



**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**HONOURABLE MS. NTLHOI MOTSAMAI, MP**

**SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO**

**DURING THE**

**FOURTH WORLD CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENT**

**ON**

**GENERAL DEBATE: “PLACING DEMOCRACY AT THE SERVICE OF**

**PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, BUILDING THE**

**WORLD THE PEOPLE WANT”**

**31 AUGUST 2015**

**NEW YORK**

PRESIDENT OF THE IPU, HON. SABER CHOWDHRY,

HON SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENT

SECRETARY GENERAL MARTIN CHUNGONG

DISTINGUISHED DELEGATES

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

LET ME TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO JOIN MY COLLEAGUES WHO SPOKE BEFORE ME TO WISH THIS AUGUST ASSEMBLY FRUITFUL AND SUCCESSFUL DELIBERATIONS AS WE TAKE FORWARD THIS JOURNEY WHICH STARTED FIFTEEN YEARS AGO AT THE FIRST CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENT. I TRUST THAT OUR DELIBERATIONS WILL AS PLANNED, CULMINATE INTO ADOPTION OF THE FINAL OUTCOME DOCUMENT.

TODAY AS PART OF THE WORLD ORGANIZATION OF PARLIAMENTS, LESOTHO JOINS OTHER SISTER PARLIAMENTS IN CONGRATULATING THE COMMUNITY OF NATIONS IN CELEBRATING THE 70<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF A **“STRONG UN AND A BETTER WORLD”**. WE HAVE FOLLOWED WITH KEEN INTEREST AND APPLAUD THE RANGE OF SPECIAL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS BEING UNDERTAKEN TO CELEBRATE

THIS OCCASION, SUCH AS THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL EDITION OF THE UN'S ICONIC FOUNDING DOCUMENT – THE UN CHARTER, LAUNCHED ON 26 JUNE 2015, IN COMMEMORATION OF THE SIGNING OF THE CHARTER ON THE SAME DATE, SEVENTY YEARS AGO.

MR. PRESIDENT

WE STAND HERE TODAY FACED WITH MULTITUDE CHALLENGES IN DEFINING WHERE WE STAND WITH THE BECKONING OF OUR THEME ***“PLACING DEMOCRACY AT THE SERVICE OF PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT”***. IT IS INDEED A TALL ORDER FOR US AS PARLIAMENTS BEING CENTRAL INSTITUTIONS OF DEMOCRACY, TO REFLECT ON OUR ROLE IN ALL THESE ISSUES AT THE WORLD STAGE. OUR INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PEOPLES' VOICES STANDS CHALLENGED AS TO WHETHER WE ARE IN THE PROCESS OF FINDING THE WORLD THAT OUR PEOPLE WANT. IT IS NONETHELESS, GRATIFYING TO OBSERVE THE POSITIVE NOTE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR RECOMMENDATIONS FROM PREVIOUS CONFERENCES OVER THE PAST 15 YEARS, AND THE CONCLUSIONS THEREOF.

IN TANDEM WITH THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS (MDGS) AND THE SEQUEL 2015 –2030 SUSTAINABLE DEGELOPMENT GOALS (SDG) AGENDA, OUR

CONFERENCE THEME DRAWS ITS INSPIRATION FROM THE BROAD CONSENSUS TO THE EFFECT THAT THE WORLD WE LIVE IN AND ITS PEOPLE ARE FACED WITH MYRIADS OF PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES IN THEIR QUEST AS HUMAN BEINGS FREE FROM:

- THE SCOURGES OF WAR AND CONFLICTS,
- VIOLENCE IN ALL ITS FORMS,
- EXTREME POVERTY AND HUNGER,
- UNEMPLOYMENT,
- DISEASE,
- CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS AFTERMATH; THE LIST IS ENDLESS!!!!

AS WE TAKE STOCK OF WHAT WE HAVE SO FAR ACHIEVED IN OUR SOCIETIES, THROUGH THE LENSES OF THE MDGS FROM THEIR INCEPTION AT THE MILLENNIUM SUMMIT AND OUR FIRST CONFERENCE OF SPEAKERS; ALL IS NEITHER DOOM NOR GLOOM. SOME OF THE COUNTRIES HAVE REACHED MANY OF THE GOALS SET WHILE OTHERS HAVE, FOR DIFFERENT REASONS AND CIRCUMSTANCES, FALLEN SHORT OF THE TARGETS SET THEREIN; AND MY COUNTRY, LESOTHO IS NO EXCEPTION IN THIS REGARD.

