



**STATEMENT BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE PRIME  
MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO**

**DR. MOTSOAHAE THOMAS THABANE**

**DELIVERED AT THE 73<sup>RD</sup> SESSION OF THE UNITED  
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**NEW YORK, UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**

**28 SEPTEMBER, 2018**

Check Against Delivery

**Your Excellency President of the 73<sup>rd</sup> Session of the  
General Assembly,**

**Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,**

**Your Excellency Mr. Antonio Guterres', Secretary General  
of the United Nations,**

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Allow me at the outset to sincerely congratulate you, Madam President, for your well-deserved election as the fourth woman to ascend to the highest seat at the United Nations. In as much as we are happy about this reality, we are, however, certainly not proud of our record. Out of seventy three (73) General Assembly Presidents, we only have four that are women to date. Nevertheless, all is not lost. We must resolve to walk our talk and ensure that women get the same opportunities as men, in line with the spirit of the UN Charter.

I assure you of my delegation's full support **Madam President.** Your impeccable credentials and experience spanning over two decades in the multilateral setting, assure us of a successful 73<sup>rd</sup> session. It would be remiss of me not to commend your

predecessor, **H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajcak**, for his distinct leadership in the previous session.

I also wish to thank the Secretary General for his report on the Work of the Organisation which outlines the state of our United Nations.

**Madam President,**

The World history is replete of incidences of lack of peace since time immemorial. It speaks of conflict between brothers and sisters – wars between and within nations. Terrorism and violence have disrupted and displaced families, while economic devastations have torn countless people apart. Natural disasters such as Earthquakes, floods, tornadoes, due to climate change, have taken their toll on humanity. Injustice continues to permeate through countries, and societies are left devoid of hope for a prosperous, free, peaceful and just world. As new wars and civil unrests seem to be flaring up every week, our people look up to us as their Leaders for solutions, and they yearn for help from the United Nations.

It is in the above context, Madam President, that we welcome the theme for this Session; **"Making the United Nations Relevant to All People: Global Leadership and Shared Responsibilities for Peaceful, Equitable and Sustainable Societies"**. The theme speaks to the very <sup>(Kw)</sup>principles underpinning the formation of the United Nations. The United Nations Charter puts **"People"** at the center of the UN with the following words in its preamble: **"We the Peoples of the United Nations"**. The big question today is, have we, for more than seven decades now, put the People at the center of our efforts as an organization?

As the session of 51 delegates who came from across the world to adopt the UN Charter in 1945 came to a conclusion, the then President of the United States, Harry Truman, said:

*"The Charter of the United Nations which you have just signed, is a solid structure upon which we can build a better world...Between the victory in Europe and the final victory, in this most destructive of all wars, you have won a victory against war itself ... With this Charter the world can begin to look forward to the time when all worthy human beings may be permitted to live decently as free people".*

For the past 73 years now, we have been standing behind this rostrum making commitments and inspiring hope among the citizens of the world. However, our rhetoric has not been matched with actions. Our fidelity to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter remains a concern. Seven decades on, we are still embroiled in vicious conflict and violence. A world envisioned by our forebears – a world where *"worthy human beings may be permitted to live decently as free people"*, continues to elude us. The multilateral system seems to provide no sustainable solution to the multifaceted challenges that confront our world, while unilateralism is on the rise. These challenges put to the test the trust that humanity has on the United Nations. Their hope that future generations shall be saved from the scourge of war, "which has twice in our lifetime brought untold sorrow to humanity", is further receding from sight.

**Madam Chair,**

The above scenario that I have just painted is a reality. Even so, the centrality and relevance of the United Nations cannot be challenged. The World could not have been the same without the UN. Imperfect as it might be, its positive impact on the lives of

countless people is a fact that cannot be denied. From feeding over 104 million people in over 80 countries every year, to assisting millions of refugees and protecting women and children, to fighting poverty, HIV and AIDS and to restoring calm through peacekeeping initiatives, the UN has undoubtedly made a difference in the lives of global citizens.

When addressing this Assembly during the 72<sup>nd</sup> Session, I did so with a heavy heart as there was a dark cloud of instability and insecurity hovering over my Country. But, today I stand before you to attest to the difference the UN can make in people's lives. With the help of the UN, SADC, African Union (AU) and other Development Partners, we are on the path towards changing the trajectory of a vicious circle of instability and volatile security in Lesotho. The Kingdom of Lesotho is now embarking on a Comprehensive National Reforms agenda that will culminate with the calibration of pivotal elements of Government and thereby achieve the tenets of the National Vision 2020. Our shared commitment as a Nation to transform the Mountain Kingdom into a just, prosperous and stable country, marked by effective and people-focused institutions; national unity of purpose; rule of law, good governance and human rights, shall be attained.

