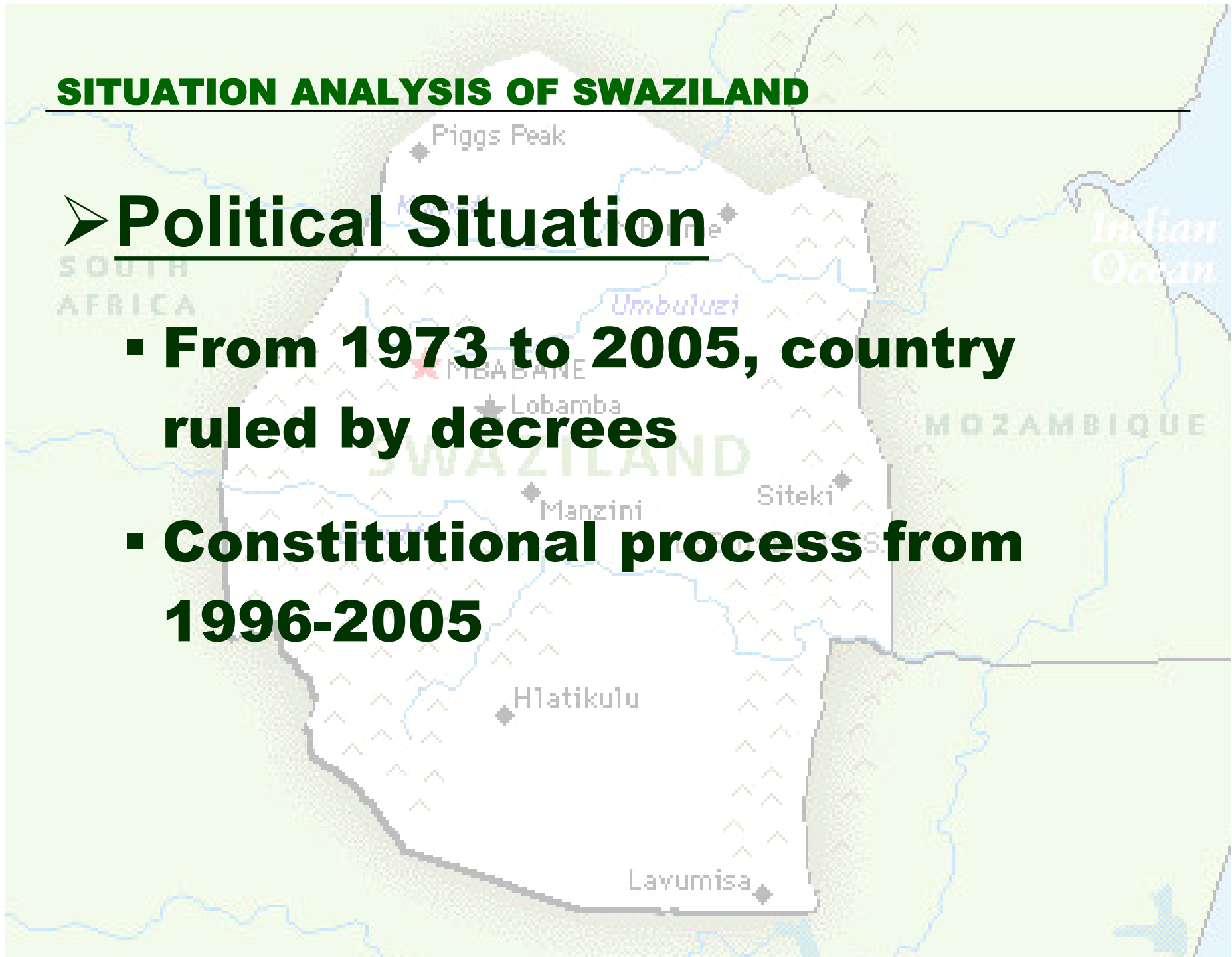
- **Absolute monarchy**
- **Independence from Britain in 1968**
- **Independence Constitution repealed unconstitutionally in 1973**



