



**NATIONAL STATEMENT TO BE DELIVERED BY HIS MAJESTY
KING LETSIE III DURING THE 79TH SESSION OF THE UNITED
NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY (UNGA)**

NEW YORK

26TH SEPTEMBER, 2024

**YOUR EXCELLENCY AMBASSADOR PHILEMON YANG,
PRESIDENT OF THE 79TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL
ASSEMBLY,**

YOUR EXCELLENCIES HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT,

**YOUR EXCELLENCY MR. ANTÓNIO GUTERRES, THE
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS,**

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,



MR PRESIDENT, I WISH TO CONGRATULATE YOU ON YOUR WELL-DESERVED ELECTION TO THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT OF THE 79TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY. I AM CONFIDENT THAT WITH YOUR VAST EXPERIENCE AND WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE, YOU WILL SUCCESSFULLY GUIDE THE ASSEMBLY TO LIVE UP TO ITS COMMITMENTS. I, THEREFORE, ASSURE YOU OF MY DELEGATION'S FULL SUPPORT AND CO-OPERATION IN ALL YOUR ENDEAVORS.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO PAY MY TRIBUTE TO YOUR PREDECESSOR, MR. DENNIS FRANCIS, FOR THE EXCELLENT MANNER IN WHICH HE DISCHARGED HIS DUTIES AS PRESIDENT OF THE ASSEMBLY DURING THE 78TH SESSION. UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP, A LOT WAS ACHIEVED.

TO SECRETARY GENERAL MR. ANTÓNIO GUTERRES, I EXPRESS MY COUNTRY'S DEEP GRATITUDE AND UNWAVERING SUPPORT FOR YOUR EXCEPTIONAL WORK ON BEHALF OF HUMANITY, ESPECIALLY AMIDST THE SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES FACING MULTILATERALISM TODAY. UNDER YOUR LEADERSHIP, THE UNITED NATIONS HAS NAVIGATED NUMEROUS OBSTACLES, INCLUDING THE COVID-19



PANDEMIC, ESCALATING DEBT CRISES, AND THE IMPACTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

IN YOUR ADDRESS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, YOU HIGHLIGHTED THE IMPORTANCE OF PEACE WITHIN COMMUNITIES, PEACE WITH JUSTICE, PEACE WITH DIGNITY, AND PEACE WITH NATURE, EMPHASIZING THAT BUILDING PEACE IS **"HUMANITY'S GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY."**

THE UN WAS FOUNDED ON THE BELIEF THAT NATIONS CAN AND SHOULD LIVE TOGETHER IN PEACE, AND WORK WITH EACH OTHER TO RESOLVE CONFLICTS PEACEFULLY FOR THE BETTERMENT OF OUR LIVES. IT ALSO ESTABLISHED THE FRAMEWORK FOR JUSTICE, RESPECT FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW, AND THE PROMOTION OF GLOBAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. AS THE UN CELEBRATES ITS SEVENTY-NINTH ANNIVERSARY THIS YEAR, WE MUST REAFFIRM THE ENDURING CONVICTION OF OUR FOUNDERS AND REASSERT THEIR SENSE OF PURPOSE.



AS I STAND HERE TODAY, I RESONATE WITH THESE SENTIMENTS, DRAWING FROM OUR NATION'S HISTORY AND EXPERIENCES. THIS YEAR, LESOTHO COMMEMORATES 200 YEARS SINCE THE FOUNDING OF THE BASOTHO NATION, WITH THE PINNACLE OF THIS CELEBRATION OCCURRING ON OCTOBER 4, 2024. WHAT, THEN, CAN WE, AS A SMALLER NATION, CONTRIBUTE TO THE GLOBAL DISCOURSE ON PEACE?

MR. PRESIDENT,

LESOTHO WAS FOUNDED ON THE PRINCIPLE OF PEACE, '**KHOTSO**'. OUR FOUNDER; MORENA MOSHOESHOE 1, CHERISHED PEACE AS ONE OF HIS CORE VALUES. WRITERS AND RESEARCHERS HAVE DESCRIBED HIM AS **" NO COMMON MAN, AS SOMEONE WHO STANDS OUT CLEAR IN THE LIGHT, ORIGINAL, ABLE, ENLIGHTENED AND UPRIGHT. HIS HUMANITY, HIS MILDNESS, HIS LOVE OF PEACE AND JUSTICE, HIS HORROR OF WAR, HIS FORBEARANCE UNDER EXTREME PROVOCATION, ARE CONSPICUOUS UPON EVERY OCCASION."** THESE ARE QUALITIES THAT HAVE INSPIRED US AS



