



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

BY

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THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT
OF LESOTHO**

AT

**THE THIRTEENTH SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON
SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

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Mr. Chairman,

My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

As the 13^x Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) is a policy session, it is important that we come up with clear, specific and action-oriented policy guidelines which will facilitate enhanced implementation towards the achievement of targets set for water, sanitation and human settlements.

In this regard, Lesotho emphasizes the integration of planning and management of human settlements which incorporates water supply, sanitation, waste management, education, health care services, transport, communication and other infrastructural facilities. Human settlements are indeed the basis upon and around which all other infrastructure must be provided. They hold great potential as socio-economic and cultural growth centres. However, in the least developed countries, this potential is stifled by poverty, unemployment and lack of services, particularly in unplanned settlements.

Yet despite the odds that they face, people living in unplanned settlements have developed survival mechanisms, such as simple burial societies and money-lending schemes. In designing unplanned settlements and slum-upgrading programmes, we need to build on this ability of the people to raise funds. While these efforts must be supported and enhanced through micro-finance at national level, we also urge the donor community to assist microcredit institutions in raising capital.

Mr. Chairman,

We need to recognise the important role that can be played by local authorities in the empowerment of people. In Lesotho, we are at the dawn of empowering people as we will be holding local government elections on 30th April, 2005. We see great potential in local authorities' ability to mobilise the people and to foster partnership arrangements with the central government, the civil society and the private sector in the planning and management of human settlements.

Pressure is on all of us to meet the targets of the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation (JPOI) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). With the continuous increase in rural-urban migration, development plans must reflect upgrading of unplanned settlements and slums, as top priority in our human settlements programmes. These must be supported by corresponding budgetary allocations.

Least developed countries need additional support; and therefore massive mobilisation of resources is required in fulfilment of the developed countries' commitment under the Monterrey Consensus.. This is necessary in order to meet efforts at national level. We subscribe to the integrated planning and management of human settlements, -water and sanitation. The manner in which we finance these activities must reflect this commitment at both national and international levels. Therefore, a holistic financing approach which focuses on human settlements as potential growth centres, is better placed to also facilitate the provision of the necessary basic infrastructure such as water and sanitation, as opposed to the financing of parallel individual projects.

Mr. Chairman,

The UN-Habitat has an increased responsibility to carry forward the outcomes of CSD-13, over and above monitoring progress and assisting member states towards the achievement of target 11 of the Millennium Developments Goals. In this regard, adequate resources are necessary for the UN-Habitat to position itself to effectively contribute to improved accessibility of basic services, and to continue playing the key role in the future work of the Commission.

If energy, climate and air quality are among issues to be considered for CSD 14, energy consumption at household level is one of the major areas presenting development challenges, particularly in the least developed countries. Such is the centrality of human settlements to the development process, and such is the centrality of the people dwelling therein, to the sustainability of that process.

I thank you.