SITUATION ANALYSIS OF SWAZILAND

➤ Political Situation

- **From 1973 to 2005, country ruled by decrees**
- **Constitutional process from 1996-2005**

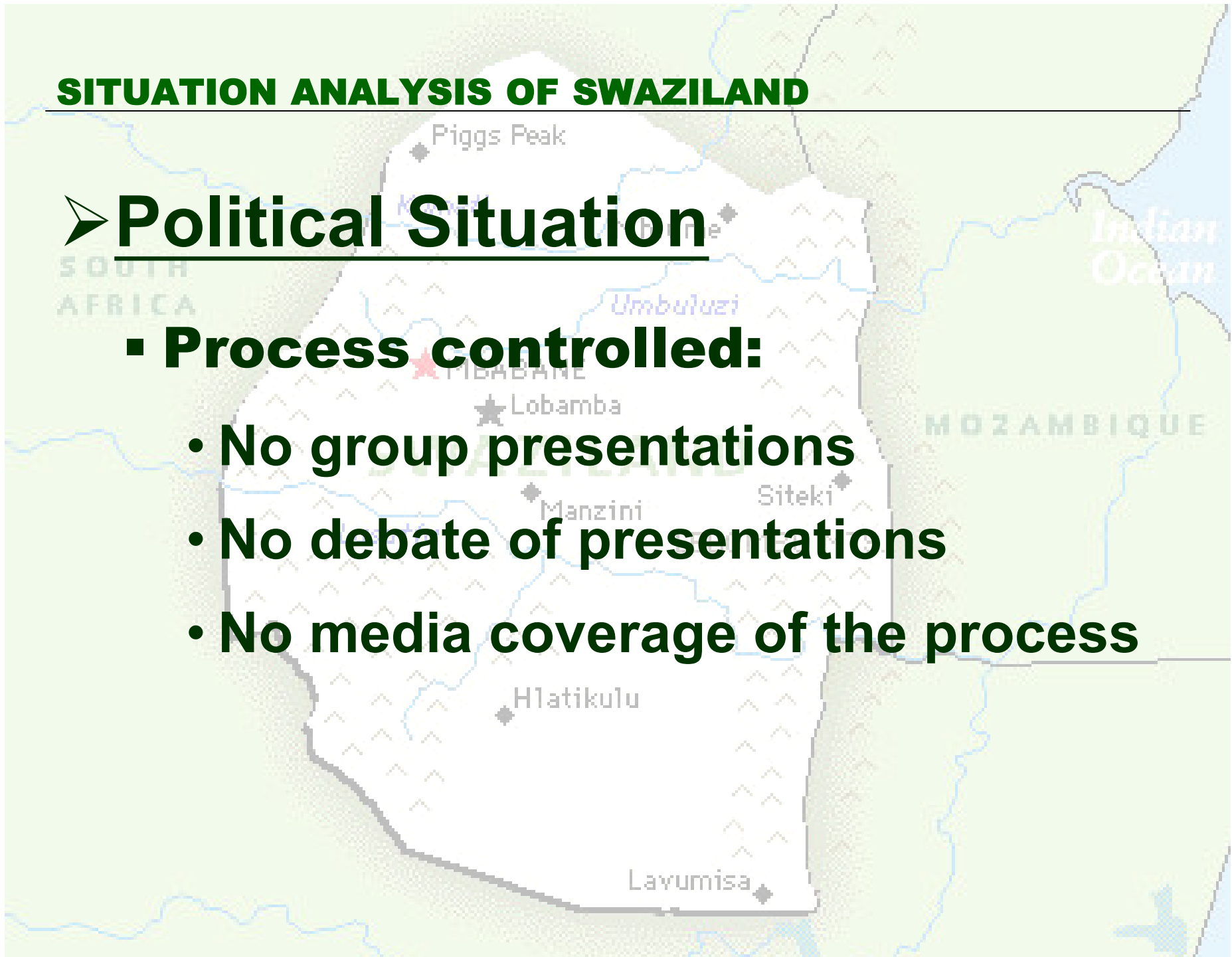


SITUATION ANALYSIS OF SWAZILAND

➤ Political Situation

▪ Process controlled:

