



**NATIONAL STATEMENT BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

H.E Mr. MATETE 'NENA

**DURING THE 57th SESSION OF THE COMMISSSION ON
POPULATION AND DEVELOPMNET (GENERAL DEBATE)**

UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS

NEW YORK

02 MAY, 2024

Mr. Chair

Distinguished delegates

The kingdom of Lesotho is happy to join the global community in celebrating 30 years since the adoption of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action. This milestone, coincides with the kingdom's 200 years of existence. The year 2024, is truly a reflection year for Basotho in many fronts.

On this momentous occasion, we celebrate the remarkable achievements of the ICPD over the past three decades. From advancing sexual and reproductive health rights to promoting gender equality and sustainable development, the ICPD has been a beacon of progress. As we reflect on our journey, we recognize the importance of placing people at the centre of development, ensuring their dignity, autonomy, and well-being.

We wish on the onset, to reaffirm our unwavering commitment to the principles and goals outlined in the ICPD Programme of Action. We recognize that achieving sustainable development, gender equality, and the empowerment of all individuals is intrinsically linked to addressing population dynamics, sexual and reproductive health, and human rights. We also believe that the future of sustainable development is directly linked to fulfilling the aspirations of adolescents and youth.

Mr. Chair

The Kingdom of Lesotho is undergoing a notable shift in its demographic structure, owing to decreases in fertility and infant mortality. This shift presents a potential for the country to benefit from the demographic dividend. The government has therefore, been very intentional in its efforts to empower young people to unleash their potential.

Lesotho joined the rest of the African Continent in 2023 to undertake national review on Addis Ababa Declaration on Population and Development (AADPD)@10, an African pathway to realizing the ICPD. The national review report which is based on the six pillars of the AADPD, has demonstrated encouraging progress. The national trends in poverty ratio in the country show a decline from 56.6 percent in 2002 to 49.7 percent in 2017. Regrettably, this positive trajectory has been undermined by COVID-19.

The kingdom has also taken steps to address inequality in the country. The government of His Majesty, has established frameworks that

mainstream gender, promote and protect women's rights and shield women from various forms of abuse, exploitation and discrimination.

The government of Lesotho has further made good progress in strengthening health systems. This has resulted in a steady decline in unmet needs of family planning from 18% in 2014 to 16 % in 2018. Similarly, the maternal mortality ratio, although still high, has declined from 936 deaths per 100 000 live births in 2006 to 566 deaths per 100,000 birth in 2020.

The country recognizes the gaps in data to guide development agenda. Our national Bureau of Statistics has developed a national strategy to meet the country's increasing data demands.

Lesotho also continues to strengthen partnerships and international cooperation. The country recently launched the Country Partnership Framework for the period 2024 to 2028. This is a product of collaboration between the Government of Lesotho and the World Bank Group, to promote a private sector driven, export orientated economy for job creation and support for an effective public sector. Furthermore, the government is continuing to strengthen partnership with both national and international civil society organizations to promote a better health for all in the kingdom.

Mr. Chair

As we move forward, we pledge to accelerate efforts to ensure universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services, eliminate harmful practices, promote gender equality, and uphold the dignity and rights of every person.

Our commitment extends beyond 2030, as we position ourselves for a future where every individual can thrive. By advancing the ICPD Programme of Action, we contribute to a more just, equitable, and prosperous world for all.

As I conclude **Mr. Chair**, we humbly call upon all UN member states to harness the power of collaboration, evidence-based policies, and inclusive approaches. Together, we can build a world where no one is left behind, where rights are respected, and where sustainable development flourishes.

I thank you for your attention!