



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

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STATEMENT

BY

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IN THE

SIXTH COMMITTEE

**ON AGENDA ITEM 82:
THE RULE OF LAW AT THE NATIONAL
AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS**

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Mr. Chairman,

On the outset allow me to congratulate you and other Members of the Bureau on your election. I am confident that under your sterling leadership, proceedings within the Committee will be successful. I assure you of my delegation's full support.

I align myself with the statements made by the distinguished representatives of Iran and South Africa on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group respectively.

My delegation welcomes the Report of the Secretary-General on strengthening and coordinating United Nations rule of law activities, which highlights key achievements and challenges in the rule of law at national and international levels over the past year.

Mr. Chairman,

The rule of law is a broad and complex concept, embedded in the history of all nations, as well as in the long standing efforts of States to create an international community based on law. Strengthening the rule of law at the international level is not only critical for effectively addressing current global challenges, but also for reinforcing the principle itself as the very foundation of peaceful coexistence between nations.

The concept of the rule of law has, in the recent past, gained significant momentum within the United Nations system. Looking back at the various debates within the UN on the subject, it is clear that we are moving in the right direction. For normal international life to be possible, the rule of law should govern inter-state relations in all spheres of life. Not only should the rule of law serve as a basis for peaceful coexistence of nations in the world, but it should also serve as a guarantee for insuring sustainable development, safety and security of our planet.

Mr. Chairman,

The advancement of the rule of law, both at the national and international levels, is essential for realization of sustained economic growth, sustainable development, eradication of poverty and hunger, and protection of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. The international community has affirmed

on many occasions that strengthening the rule of law and bringing the law closer to the people are effective tools by which to promote economic and social advancement.

In our view, the linkages between the rule of law and the quest for sustainable development cannot be overemphasized. Lasting peace and sustainable development cannot be fully realized without the respect for human rights and upholding the rule of law. These notions therefore cannot be ignored in the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

Mr. Chairman,

International law must be respected equally by all States. Selectivity and double standards in the application and enforcement of international treaties must also be rejected, since they undermine the very nature and objective of the rule of law. The notion of peaceful settlement of disputes is not only one of the main purposes of the United Nations but also one of the fundamental principles of the international legal system. At the international level several Member States have brought their disputes to international adjudicative mechanisms with the purpose of peaceful settlement.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) continues to play a central role in the peaceful settlement of disputes before intractable conflict and post conflict situations arise. It is encouraging that the ICJ is now considering a larger number of cases on a broad range of aspects of public international law.

Mr. Chairman,

While it is mainly the responsibility of Member States to implement the rule of law, countries are not on the same level of development. We must therefore forge a genuine global partnership to enhance the capacity of Member States, particularly developing countries, to carry out their international obligations. Only a society based on the rule of law has the necessary means to offer better living conditions for its people, prevent corruption, and cure the ills of society.

The application of the rule of law at the national level is thus a cornerstone for building stable and resilient societies. In our view, the rule of law at the national level promotes social interaction among citizens and government in a legal environment that respects and protects basic human rights and freedoms.

It is in this spirit that Lesotho, as a democratic Country has resolved to advance the rule of law as an answer to many challenges that besiege her.

Mr. Chairman,

Lesotho has made certain strides in strengthening the rule of law at the national level within a broad spectrum of legal and institutional frameworks. There are a number of laws and institutions that safeguard constitutional governance and the rule of law. Such are required to ensure administrative fairness, compliance with the rule of law and public accountability.

In addition to the Constitution as the supreme law of the land, a number of statutes have been enacted in the recent past to provide for the protection of human rights and respect for the rule of law. These include amongst others, the Speedy Courts Trial Act of 2002 enacted as a response to the problem of bureaucratic inefficiencies being experienced in the legal system; the Sexual Offences Act of 2003 enacted to consolidate all laws relating to sexual offences; the Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act of 2006 which has removed the legal inequality between husband and wife; the Penal Code of 2010 which codifies existing common law criminal justice principles; and finally the Children's Protection and Welfare Act of 2011, which is a comprehensive statute that brings together all policies and regulations on children's protection and welfare.

Institutionally, apart from the ordinary courts, Lesotho also has established specialized courts to deal with specific matters. These special courts include, the Commercial Court, the Labour Court, the Children's Court, the Courts Martial and the Small Claims Courts.

Mr. Chairman,

The rule of law will continue to be central in meeting the challenges of our time. Together, we can support sustained, coherent and well-resourced efforts to strengthen the rule of law at both the national and international levels, and ensure that the rule of law can play its rightful role in building a better world for all. I use this opportunity to emphasize that by following an international law and justice- based approach, and respecting the inherent right of others on

an equal basis, we will be able to overcome the difficulties and challenges before us as members of the international community.

In conclusion, **Mr. Chairman**, Lesotho looks forward to continue the discussions on the rule of law in the Sixth Committee. We pledge to continue upholding the notion and the principles it is based upon, namely the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, democracy and equality and justice for all.

I thank you.