- No group presentations**
- No debate of presentations**
- No media coverage of the process**

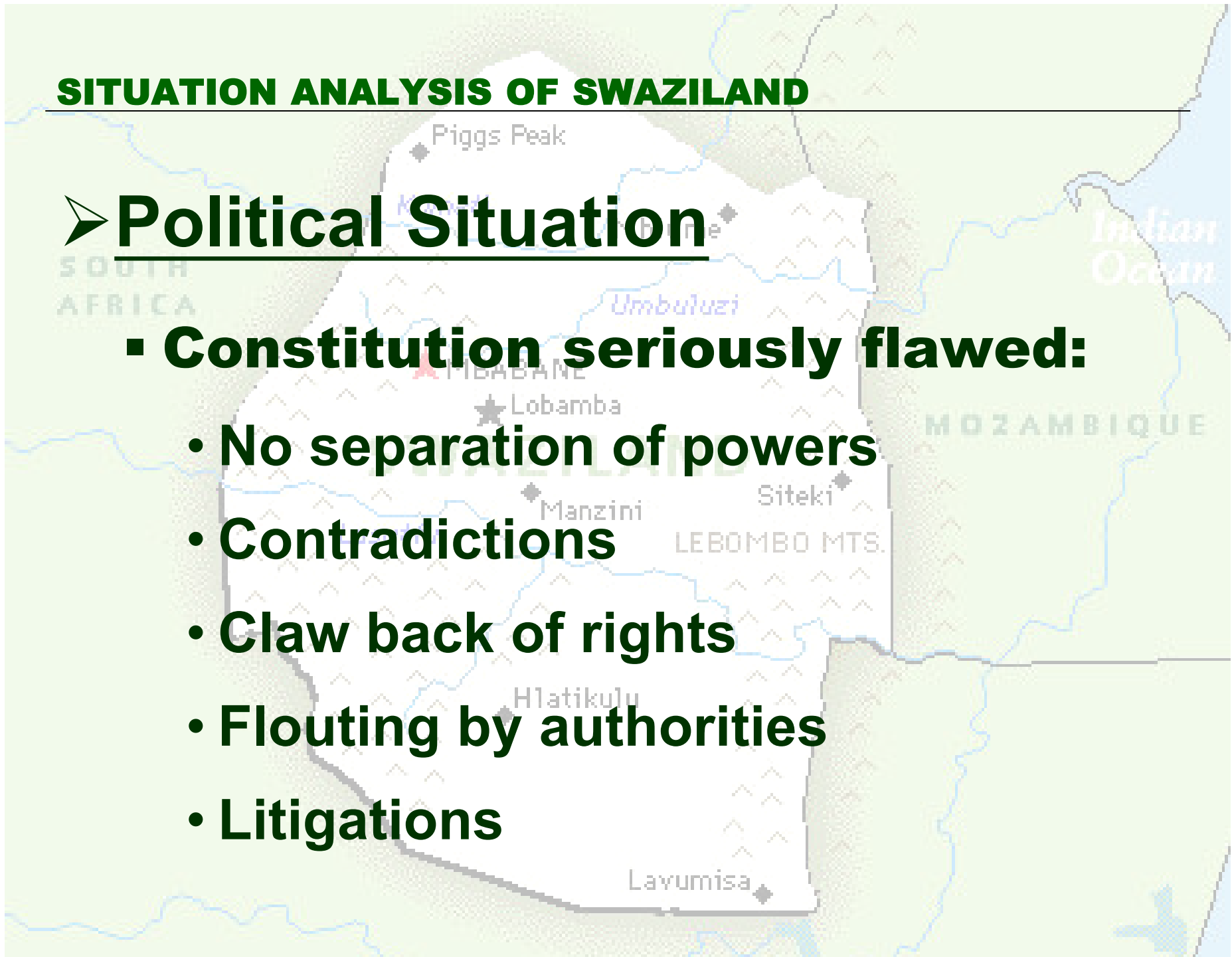


SITUATION ANALYSIS OF SWAZILAND

➤ Political Situation

▪ Constitution seriously flawed:

