



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

BY

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PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO**

AT THE

**PLENARY OF THE
SIXTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

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

Mr. President,

At the very outset, allow me to congratulate you for your well-deserved election to the Office of President of the 66th Session of the General Assembly (GA). I assure you of my delegation's full support during your tenure of office. Let me also pay a fitting tribute to your predecessor, His Excellency, Mr. Joseph Deiss, for the commendable manner in which he led the work of the GA during the 65th Session.

His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki Moon also deserves our hearty congratulations for his re-appointment as Secretary General of the United Nations (UN). His unanimous re-appointment is a true reflection of the confidence that all Member States have in him.

I wish to also express my profound joy at witnessing the Republic of South Sudan join the ranks of the Members of the UN. We welcome this new Member and extend our hand of friendship.

Mr. President,

This 66th Session of the GA once again provides us with an opportunity to reflect on the overall situation in the world. The world continues to experience numerous challenges. The target date for the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) is fast approaching. Yet the world continues to be overwhelmed by unending hurdles in the path towards the achievement of these Goals. Despite globalization, the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are yet to be fully integrated into the global markets.

The rapid environmental degradation, compounded by the effects of climate change, continue to adversely affect the ecosystems, agriculture, water resources and energy supplies. HIV and AIDS has not relented from decimating whole nations. The promotion of the principles of democracy and good governance, the protection of fundamental human rights, and the abuse of power in international relations continue to present challenges.

Mr. President,

As if this is not enough, terrorism continues to torment us. Like all the other challenges, this is a fight that we collectively must win. Terrorism is a transnational problem that cannot be left to one state to confront. There is need for cooperation by all Member States to address and eliminate this menace. The biggest challenge that we face in the post cold war era is to ensure that terrorists do not lay their hands on weapons of mass destruction. It is in this regard that we reiterate our call for the total elimination of all nuclear weapons. We are convinced that the only assurance that terrorists will never have access to nuclear weapons is their total elimination. We urge the Nuclear Weapon States to remain faithful to their commitments under the Treaty on the Non Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We further call on the Member States who have not joined the NPT, to do so without any further delay. But it will be illogical to demand of non-nuclear states to shun proliferation of nuclear weapons, while states that possess nuclear weapons continue to perfect new generations of these weapons, and to threaten their use at the slightest opportunity.

Mr. President,

Some Member States of this global Organisation continue to experience either internal or external conflicts of significant proportions. The International Community has not been consistent in its approach to the management of these conflicts. In some countries, the International Community, acting through the United Nations Security Council, has been swift and decisive in intervening militarily. In other countries, the International Community has preferred mediation. And yet still in others, it has turned a blind eye, at best, leaving the mantle to some members of the International Community to unilaterally threaten the imposition of sanctions.

It is against this background that we welcome the theme of our general debate, namely, “**The Role of Mediation in the Settlement of Disputes by Peaceful Means**”. Indeed, the relevance and appropriateness of this theme, at the present juncture in international relations, is beyond doubt.

Mr. President,

In addressing this theme, we start from the premise that peaceful settlement of disputes by mediation lies at the heart of the work of the UN. However, the UN has not sufficiently used mediation as a tool for conflict resolution.

The UN is charged with the maintenance of international peace and order through the United Nations Security Council. Consequently, the Council is expected to take a leading role in the settlement of disputes by mediation. In so doing, the Council must adopt the multilateral approach. Multilateral approach is the only way to guarantee transparency, impartiality and ownership of the process, by the general membership of the UN. Mediation must have, as its priority, peaceful settlement of disputes, reconciliation of the parties, as well as future sustainability of peace and stability. Peace that is imposed without consulting all parties to conflicts cannot be sustainable. Bias and abuse of military power to influence the outcome of mediation in conflicts will quickly erode the credibility of the UN as an honest mediator, and will strengthen perceptions of ulterior motives.

We still believe in the principle of subsidiarity. It is common course that the primary role for the maintenance of international peace and security reposes on the Security Council. However, cooperation and coordination between the Council and regional organizations, in terms of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, is key to resolving conflicts speedily. The UN must empower and support the efforts of regional structures and organizations, which in all cases, have a comparative advantage to mediate.

