



STATEMENT BY
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OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO
AT THE
HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM ON SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT 2020

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Madam President,

Honourable Ministers

Your Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

It is a great honor and privilege for me to address this 2020 Session of the High Level Political Forum that has an important task of reviewing our progress on SDGs. At the outset, let me congratulate you, Madam President and thank you for convening this important event, which gives us the opportunity to report progress and provide further guidance on implementation of the SDGs. Lesotho welcomes the report of the Secretary General and aligns herself with the principle that no one should be left behind. Let me also align myself with the statements delivered by Malawi on behalf of LDCs, Kazakhstan on behalf of the LLDCs as well as the Guyana on behalf of G77 and China.

Madam President,

The Government of Lesotho is implementing its Second Generation National Strategic Development Plan 2018/19 – 2022/23 (NSDP II) which consciously mainstreamed and integrated the SDGs, under the four pillars, namely: promoting inclusive and sustainable growth, strengthening human capital focusing on health, education, nutrition and social protection, building enabling infrastructure as well as strengthening governance and accountability.

Madam President

Lesotho's poverty rate fell from 57.6 percent in 2002 to 49.7 percent in 2017 however still exceptionally high, especially in rural areas at 60.7% and for female headed households. This represents about 7 percentage points decline over a 15-year period. This improvement has however been driven to a downturn by the current Covid-19 pandemic with more people losing their means of living. The number of food insecure population has increased from a total of 640,00 due to drought to a high of 179,000 and 720,000 households in urban and rural areas respectively in March 2020 and likely to have increased significantly due to covid-19. Inequality has declined with Gini coefficient of 44.6 percent from 51.9 percent in 2002/03 but the country still remains one of the 20 percent most unequal countries in the world.

Madam President,

The Kingdom of Lesotho experiences a high unemployment of 22.4 per cent and even higher among youth at 29.1 per cent according to the Bureau of Statistics Labour Force Survey 2019. Employment in the manufacturing sector is likely to be affected as a result of the negative impact posed by the Covid-19 epidemic.

The National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) II seeks to foster job creation and inclusive growth and further reduce poverty. The plan targets gradual economic growth, from 0.4 percent in 2017/18 to about 5 percent projected in 2022/23 and creation of 49,000 private-sector jobs within the plan period. However, the anticipated economic growth is likely to be affected by COVID-19, which has negatively impacted the global economy.

Madam President,

Lesotho recognizes that inclusive and quality education and training, together with health, are part of human capital development and critical enabler for achieving sustainable development in the country. While the country has been doing well to achieving universal primary education with literacy rate estimated at 86 per cent, the Covid-19 pandemic is impacting negatively on education with primary and secondary schools remaining closed since April which is expected to lead to a decline in the education outcomes.

Madam President

With a history of episodes of instability and political unrest, the search for sustainable peace and stable institutions is a key priority of the current 4th Coalition Government. There is a process of implementing the reforms agenda outlined in the Blue print “The Lesotho We Want: Dialogue and Reforms for National Transformation – Vision, Overview and Roadmap”. Lesotho’s priorities in this regard include: Building national and local level peace architecture: peace and stability institutions and platforms at all level; and strengthening the judiciary: special courts including the Children Court and another dealing with people with disability; increasing relevant human resources; including the number of judges and other legal officers; strengthening case management and strengthening of the legal drafting capacity.

Madam President

In conclusion, the Government of Lesotho reaffirms her commitment to:

- i. Implement priority programmes under different SDGs that have high combined impact on poverty reduction in all its facets and unemployment
- ii. Mobilise the participation of everyone in the implementation of agenda 2030 and leave no one behind
- iii. Take effective action to respond to the effects of climate change
- iii. Maintain the momentum for National Dialogue and consultations and implement the agreed National Reform Agenda, to promote lasting peace, stability, inclusive society, with strong and effective institutions.
- iv. Call on partners to provide the necessary technical support and close the resource gaps, especially for catalysing private investment, as well as dealing with control of Covid-19 and mitigating its impact.

I thank you.