BASOTHO. MORENA MOSHOESHOE 1 WAS ABLE TO BRING TOGETHER DIFFERENT TRIBAL GROUPS, AVERT CONFLICTS, AND NEGOTIATE LASTING PEACE THAT TO THIS DAY, WE STRIVE TO MAINTAIN. BASOTHO ARE A NATION BUILT ON TOLERANCE, INCLUSION, AND UNITY, WHICH ARE ALSO THE KEY PRINCIPLES ENSHRINED IN THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S NEW AGENDA FOR PEACE.

IT IS IN THIS CONTEXT, THAT WE HAIL, AS MOST APPROPRIATE, THE THEME CHOSEN FOR OUR GENERAL DEBATE THIS YEAR, NAMELY: **"LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND: ACTING TOGETHER FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF PEACE, SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, AND HUMAN DIGNITY FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS"**. THE RELEVANCE OF THIS THEME, AT THE PRESENT JUNCTURE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, IS BEYOND DOUBT. THROUGH COLLECTIVE ACTION, WE CAN CONQUER THE CHALLENGES FACING HUMANITY AND REALIZE A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR ALL. HOWEVER, THIS WILL REQUIRE LEADERS WITH HUMANITY, MILDNESS, A LOVE OF PEACE AND JUSTICE, HORROR OF WAR, AND



FORBEARANCE UNDER EXTREME PROVOCATION. THESE ARE IDEALS THAT CAN BE ACHIEVED. MY ANCESTOR, AS TESTIFIED BY MANY, WAS THE EMBODIMENT OF THESE TRAITS WHICH BUILT A NATION THAT STANDS TO THIS DAY. BUSINESS AS USUAL WILL NOT PRESERVE OUR WORLD AS WE KNOW IT. THE ENJOYMENT AND EXERCISE OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND ATTAINMENT OF SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT REQUIRE A DELIBERATE FUNDAMENTAL SHIFT AND COMMITMENT BY THE WORLD'S LEADERSHIP. IN THE WORDS OF ANOTHER OF MY ANCESTORS, **“ALWAYS BE SLOW TO TAKE ARMS....AT ALL TIMES, I BESEECH YOU, LEAN UPON THIS ROD OF PEACE. ALWAYS KEEP IT CLEAR IN YOUR MIND THAT IT IS, FAR MORE PROFITABLE TO HARVEST FOOD IN THE GRAIN FIELDS THAN TO KILL MEN IN THE BATTLEFIELDS.”**

IN TODAY'S RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD, THE UN HAS CONTINUED TO FORGE PEACE IN CONFLICT-RIDDEN AREAS AROUND THE WORLD, PROMOTING HUMAN RIGHTS AND LIFTING THOUSANDS OUT OF POVERTY. LESOTHO REAFFIRMS ITS COMMITMENT TO ADVANCE THIS



COLLECTIVE VISION OF AN EFFECTIVE UNITED NATIONS TO ENSURE A PROSPEROUS AND A LASTING FUTURE FOR ALL OUR PEOPLE.

MR. PRESIDENT,

THE WORLD FACES SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES AS THE DEADLINE FOR ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS) APPROACHES. THE 2024 SDG REPORT INDICATES THAT ONLY 16% OF THE TARGETS ARE ON TRACK TO BE MET BY 2030, WHILE 84% SHOW LIMITED OR REVERSED PROGRESS. THE UNCTAD 2024 REPORT HIGHLIGHTS A TROUBLING TREND WHERE 48 DEVELOPING COUNTRIES SPEND MORE ON LOAN INTEREST PAYMENTS TO DEVELOPED NATIONS THAN ON ESSENTIAL SERVICES LIKE EDUCATION AND HEALTH. THIS ECONOMIC INEQUALITY DRIVES MIGRATION, AS REFUGEES SEEK BETTER OPPORTUNITIES, OFTEN LEADING TO XENOPHOBIA AND CONFLICT IN HOST COUNTRIES. ADDRESSING THIS INEQUALITY IS CRUCIAL FOR FOSTERING INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT AND ENSURING GLOBAL PEACE AND STABILITY.