But, the Security Council can only better discharge this function if it is more representative of the Membership of the UN. A more representative Security Council will take into account all our aspirations, and its decisions will command legitimacy. Consequently, we continue to call for the early and comprehensive reform of the Security Council in order to make it more representative of the Member States of the UN.

Mr. President,

The Settlement of conflicts by mediation has been put to the test, and its successes are well-recorded in the annals of history. The peaceful settlement by mediation in the conflict in the Republic of Kenya in 2007 is a typical example. It would be recalled that in Kenya, a group of eminent persons from Africa worked together with the UN to broker a peaceful solution to the political stalemate that resulted from the disputed Parliamentary and Presidential elections of 2007. That solution resulted in the formation of an all-inclusive and stable Government. A sub-regional specific mediation by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) in Zimbabwe yielded fruitful results, and so did that of the African Union in Burundi.

Furthermore, we witnessed a successfully mediated solution bring an end to Africa's longest civil war in Sudan. The world rejoiced together with the People of South Sudan in July 2011 upon their attainment of independence as a sovereign nation. The remarkable mediation efforts of the African Union, with the support of the entire international community, helped in consolidating peace in South Sudan. Indeed, the mediation efforts are continuing in this sister Country to ensure the sustenance of peace in the post conflict period.

Mr. President,

It is our humble but considered opinion that where mediation has been given a chance, lives have been saved. The cost in resources, be they financial or human, has been minimal, and the destruction of infrastructure spared. Above all, reconciliation between the warring factions has been realised.

Mr. President,

Strangely, and despite having mediation at its disposal, the Security Council has at times preferred military intervention. I may also add that, at times, some Members of the International Community have unilaterally engaged in military interventions. Whenever military intervention has been preferred, it has not enjoyed the support of the general membership of the UN. Needless to mention that the cost of military intervention in conflicts is catastrophic on the innocent civilians, and destroys infrastructure and economies of countries. In this regard, Libya may be used as a case study. The African Union (AU) developed a Comprehensive Road Map that would have led to the peaceful settlement of the Libyan crisis by the Libyan people themselves. Sadly, we witnessed the deliberate marginalization of the AU, in the resolution of this crisis. Military intervention was hastily adopted as an option, and the results of this kind of intervention are a matter of record for all to see.

Nevertheless, the opportunity for all stakeholders to work together in the consolidation of peace in Libya has not eluded us. The AU Road Map for peace remains as relevant today as it was at the beginning of the conflict. The UN and the AU must work together to bring about the consolidation of peace, national reconciliation, and the establishment of an all-inclusive Government in Libya. The UN, not just a few countries with vested interests, should take the lead in the reconstruction of that country. Only this transparent and unbiased approach can ensure that there is no relapse to conflict in Libya.

Mr. President,

We must use all the assets at our disposal to fully utilize mediation as a tool for conflict prevention and resolution. The use of the Good Offices of the Secretary-General in conflict prevention and resolution is an instrument that may be very effective in mediating conflicts. This Office must be strengthened and capacitated with human and other necessary resources to undertake mediation early enough to prevent conflicts, and to deal effectively with those that are ongoing. In this regard, we encourage the mediation efforts that are being made by this Office towards the realization of a free and independent Western Sahara.

By the same token, we are convinced that the solution to the settlement of the Palestine Question will be attained through genuine mediation. The stalemate in the negotiations is a cause for grave concern to my Country. We urge all the Parties involved to resuscitate the negotiations between the State of Palestine and Israel.

Similarly, we must explore the possibility of a mediated solution to the problem between the Republic of Cuba and the United States of America. The International Community has been unanimous in its call for the lifting of the Economic and Commercial Embargo imposed upon Cuba, yet the problem persists. Indeed, Cuba like all Member States is entitled to freedom of international trade and navigation.

Mr. President,

I conclude by pointing out that the crises that we face provide us with an opportunity for introspection, and to chart the way forward. The obstacles that lie ahead of us are not insurmountable. We must build a more robust multi-lateral organization that is responsive to the modern day needs of our peoples. A UN that is able to work with its partners, such as regional and sub-regional organizations and all its Member States will surely register much success in all its endeavours. With renewed political will and determination, let us commit ourselves to the principles of mediation as enshrined in the UN Charter and commit to peaceful settlement of all disputes and conflicts.

I THANK YOU