



*PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM
OF LESOTHO TO THE UNITED NATIONS
KHOTSONG
204 East 39th Street
New York, NY 10016*

STATEMENT

BY

HONOURABLE ARCHIBALD LESAO LEHOHLA, MP

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

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Mr. President,
Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,
Your Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

My delegation associates itself with the compliments extended to you, Mr. President, on your election to the high office of this session, and to your predecessor, Her Excellency Mrs. Sheikha Haya Rashed Al Khalifa of Bahrain. I also wish to take this opportunity to welcome His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-Moon and to assure him of my country's unconditional support during his tenure as the Secretary General of the United Nations.

Mr. President,

Lesotho congratulates you for inviting Member States to comment on the theme, "Responding to Climate Change", during this session. In 1992, the first Earth Summit- the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, was held in Rio de Janeiro. It was at this conference that we committed ourselves to attain sustainable development in the 21st Century. We reaffirmed our commitments in Johannesburg at the 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development. It would seem that since then, we agreed to disagree 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 unequivocal. We waited for the adverse effects of climate change to begin to be felt all over the globe before we could acknowledge that consensus was essential for a concerted action on Climate Change.

Sadly, catastrophes have begun to hit. As it is usually the case, it is the poorest nations and mostly vulnerable countries that are being worst affected. My country is one of those countries. Unfavourable climatic conditions, which are attributable to climate change, have led to severe drought that resulted in acute food shortages. In order to address this crisis, my government declared a state of emergency on food security.

Mr. President,

As the world prepares for the United Nations Climate Change Conference that will take place in Bali, Indonesia in December 2007, we need to be reminded of the urgent need to build a solid and sustainable consensus on a global response to climate change for the period after the expiry of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol in 2012. My delegation calls upon the international community to endeavour to reach consensus on, among other things, steps that must be taken to reach the 60 to 80 per cent emission cuts that are required to stabilize the atmosphere. In that regard, the industrialized countries must assume the major responsibility, because scientific evidence has confirmed that it is the greenhouse gas emissions from these countries that are making the natural disasters worse. The international community must also reaffirm its commitment to assist regions, such as Africa, that are most vulnerable to climate change. In addition, my delegation calls upon the developed countries to assist the developing countries to strengthen their capacity to adapt to climate change.

Mr. President,

Allow us further to share our thoughts on what we consider as “The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century”.

We predicate our thoughts, on three areas. These are:

- a) Democracy
- b) Conflicts, and
- c) Development

The United Nations was formed against the backdrop of colonialism, particularly in the African Continent. As Colonial Rule slowly but surely ended, it left behind, a legacy of undemocratic governments. African Countries were characterised by Coup d’ tats, day in and day out. Very few African Countries have not had the “pleasure” of a Military Rule.

Faced with this disturbing reality, some regional organizations adopted instruments carrying out sanctions that deal with unconstitutional changes of governments. Mention here may be made of the Organisation of African Unity, its successor, the African Union, as well as the Commonwealth Group of Nations. Significantly however, our organization, the United Nations has not adopted any instrument that would carry sanctions against defaulting Member States. This is what the United Nations must do.

Mr. President,

Today, the overwhelming majority of the countries of the world, adhere to the principles of democracy. These countries hold periodic elections. However, the most common denominating factor in the developing countries, is the non-acceptance of the election results. It has become a tradition for the losing Political Parties to dispute the election results. Regrettably, more often than not, this is done through unlawful means. This is despite the fact that there are always lawful mechanisms for challenging the election results. This is one area where we see the role of the United Nations, as the Universal Institution with the necessary capacity, to assist requesting Member States to reverse these trends.

Just as the United Nations plays a critical role in world economic development, it should see it as its role to aggressively inculcate the culture of democracy in all nations. In particular, it must help the developing countries to fight the culture of impunity. The common understanding must be a simple one – “when the people have spoken, respect their voice.” Victors must learn to accept victory with humility and magnanimity - and Losers to accept defeat with grace. In this way, the post election period can be devoted to development, with all sides joining hands in the collective national effort. We must hasten to acknowledge the role which the UN is now playing in the democratization processes, but we feel that it can do more.