TO ENHANCE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2030 AGENDA, MY GOVERNMENT PLANS TO PRESENT ITS THIRD VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN 2025. ACHIEVING THIS GOAL REQUIRES STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS AND INCREASED FINANCIAL SUPPORT, PARTICULARLY FOR VULNERABLE COUNTRIES THAT ARE BOTH LEAST DEVELOPED AND LANDLOCKED.

THE CURRENT CRISES OF HUNGER, POVERTY, DISEASE, AND CLIMATE CHANGE THREATEN TO REVERSE THE PROGRESS MADE OVER THE LAST CENTURY. IN LESOTHO, CLIMATE CHANGE EXACERBATES ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION, IMPACTING AGRICULTURE, WATER RESOURCES, AND ENERGY SUPPLIES, LEADING TO FOOD SHORTAGES WHICH HAVE COMPELLED THE GOVERNMENT TO DECLARE A STATE OF EMERGENCY IN FOOD SECURITY. HOWEVER, WE ARE COMMITTED TO RESPONDING TO THESE CHALLENGES BY PURSUING OPPORTUNITIES THAT WILL ENABLE GREATER SELF-SUFFICIENCY FOR THE COUNTRY.



LESOTHO'S STOCK IN TRADE IS A HIGH-QUALITY SUITE OF RENEWABLE ENERGY RESOURCES OF SUN, WIND, AND A PLENTIFUL SUPPLY OF THE PUREST MOUNTAIN WATER. WE ARE THEREFORE IN A POSITION TO ESTABLISH A SUSTAINABLE RENEWABLE ENERGY AND WATER ECONOMY. OUR PRIORITY IS TO SATISFY THE DEFICIT IN OUR DOMESTIC ENERGY DEMAND AND TO EXPORT CLEAN ENERGY AND HIGH-QUALITY WATER TO THE REGION. OUR GOAL TO FULLY MEET COMMITMENTS TO THE PARIS ACCORD WELL IN ADVANCE OF 2050 WILL BE ATTAINED, WITH THE POTENTIAL OF LESOTHO BEING AMONG THE FIRST COUNTRIES IN AFRICA TO BE A FULLY CARBON-NEUTRAL ELECTRICITY GENERATOR. WE SEEK OUR OWN OPPORTUNITY TO NAVIGATE OUR OWN WAY IN THIS COMPLEX WORLD.

IT IS ESSENTIAL TO RESTORE DIGNITY AND HOPE FOR WOMEN, YOUTH, AND MARGINALIZED COMMUNITIES WHO CONTINUE TO EXPERIENCE A DISPROPORTIONATE LEVEL OF VULNERABILITIES AND DISADVANTAGES. GENDER EQUALITY AND THE PROTECTION OF WOMEN AND GIRLS FROM VIOLENCE ARE FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS THAT MUST BE PRIORITIZED. THE GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO



HAS IMPLEMENTED POLICIES AND LAWS TO ADDRESS THESE ISSUES IN LINE WITH REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS. ADDITIONALLY, WE CONTINUE TO COMBAT DISEASES LIKE HIV/AIDS, ACHIEVING SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS WITH 95% OF THOSE LIVING WITH HIV KNOWING THEIR STATUS, 94% RECEIVING TREATMENT AND 98% OF THOSE ON TREATMENT VIRALLY SUPPRESSED. SINCE 2010, WE HAVE SUCCESSFULLY REDUCED NEW HIV INFECTIONS BY 74%, DEMONSTRATING OUR COMMITMENT TO PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL EQUITY.

MR. PRESIDENT,

GLOBAL PEACE AND SECURITY ARE UNDER THREAT FROM TERRORISM, ILLICIT ARMS FLOWS, ORGANIZED CRIME, CYBERCRIME, AND FINANCIAL CRIMES, HINDERING PROGRESS TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE PEACE. THIS WORRYING STATE OF AFFAIRS DEMANDS COLLECTIVE AND RESOLUTE ACTION TO PROTECT GLOBAL PEACE, SECURITY AND STABILITY FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL HUMANITY.



