



*PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM
OF LESOTHO TO THE UNITED NATIONS
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STATEMENT

BY

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PRIME MINISTER AND HEAD OF GOVERNMENT
OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO**

AT THE

**PLENARY OF THE
SEVENTY FIRST REGULAR SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**23 SEPTEMBER 2016
NEW YORK**

Please check against delivery

Mr. President,

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki Moon, the Secretary General of the United Nations,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

May I take this opportunity to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your well-deserved election as President of the 71st Session of the General Assembly. Your distinguished career, experience and impeccable credentials, assure us of a successful session. Let me hasten to pledge my delegation's full support and cooperation to you during your term of office. I also wish to commend your predecessor, Mr. Mogen's Lykketoft, for his outstanding leadership during the previous session.

Similar accolades go to the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki Moon, under whose leadership the organization continues to discharge its mandate with honour and commendable zeal. We may recall that under Your stewardship, the United Nations waded through several challenges, most of which were handled with great success. As we prepare to bid you farewell, we do so with pride, as you have indeed discharged your onerous responsibilities with

honour and dignity. You have left indelible footprints which your successor will embrace and continue the good work done.

This 71st Session of the General Assembly comes at a time when the United Nations, as an Organization, has made significant strides in addressing many of the serious challenges facing the International Community. It is to the credit of the United Nations that, since the end of the Second World War, no world-wide conflict has occurred; except localized skirmishes in different parts of the globe. The international community has enjoyed the longest period of sustained peace and development in modern history.

The intractable conflicts in the Middle East and Africa; tension on the Korean peninsula and other parts of Asia, including the biggest refugee problem since World War II, are some of the challenges facing the United Nations and the world today. Terrorism continues to rear its ugly head in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia, with ISIS and other terrorist entities indiscriminately causing great damage to property and needless loss of lives. World security is indivisible, threads of conflict, terrorism and famine in one part of the world will always have debilitating repercussions everywhere; the case in point being the influx of refugees from Africa, Middle East and Asia into Western Europe.

Mr. President

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals, agreement on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Climate Change Treaty are notable landmark achievements which have cemented the role of the

United Nations as the only forum at which collective diplomacy can bear fruit. The theme chosen for the 71st General Debate, namely, **“The Sustainable Development Goals: a Universal push to transform our world”**, is most relevant and appropriate at this time, when humanity is tottering on the precipice of hunger, poverty, disease and adverse consequences of climate change. The theme highlights the collective desire of the United Nations to eradicate poverty in all its forms and dimensions. As we may recall, the over-riding message of Agenda 2030 is **“leaving no one behind”**.

The unique and special challenges faced by Least Developed, Landlocked and Small Island States as well as those emerging from conflicts, should be paramount in the consideration of all strategies and steps taken to bring Sustainable Development Goals to fruition. We believe that inclusion of all stakeholders, especially women and youth, in a programmatic and results-orientated action, will bring about fundamental changes in the livelihood and well-being of our societies. In Lesotho women constitute a significant majority of the population and are the backbone of our rural communities. Their human resource potential cannot be underestimated. It is for this reason that we have promulgated laws that allow them access to land, credit and resources necessary for their unfettered engagement in economic activity.

Young people are always at the receiving end of the economic down-turn anytime it occurs, yet they are endowed with intellect, energy and the exuberance of youth which can be harnessed for development in the long term. In

line with the SDGs, we have undertaken to capacitate youth-owned Small, Macro and Medium Enterprises (SMMEs) to acquire appropriate skills that will help them create jobs and take advantage of international markets already at their disposal. Special attention is given to SMMEs as they form an integral part of industry and are potential employers for unskilled and semi-skilled labour. It is also a point of entry for young entrepreneurs into manufacturing and services sectors. In Lesotho's Coalition Agreement, we have committed to:

“ Supporting Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises(SMME's) through appropriate regulatory policies and access to finance”.

The transition from Millenium Development Goals(MDG's) to the SDGs has not been difficult as there are many synergies and complementarities between the two programmes. We are also aware of the synergies that exist between the UN 2030 Agenda, AU Agenda 2063 and the SADC Revised Regional Indicative Development Plan. For our part in Lesotho, we have already begun a process to ensure that the three agendas are mainstreamed into our national policies and plans. With our limited domestic resources, we are looking for innovative ways of pursuing our development priorities and aligning them to global, continental and regional agendas. Towards this end, Lesotho has been working with the UN Country office to conduct sensitization workshops on the SDGs. So far we have conducted such workshops for the Private Sector, Civil Society and Parliamentarians. We are in the process of reviewing our National Strategic Development Plan(NSDP) to align it fully with Agenda 2030, regional and continental development plans.