- **No separation of powers**
- **Contradictions**
- **Claw back of rights**
- **Flouting by authorities**
- **Litigations**



SITUATION ANALYSIS OF SWAZILAND

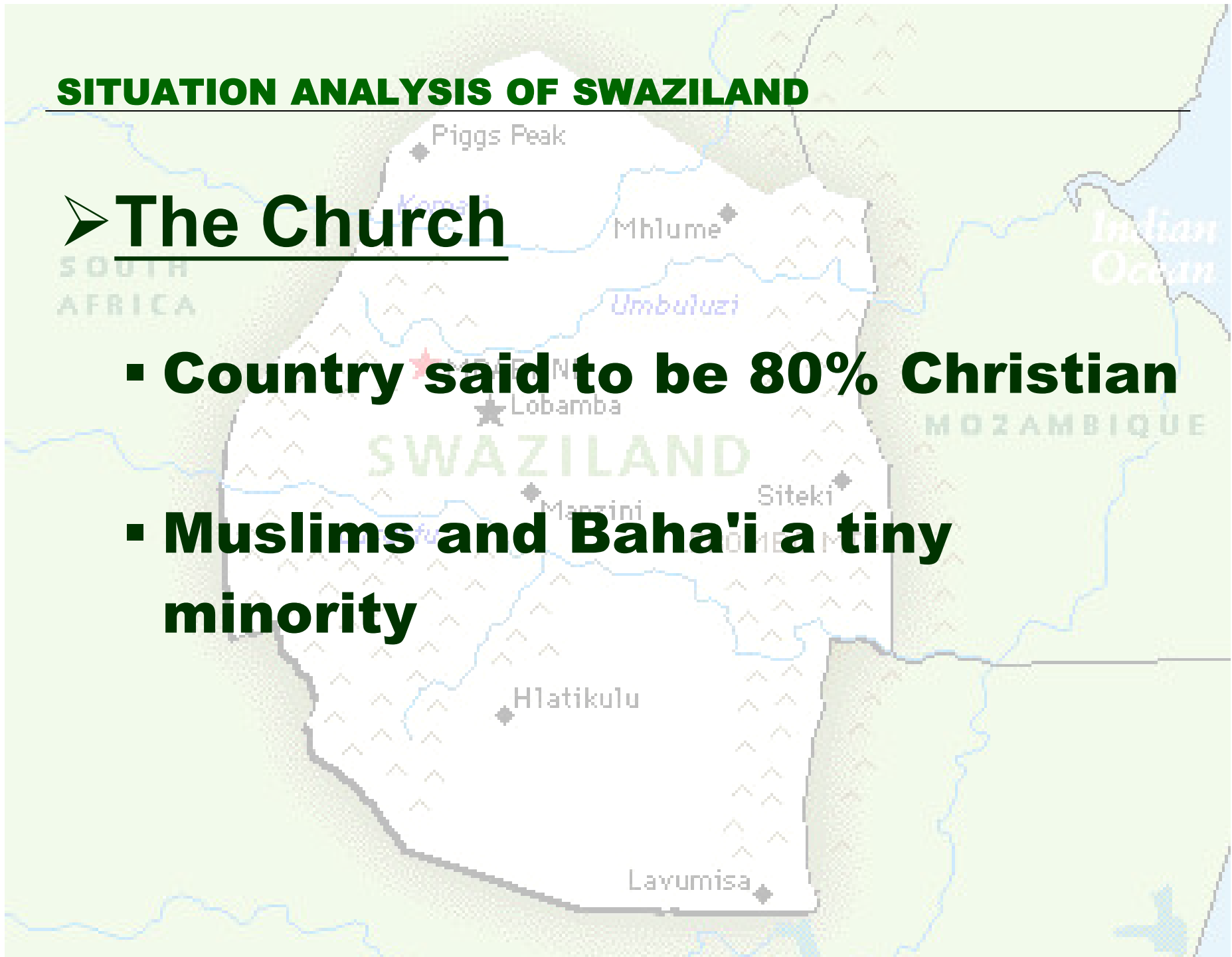
➤ Political Situation

- **Elections not according to party groups, but individuals**
- **Prime Minister and Ministers' are appointees of the King**
- **Corruption is the order of the day**

