



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

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PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

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CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Your Excellency, Mr. Jean Ping, President of the 59th Session of the United Nations General Assembly;
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government;
Your Excellency, Mr. Kofi Annan, Secretary-General of the United Nations;
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.

Mr. President, allow me on behalf of my delegation to join previous speakers in congratulating You on Your election to the presidency of this session. In the same breath, to extend our complements to Your predecessor, His Excellency, Mr. Julian Hunte and the Secretary General of the United Nations, His Excellency, Mr. Kofi Annan for a job well done.

Mr. President, if there has been one consistent and predictable area of convergence in our debates at the sessions of the UN General Assembly of the past and of today, it is the compelling need for a peaceful and stable world. A world where humankind lives in harmony, mutual tolerance and respect for collective benefit. For, with peace and stability at the national, regional and international levels, humankind would be able to concentrate on the real issues of the development of our only world.

Mr. President, never before has our world become so insecure, and faced such enormous challenges as today. Sadly, this insecurity emanates from man's insensitivity and inhumanity to human life. Yet, it is equally through man's efforts, that the effects of these challenges *can and* must be mitigated or better still, defeated.

Mr. President, the list of challenges facing us today is inexhaustive. I need only mention: -

- * World insecurity;
- * HIV and AIDS pandemic;
- * Poverty; and
- * High unemployment rates.

Mr. President, it is common knowledge that the root cause of the world's insecurity today is international terrorism and armed conflicts. Terrorist actions continue to haunt and shock us. The recent murder of innocent, young and defenceless school children in Beslan, Russia; the bombings in

Indonesia; and daily killings in Iraq, Palestine and Israel are simply too ghastly to countenance. Equally, the recent massacres of men, women and children in refugee camps in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Burundi and the Sudan are not only dastardly in the extreme, but in stark contrast to everything modern civilization, humanity and morality espouse.

Our world shall continue to be insecure for as long as terrorists continue to be harboured and financed by some Member States of the UN. We must recognize that none of us is immune from terrorism. We must confront terrorism head on, as they say, "Fire with fire". But a more honest and practical solution would be, for all Member States of the UN to commit themselves not to harbour or finance terrorists and their organisations. In that way, terrorists would have no safe haven, thus rendering it possible to chase them from pillar to post, until terrorist organizations are eliminated from our world. Yet another equally pragmatic solution may be found, we submit, in the answer to the question: - "what is it that drives an inherently good human being to commit such inhuman and senseless acts of state terrorism, organizational terrorism or individual terrorism"? In short, we must confront the causes of terrorism in all honesty and without malice to anybody.

Mr. President, Lesotho is deeply concerned that armed conflicts continue to cause suffering, and hinder economic growth in Africa and elsewhere. However, we commend the United Nations for all its efforts aimed at the elimination of human suffering in armed conflict situations. When this august Assembly adopted the historic resolution on the prevention of armed conflicts, in July 2003, it recognized that multilateral cooperation, under the auspices of the United Nations, could be an effective means to prevent armed conflict and to address its root causes. Furthermore, it acknowledged the responsibility of the United Nations to stand up to the challenge of preventing, rather than just responding to, conflicts. Let me take this opportunity to express my delegation's appreciation for the comprehensive report of the Secretary-General, presented at this Session, on the implementation of that important resolution.

Mr. President, for years now, the situation in Somalia has posed a threat to international peace and security. The swearing-in of Somalia's transitional Parliament on 22 August 2004, in Nairobi, Kenya, paves the way to genuine recovery for Somalia. In this regard, my delegation compliments the Government of Kenya, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development

(IGAD), the African Union (AU), and all other stakeholders for their efforts to bring about normalcy in Somalia. This momentum must not be allowed to lapse or be derailed by those who seek to fuel hatred, divisions and killings of the people of Somalia, through the smuggling of arms despite the arms embargo.

Mr. President, the humanitarian and security crises engulfing the Darfur region in the Sudan, are a cause for serious concern to all of us. A lot has been said about this grave situation but not much has been done to contain the humanitarian and political crises. However, my delegation is hopeful that words will finally turn into action. We had hoped that with the help of the African Union mediators, the representatives of the government of Sudan and the two rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Army (SLA) and the Justice Equality Movement (JEM) could be persuaded to sign and respect the protocol on security. We reiterate our call to all concerned parties to submit themselves to negotiations. We wish to remind the government of the Sudan that it is its primary responsibility, first and foremost, to protect the civilian life of its nationals.

Mr. President, the Great Lakes region remains politically volatile. This situation has been exacerbated by the recent massacre of refugees from the DRC, at the Gatumba refugee camp in western Burundi. We hope that the fact that the Forces for National Liberation (FNL) have claimed responsibility for the killings would make investigations easier.

Mr. President, the peace process in the DRC remains elusive just when we thought the gains that had been made from the Congolese Dialogue, in South Africa, could be consolidated. We reiterate the call by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for renewed commitment by the Transition Government in the DRC, the Security Council and the international community, to work in full partnership to see the transitional process through to elections scheduled for 2005.

It is worth mentioning that, at the Regional level, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Heads of State and Government, at their recent Summit in Mauritius, mandated the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation to actively remain seized with the situation in the DRC.