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Delegates;

We are convinced that a private sector-led growth strategy, which ensures that the sector contributes to economic growth, job creation, poverty alleviation and sustainable development is vital for competitiveness and expansion of trade and investment opportunities. Goal 9 which enjoins us to **“build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”** recognizes the importance of infrastructure, industrialization and technology to the progress and development of countries like Lesotho.

Economic development cannot be sustainable without a conscious effort to protect the environment. The adoption of the Climate Change Treaty in Paris last year, is another milestone in the global effort to safeguard and promote humanity’s continued progress and survival. We welcome the pledge by Developed countries to make resources available for the Green Climate Fund.

The threat posed by underdevelopment, climate change and HIV/AIDs has pricked the conscience of mankind for many years. Lesotho has adopted an innovative, indigenous leadership program which seeks to galvanize the collective wisdom of all levels of leadership to join the fight against HIV/AIDs, in particular, and ensure that the health delivery system is affordable, accessible and effective. The program was launched by His Majesty King Letsie III on the 25th August this year. We launched the Test-and-Treat programme in April and revived the

National AIDs Commission. These are just a few of the initiatives the Government has initiated to curb new infections, maternal deaths and TB incidences.

Mr. President,

We recognize the role of disarmament in the maintenance of international peace and security; and Lesotho remains fully committed to the implementation of the provisions of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) which aims to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. We therefore call upon all nuclear weapons states to start making deep cuts in their current nuclear weapons stockpiles, with the ultimate aim of finally eliminating them. The Africa Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty which came into force in July, 2009 is a clear demonstration of the continent's desire for peace and genuine nuclear disarmament. We should all remain true to the principle of ***"responsibility to protect"***, which the United Nations, unanimously, adopted nearly a decade ago.

This principle imposes upon us, the responsibility to create conditions of peace, security and harmony, leaving no room for hostility, violence or aggression. We therefore remain committed to supporting the efforts by the Security Council that include authorization for military intervention, where necessary. Our understanding is that the international law principles of non-use of force in international relations, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states, remain paramount and sacrosanct in all instances. We commend the work the UN Security Council has performed in this regard over the years.

For this reason, I wish to reiterate Lesotho's well-known position on the reform of the UN Security Council along the established position of the AU as articulated in the Ezulweni Consensus. We strongly urge that this very important issue of the UN's Security Council reform should not be turned into a joke! The sooner it is concluded the better for humankind and peace in the world. We further reiterate our position on the one-China policy, a position that will ensure that the people of China are not dismembered and huddled into imaginary geographic segments.

Mr. President,

The right to self-determination and independence is a God-Given right which cannot be taken away arbitrarily. It is for this reason that we have never wavered in our support for the independence of the people of Western Sahara. We call upon the United Nations to assist the Secretary General to resuscitate negotiations for the holding of a referendum in Western Sahara to determine the will of the Saharawi people. We also urge the Kingdom of Morocco to support this process so as to bring a lasting solution to this matter; and to facilitate the return of Morocco to her rightful place in the AU family.

The plight of the Palestinian people has been on the agenda of the international community for far too long. We call for a new initiative that will buttress all

efforts aimed at a two-state solution which will result in the state of Israel and that of Palestine existing in peace side by side. A fresh initiative is required to restart the Oslo process and bring an end to the suffering of the communities which endured aggression for over sixty years now. Surely a permanent resolution of this seeming impasse is now overdue and urgent for the mutual benefit of these neighbouring countries and the world at large.

We applaud the decision of the State of Palestine to deposit its instrument of ratification of the Kampala Amendments to the Rome Statute, making it the 30th State to do so. This ratification has given way for the State Parties to the Rome Statute to take the necessary and crucial decision of activating the Court's jurisdiction over the crime of aggression in the year 2017. This brings us one step closer to a permanent system of accountability at the international level, for this crime. We are happy to report that Lesotho is in the process of ratifying the Kampala Amendments.

As I conclude, let me express our hope and expectation that, in the next decade, the efforts of the United Nations in accelerating the pace of economic development, on a global scale, will begin to show tangible results. Let us work to create a world where the foundations of world peace and security will continue to rest, not on the absence of war, but on the international principles of non-aggression, non-use of force in interstate relations and the peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter. We will, hopefully, continue to consolidate foundations of a world where the true definition of

peace will manifest itself in harmonious relations between peoples; and mutual respect and understanding between states. We will continue to build prosperity for our peoples on the basis of the agreed principles embodied in the SDGs, which represent a pragmatic and visionary programme that seeks to free humanity from the bondage of hunger and poverty. We will ultimately embrace the need to allow reason to prevail over might. This is the future of our dreams, the future we owe unto posterity.

I THANK YOU