



STATEMENT

BY

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

DELIVERED AT

**THE HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON
THE RULE OF LAW AT THE NATIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL LEVELS**

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**Your Excellency the President of the General Assembly,
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki Moon, the Secretary General of the
United Nations,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, for convening this very important High-Level Meeting on the Rule of Law at the National and International Levels.

The world that we are living in has always been characterized by wars, injustice and inequality since the dawn of time. The formation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945 ushered in hope to mankind that the rule of law in international relations would reign and breed freedom, justice and prosperity. Indeed respect for the rule of law is at the very heart of the UN. However, challenges to the rule of law, both at the national and international levels, abound. Lack of respect for the rule of law has led to brutal conflicts, oppressive rule and violations of human rights in some parts of the world.

This High Level Meeting, therefore, presents a golden opportunity for us to reaffirm our commitment to enhancing the respect of the rule of law, and for agreeing on concrete steps on how to consolidate it, both at the national and international levels.

Mr. President,

The concept of the rule of law has, in the recent past, gained some momentum within the UN system. In 2005, at the World Summit, we collectively agreed on

the importance of universal adherence to and implementation of the rule of law, both at the national and international levels. The resolutions that the Security Council has adopted on this subject since the year 2003, and the establishment of the Office for the Rule of Law within the UN Secretariat, highlight the importance that the UN attaches to this concept. Despite the strides made, much still needs to be done.

Mr. President,

Strengthening the rule of law at the international level is not only critical for effectively addressing the current global challenges, but also for reinforcing the principle itself as the very foundation of peaceful coexistence between nations. World peace will forever be difficult to attain unless there is application of the principles of the rule of law to relations between states and other subjects of international law. The need to increase compliance with international law treaties and conventions as well as the UN Charter cannot be overemphasized. Consistency in the application of international law, and democratization of international relations are also key to building a just world order. Double standards degrade the integrity of the international legal system.

All laws are made by human beings and for the laws to be applied effectively; they must enjoy the trust and support of the people. If the faith of the International Community in the rule of law is to be sustained, flagrant violations of international law without any consequences must be a thing of the past. The law must apply both to the mighty and to the weak, to the rich and the poor alike. In this regard, we need to work together towards strengthening the International Court of Justice and other international dispute resolution mechanisms. The era

of impunity must be no more. Enforcement of accountability for crimes punishable under international law must become a norm. Justice to victims of the most heinous crimes and reconciliation of societies ravaged by violence, will not be possible unless we have a strong international criminal justice system. It is in this spirit that we acknowledge the work done by the International Criminal Court (ICC) and other international criminal tribunals in entrenching the traditions of the rule of law. Let us commit to support them in their noble course, and pledge our cooperation with them.

Mr. President,

The application of the rule of law at the national level is a cornerstone for building stable and resilient societies. In our view, the rule of law at the national level promotes social interaction among citizens and government in a legal environment in which basic freedoms and human rights are respected and protected. It is in this spirit that Lesotho, as a Country that is ruled by a Government that is democratically elected through equal and universal suffrage, has resolved to advance the rule of law as an answer to many challenges that besiege her. Lesotho is committed to respect for the rule of law, and protection of the rights and freedoms of Her citizens, as enshrined in the Country's Constitution. It is only in the environment where basic freedoms are protected, that individuals and groups can reach their full potential for realizing their aspirations.

Lesotho has made modest strides in strengthening the rule of law at the national level. Inequality between men and women has been addressed to a large degree. Legislation aimed at empowering and protecting women, was enacted in 2006.

This Act provides for equal rights between spouses. Women are now free to enter into binding contracts and to access loans from financial institutions. Moreover, during the life of the current Parliament, we have resolved to fight corruption by strengthening the judicial system. We will do so by, among others, creating relevant and adequately resourced judicial structures to fight this menace. This will indeed go a long way in addressing some of the societal ills affecting our people on a daily basis.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by pointing out that the journey we have traveled thus far is a clear sign of our commitment to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and international law. It is on the strength of the principles of the UN Charter that the rule of law stands out as the most indispensable tool for promoting a just, peaceful, and prosperous world. The supremacy of the law over all individuals, ensuring accessibility to justice and the independence of the judiciary should be our common pledge today.

This High-level Meeting should not be an end in itself but rather the beginning of a process in which the rule of law can be more intensively advocated, venerated and actively practiced. The Declaration that we will adopt today is a step in the right direction. It is now time for us to collectively turn vision and political will into concrete commitments that will ensure that the universally pursued principle of the rule of law remains an important hallmark of our civilization.

I thank you.