



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

BY

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AT THE

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

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Please check against delivery

**Your Excellency Mr. Kutesa, 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.**

I wish to congratulate you, Mr. President, for your well-deserved election to the Office of the President of the 69th Session of the General Assembly. Your distinguished career as a diplomat and leader assures us of a successful Session. I should also commend your predecessor, Ambassador John Ashe, for his remarkable leadership during the 68th Session.

Mr. President,

For the past 69 years of its existence, the United Nations witnessed several changes in the configurations of international relations. Some of them were traumatic while others were benign. The survival of the UN through all these tribulations bears testimony to its resilience and the enduring validity of its mission. Today, the UN remains confronted by serious challenges. The continuous eruption of armed conflicts throughout the world, terrorism, climate change, diseases, the lingering effects of the economic and financial crises are some of the challenges that have remained at the fore of international relations and pre-occupied the international community.

From the horn of Africa and across the Sahel Region to the Republic of Kenya and Congo, the Continent is facing a rise in terrorism. The Nigeria based Boko Haram, Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb, and the Alshabaab in Somalia continue to pose serious threat to the peace and security of the Continent. The emergence of new extremist groups and terrorist entities in the Middle East and elsewhere, such as ISIS, has not only further compounded the problem, but is a stark reminder that we need to act collectively to discharge the moral responsibility that rests on us to ensure that peoples everywhere enjoy the right to peace, development and the sanctity of life.

The use of military alone as a strategy to counter terrorism is no longer a panacea for this menace. Terrorism requires a holistic approach that addresses the root causes of the scourge. Resolution of international disputes based on dialogue,

justice and equality of all states must be at the heart of that strategy if it is to succeed.

Mr. President,

The recurring bloody conflict between Israel and Palestine continue to weigh heavily on the conscience of all humanity. The recent developments in that region have cast a shadow on the future that seemed to hold promise for a negotiated settlement. Unprecedented impunity and disproportionate use of force by the parties involved, calls into question our claim to civilization. Turning the UN shelters into a combat zone and killing innocent children, men and women who had taken refuge there, is a shameful act that must be condemned with the strongest terms possible. Lesotho endorses the Resolution of the Human Rights Council that the massacres of innocent Palestinian civilians should be investigated by an independent commission and that those responsible be held accountable.

Let us not forget that we unanimously adopted the principle of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) about a decade ago in order to protect and safeguard innocent civilians from war crimes, genocide, mass atrocities and ethnic cleansing. Indeed, the Security Council has re-affirmed this principle in several conflicts around the world, and in some instances authorized military intervention.

Unfortunately, in the case of the slaughter of thousands of Palestinian civilians, the Council has shied away from invoking the principle of Responsibility to Protect. Instead, it has taken comfort in issuing a presidential statement which glaringly fails to reiterate accountability for the war crimes committed.

Civilians in Gaza deserve the protection that Israelis in Tel Aviv are afforded under international law. We call on Israel, as we have always done in the past, to fully comply with its obligations under all the Security Council and General Assembly Resolutions. That is the only plausible route to lasting peace.

Mr. President,

The world has long come to terms with the dangers to humanity, which is posed by the possession of weapons of mass destruction. That is why Lesotho continues to advocate for total abolition and destruction of all nuclear weapons. These weapons have no place in the modern day civilized society, hence the call for a convention to ban all nuclear weapons. While working towards that goal, we must emphasise that full compliance with the provisions of the Treaty on Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is critical. By the same token, we call for the

establishment of a Middle East Zone Free of Nuclear Weapons in accordance with the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

It is unacceptable that the UN of today is still reflective of the 1945 structure of the world as seen by the victors of World War II. The reform of the UN, including the Security Council, can no longer be delayed. A reformed, transparent, and democratic UN is necessary for preserving international peace and security, and for confronting the challenges of development. All Member States need to garner the necessary political will to advance Intergovernmental Negotiations on the reform of the Council. Let us make the 69th Session a session for decisive action.

