



*PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM
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STATEMENT

BY

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PRIME MINISTER AND HEAD OF GOVERNMENT
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AT THE

**PLENARY OF THE
SEVENTIETH REGULAR 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 Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

At the onset, let me congratulate you, **Mr. President**, on your well-deserved election to preside over our deliberations during this 70th Session of the United Nations General Assembly. Your impeccable credentials and experience assure us of a successful Session. I also wish to assure you of my delegation's full support and co-operation during your tenure of office. Turning seventy is not only an auspicious event for humanity but it assumes added significance and importance for an Organization that has presided over many of humanity's trials, failures and successes. We recall with pride that many countries in Africa were ushered into the glee of independence through the united efforts of this august Body. It is for this reason that we make an impassioned plea for the UN to now address the unfinished business in North Africa and the Middle East.

Allow me to take this opportunity to commend your predecessor, His Excellency Mr. Sam Kutesa, for his outstanding leadership during the 69th Session. My delegation truly appreciates his tireless devotion to the onerous responsibilities entrusted to him during the past year. I should also thank the Secretary General Mr. Ban Ki Moon for the lucid report tabled before this Session. The report provides valuable insights into the state of our Organization and highlights a roadmap that will steer us into the future. We further recognize and appreciate the tedious work our Secretary General performs throughout the year, dousing flames of discord wherever they occur and applaud him for sharing the joy of our Organization's successes.

Mr. President,

The UN was founded on the conviction that the nations of the world can and should cooperate to resolve conflicts peacefully; and to change people's lives for the better. It further established conditions for justice and respect for international law and promotion of socio-economic development in the world. As the UN turns seventy, that abiding conviction of our forebears must be steadfastly reaffirmed and their sense of purpose reasserted. It is in this context, that we hail, as most appropriate, the theme chosen for our General Debate, namely: **"The UN at 70: Peace, Security and Human Rights"**.

As the world's only truly universal global organization, the UN has, over the years, become the most important and relevant forum for addressing issues that transcend national boundaries. For the past 70 years, this Organization has worked tirelessly to buttress the foundations of global security, as well as the safety and well-being of the world citizenry.

As a result of the work of the UN, in many countries corrupt dictatorships have given way to new democracies and millions around the world today, breathe the fresh air of freedom. Other notable moments of glory in the track record of the UN include its successful conflict resolution and peacekeeping initiatives, helping over seventeen million refugees since 1949 and ensuring that governments meet their responsibilities to the fugitives in accordance with UN Conventions. This notable achievement notwithstanding, we are of the firm belief that the world should not continue to churn more refugees but an environment must be created to ensure that a culture of religious and political tolerance is created to stop the flow of refugees.

Another milestone in the work of the United Nations is the adoption of an ambitious Sustainable Development Agenda for the post-2015 period that epitomizes the UN's visionary endeavor to eradicate poverty, address climate change and ensure that prosperity is equitably shared. After frank and constructive negotiations, we adopted, by consensus, a few days ago, the Outcome Document which might not be perfect, but represents the best hope for future prosperity and stability in the world.

Mr. President,

Looking at the 17 sustainable development goals, we draw courage and confidence over the fact that most of them resonate so well with the objectives of the new Coalition government which I lead. A very ambitious commitment the leadership of the Coalition Government has made is to ensure that Lesotho emerges from the group of least developed states by 2025, and the practical roadmap under Goal 1 of the SDGs complements programs already in place in Lesotho. We are humbled by the AU's faith in our Country by nominating His Majesty King Letsie III as the Champion for nutrition, a move which will intensify efforts already underway in my Country in the area of nutrition. On the important issue of energy, Lesotho recently launched an innovative Energy Policy which will ensure a substantial increase of renewable energy production leading to increase in affordable energy provision to 50% by the end of this current term of Parliament. These are just a few

examples of the development programs Lesotho is committed to implement in the next ten years which are in line with the SDGs just adopted.