Our resolve to build a safe, more stable and secure country is propelled by the fact that peace and security are pre-conditions to development. We are determined to take charge of our socio-economic transformation as a country in line with the African Union Agenda 2063 as well as the UN Agenda 2030, premised upon the principle of inclusivity and leaving no one behind. We do, however, note the importance that financing plays in any attempt to achieve the goals enshrined in both Agenda 2063 and Agenda 2030. While we acknowledge that Official Development Assistance (ODA) remains a catalyst for development, we also advocate for robust domestic resource mobilization. This is the path that we are venturing on as a Country. We are determined to combat illicit financial flows, strengthen tax administration and harness remittances.

In line with our National priorities, we are taking substantive steps towards providing an appropriate space for private sector investment and entrepreneurship as a complement to public investments. An Industrial Hub has been launched in the Northern district, which will create job opportunities for about 14,000 people once fully operational, and where private property investors will be invited to build factory shells.

We cannot also ignore the disturbing issue of migration. We all know that the movement of persons across borders is a phenomenal issue. It is our considered view that migration is one area in which opportunities for skilled and surplus labour can be explored. To this end, my Government is working closely with International Partners to achieve developmental outcomes which are related to migration. Further to this, a National Consultative Committee (NCC) was set up to deal with a range of migration-related matters including, inter alia; the development of a strategic plan on migration and development.

Encapsulated in the plans are interventions aimed at enhancing the proper utilization of remittances from the Diaspora. We, therefore, need to embrace migrants at the global level on their contribution towards the economic development of both their countries and host countries. We find it disturbing that migrants across the world continue to face challenges of unprecedented magnitude. We call upon all concerned to adhere to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. We look forward to the endorsement of the Compact in December of this year.



**Madam Chair,**

Peace and prosperity cannot be achieved when women and girls are marginalized and not given the opportunity to contribute to development. The role of women and other disadvantaged sectors of our communities in advancing the global development agenda must be further enhanced. Equally important is to underline that the protection of human rights is a noble objective of the international community that must not be politicized, redefined or even subjected to double standards in accordance with the whims and caprices of a few powerful states in pursuit of their individual agenda.

On the African Continent, we are today, more than ever before, determined to rid ourselves of conflict by settling disputes through peaceful means. The warring parties in South Sudan have finally brokered a Peace Deal. The developments in the horn of Africa offer hope for a prosperous and peaceful region. In particular, the normalisation of relations between Ethiopia and Eritrea, through the signing of the peace deal and opening of Embassies in those Countries' respective Capitals, will usher in a new era of peace with concomitant huge economic, humanitarian and strategic implications for the region.

We continue to be saddened, however, by the situation in Western Sahara. Western Sahara continues to be the only colony on the African Continent. The suffering of the Saharawi People has been going on for far too long now. They deserve to be afforded an opportunity to voice out their aspirations for independence through an independent and equal suffrage. Lesotho shall continue to stand with them in their pursuit for emancipation.

While the Palestinian People's plight continues to worsen, the hope for the resolution of the crises in Syria and Iraq continues to diminish. We cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of these innocent people. Unilateral actions that defy international agreements and the United Nations Resolutions will only worsen the situation of the Palestinians. A two state solution, with Palestine and Israel living side by side in peace and harmony, remains the only viable option for settlement of the Palestine Question. Attainment of peace is a process that requires engagement, accommodation and genuineness. Peace cannot be attained by war or oppression. All of us joined this Organisation voluntarily and professing **Love for Peace**. Our actions must, equally, reflect that commitment.

In the same vein, the economic and commercial embargo on Cuba continues to weigh heavily on our conscience. There is no doubt that this measure has had negative impact on the People and economy of Cuba. It is our appeal that the embargo be lifted and Cuba be reintegrated into the world trading system.

**Madam President,**

In today's globalized world, it is indefensible and incomprehensible that decisions which bind us all are left in the hands of a few Member States. Our advocacy for democratization of the United Nations must be intensified. Reform of the Security Council, which takes into account the aspirations of Africa, as espoused in the Ezulwini Consensus, cannot be postponed any longer. Transparency, inclusivity and democracy must inform the work of the entire United Nations system.

Equally important is to underscore that the gains made in the field of disarmament are being eroded gradually. Small arms and light weapons continue to flood the illegal market. The threat of the use of weapons of mass destruction has re-emerged, and the United Nations is left paralysed due to the size and power configuration of the current Security Council, making the call for the reform of this body even more urgent.

As I conclude, **Madam President**, allow me to indicate that Yes, the United Nations has to a very large extent attempted to put people at the center of its core business. However, more still needs to be done. My appeal to you all is to shun those who seek to divide and incite us against one another. It is through our solidarity, more than anything else, that the UN will thrive and successfully put humanity at the center of its activities. The United Nations is the only platform that affords us to embrace true multilateralism.

At the same time, let us remember that even though we might have a shared vision and determined leadership to address peace, equity and sustainability challenges, the truth, however, is that we are mortal beings with intellectual and other constraints. As such, we need to acknowledge that there is Divine Power above from whence emanates true wisdom. Let us, therefore, keep our communication lines with God open in order to find real and lasting solutions to the world problems that so often besiege us.

**I THANK YOU**