



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

BY

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AT THE PLENARY

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

Mr. President,

My delegation associates itself with the compliments extended to you on your election to the presidency of this session, to your predecessor, and also to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

We greatly welcome the convening, as well as the outcomes of the two High-level Meetings on Africa's Development Needs and on the Millennium Development Goals during the course of this session of the General Assembly. Let us not lose the momentum generated by these two meetings.

Mr. President,

Let me thank you for advancing a very befitting theme, "the impact of the global food crisis on poverty and hunger in the world as well as the need to democratize the United Nations". The decision by the Secretary General to establish the High-level Task Force on the Global Food Crisis demonstrates the determination of the United Nations, to champion a unified response to the current food crisis. This is indeed emboldening, and we welcome the progress that has been achieved so far, by the Task Force, in producing the Comprehensive Framework for Action. The food crisis poses a serious threat to the fragile progress that is being made towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. It is also a source of political instability in developing and often vulnerable countries.

Policy initiatives that should be implemented by relevant stakeholders, to overcome this crisis, were adequately articulated in the outcome documents of the High-Level Conference on World Food Security: the Challenges of Climate Change and Bioenergy, that took place in Rome, in June 2008. Here, the bottom line was clearly drawn, that while the current energy needs

are real and urgent, they cannot and should not be allowed to compete with the call to ensure food security. The stakes are too high in many developing countries, Lesotho included, where abject poverty, malnutrition and the spread of HIV and AIDS, have reached unacceptable levels. All of humanity have a right to food. Hunger constitutes a violation of human dignity.

That is why my delegation regrets the lack of progress in the implementation of previous international commitments to fight hunger, particularly those contained in the outcomes of the 1996 and the 2002 World Food Summits. The objective of reducing by half the number of undernourished people, by 2015, will not be achieved, unless there is visible movement from rhetoric to action.

Mr. President,

Lesotho was encouraged by the G8 Statement on Global Food Security that was recently issued at the Hokkaido Toyako Summit. The statement highlighted the importance of stimulating the world food production and of increasing investments in agriculture. Hope raising pledges were made at that Summit and earlier ones. What remains to be done as a matter of great urgency is delivery of those promises. Also, we call upon other development partners, including the Bretton Woods institutions, to scale-up their efforts to help farmers in the Least Developed Countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, to raise agricultural production and productivity. The preparedness of the African continent to shoulder its responsibilities in this regard was clearly reflected in a declaration entitled, “Responding to the Challenges of the High Food Prices and Agriculture Development”, that was recently adopted by the African Union Summit, in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt in July this year.

The establishment by the World Bank, in May 2008, of two international climate investment funds, intended to provide innovative financing for developing countries to pursue cleaner development paths and also to protect themselves from the impacts of climate change is also an encouraging development. Our hope is that these Climate Investments Funds will be additional to the existing Official Development Assistance (ODA), which is so much needed by the developing countries to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. President,

Peace and development are closely inter-related and are mutually reinforcing. The United Nations cannot afford the luxury of complacency in its mandate for the maintenance of world peace and stability.

Most importantly, let us not forget that the United Nations Organisation was born from the ashes of a devastating world war. Indeed, the primary purpose of the United Nations was and continues to be to eliminate future wars and to create sustainable international security. But every year we witness the emergence of new hotspots and designer wars, as some big and powerful states resort more and more to the use of force. Every time these states try to pursue the illusory goal of imposing by force their will on others, they create a more unstable and more dangerous world.

Mr. President,

Let me now address an issue of concern to my delegation, “the abuse of the Principle of Universal Jurisdiction”. The Assembly of the African Union was seized with the issue of the abuse of the Principle of “Universal Jurisdiction” by some countries that seem inclined to use this principle to target certain African Leaders.

We do recognize that universal jurisdiction is a principle of International Law whose purpose is to ensure that individuals who commit grave offences such as genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity with impunity are brought to justice. This noble principle should be impartially and objectively applied, so that it may not be abused for the political ends of some individuals or countries, as this could endanger International Order and Security.

It is a trite fact that the need for the application of this principle by individual states has been rendered unnecessary by the creation of the International Criminal Court (ICC). If a state is unable or unwilling to deal with certain grave situations, such a matter should be referred to the ICC, which will deal with it impartially. Even the United Nations Security Council does refer certain situations to the ICC. We need only emphasise that, the ICC was created by this world body and must enjoy the support and trust of the entire membership of the United Nations. It must also be immune from any external influences.

Mr. President,

As we respond to your invitation to comment on the second part of our theme, “the need to democratize the United Nations”, we do so, against the background of the integrity and credibility of the United Nations Security Council.

We raise the issue of the integrity and credibility of the United Nations Security Council, recognising fully its responsibility to uphold the three pillars of the United Nations, namely, human rights, development and peace and security.

The working methods of the United Nations Security Council continue to interest us precisely because the Security Council is the most powerful institution within the United Nations setting. It is charged with the responsibility for the maintenance of world peace and order, and it is a custodian of human rights.

In order to perform this mandate the Security Council needs to always preserve its integrity and credibility. It is only when all Member States are convinced of its integrity and credibility that they will have confidence in it.

But the Security Council can enjoy such confidence, if and only if, it is seen to be transparent and democratic in its structures, accountable and responsible to the entire membership of the United Nations. Only if it submits itself to the rule of law. Only if it is objective and impartial in its work. Only if the membership of the United Nations is convinced that it is not used as a policy instrument of any one state or group of states. And only if it subjects all member states of the United Nations to the same and equal treatment.

The Security Council should thus, not turn a “blind eye” to a situation in one country, and then act when a similar situation obtains in another country. It must be an honest arbiter in conflicts. We all owe it to ourselves to work towards such reform of the Security Council that will help to preserve its integrity and credibility so that it can perform its lofty mandate more efficiently.

Mr. President,

Lesotho is also concerned that the Security Council continues to be seen to be encroaching in matters that fall within the powers and prerogatives of other organs of the United Nations, including the General Assembly. We believe that the Council must desist from assuming the legislative role of the General Assembly and passing binding resolutions that dictate domestic law for all member states. In some instances the Council has sought to interfere in purely internal political matters, which do not pose a threat to international peace, and which are being dealt with at the regional level. In our view, the usurpation by the Council of the mandates of other organs, is not justifiable.

Mr. President,

A few days ago, we witnessed a positive development in the Southern Africa sub-region when the leaders of the people of Zimbabwe put aside their political differences and joined hands to form a government of national unity. We congratulate the people of Zimbabwe for this historic feat. We urge the international community to support the people of Zimbabwe to rebuild the economy of their country and to determine their destiny under the atmosphere of national harmony and peace. We also urge the leadership of Zimbabwe to ensure adherence to the principles of democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law as such adherence will have a catalytic effect to socio-economic development.

Finally, we urge the Security Council to support efforts to bring to an end the unilateral economic and financial embargo that has, for decades, been imposed against Cuba. We further urge the Council to intervene more decisively on behalf of the people of Palestine and Western Sahara who have, for decades, been denied the right to self-determination. Lesotho is supportive of any efforts that will bring about lasting and sustainable peace in the Middle East and in other conflict areas in Africa, the Balkans and everywhere in the world. We recall that in his report, "In larger freedom: towards development, security and human rights for all", the former Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Kofi Annan, said: "Our guiding light must be the needs and hopes of peoples everywhere".

Such is the call and challenge staring in the face of the United Nations to ensure a peaceful, safe, dignified and prosperous world in our time and for posterity.

I thank you.