



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

**BY**

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE  
MR. MOTSOAHAE THOMAS THABANE  
PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO**

**AT THE**

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

**26 SEPTEMBER 2013  
NEW YORK**

**Please check against delivery**

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

At the very outset, allow me to congratulate you for your well deserved election to the Office of the President of the General Assembly. I assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation during your tenure of office. I also wish to commend your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Vuk Jeremic for the exemplary leadership he demonstrated during the previous session.

**Mr. President,**

From humble beginnings of a fledging organization more than six decades ago, to massive expansion in membership today, the UN has undoubtedly stood the test of time. Its worth as an indispensable entity in reshaping the world of our time is a matter of common cause. Some of the great strides the UN has made span from peaceful settlement of disputes, restoring calm in many countries through peacekeeping, raising consciousness of human rights, and eradication of diseases. Nevertheless, much more still needs to be done.

Much of the world remains mired in poverty and diseases, while peace, security and stability continue to be fragile. Economic development continues to be the greatest challenge in history. As we ushered in a new millennium thirteen years ago, we adopted the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development

Goals (MDGs) in order to focus the world attention on ending extreme poverty in all its forms.

The 2015 deadline for the achievement of the MDGs is fast approaching, yet it is clear that not much progress has been made in many countries in the achievement of the Goals. Alive to that fact, the United Nations is engaged in various processes in preparation for the post-2015 development era. It is in this context that we welcome the theme for this session, namely; **“The Post-2015 development Agenda: Setting the Stage”**.

**Mr. President,**

One of the key outcomes of the Rio+20 Conference was that we launch a process to develop a set of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which would build upon the MDGs and converge with the post 2015 development agenda. We note progress in this regard and hope that the letter and spirit of the Rio+20 Outcome Document will be upheld. It is our hope that we will develop SDGs that are simple to implement, while also paying attention to the reality that no- one- size fits all.

The post- 2015 development agenda must be an integral framework that will build upon the successes and failures of the MDGs. We need to reflect on experiences and lessons learnt in implementing the MDGs, – results achieved and opportunities missed. It is time for this august body to come together and exercise its collective responsibility to finalise this one shared goal of articulating and shaping a development agenda that is inclusive and people centered. A new development agenda premised upon the sovereign equality of all states while recognizing their interdependence and mutually reinforcing roles should be our goal. To achieve

this, a renewed spirit of solidarity, cooperation, and mutual accountability must underpin our efforts.

**Mr. President,**

Equally important in our view, is to pay special attention to the perils of climate change on our physical world as well its destruction of ecosystems, all of which result in land degradation and contribute to the decline of agricultural productivity. Agriculture is the mainstay of our small economies. In order to address this challenge, **agriculture and food security have to be given the necessary prominence in the envisaged development agenda.**

In like manner, sustainable mountains development should be our ideal. To a Country such as Lesotho, with over 60% of the land area covered by mountains, sustainable mountain development is an imperative for the people to survive. **Mountains are valuable water sources with rich biodiversity. As such, international support of programmes on conservation and protection of mountain ecosystems should be at the forefront of our plans.**

**Mr. President,**

The state of peace and security in the world is gradually getting worse. Possession of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction remains the principal threat to the survival of humanity.

The widespread sectarian strife in the Middle East and elsewhere, and xenophobia are some of the great challenges to global peace. Sadly, discord remains among UN Member States on how to overcome these problems.

Of particular concern to my delegation is the situation in Syria which poses a serious and growing threat to international peace and security. Scores of civilians continue to be the chief victims. Women and children and the elderly bear the brunt of the conflict. The use of chemical weapons in Syria is not only abhorrent, but also a crime against humanity. We condemn it in the strongest terms as it threatens to undermine the norm against the use of chemical weapons universally embraced by the international community. We welcome the partial report of the UN Team of Inspectors on the use of these weapons in Syria, and hope that the culprits will face the might of the international law and justice.