SITUATION ANALYSIS OF SWAZILAND

➤ The Church

- **Country said to be 80% Christian**
- **Muslims and Baha'i a tiny minority**



SITUATION ANALYSIS OF SWAZILAND

➤ The Church

- **Church divided; no one voice:**
 - Conference of Churches
 - Council of Swaziland Churches
 - League of Churches

- **Tendency to please status quo for political favours**

Theological Reflection

on

**THE ROLE OF
CHURCH IN SOCIAL
CHANGE**

OUTLINE

- 1. Basic Fundamental Questions**
- 2. God's Purpose for Humanity**
- 3. Implications of God's Purpose**
- 4. The Role of Prophets**
- 5. Jesus as Model of Champion for Justice**
- 6. Church and State**
- 7. Contemporary Witnesses for Justice**

1.
BASIC
FUNDAMENTAL
QUESTIONS

1. BASIC FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

- **Does the church have a role in social change?**

In other words, is there a relationship between faith and life?

- **What is God's attitude toward injustice?**

What would Jesus have done in circumstances of injustice, oppression, violation of human rights etc?

2.

**GOD'S PURPOSE
FOR HUMANITY**

2. GOD'S PURPOSE FOR HUMANITY

- **In God's own image**
- **Endowed with dignity**
- **To rule and have dominion** (*Gen 1:26; Ps. 8*)
- **To be creative and determine own destiny** (*Gen. 2:15*)
- **To work with God in transformation** (*Rev. 21:5, 1 Cor 3:9*)

3.

**IMPLICATIONS OF
GOD'S PURPOSE**

3. IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S PURPOSE

(a) Dignity for the Human Person

- **Applies to everyone unconditionally irrespective of achievements, success, failure, sin etc.**
- **Violation of the personal dignity of a human being is an affront to the creator.**
- **Involves the right to take part in public affairs and contribute to common good.**

3. IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S PURPOSE

(b) Common Good

- **Refers to the good of all members of society, not the good of an elite ruling class.**
- **Involves the well-being of people; social, economic, political activity. Serves the interest of the people, not the people being used to serve interests of a few.**

3. IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S PURPOSE

(b) Common Good

- **Implies access by all to food, shelter, employment, healthcare, education, recreation, cultural enrichments etc.**

Enabled by:

- **a healthy economy and open political society.**
- **peaceful and secure environment.**
- **respect for human rights and freedoms.**

3. IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S PURPOSE

(b) Common Good

- **Requires that those on the margins of society should receive special attention e.g., poor, vulnerable, physically challenged, sick, PLWA etc.**
- **Requires that certain natural resources should not be privatised, e.g. roads, water, rivers, national parks mineral wealth etc.**

3. IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S PURPOSE

(b) Common Good

- **Land and minerals should produce for the common good.**
- **Ensures access to the land without fear of eviction.**

These are the ideals closest to God's heart

(Ps. 24:1-2)

3. IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S PURPOSE

(b) Common Good

**The common good
embraces the sum total
of those conditions of social life
which enable individuals,
families and organizations to
achieve complete fulfillment.**

3. IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S PURPOSE

(c) Human Rights

- **Dignity can be protected and a healthy community achieved only if human rights are respected.**
- **Human rights emanate from God-given dignity, and are inalienable.**

3. IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S PURPOSE

(c) Human Rights

➤ **The rights include:**

- **Basic Rights** – Life, food, shelter, clothing, education, healthcare, employment.
- **Individual Rights** – personal liberty, assembly, association, expression, movement, conscience and religion.

3. IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S PURPOSE

(c) Human Rights

➤ **The rights include:**

- **Gender Rights** – gender equality in economic and social life, right of girl child to education and employment, right to refuse in- human cultural practices (e.g. forced marriages, genital mutilation etc)
- **Right to a Just Wage**

3. IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S PURPOSE

(d) Participation

- **Right to participate in the economic , political, and cultural life of ones nation e.g. (MLK JR's) "Give us the Ballot".)**
- **Unjust to exclude some people in what affects their life.**

3. IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S PURPOSE

(d) Participation

- **Human dignity implies that far from being an object, a merely passive element in the social order, people must be its subject, its foundation and its end.**
- **Through mutual co-operation, all people should become principal architects of their own economic and social development.**

3. IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S PURPOSE

(e) Economic Justice

- **The economy must serve people, not people to serve the economy.**
- **Right to productive work, decent and fair wages, safe working conditions etc.**
- **Fundamental right to organize and join unions.**
- **Right to take economic initiatives and to own private property.**

4.

ROLE OF PROPHETS

4. ROLE OF PROPHETS

- **The O.T. prophets protested against the outrages committed vs the poor by the rich and powerful.**
- **Isa. 3:15 – Crushing my people and grinding the faces of the poor.**
- **Am. 5:12 – Taking bribes, diverting the poor from justice.**
- **Ezek. 22:29 – Oppression of the weak, robbery, mistreating the poor and needy, the stranger.**

4. ROLE OF PROPHETS

- **Isa. 58:6-7 – Remove unjust burdens.**
 - **Let the oppressed go free.**
 - **Share your bread with the hungry.**
 - **Shelter the homeless poor.**
 - **Clothe the naked.**

- **Am. 5:24 – Let justice prevail.**

5.

**JESUS THE PERFECT
MODEL**

5. JESUS THE PERFECT MODEL

- **Identified totally with humanity.**
- **Embraced all human concerns.**
- **Was infinitely compassionate.**
- **Desired the fullness of life for all.**
- **Was kingdom intoxicated.**

5. JESUS THE PERFECT MODEL

- **Had a clear mission (Lk. 4:18)**
 - **Preach good news to the poor.**
 - **Heal the broken hearted.**
 - **Liberty to the captives.**
- **Recovery of sight to the blind.**
- **Set at liberty those oppressed.**

5. JESUS THE PERFECT MODEL

➤ In his work he:

- **Sided with the struggling majority rather than the economically and politically powerful minority.**
- **Had compassion for the suffering outcasts (i.e. the sick, mentally disturbed, those in despised work e.g. tax collectors, shepherds) and for this he was always at loggerheads with the religious authorities of the time.**

5. JESUS THE PERFECT MODEL

**Judgment
will be about our response
to the poor and marginalized
of society.**

(Mat. 25: 33-45)

5. JESUS THE PERFECT MODEL

Who are the Poor?

To be poor is, among other circumstances...

- **To be hungry.**
- **To be without decent shelter.**
- **To lack education and health care.**
- **To be unemployed.**
- **To be on the margins of society.**
- **To be unable to deal with the challenges of daily existence.**

5. JESUS THE PERFECT MODEL

Who are the Poor?

To be poor is, among other circumstances...

- **To be excluded from decisions which affect you.**
- **To have no political choices.**
- **To be discriminated against.**
- **To be sexually manipulated or abused.**
- **To be a woman in a patriarchal culture**
- **To be subject to being evicted from your land.**

6.

CHURCH AND STATE

6. CHURCH AND STATE

- ❖ **If, as MLK Jr. defines politics, it has to do with the process of determining who gets how much of what, when, and where in five areas, namely, education, health care, income, justice and housing/shelter, it is mandatory for Christians to engage in struggle for justice where these basic needs are denied.**

6. CHURCH AND STATE

- ❖ Called to ensure that those elected are servants of the people, and not their masters.**
- ❖ To be the conscience of those in power and to remind them that all authority is from God for the good of the people (Rom 13:4)**
- ❖ The church is not to take the side of any political party, but to seek justice for all, esp. the poor.**

6. CHURCH AND STATE

- ❖ The institutional church has no political programme to offer, and is non-partisan.**
- ❖ The fact of being non-partisan does not justify indifference in the face of falsehood on earth.**
- ❖ To remain silent is to behave contrary to the gospel.**

