



**Statement by**

**Honourable Mr. Mohapi Mohapinyane, Minister of Energy and Meteorology During the Africa Regional Review Meeting on the Implementation of the Istanbul Programme of Action in preparation for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries**

**26 February, 2021**

**Moderator**

**Excellencies,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Thank you Moderator for giving me the floor. At the outset I wish to indicate that Lesotho like other LDCs remains committed and at the top of action in championing climate action and accelerating energy transition.

**Moderator,** the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) face a range of pressures and challenges that undermine their economic and social development efforts, and their achievement of all the UN sustainable development goals. Climate change is the most serious ‘present-day’ threat to human and natural systems globally, and adds to these pressures; In Lesotho, extreme weather events have increased in frequency and magnitude resulting in loss of lives and property. Access to climate finance to

increase resilience to climate change impacts and reduce greenhouse emission remains a challenge in Lesotho, like in many other LDCs

In our efforts to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters, Lesotho prepared a *National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA)* in 2007 which outlined priorities to build resilience and reduce the vulnerability of the people of Lesotho to climate change impacts.

**Moderator,** the Government of Lesotho developed *the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP II)* with the objective of achieving climate resilience and low carbon development as well as increasing access to sustainable energy. In 2017, Lesotho formulated the *National Climate Change Policy*, and *National Climate Change Policy Implementation Strategy* and *Sustainable Energy Strategy*. The Policy's long-term vision is to build climate change resilience and low-carbon pathways, including a prosperous, sustainable economy and environment in Lesotho.

In June, 2018 Lesotho submitted her updated *Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC)* report to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), committing to unconditionally lower her net Greenhouse Gas emissions by 10% by 2030; to further push for an additional 25% Greenhouse Gas emission reduction on condition that external support (finance, investment, technology development and transfer, and capacity building) is made available to cover the full cost of implementing the adaptation and mitigation actions.

Furthermore, there are several initiatives and programmes implemented by the Government of Lesotho to address climate change such as *Integrated Catchment Management*, the *Improvement of Early Warning System*, the formulation of a

*National Adaptation Plan, the Improving Adaptive Capacity of Vulnerable and Food insecure Populations in Lesotho*, as well as mainstreaming climate change into our development programs.

**Moderator,**

Turning to Energy, for Lesotho like many other LDCs, access to is relatively low (49% household connections). Almost all electricity generated locally comes from hydro energy which is highly dependent on the availability of good rains. With ongoing climate change, Lesotho is experiencing increased frequency and intensity of droughts which exert pressure on hydro-power generation.

To address the energy challenges, Lesotho has developed *the Electrification Masterplan* in order to accelerate electricity access; *the Lesotho Solar Thermal Technology Roadmap* to promote solar thermal applications; and established *the Lesotho Electricity Generation Company* to improve electricity generation through renewable energy sources.

In addition to these, there are ongoing and pipelined activities aimed at accelerating the clean energy transition in *Lesotho such as solar street lighting*, and *the Lesotho Renewable Energy and Energy Access Project and the Sustainable Energy for All project*.

**Moderator,**

COVID19 pandemic has clearly demonstrated that the collapse of the global supply chain systems disproportionately crippled the weakest in the system, the LDCs. It has also taught us that reliance on external systems and products is not only unsustainable but also presents unprecedented challenges. With the restrictions on travel, all the support that would have been possible through external expertise is no

longer accessible. In this instance, **Moderator**, we call on our development partners to support long-term capacity development in LDC's in order to build resilience to climate change.

## **Moderator**

Again, in an effort to ensure that LDCs are better positioned to build resilience to climate change and natural disasters, Lesotho wishes to recommend that;

- as the most vulnerable, the LDCs must remain a priority under the UN system and the development community to enable them to catch up with the rest of the world;
- a unified UN led support system with special programmes per regions—to support the LDCs to address climate change and energy shortage should be put in place. We consider the establishment of UN Technology Bank for the LDCs one of the “first” achievement of the SDG target: target 17.8, that would help strengthen science and technology innovations essential to development and therefore we call on the donor countries to support the UN Technology Bank so that it can execute its mandate to LDCs successfully;
- efforts must be elevated to support all African LDCs to build human assets, diversify their economies, and build resilience to present and future shocks;
- improving access and simplifying modalities for climate finance and requisite conditionalities will ensure that countries like Lesotho are on the track to maintaining a climate resilient and low-carbon pathway, thus bringing the attainment of the SDGs within reasonable reach.

**Moderator**, with these few remarks I wish to thank everyone for their attention.