



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

STATEMENT

BY

THE HONOURABLE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

MR ARCHIBALD LESAO LEHOHLA MP,

ON THE OCCASION OF THE UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY

GENERAL'S HIGH LEVEL EVENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

DELIVERED AT

THE SIXTY-SECOND SESSION OF THE

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

**24TH SEPTEMBER, 2007
NEW YORK**

Please check against delivery

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

Climate change is a relatively new subject on the international agenda. Over many centuries, mankind took the climate system for granted, without noticing that human activities had a profound impact on this important resource.

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

Climate-related incidents have become so frequent that there is no news bulletin that is complete without mentioning the subject. Reports on the state of global climate and the resultant impacts, are very alarming. Unfortunately, despite initial international complacency, climate change is a stark reality and cannot be wished away. The reality is that, just as it is with the HIV and AIDS pandemic, the fact that climate change poses the most serious threat to sustainable development has reached home in all of our countries. The whole global family is vulnerable to climate change.

For the developing countries, at least in Africa, the question of adapting to climate change is becoming increasingly topical and urgent. .

My country Lesotho in particular is in a unique situation. Lesotho is a land-locked country. It is, *semi-arid, prone to natural disasters, liable to drought and desertification, and has a fragile mountain ecosystem.* The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has confirmed that almost all sectors of our national economy are vulnerable to climate change. Our top revenue earner, the water resource, and agricultural sector are being

negatively impacted by climate change, and so are other sectors such as forestry, health and culture. Because of the terrain of our country, land degradation has traditionally been the most serious environmental challenge. The climate change models indicate that the situation will worsen in future unless effective adaptation strategies are implemented.

This year we are paying a heavy price for a worst crop failure ever, when a severe drought coincided with a critical crop period.

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates

The world must urgently speed up a coordinated effort to adapt to the effects of climate change. Lesotho Government fully cognizant of this fact, recently audited the national education curriculum to assess its relevance to the climate change challenge. This audit will be extended to other sectors to ensure integration of climate change in major policy documents.

Secondly, Lesotho completed the National Adaptation Plan of Action on Climate Change (NAPA) in February this year. This document identifies some projects that can be implemented promptly to mitigate the adverse effects of climate change in the short term. We call for the speedy implementation of NAPA programmes under the Least Developed Countries Fund. Further delay would frustrate the whole purpose for which this fund was created.

Thirdly, we have completed a technology needs assessment in the energy and land use change sectors, with a view to identifying adaptation technologies that can be adopted.

Lesotho is prepared to embark on a comprehensive adaptation

programme in order to improve its resilience with a view to ameliorating the impacts of climate change. We are however incapacitated by inadequate financial resources and adaptation technologies. We need assistance in this regard.

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

I would like to take this opportunity to make a call to the world community to urgently intensify programmes to enable developing countries particularly the Least Developed Countries, to cope with the impacts of climate change.

I also call for the prompt operationalization of other financial mechanisms identified under both the UNFCCC and the Kyoto Protocol, to provide finance, and to facilitate technology transfer and the eventual establishment of good practices on the ground. It is indeed sad to note that with many elaborate plans and well defined financial mechanisms to address adaptation, including completion of the NATIONAL ADAPTATION PLANS OF ACTION by many developing countries, not many physical projects have commenced on the ground.

Excellencies and Distinguished Delegates,

In conclusion I would like to state my country's optimism that , our global family will succeed in meeting the challenge that we face to adapt and to build resilience against climate change if we act together and show the necessary political will. It is heartening to note that climate change is attracting so much attention and has become embedded in exchanges during global economic and social and political fora. We in Lesotho, take climate change seriously and are committed to meet and support all efforts that address it.

Excellences and Distinguished delegates,

As members of the global village, we all have a common responsibility to put climate change on top of the political agenda nationally, regionally and internationally. We have learnt from events of the past few years that the impacts of climate change cannot be contained in artificial political boundaries. We therefore expect greater multilateral action, and the forthcoming conference in Bali offers the opportunity to map out such action.

I thank you.