6. CHURCH AND STATE

- ❖ God does not view injustice objectively but subjectively.**
- ❖ God takes sides on behalf of the poor, the widow, the weak (Ps. 9:13; 19; 22: 27; 35:10)**
- ❖ In doing so, Christians should avoid stooping to the level of the violence associated with the oppressors. No room for violence.**

6. CHURCH AND STATE

- ❖ Jesus taught the power of love which was his strongest weapon; not violence (Mat.5:44)**
- ❖ Individual Christians must get involved in party politics to be the salt there.**
- ❖ There is intrinsic link between constitutional democracy and sustainable development. The influence of Christians must be felt in the process and implementation of a constitution.**

6. CHURCH AND STATE

- ❖ **Enlightened political, civil and church leadership should continually reclaim public space and commit themselves to development by ensuring that**
 - ❖ **national institutions and systems are not turned into private possessions to serve private political interests.**

6. CHURCH AND STATE

- ❖ **Enlightened political, civil and church leadership should continually reclaim public space and commit themselves to development by ensuring that**
 - ❖ **Institutions are used for the well-being of all citizens.**

6. CHURCH AND STATE

- ❖ **Enlightened political, civil and church leadership should continually reclaim public space and commit themselves to development by ensuring that**
 - ❖ **The centrality of the constitution as the supreme law of the nation is promoted.**

6. CHURCH AND STATE

- ❖ **Enlightened political, civil and church leadership should continually reclaim public space and commit themselves to development by ensuring that**
 - ❖ **the independence of the judiciary and the legal profession are promoted and defended.**

7.

**CONTEMPORARY
WITNESSES FOR
JUSTICE**

7. CONTEMPORARY WITNESSES FOR JUSTICE

To champion the cause of justice in line with the dictates of the Gospel makes you an enemy of the dictatorial authorities. It is indeed a challenge to denial of self and the taking up of the cross. We derive encouragement, however, from the witnesses of our times who have demonstrated that we can all be the salt and the light that God has called us to be.

7. CONTEMPORARY WITNESSES FOR JUSTICE

- **“If you have nothing to die for you have nothing to live for.”**

(MLK Jr. 1929-1968)

- **“It is a dangerous thing to be a Christian in our world.”**

(Rutilio Grande 1928-1977)

- **“The cross is something that you bear, and ultimately that you die on.”**

(MLK Jr. 1929-1968)

7. CONTEMPORARY WITNESSES FOR JUSTICE

- **“I rejoice, brothers and sisters, that our church is persecuted precisely for its preferential option for the poor and for seeking to become incarnate in the interest of the poor. How sad it would be in a country where such horrible murders are being committed if there were no priests among the victims.”**

(Oscar Romero 1917-1980)

7. CONTEMPORARY WITNESSES FOR JUSTICE

- **“A church that does not unite itself to the poor in order to denounce from the place of the poor the injustice committed vs them is not truly the church of Jesus Christ.”**
(Oscar Romero 1917 – 1890)
- **“I am your message, Lord. Throw me like a blazing torch into the night, that all may see and understand what it means to be a disciple”**
(Mother Maria Skobtsova 1891-1945)

7. CONTEMPORARY WITNESSES FOR JUSTICE

- **“The church’s task is not simply to bind the wounds of the victims beneath the wheel, but also to put a spoke in the wheel itself.”**
- **“The church stands, not at the boundaries where human powers give out, but in the midst of the village.”**

7. CONTEMPORARY WITNESSES FOR JUSTICE

- **“We have for once learnt to see great events of world history from below, from the perspective of the outcast, the suspects, powerless, the oppressed, the reviled – in short from the perspective of those who suffer”**

(Dietrich Bonhoeffer 1906-1945)

7. CONTEMPORARY WITNESSES FOR JUSTICE

➤ **“The future will be different if we make the present different.”**

(Peter Maurin 1877-1949)

➤ **“The road to freedom is via the cross”**

(Albert Luthuli 1898 – 1967)

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

