



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

BY

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TO THE

FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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Chairperson,

I wish to first of all congratulate you and other members of the bureau for the excellent manner in which you are guiding the work of this 55th Session of the Commission.

We align ourselves with the statements delivered by the delegations of Argentina, Mozambique and Namibia on behalf of the Group of 77 and China the African Group and SADC respectively.

We commend the Commission for the theme chosen for this session and we thank the Secretary General for the reports submitted earlier.

Chairperson,

The importance of education, training, science and technology and their contribution to the socio-economic development of our countries cannot be overemphasized. The benefits of enhancing the inclusion of women and girls in education, training and employment in achieving “full employment and decent work” are well articulated in the *BPFA* and the *Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*. To that end, the Government of Lesotho remains committed to improving the lives of women and girls by ensuring their access to proper training and education.

Today, I wish to share with you some of the initiatives made by the Government of Lesotho in promoting access to education by women and girls, and their full employment and decent work. Education is a constitutional right enshrined in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Lesotho. Section 23 thereof provides for education for all. It further provides for the adoption of policies aimed at ensuring that “education is directed to the development of the human personality and sense of dignity and susceptibility to social and political responsibilities and personal freedoms”. In this regard, the Government of Lesotho has taken specific measures to eliminate discrimination and universalise education. The vision of the Government of Lesotho is to use Basotho as a fully functional society with well-grounded moral and ethical values; adequate social, scientific and technical knowledge and skills by the year 2020.

Chairperson,

In 2005, the Government of Lesotho adopted the *Curriculum and Pedagogic Policy* which seeks to eliminate socio-cultural barriers with respect to girls and boys’ education, as well as ensure gender sensitive career guidance at all levels of education. Likewise, whilst Pre-Service and in-service teachers and curriculum developers have been gendered and gendered in terms of the curricular, inspection and curriculum fields has enabled the Ministry of Basic Education and Training to come up with an education sector development plan in their implementation addresses the identified gaps.

Chairperson,

The Government of Lesotho adopted the Education Sector Strategic Plan 2012-2022, which among others, strives to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education, and achieve gender equality in education. The plan has set out six priority areas: i) Integrated Early Childhood Care (0-5); ii) Basic Education; iii) Secondary Education; iv) Technical and Vocational Institutions; v) Higher Education and vi) Life Long Learning and non-formal education.

The Government has progressively made basic education free, accessible and now compulsory to all. Lesotho has exceeded gender parity in access to primary education, achieving 87% for girls and 75% for boys, with higher completion rates for girls. In addition to the provision of formal education, life-long learning and informal non-formal education have been instituted for the less privileged. There is also the child sponsorship programme which targets children at secondary, and high school levels. Through the government's educational grants to children of church who have been identified by the Social Welfare Department and teachers as being financially assistance to pursue their studies. Furthermore, there is also the ministry of finance which awards loans to persons who are pursuing technical and further education level both in and outside Lesotho.

Chairperson,

Turning to employment creation, in particular for women, we wish to underscore that, as a general rule, the Government of Lesotho is committed to creating employment as a means of eradicating poverty. Ministerial guidelines for "Women's equal access to full employment and decent work", the Government of Lesotho has reformed the Country's legislation in order to guarantee equal opportunities for fair and equal remuneration for equal work. Maternity leave is also mandatory under the Labour Laws of Lesotho. Support services in the form of women's entrepreneurship and skills training, as well as access to credit have also been initiated. This has gone a long way in boosting the economic independence of the families of the 60% of women.

Chairperson,

In conclusion, I wish to point out that these results would not have been possible without the support of our development partners and civil society organizations. We therefore call for continued support for the betterment of life in the lives of women and girls.

I thank you.