MEDIATION HAS PROVEN EFFECTIVE IN SAVING LIVES, MINIMIZING RESOURCE COSTS, AND PREVENTING INFRASTRUCTURE DESTRUCTION WHILE FACILITATING RECONCILIATION BETWEEN OPPOSING PARTIES. DESPITE THE UN'S FOCUS ON PEACEFUL DISPUTE RESOLUTION, POLITICAL TENSIONS AMONG MEMBER STATES HAVE LIMITED ITS MEDIATION EFFORTS. IT IS THEREFORE ESSENTIAL FOR THE UN SECURITY COUNCIL TO TAKE A PROACTIVE LEADING ROLE IN THE MEDIATION OF DISPUTES. TO ACHIEVE THIS, THE COUNCIL MUST ADOPT A MULTILATERAL APPROACH, AS WE BELIEVE THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO ENSURE TRANSPARENCY, IMPARTIALITY, AND A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP OF THE MEDIATION PROCESS BY THE WIDER UN MEMBERSHIP. FOR THIS REASON, WE WARMLY WELCOME THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S NEW AGENDA FOR PEACE, WHICH EMPHASIZES THE URGENT NEED TO REBUILD MECHANISMS FOR MANAGING DISPUTES AND ENHANCING TRUST AMONG MEMBER STATES AND REGIONAL FRAMEWORKS.

MR. PRESIDENT,



RESPECTING AND UPHOLDING HUMAN RIGHTS IS A FUNDAMENTAL OBLIGATION OF ALL STATES, AS OUTLINED IN THE UNITED NATIONS CHARTER. SELF-DETERMINATION AND INDEPENDENCE ARE ESSENTIAL RIGHTS THAT SHOULD BE ACCESSIBLE TO ALL PEOPLE. WE URGE THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS AIMED AT ENDING ALL FORMS OF COLONIALISM AND OCCUPATION, PARTICULARLY EMPHASIZING THE NEED FOR THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF THE PEOPLE OF WESTERN SAHARA.

THE SITUATION IN THE MIDDLE EAST, ESPECIALLY THE ONGOING HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN GAZA, REQUIRES URGENT ATTENTION. WE RENEW OUR CALL FOR A CEASEFIRE, AS BOTH THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE SECURITY COUNCIL HAVE REPEATEDLY ADVOCATED FOR ONE. THE HIGH COST OF WAR IS A BURDEN HUMANITY SHOULD NOT BEAR. WE BELIEVE IN A TWO-STATE SOLUTION THAT ALLOWS ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS TO COEXIST PEACEFULLY AND SECURELY. GENUINE DIALOGUE AND MEDIATION, RESPECTING THE RIGHTS AND CONCERNS OF BOTH PARTIES, ARE CRUCIAL FOR RESOLVING THE PALESTINE QUESTION.



ADDITIONALLY, WE CALL FOR A MEDIATED SOLUTION TO THE UNILATERAL COERCIVE MEASURES ON CUBA, AS THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY HAS CONSISTENTLY DEMANDED THE LIFTING OF THE ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL EMBARGO. CUBA, LIKE ALL MEMBER STATES, DESERVES THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE FREELY IN INTERNATIONAL TRADE, AND WE ALSO REITERATE OUR CALL FOR THE LIFTING OF SANCTIONS ON ZIMBABWE.

MR PRESIDENT,

TO CONCLUDE WE WOULD LIKE TO REITERATE OUR BELIEF IN THE PRINCIPLE OF SUBSIDIARITY, RECOGNIZING THE SECURITY COUNCIL'S PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY FOR MAINTAINING INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY. WE, THEREFORE, CALL FOR GREATER AND MORE EFFECTIVE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AS OUTLINED IN CHAPTER VIII OF THE UN CHARTER. THE STRENGTHENING OF THIS COOPERATION IS CRUCIAL FOR THE SWIFT RESOLUTION OF REGIONAL CONFLICTS. WE BELIEVE THAT THE SECURITY COUNCIL



SHOULD BECOME MORE REPRESENTATIVE OF UN MEMBERSHIP TO ENSURE ITS DECISIONS ENJOY GREATER LEGITIMACY. THEREFORE, WE ADVOCATE FOR A COMPREHENSIVE REFORM OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL, SUPPORTING THE COMMON AFRICAN POSITION KNOWN AS THE **'EZULWENI CONSENSUS.'** WE ALSO BELIEVE THAT THE UN SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE A PLACE WHERE ALL OUR ASPIRATIONS FOR A BETTER AND SECURE LIFE FOR HUMANITY MUST BE CHAMPIONED. LET US WORK TOGETHER TO BUILD A UNITED NATIONS THAT REFLECTS A BROAD CONSENSUS AMONG MEMBER STATES, REINFORCING ITS CENTRAL ROLE IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND FOSTERING COLLABORATION WITH REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WHILE ENSURING ALL MEMBERS RESPECT ITS CHARTER.

I THANK YOU.