Of greater significance is the reform process that we have emphasized in the Coalition Agreement signed after the February, 2015 elections. Lesotho has passed through many political challenges since return to democratic rule in 1993, which placed us on the agenda of SADC for too long. Most of these challenges have tested the resilience and relevance of our Constitution to the limit. We are now in agreement, together with our SADC partners that there is an urgent need to address the issue of Constitutional reform as a first step towards the road to political stability. The Commonwealth has also thrown its weight behind the need for such reforms. Our appeal to this world body is for it to remain seized of this process, offer the necessary guidance whenever the need arises so that Lesotho's dignity can be restored and for peace and stability to reign.

Mr. President,

Despite the laudable achievements made by the UN in shaping the form and content of global dialogue and negotiations, the world is still an unequal place, with large parts beset by intolerable poverty and hunger. Thousands still die from malnourishment while many people still live below the poverty line. Small arms and light weapons continue to be illegally traded. These weapons are sometimes used in violent terrorist attacks. The lack of political will to rid the world of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction is obvious to all; the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) is not yet universal, while the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT) regime is at the cross roads with some nuclear-capable states refusing to sign on.

With the ongoing violence in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and some parts of Africa, from the Sahel to the Democratic Republic of Congo, the capacity of the UN to find lasting solutions to these challenges is tested to the limit. Sadly, the human origin of many of these problems cannot be doubted. Among the most pressing issues for the international community today, is the problem of refugees and mass migration. As a result of war and the carnage that has exposed the depths of man's cruelty to man, millions of people, in the Middle East and elsewhere, are fleeing across international borders on a scale reminiscent of the Second World War. The numbers crossing the Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea, to reach Europe, despite the attendant risks, are staggering. The refugee problem facing Europe today, will test the limits of the continent's resolve and generosity.

Parallel to the migration crisis is the phenomenon of terrorism. Terrorism has increased world-wide and it has become more brazen and lethal than before. Terrorist networks are expanding across Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Even as we remain vigilant against the threat of terrorism, we must move beyond a mindset that this menace can be defeated by force of arms alone. We may strike blows against terrorist networks, but if we ignore the fact that political instability and religious and other forms of intolerance fuel extremism, our efforts to root out this menace will be futile.

Mr. President,

Climate change is a major challenge facing the world today; and unless it is addressed effectively, it will continue to rewrite the global equation for development, peace and prosperity. We should not let the window of opportunity that will be presented by the Paris Climate Change Conference close without collectively committing to action-oriented solutions that can significantly contribute to reducing emissions. The Paris negotiations should be guided by the spirit of frankness, mutual understanding and the willingness to compromise.

Mr. President,

The Doha Development Agenda (DDA) is an issue of importance to Developing Countries which deserves emphasis at every available opportunity. We strongly believe that a well-functioning, rules-based multilateral trading system, is in our interest. The bilateral arrangements that we are negotiating should follow the preferences and flexibilities accorded to WTO member states within the multilateral trading system. We therefore make a strong call for the Doha Development Agenda to quickly conclude according to its mandate and fully deliver its development objectives.

Equally important is the need to acknowledge that we will never achieve real development if some sectors of society continue to be marginalized. The role of children and women, as well as other disadvantaged groups in our communities, in advancing the global development agenda, must be further enhanced. As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the World Programme of Action for Youth (WPAY) this year, through which the United Nations strengthened its commitment to improving the lives of young people, let us resolve to adequately address the

development needs and aspirations of young people with more vigour. The seventieth anniversary of the UN offers a unique opportunity to appeal to the Security Council not to use the International Criminal Court in pursuit of the interests of its powerful members. We must acknowledge that in its present form and configuration, it will be an uphill battle for the Security Council to take our concerns on board. The call for the Council to be more transparent, inclusive and democratic needs to be echoed with even more vigor and clarity. A reformed United Nations Security Council, that is in line with the Twenty First Century geopolitical realities, is one that will be reconstructed in accordance with the Ezulwini Consensus and Sirte Declaration. A Security Council, that has the voice of Africa and other marginalized regions in the Permanent Category, will increasingly acquire legitimacy and unconditional acceptance of its decisions.