The delegates who gathered in San Francisco to finalize the Charter of the UN dreamed of a world of peace and shared prosperity. They renounced a vision of the world in which some unilaterally impose economic sanctions and financial blockades against others, or one in which peoples are denied their right to self-determination or subjected to occupation as is the case in Cuba, Palestine and Western Sahara. We have to remove these dark spots on the history of our time by allowing our actions to be guided by the letter and spirit of the UN Charter.

Mr. President,

The theme chosen for our General Debate, “**Delivering on and Implementing a Transformative Post-2015 Development Agenda**”, could not be more relevant at the current international juncture. The road towards the achievement of MDGs has been rough, with some countries reporting relative success in reducing poverty and hunger, marked increase in school enrolment, reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating HIV/AIDS. However, the challenges remain most daunting in the least developed countries, land-locked developing countries, some small island developing states and countries in or emerging from conflict.

For our part, in Lesotho, we have made some progress in achieving at least two of the eight goals of the MDGs, namely universal primary education (MDG2) and promoting gender equality and empowering women (MDG3). We still face a long and uphill journey to reach a life of dignity for all. HIV and AIDS still pose a serious threat to us. The untold miseries brought about by this scourge are known to all. Africa is more vulnerable to this threat due to the worsening poverty and unemployment. Sadly, new incurable pandemics such as the Ebola Virus have emerged, wreaking havoc in sister African Countries and overwhelming their health systems. The world must mobilise resources and energy to help the affected countries of West Africa fight the pandemic and to abolish it in the long-run.

Our quest to pursue a sustainable future for all must never wane as we step into the new era and embark on the road-map of the post-2015 development agenda. We need to formulate a new set of universal Sustainable Development Goals- (SDGs) that are concise and strong on the means of implementation. It is important to emphasise national ownership and respect for national conditions of each member state and take advantage of world diversity so that we can all reach our development aspirations.

As we continue with intergovernmental discussions leading up to the third International Conference on Financing for Development that will be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in July 2015, we must be guided by the spirit of frankness and mutual understanding without the acrimony that so often characterizes our inter-governmental deliberations.

Equally important is the need to emphasise that the advancement of the rule of law at the national and international levels is essential for the realization of sustainable development, eradication of poverty and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Mr. President

A few days ago the Climate Summit provided us with an opportunity to once again reaffirm our collective resolve to implement measures that can significantly address climate change. We have disagreed for far too long until we were confronted by the glaring and compelling scientific evidence that the link between global warming and human activities was indisputable. Sadly, catastrophes have begun to hit, mostly affecting the poorest and most vulnerable countries. My country is one of the worst affected by climate change. Lesotho has, in recent years, faced unsettling development challenges due to the effects of climate change. The effects of increasingly extreme weather patterns such as early frost, droughts, desertification and degradation of arable land, compound the challenges that we are already facing. Livelihoods of societies are stifled and economies and ways of life are negatively affected.

While we appreciate that there are resources aimed at helping developing countries mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change, we are however concerned that such funds are difficult to access. The global climate finance architecture is

complex, with variable structures of governance and modalities. Some finance is channeled through multilateral agencies, sometimes even outside of the UNFCC funding mechanisms, while others flow through bilateral development assistance institutions, thus making coordination difficult. Lesotho calls on the international community and our development partners to simplify accessibility of funds earmarked for climate change initiatives if we are to make impact on the ground.

Mr. President,

As I conclude, let me point out that the regime of the UN Charter has so far done its part to prevent a third world war, thus fulfilling one of the dreams of the architects of this our beloved organization. The continued success and relevance of the UN in the new millennium will depend, in large measure, on its capacity for self-renewal in readiness to meet modern day challenges.

We, the United Nations should continue to be the voice of the voiceless and the best hope for all humankind. Now is the time for leaders everywhere to join the race for transformative action that can drive peace, democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law, human dignity, economic competitiveness and sustainable prosperity for all.

I THANK YOU