



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

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**H.E. MR. MOTLATSI RAMAFOLE  
AMBASSADOR AND PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE  
OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO TO THE UNITED NATIONS**

**ON**

**AGENDA ITEM 62: ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN**

**IN THE**

**THIRD COMMITTEE**

**DURING THE SIXTY-FOURTH SESSION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

**14 OCTOBER 2009  
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**Mr. Chairman,**

At the onset, let me congratulate you and other members of the Bureau on your election. The manner by which you are steering the business of this Committee is exemplary. I assure you of my delegations' support.

My delegation aligns itself with the Statements delivered by the Representative of Sudan and the Permanent Representative of Malawi on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), respectively.

**Mr. Chairman,**

I would like to thank the Secretary-General for the reports submitted under this agenda item, and take note of the conclusions and recommendations contained therein. I commend the United Nations system for its efforts in intensifying initiatives aimed at eliminating violence against women. My delegation pledges its full cooperation with the various offices charged with the advancement of women.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Gender equality and the empowerment of women are major priorities for the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho. That is why Lesotho is a State Party to several International Human Rights instruments, that seek to address gender inequality.

At the national level, Lesotho adopted the Gender and Development Policy in 2003. This Policy serves as a framework to address the challenges of gender inequities and inequalities, poverty, increased spread of HIV and AIDS as well as unemployment. It also aims at ensuring equal opportunities and participation of women and men in politics and decision-making processes and in the entire development process. It further seeks to promote equal access to education and training, health services and control over resources such as land and credit.

In addition, the Parliament of Lesotho passed the Sexual Offences Act in 2003. The Act considers sexual violence as a crime punishable by law. This Act protects the victims and survivors of sexual violence. It provides for

increased punishment against people who deliberately expose others to HIV and AIDS. To this end, there has been a notable decrease in incidences of sexual offences.

**Mr. Chairman,**

In its efforts to address gender equality between women and men, Lesotho enacted the Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act in 2006. The Act provides for the abolition of the minority status of married women. This milestone legislation ensures that women have equal reproductive rights to men and provides protection for women's property rights. It promotes equality between spouses married in community of property.

To enhance the implementation of this Act, the Government of Lesotho in collaboration with its cooperating partners has embarked on numerous workshops to educate the nation about the content of the Act. Law enforcement agencies have also been trained to ensure a uniform understanding and interpretation of the law so as to uphold and promote the rights provided under the Act.

**Mr. Chairman,**

The year 2010 marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The guidelines enumerated in this document continue to be the basis for Lesotho's initiatives towards the advancement of women. Lesotho is at an advanced stage of preparations for the commemorative event aimed at marking the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. A very significant document in the history of women indeed. We look forward to sharing our experiences at this event in a more comprehensive manner.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Despite the above mentioned accomplishments, challenges towards gender equality and empowerment of women still exist. The biggest challenge concerns the scourge of HIV and AIDS. HIV and AIDS continue to be a stumbling block to development. As reports have continuously said and experiences shown, women are the hardest hit by this pandemic. This is also true for Lesotho. Women are faced with extra responsibilities of providing care for HIV and AIDS patients as well assuming the responsibilities of

heading households. The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho, in partnership with its cooperating partners will continue to intensify its efforts towards the eradication of this scourge.

**Mr. Chairman,**

I wish to conclude by pointing out that the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho remains committed to gender equality and the advancement of women's rights. We are confident that the proceedings of this session will shed more light on how Member States can redouble their efforts for improving the lives of women.

**I thank you.**