MR. PRESIDENT

OUR COMMENDABLE ACHIEVEMENTS IN UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION, GENDER EQUALITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP HAVE BEEN MASKED BY CHALLENGES IN ADDRESSING POVERTY REDUCTION, HIV PREVALANCE AND MATERNAL MORTALITY IN PARTICULAR. BUT AS THE SECRETARY GENERAL HAS OBSERVED IN CONCLUDING THE MDG REPORT; 2015 IS INDEED A MILESTONE YEAR OF COMPLETING THE MDGs AGENDA. WE JOIN THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY IN FORGING THE NEW SDG AGENDA.

TODAY AS WE BUILD STEPS TOWARDS GREATER COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR WORLD ORGANISATION OF PARLIAMENTS AND THE UNITED NATIONS IN GOING AHEAD WITH THE POST 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA, IT IS MY HOPE THAT WE ARE ENTERING INTO A NEW PHASE WHEREIN LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE MDGS WILL CREATE FRESH IMPETUS FOR OUR COUNTRIES AND PARLIAMENTS TO DO MORE IN BROADENING THE SCOPE OF ADDRESSING POVERTY REDUCTION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE GLOBE.

MR. PRESIDENT

LESOTHO WELCOMES THE NEW POST 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA WITH ITS 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND SUPPORTS THE OFFICIAL IPU POSITION THEREON.

FIRSTLY, TO ACHIEVE THE TRANSFORMATIVE AGENDA THAT THE SDGS PROMISE, A WHOLE NEW ECONOMIC MODEL IS NEEDED WITH A FOCUS ON GROWING LEVELS OF HUMAN WELL BEING AND HAPPINESS.

SECONDLY, THE ROLE OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE HAS BEEN RECOGNISED AS BOTH A MEANS AND END TO DEVELOPMENT.

THIRDLY, THE SDGS MUST BE PEOPLE-CENTRED IN THAT THE FULFILMENT AND REALIZATION OF ALL HUMAN RIGHTS WILL LEAD TO THEIR SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION.

THE HANOI DECLARATION ADOPTED AT THE 132 ND IPU ASSEMBLY REAFFIRMED A VISION OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THAT IS PEOPLE - CENTRED AND THAT IS FIRMLY ANCHORED IN THE INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS FRAMEWORK.

WE SUPPORT THE 17 SDGs IN THAT THEY ENCOMPASS GOALS THAT IPU MEMBERS HAVE ADVOCATED; WHICH INCLUDE HEALTH, GENDER, INEQUALITY, GOVERNANCE AND CLIMATE CHANGE. WHAT WILL REMAIN AS A CHALLENGE TO

US AS IPU MEMBERS IS TO TRANSLATE THESE GOALS INTO ENFORCEABLE LAWS AND REGULATIONS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, INCLUDING BUDGET MAINSTREAMING.

WE ARE FURTHER CHALLENGED BY THE HANOI DECLARATION FOR US AS PARLIAMENTS TO BUILD NATIONAL OWNERSHIP OF THE SDGs BY ENGAGING OUR CONSTITUENTS, AND BY WORKING TO TAILOR THE GLOBAL GOALS TO OUR COUNTRIES'S SPECIFIC CIRCUMSTANCES, INCLUDING THE PROCESS OF DRAWING UP NATIONAL SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANS.

THESE CHALLENGES, IN MY VIEW, ARE THE ROADMAPS FOR EACH OF OUR COUNTRIES TO FOLLOW. WE CONSEQUENTLY WELCOME ANY INITIATIVES BY THE IPU THAT WILL ASSIST PARLIAMENTS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SDGs. THIS MAY COME IN THE FORM OF HELPING OUR PARLIAMENTS TO INSTITUTIONALISE THE SDGs IN OUR DELIBERATIVE PROCESSES AND PROVIDING THE NECESSARY EXPERTISE IN ADVANCING SPECIFIC GOALS SUCH AS GENDER EQUALITY, HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE.

MR. PRESIDENT,

ON THE ISSUE OF DEMOCRACY, WE ARE AWARE THAT WHILE THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS HAS TAKEN ROOT IN MOST OF OUR COUNTRIES, DEMOCRACY REMAINS LARGELY FRAGILE AND A LOT REMAINS TO BE DONE TO INSTILL THE CULTURE OF DEMOCRACY. THERE ARE STILL CHALLENGES THAT FACE OUR GOVERNMENTS RANGING FROM CONFLICTS, INSTABILITY, VIOLENCE AND LACK OF POLITICAL MATURITY AND TOLERANCE, WHICH REQUIRE POLITICAL DIALOGUE, SOUND ECONOMIC POLICIES AND FAIR DISTRIBUTION OF RESOURCES; THEREBY REDUCING ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DISPARITIES AND POLITICAL UPHEAVALS.