This brings us to the second area, that of conflicts. Conflicts always feature prominently in our addresses before this Assembly. We must acknowledge that interstate conflicts are on the decline across the globe. The same however, cannot be said about internal conflicts. It cannot be denied that, these intra state conflicts occur where there is little or no regard for democratic governance. If a country is not accustomed to holding elections or to accepting election results, conflicts arise. Other causes that are still attributable to lack of democratic governance, include lack of judicious sharing of a country’s wealth, rampant poverty and ethnicity.

Mr. President,

In all these conflicts, small arms and light weapons become weapons of choice. We therefore still consider it regrettable that in 2005, Member States

were not able to adopt a legally binding international instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons. We share the view that such an instrument could curtail the sources of illicit small arms and light weapons, their transfers and civilian possession. It is the urgent responsibility of the United Nations to facilitate the adoption of an effective international instrument for curbing the illicit trade in conventional weapons which will make it harder for such weapons to end up in the hands of criminals. We hope that the Arms Trade Treaty that is being proposed, can be concluded expeditiously.

Mr. President,

We must, recall that, in the year 2005, this Assembly solemnly proclaimed the role of the entire international community, acting through the United Nations to protect populations from genocide, war crimes and other crimes against humanity. Unfortunately this is not what is happening on the ground. We still notice inaction on the part of the Security Council, or its reaction coming too late!! The harrowing experience of Rwanda and now Darfur are a living testimony to this. We attribute this inaction to the skewed composition and powers of the Council – especially the right of “veto”, which we are now, more than ever before, convinced that is extremely subjective, and is exercised according to the interests of the concerned Permanent Member. This has, in some instances, caused the “breaking of the ranks” among the “Big Five”.

Mr. President,

We continue to witness unilateral economic and financial blockades being imposed against other countries, the denial of peoples of their right to self-determination while others are still subjected to occupation. Cuba, Palestine and Western Sahara are cases in point here.

We submit that, it must remain the role of the United Nations, in the 21st Century, to proactively preserve international peace and security. Our call is, therefore, that where peace and security are threatened, the United Nations, through the Security Council, must act swiftly and decisively at all times.

But the United Nations can only do so, if its structures are reformed to make

them democratic and representative. Our basic premise would continue to be that, the United Nations in the 21st century, should inculcate democracy, not only in member countries but also within itself.

It is hard fact that the reform of the United Nations would not be complete without the reform of the Security Council. Members of this august body have on several occasions reiterated the fact that the Security Council in its current form does not reflect the realities of today's world, and yet for more than a decade, the Assembly has remained stagnant on this issue. The presentation per se of various positions by major stakeholders as well as various attempts to bridge major differences in those positions, have thus far failed to produce tangible results. Hence, my delegation shares the view that it is now time to move forward and begin intergovernmental negotiations. However, we wish to underline that while the reform of the Security Council is possible, all Member States need to garner the necessary political will to attain that goal. The credibility of the Council is at stake!

Mr. President,

Sustainable world peace and stability creates the necessary space to deal with development challenges of our countries and peoples. The world has acknowledged that, the HIV and AIDS pandemic represents the top most challenge. The untold miseries brought about by this scourge are common course. To the extend that no cure is available, HIV and AIDS will continue to be a threat to human existence. This threat, particularly in Africa, is compounded by the worsening poverty and famine levels, brought about, in most cases, by unfavourable weather conditions, compliments, in large measure, of climate change.

It is our view that, in a country enjoying political stability, the potential for all sectors of that nation to address these challenges is greatly enhanced. Moreover, no economic development can take place without democracy, peace and stability. Of course, the support of the developed countries will always be called for. Hence the need for them to fulfill their promise on Official Development Assistance, that plays such a critical role in the economic development of the developing countries.

Mr. President,

My delegation congratulates the Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Ban Ki-Moon for his commitment to the strengthening of the Organization. For this organisation to acquit itself successfully in the 21st Century, the role of its Secretary General must remain sacrosanct. He must remain immune from influence by the interests of any groups or powers. He must be faithful to the interests of all in the service of our family of nations. Above all, he must help, through the United Nations to create the "World at Peace with itself".

I THANK YOU.