



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

KHOTSONG

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STATEMENT

BY

**H.E. MR. MOTLATSI RAMAFOLE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO
TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**IN THE
THIRD COMMITTEE**

**ON
AGENDA ITEM 28: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

**DURING THE
SIXTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE
UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**11 OCTOBER 2011
NEW YORK**

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Mr. Chairman,

I commend you for your able leadership in guiding the deliberations of this Committee. I assure you of my delegation's continued support.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered by the delegations of Kenya, the United Republic of Tanzania and Argentina, on behalf of the African Group, SADC and the Group of 77 and China respectively.

Mr. Chairman,

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are among the top priorities of the Government of Lesotho. In this regard, Lesotho has recorded major achievements with regard to eliminating violence against women, providing women with quality education, increasing their participation in decision making, as well as ensuring their economic empowerment.

The Government of Lesotho has also enacted a number of legislations promoting gender parity, and eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. These include the Sexual Offences Act 2003, the Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act 2006, and the Land Act 2010. Indeed, this is a clear testimony of the commitment of the Government in advancing the rights of women.

Mr. Chairman,

As the Secretary General's report rightly states, women living in rural areas play a significant role in rural development. However, they continue to be economically and socially disadvantaged. They live in abject poverty and do not have access to quality health care. These are due to a variety of factors such as the increasing food prices and the effects of climate change. The Government of Lesotho is dedicated to ensuring that rural women overcome all these challenges.

The Government is also engaged in awareness raising campaigns targeted at rural women. These are aimed at improving their economic and social wellbeing. As a result of these campaigns, rural women have organized themselves in agricultural projects, and as rural health care workers. The Government, in partnership with the civil society organizations, provides technical and financial assistance to support these initiatives.

Mr. Chairman,

Trafficking in Persons continues to be a major obstacle in our path towards development. Unfortunately, women and girls are more vulnerable. In an effort to address trafficking in persons, Lesotho became a State Party to the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. As a measure to implement this Protocol and all other instruments against trafficking, the Government enacted the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 2011 with the main focus on preventing trafficking in women and children.

Additionally, the Government has partnered with Civil Society Organisations to educate communities on trafficking. This partnership has also led to the establishment of a shelter for victims of trafficking. The shelter offers counseling services and training to equip the victims with skills for sustainable livelihood.

Mr. Chairman,

Enough cannot be said about the challenges that we experience due to the HIV and AIDS pandemic. It remains as one of our main developmental challenges. Women and girls are most vulnerable to this epidemic. With the view to overcome this challenge, the Government continues to implement the International, Regional, Sub-regional and National Instruments that address HIV and AIDS. At the national level, the Government has developed the HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan 2011 – 2016. The Plan is based on the principles of gender equality and advancement of women's rights. It sets guidelines for reducing the vulnerability and impact of HIV and AIDS, among women and girls. It highlights a number of priority areas such as, sexual and gender based violence, economic empowerment, and access to sexual and reproductive health services.

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to report that Lesotho has submitted her report on the implementation of CEDAW. The submission of this combined report is a clear testimony of the commitment of my Government to the promotion of the rights of women. It also shows Lesotho's resolve to fulfill Her obligations to the International Human Rights Instruments to which She is

Party. With the assistance and guidance from the CEDAW Committee and other relevant bodies, we will continue to enhance compliance with the Convention and other related documents.

Mr. Chairman,

I conclude by commending UN-Women for its leadership role in advancing the rights of women globally. As one of the founding Members of UN-Women Executive Board, Lesotho will continue to play an active role in the Sessions of the Board. We reiterate our appeal to Member States and other partners, to financially support UN-Women. This will ensure the full and efficient implementation of its obligations.

I THANK YOU