



STATEMENT BY

**Honourable Matsepo Ramakoae – Minister of Foreign Affairs and
International Relations of the Kingdom of Lesotho during the
Annual Ministerial Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs for
Least Developed Countries (LDCs)**

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**President of the GA,
Deputy Secretary General,
President of Economic and Social Council,
Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,**

Let me at the onset express our gratitude to you Mr. Chairman, on your leadership in steering the activities of the LDC Group, especially during these trying times of the COVID-19 pandemic. Madam Under Secretary-General of our group your support is also highly appreciated.

Mr. Chairman,

In our determination to achieve the goals of the Istanbul Programme of Action for the successful delivery of Agenda 2030, Lesotho has begun implementation of the National Development Strategic Plan II (NDSP II). It is our aim to achieve the graduation criteria in the near future. Lesotho's Gross National Income (GNI) per capita of \$1,296 is above the graduation threshold of \$1,230 but still much lower than the income only graduation threshold of \$2, 484. The Human Asset Index (HAI) is 61.6 which is below the graduation threshold of 66 or above, and the Economic Vulnerability Index (EVI) is at 42 which is higher than the graduation threshold of 32 or below. Through the implementation of the NSDP II we have accelerated our efforts towards graduation and achievement of our development goals anchored on sustainable growth and poverty reduction through an export led and diversified economy.

Progress towards graduation has been hampered by limited financial resources as well as governance related challenges. Furthermore, setbacks such as negative effects of climate change and more recently COVID 19 pandemic have beleaguered any positive gains that may have been realized by Lesotho during the IPoA 2011 – 2020 implementation.

Mr. Chairman,

The UN reports on SDGs give us a true picture of a post COVID 19 era of further struggle that will be faced by LDCs. Multilateralism and solidarity in the face of these adversities will be our only succor.

In this context Mr. Chairman, I wish to recognize that it is through your able guidance, that the plight of LDCs in the face of Covid-19 has been communicated to the UN System. We particularly welcome the statement issued by your office on behalf of LDCs which among others is calling for emergency public health package for LDCs; financial support for social protection system; education support for students; immediate fulfillment of 0.15 per cent of gross national income as ODA to least developed countries; full debt cancellation, lifting trade barriers and scaling up aid for trade; stimulus packages to stabilize the agricultural sector; a renewed and revitalized global trade framework to promote export earnings of LDCs, to mention but a few.

Mr. Chairman

As I conclude, I welcome the launch of the United Nations COVID-19 Response and Recovery Fund which has indeed been of great assistance to our vulnerable countries in these trying times. It would be remiss of me not to express further, our appreciation to the G20 countries, International Financial Institutions and other multilateral and bilateral development partners for their prompt actions in the form of emergency health support, debt relief and other economic assistance.

I thank you all for your kind attention!