AS PARLIAMENTS WE HAVE TO PLAY OUR PART IN PROMOTING DEMOCRACY BY BEING TRULY REPRESENTATIVE, TRANSPARENT, ACCESSIBLE, ACCOUNTABLE AND EFFECTIVE IN OUR MANNER OF DOING BUSINESS. WE HAVE TO REVIEW OUR CONSTITUTIONS TO SUIT THE MODERN WAY SOCIETY AND TO BE IN LINE WITH INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS. OUR ELECTORAL LAWS HAVE TO CATER FOR FULL REALISATION OF FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHTS AND FREE PARTICIPATION IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS, FOR PARLIAMENTS TO REFLECT THE TRUE WILL OF THE PEOPLE, WHICH IS THE BASIS FOR GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DEMOCRACY. OUR



PARLIAMENTS HAVE TO FURTHER PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN ENSURING THAT THE RULE OF LAW IS UPHELD AND THAT ALL PEOPLE HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE.

MR. PRESIDENT,

AS A RESULT OF THE REFORM OF THE ELECTORAL LAW IN LESOTHO, THE COUNTRY IMPROVED ITS ELECTORAL MODEL FROM THE FIRST – PAST- THE POST MODEL TO A MIXED-MEMBER-PROPORTIONAL MODEL THAT COMBINES BOTH THE FIRST- PAST - THE POLE AND PROPORTIONAL REPRESENTATION AND THIS HAS PROVED TO BE INCLUSIVE IN THAT A NUMBER OF POLITICAL PARTIES ARE ELECTED INTO PARLIAMENT. DURING THE PAST TWO ELECTIONS THAT WERE HELD IN 2012 AND 2015, WE HAVE HAD COALITION GOVERNMENTS EVEN THOUGH THERE ARE STILL CHALLENGES OR TEETHING PROBLEMS THAT THE COUNTRY IS GOING THROUGH NOW.

LESOTHO HAS TAKEN GREAT STRIDES IN ADDRESSING THE ISSUE OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN AND MAKING GENDER EQUALITY A REALITY. SOME LAWS HAVE BEEN REFORMED AND OTHERS REPEALED THAT WERE GENDER - BIASED. GROUND BREAKING LEGISLATION THAT ESTABLISHES WOMEN RIGHTS, LABOUR RIGHTS, SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS HAVE BEEN ENACTED. THESE LAWS ALLOW FOR INNOVATIONS FOR MORE GENDER INCLUSIVE DECISION

MAKING PROCESSES AND WOMEN ENTREPRENEURSHIP. THE FOLLOWING LAWS BEAR AMPLE EVIDENCE:

- LEGAL CAPACITY OF MARRIED PERSONS ACT OF 2006 GIVES WOMEN AND MEN EQUAL LEGAL STATUS. UNTIL THIS ACT WAS PASSED, A WOMAN HAD THE LEGAL STATUS OF A MINOR.
- THE 2010 LAND ACT PROTECTS WOMENS ECONOMIC RIGHTS AND GIVES SECURITY OF TENURE ON IMMOVABLE PROPERTY.
- THE LABOUR CODE (1992) OUTLINES BASIC WORKERS RIGHTS, INCLUDING PROHIBITION AGAINST DICRIMINATORY TREATMENT OF FEMALE EMPLOYEES.
- THE COMPANIES ACT, 2011 ALLOWS MARRIED WOMEN TO OWN BUSINESS WITHOUT THEIR SPOUSES' CONSENT.

AS STATED EARLIER, IT IS MY FERVENT HOPE THAT AT THE END OF THIS HIGH LEVEL MEETING OF SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENT, A FINAL DECLARATION WILL BE ADOPTED AND I WISH TO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO COMMEND THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE OF 30 DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS OF PARLIAMENT WHO SELFLESSLY WORKED ON THE DRAFT DECLARATION FOR OUR CONSIDERATION. WE ALSO COMMEND THE PRESENTERS AND RAPPORTEURS OF

THE VARIOUS OF CONFERENCE REPORTS THAT WERE LAID AT OUR DISPOSAL. THAT EFFORT HAS SET THE TONE FOR US TO ANSWER TO THE CLARION CALL OF “PLACING DEMOCRACY AT THE SERVICE OF PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, BUILDING THE WORLD THE PEOPLE WANT.”

WE ARE HOPEFUL AND THAT AS WE LEAVE THIS CONFERENCE, WE WILL ALL BE FILLED WITH GREATER STRENGTH IN FULFILLING THE PRINCIPLES SET OUT IN THE DECLARATION AND TO INSPIRE THE PEOPLE WE REPRESENT, THAT A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR THEM IS IN THE HORIZON WITH THE FINAL LAUNCH IN A FEW WEEKS OF THE NEW 2015 DEVELOPMENT AGENDA FOLLOWING THE OFFICIAL PRESENTATION OF OUR OUTCOME DOCUMENT.

I THANK YOU.