



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

BY

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OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**IN THE
THIRD COMMITTEE
ON AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

**DURING THE
SIXTY- SEVENTH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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Chairperson,

Thank you for giving me the floor. I congratulate you on your election to chair the Third Committee for the 67th Session. I also wish to applaud members of the Bureau on their election. I assure you of My delegation's full support and cooperation.

I would also like to thank the introductory statements delivered by representatives of UN-Women, CEDAW and UNFPA.

My delegation aligns itself with the statements delivered by Algeria on behalf of G77 and China, Cameroon on behalf of the African Group and Malawi on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), respectively. I, however, wish to add a few remarks on my national capacity.

Chairperson,

One of the purposes for the establishment of the United Nations (UN) was to achieve international cooperation in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion. In this regard, empowerment of women has been a top priority for the UN ever since its creation. The UN has been working assiduously to empower women so that they could take their rightful place as equal partners with men in all aspects of life. The beacons in this regard are, **inter alia**, the establishment of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the holding of various World Conferences on Women, as well as the

establishment of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women, known as “UN Women”.

Despite these achievements, problems in the path towards empowerment of women abound. The disparity in education between women and men persists. Women continue to be unemployed in huge numbers, and many of those who have a job hold junior positions. Hence, they constitute the highest proportion of people living below the poverty line. Instances of violence against women continue to be reported in many parts of the world. Needless to mention that the rates at which women die during childbirth are still unacceptably high. We, therefore, have to redouble our efforts in working towards achieving our shared objective of creating a world where women are equal citizens to men in all respects.

Chairperson,

Women are not just the appendages of men. They have a meaningful role to play in advancing the global agenda of consolidating international peace, economic prosperity and human social progress. That role must be recognized and strengthened, particularly through the empowerment of women and by institutionalizing gender equality. It is only when the inequalities in education and employment are eradicated that women will be in a better position to fully get involved in all the efforts aimed at fighting poverty, and to make the world a better place for all. The inclusion of women in governance and all decision making spheres is an imperative of our time. We must, therefore, set quotas in order to guarantee gender parity in politics, hence, increase women’s representation in parliament.

Chairperson,

Allow me to share with you some of the strides my country has made in implementing the commitments aimed at the advancement of women. The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho recognizes women as equal citizens and is committed to the promotion and protection of their human rights. Lesotho is born from a rich cultural heritage and valuable principles that hold women in high esteem, and regard them as the basic pillar of strength in the building of our society. To that end, the Gender Equality in Economic Rights Programme, forms part of the Compact of Agreement for the Millennium Challenge Account, between the Government of Lesotho and the Government of the United States of America through the Millennium Challenge Corporation. The programme aims at influencing women's equal rights to economic resources and opportunities for their meaningful participation in economic enhancement.

Moreover, we have taken great strides in policy, legislation and programmatic interventions to improve the quality of life of our women. In partnership with her Development Partners, and consistent with the Lesotho Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS), as well as the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Government of Lesotho is working towards the improvement of the quality of life of her citizens with great emphasis on promoting gender equality. The strides made by Lesotho in the area of empowerment of women have not gone unnoticed. In the year 2010, Lesotho was ranked as the number one country in Sub Saharan Africa, and number eight in the world, for closing the gender gap by 76.8%.

Furthermore, the Government of Lesotho has remained steadfast in its endeavours to combat violence against women, particularly sexual violence. The Government of Lesotho has requested the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), resident in Lesotho, for support in the establishment of a **"one-stop-shop"** centre, which is meant to carry out a comprehensive study on violence against women, raise public awareness, as well as to establish a specialized service for victims of gender-based-violence.

It remains my Country's commitment to ensure that continuous efforts and initiatives are taken to promote equal opportunities and full participation of all segments of society in socio-economic development; while putting more emphasis on women and girls.

Chairperson,

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate our Country's commitment to the Advancement of Women. We also remain committed to the full implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcomes of the Twenty-Third Special Session of the General Assembly. With increased political will, we shall achieve our objective.

I thank you.