Mr. President,

We must continue to pursue a joint and consensual approach in tackling our challenges; taking decisions collectively and sharing responsibilities.

The General Assembly, in whose name the UN was created, is most suited to fulfill that task. It has continued to serve as the principal policy-making, deliberative and most representative organ of the UN. It is the only platform on which all countries, big or small, can engage in face-to-face negotiations, as sovereign equals, to seek solutions to the problems facing humanity. The process of Revitalization of the General Assembly must be hastened. The resolutions of this Principal Organ of the UN should no longer be regarded as mere recommendations that can be casually ignored. The need for manifestation of a universal commitment to the principles upon which the UN is based cannot be over-emphasized.

However, the United Nations is much more than a peacekeeper and a forum for conflict resolution. The UN and its family of agencies, are engaged in a vast array of activities that seek to address challenges hindering progress in the improvement of people's lives around the world. As indicated earlier, today's challenges include, amongst others, climate change, food shortages, HIV/AIDs, financial crises, extreme poverty, population growth, urbanization, conflicts, terrorism and mass migration. The common purpose and most complex task within the United Nations family is finding practical and lasting solutions to all these problems.

For our part, Lesotho has initiated an innovative, indigenous consultative process which seeks to galvanize the collective wisdom and energy of leadership at all levels of society, from His Majesty all the way down to local leaders, with the sole

purpose to intensify the fight against HIV/AIDs. This consultative process will ensure ownership and accountability of the leadership in all health service delivery processes. We see great wisdom in re-defining the roll out of primary health care, utilizing existing community based leadership structures in an effort to realize the goal of health for all by the year 2030. This comprehensive roll out agenda has all the ingredients so ably articulated in Goal 3 of the SDGs. His Majesty is expected to launch this initiative this month.

As we continue to ponder the most pressing issues and challenges facing the international community today, we should not forget the plight of the Saharawi and the Palestinian peoples. Both the General Assembly and the Security Council have recognized the inalienable right of the Saharawi people to self-determination and independence. We support the call for the resumption of direct negotiations between the Saharawi Arab Democratic Republic and the Kingdom of Morocco on an equal footing and without any pre-conditions. Lesotho continues to fully support the Palestinian people in their decades long Struggle against Israeli occupation and oppression. Peace between Israel and Palestine is an essential cornerstone in the architecture of a comprehensive Middle East peace, a peace that will unlock the creative genius and entrepreneurship of the region. We applaud the current initiatives to normalize relations between Cuba and the United States of America, and urge that the unilateral sanctions on Cuba be removed sooner than later.

Mr. President,

However much the world may have changed since 1945, the UN remains the only universal intergovernmental institution that unites us in a global community of sovereign states. Yes, the Organization may have its shortcomings, but it remains a bastion of hope for humanity. Indeed, the President of the 67th Session of the General Assembly correctly made the following observation:

“Yet for all its imperfections – which are inherent in any institution shaped by human mind... the UN remains critical to addressing the growing needs of mankind. One cannot simply imagine a world in which peace and the dignity of all could flourish without the United Nations.”

I cannot agree more with him. The responsibility to make the UN function optimally reposes squarely on all of us. Our shared vision and objectives require much more than the reaffirmation of our commitment to the founding principles of the UN. Increased political will is a necessary ingredient for the achievement of the ideals that underpin the UN Charter. We look forward to a rebirth and injection of

fresh energy into the UN system so that the next seventy years, will be a period of even greater achievement and success for the Organization. The obligation which the founding members of the UN handed down to us must continue to be carried out with a solemn sense of responsibility by all.

I THANK YOU