



PERMANENT MISSION OF THE KINGDOM  
OF LESOTHO TO THE  
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## STATEMENT

BY

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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
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. Please convey my appreciation's continued support.

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

**Mr. Chairman,**

Gender equality and women's empowerment 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 encouraging 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 Equal Pay Act, 2011, the Married Persons Act, 2006, and the Labour Act, 2010. This legislation 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 are often 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 their increasing joblessness and migration from safe homelands. 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 agriculture projects, and as rural health care workers. The Government, in partnership with other civil society organisations, 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 the Protocol and all other instruments against trafficking, the Government enacted the Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act 26 of 2011 with the aim of 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 counselling 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. We are arguing that it is not enough to just cope with the virus 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, reproductive health, and 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 compliance report is a clear testimony of the commitment of the Government to the promotion of the rights of women. It also shows Lesotho's sincere fulfilment of her obligations to the International Human Rights Instruments to which she is

Party. With the assistance and guidance from the UN UAWD, UN 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 in promoting the rights of women globally. As one of the founding Members of UN Women Executive Board, South will continue to play an active role in the Sessions of the Board. We reiterate our appeal to Member States and partners, to financially support UN Women. This will ensure the full and efficient implementation of its mandate.

**I THANK YOU**