



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

BY

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TO THE

**FOURTEENTH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
(CSD 14)**

**MAY 11, 2006
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Mr. Chairman,

Like others who have spoken before me, I wish to congratulate you upon your election as Chairman of the fourteenth Session of the Commission of Sustainable Development.

It is with great pleasure and honour that I address the 14th Session of the Commission on Sustainable Development on behalf of the people and Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho. Lesotho attaches importance to sustainable development as reflected in the National Vision 2020 and the Poverty Reduction Strategy which provide the overall national framework for sector specific developmental objectives, policies and implementation plans. Both the Vision and Strategy are consistent with important global initiatives including Agenda 21, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Development Goals. They acknowledge the pivotal role of the thematic issues of CSD 14 in achieving sustainable development and recognise energy as a fundamental requirement for industrial development while its processes have impact on atmospheric/air pollution and climate change.

Lesotho has embarked on an aggressive industrialization process. The textile industry has been responsible for reduction of unemployment and growth of Gross Domestic Product. In the year 2005, this sector employed over 50,000 people. The industrial estates are serviced by hydropower based electricity. In addition to textiles, Lesotho will continue to diversify the economy by, among others, developing sandstone industry, agro-industry, agri-business, tourism, quarrying and mining. We appreciate the importance of market integration and opportunities offered by cooperation with international and regional bodies. We therefore invite development partners to consider Lesotho as a favourable destination for investment.

Mr. Chairman,

The Poverty Reduction Strategy focuses on rural areas where the majority of population resides. It identifies cleaner, affordable and reliable energy access as the key to rural development. In this context, renewable energies such as solar energy and biogas are increasingly being utilized while the potential of wind energy is under investigation. Further more, solar energy plays a central role for community water pumping and sustenance of the small scale enterprises.

In line with the Millennium Development Goals, the Priorities of the Government of Lesotho aim at increasing the number of households with access to electricity from the current level of 11% to 35% in 2015. This is an enormous task calling for institutional and legal reforms as well as participation of all relevant stakeholders. We have reviewed the Power Sector Policy to enhance private sector participation including independent power producers. In addition, two institutions have been established to deal with electricity regulation and expansion of rural electrification infrastructure.

There are however, barriers to accelerated expansion of electricity infrastructure and application of renewable energies. These include unaffordable up-front investment costs

and limited technological capacity to manufacture renewable energy devices. The Development Partners are invited to cooperate with Lesotho in the removal of these barriers.

Due to relatively low level of industrialisation, Lesotho contributes minimally to both global warming and atmospheric/air pollution. However, at national level energy is a significant source of green house gas emissions. Increased use of cleaner carriers coupled with energy efficiency measures will contribute to the protection of the climate system and reduction of local air pollution such as smog, which is common in Lesotho during winter months.

For a long time, both the climate system and the condition of the atmosphere have been taken for granted. Industrial processes have resulted in climate change and the atmospheric/air pollution. Owing to her peculiar geographic and economic situation, as a “small, land-locked and least developing country vulnerable to drought and desertification, characterized by fragile mountain ecosystem and prone to natural disaster” Lesotho in all respects is highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. For example, in the last nine months we have witnessed very intense tornadoes, extended drought followed by record rainfall and flooding which resulted in loss of life and destruction of infrastructure. Climate change therefore presents formidable challenge to sustainable development in Lesotho. A programme comprising of a number of projects to respond to climate change has been prepared and at this juncture it is crucial that funding mechanisms identified under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change are operationalised.

Mr. Chairman,

In Lesotho, we recognise that the path towards achieving sustainable development requires an integrated approach to take advantage of linkages and synergies within the various sectoral development programmes. The path also calls for participation by all strata of the population including grass roots organisations, women, youth and private sector, thus ensuring effective implementation and ultimate sustainability of developmental projects. We have also learnt that another success factor for sustainable development is the existence of well functioning institutional and legal frameworks to support investment, private sector participation including Private Public Partnerships.

Thank you for your kind attention.