The crisis in Syria has the potential to engulf the whole region of the Middle East with global ramifications. We call on the international community to find a quick and lasting solution to this conflict. Whether in Syria, or anywhere else, perpetrators of crimes against humanity must be held legally accountable for their actions.

History has revealed that human societies can enjoy peaceful, orderly progress only if the rule of law obtains. The conviction that peace and justice are inextricably intertwined has always underpinned the efforts of the United Nations in the area of maintenance of international peace and security. Indeed, the creation of the ICC in 1998 is a beacon that speaks to this truism. We must use institutions such as the ICC and other international legal tribunals as a reflection of the international community's increasing rejection of impunity, and evidence that there is a rising tide in favour of the rule of law. At the same time, we need to ensure that institutions such as the ICC are adequately insulated against **politicization**. Selective prosecutions must be avoided

**Mr. President,**

A decade has passed since the initiation of the notion of “**The Responsibility to Protect**”. Yet, operationalisation of this concept has not become a reality. The fact that crimes of mass atrocity continue to be committed around the world is a stark reminder that, the time for a collective approach to protecting populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity is **now**.

Mass atrocities do not often occur spontaneously, but rather as part of a planned process. Over the years we have learned an important lesson that this Organization cannot stand on the sidelines when challenged to take preventive action. In so doing, we should guard against misuse and abuse of the norm of responsibility to protect by infringing on national sovereignty or altering the legal obligation of Member States to refrain from the use of force except in conformity with the UN Charter.

**Mr. President,**

From the horn of Africa and across the Sahel Region to the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Continent is facing a rise in lawlessness and conflicts. As we celebrated the Jubilee of the formation of our Continental organization – the Organisation of African Unity, we resolved, as Leaders of Africa, that Africa must open a new chapter going forward and extricate itself from the conflicts that have so soiled its reputation and compromised its development. We are determined to build a safe, secure and peaceful Africa from here going forward.

With the presence of extremist groups and terrorist entities in the Middle East and elsewhere, terrorism continues to pose a serious threat to world peace, security and development. The ugly face of this scourge has once again re-surfaced in Kenya.

We condemn the barbaric killings of innocent people in the West Gate Mall in Nairobi, committed by Alshabaab. Our thoughts and prayers are with the families that have lost their loved ones.

We all know that solutions to these problems cannot be through military means alone. We have to invest more in creating a holistic and integrated approach that targets, amongst others, improving economic development, promoting the rule of law, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and good governance.

**Mr. President,**

In the face of the numerous global challenges existing in the world today, promoting more effective global governance should be at the forefront of the international agenda. We, the Membership of the UN should strive for an international organisation with improved efficiency and effectiveness. In our efforts to reform the UN, emphasis needs to be placed on enhancing, amongst others, its accountability and that of all its Organs, Bodies and Programmes of member States irrespective of their size and influence.

**Mr. President,**

It would be remiss of me not to express solidarity with the people of Cuba for having endured sanctions for so many years. We also want to express our unwavering solidarity with the people of Western Sahara who have languished under the yoke of colonialization for far too long.

In the same vein, we express our unwavering support for the people of Palestine. As a small country that was surrounded by apartheid South Africa for almost a century, we understand the pain that others who still languish under that kind of situation feel. These situations are a challenge that this august Body, can, easily

remove from our agenda by simply doing what is right. In true brotherly solidarity we appeal to this august Body to remove these final vestiges of colonial oppression.

**Mr. President,**

In conclusion, I need not emphasise that our Peoples do not necessarily look at this Organization as a mirror reflecting a divided and troubled world. Rather they yearn for progress and solutions to the problems besieging their world. They want ideas, leadership and concrete hope for the future. Our actions and decisions should embody themes of peace and development that look far beyond the immediacy of the moment. The challenges that confront us today must be, more than ever before, addressed with a candor and a decision which the present global economic and political situation dictates to us all.

**I THANK YOU**