Mr. President, my delegation has never condoned the killings of the Israelis by the Palestinians or of the Palestinians by the Israelis. We have always looked into the root cause of the problem in the Middle East, which is the illegal occupation of Palestinian lands by Israel. That problem has been exacerbated by the construction of a separation wall by Israel, in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal judicial organ of the United Nations, on 9 July 2004, rendered its advisory opinion, that such a construction was contrary to international law. We, therefore, appeal to Israel to implement the important resolution adopted by the General Assembly in view of the ICJ advisory opinion. Moreover, it is our submission that, unless and until, the issue of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian People is addressed vigorously, urgently and truthfully, peace and security shall remain illusive in the Middle East.

Mr. President, perhaps we have to recall that, four years ago, we were gathered in this very hall with hope for and anticipation of a better life for all humankind in the twenty-first century, as we adopted the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Development Goals. We set time-bound and measurable goals for combating, inter alia, poverty, hunger, disease, the spread of HIV and AIDS, illiteracy, environmental degradation and discrimination against women. Needless to say, we are today, as we were then, committed to the achievement of those goals. However, Mr. President, we did not anticipate that, as we approach the comprehensive review in 2005, the HIV and AIDS pandemic would have become the greatest threat to life itself, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. Undoubtedly, the HIV and AIDS pandemic renders futile and irrelevant all our efforts at the betterment of humankind, including the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals.

As early as the year 2000, Lesotho had declared HIV and AIDS a national disaster, and various measures were being taken at the national level to control and manage the pandemic. We have not been alone in this fight. It is in this spirit that we wish to recognize and appreciate the dedication of Mr. Stephen Lewis and Mr. James Morris, the Special Envoys of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, on HIV and AIDS, and the Humanitarian Crisis in Southern Africa, respectively. Through his advocacy, Mr. Lewis has helped Lesotho start a robust programme of anti-retroviral treatment, while Mr. Morris's initiatives have ensured food supply for the vulnerable and orphaned children. Interventions of this nature give credence to the lofty declarations adopted at various international summits on the HIV and

AIDS pandemic, as they complement and strengthen our own initiatives and limited resources.

Mr. President, my delegation reiterates the call for increased support to the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). NEPAD is the framework for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in Africa. It is another mechanism that will enable African countries to fight the HIV and AIDS pandemic, to eradicate poverty and to reduce high unemployment. In the same context, the Millennium Challenge Account is indeed a worthy and commendable initiative by the Government of the United States of America to launch the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) on the road to sound and sustainable development.

Mr. President, the prevailing situations in Western Sahara and Cuba continue to be of major concern. My delegation will, because it must, repeat the statement we have made on many previous occasions that the people of Western Sahara have suffered long enough. We have, therefore, noted with appreciation the latest reaffirmation by the Security Council of its support for the 1991 settlement plan, allowing the nationals of Western Sahara to determine the future of the disputed territory in a referendum. We hope that the referendum will be held soon.

By the same token, Mr. President, the unilateral economic embargo against Cuba is causing untold misery to the people of Cuba. To my delegation, where two countries are at war with each other, or where a country has been condemned by the international community for any gross misconduct, an economic embargo could be justifiable. We are not aware that war has been declared against Cuba or that the government of Cuba has compromised or broken international law. We remain in the dark as to what justifies the victimization of millions of the people of Cuba by the unilateral economic blockade. For we contend that it is the sovereign, democratic and indeed sacred right of the people of Cuba to determine the system of government most appropriate for their country. Accordingly, we plead that normalcy be restored in Cuba through the removal of the economic blockade.

Mr. President, the coming into operation of the International Criminal Court (ICC) signifies an end to impunity. We are elated that there now exists an international body that can takeover when national courts are unable or unwilling to try perpetrators of the most egregious violations of human rights. We would indeed live in a safer world if State Parties to the Rome

Statute of the International Criminal Court could adhere to it; and also, if the Court could attain universal jurisdiction. My delegation encourages states that have not yet ratified the Statute to do so as a matter of urgency and commonsense.

We are pleased to note that the ICC has commenced investigations in the DRC and Uganda. We congratulate both these sister countries for their cooperation with the ICC.

Mr. President, in order for the United Nations family to address today's challenges effectively, the UN must be reformed with the Security Council being the central focus of that effort. The Security Council must reflect the reality of the international community in the 21st century. This must be done against the background of multilateralism, upon which international peace and security is premised. In this regard, allow me, Mr. President to congratulate His Excellency Mr. Julian Hunte, President of the 58th Session of the General Assembly, for the hard work and commitment he displayed as the Chair of the Open-ended Working Group on the Reform of the Security Council. However, we sadly note the slow progress in dealing with this very important issue. We hope that Member States will gather more political will and requisite courage as they tackle this issue in earnest during this Session of the General Assembly.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me reiterate that it is only through solidarity, unity of purpose, and honesty amongst us, her Member States, that the UN will defeat, in our time, the greatest challenges ever to face humankind; otherwise, as the Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency, Mr. Kofi Annan stressed in his opening statement, history will judge us harshly.

I THANK YOU.