



LESOTHO

**STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF JUSTICE,
HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICE AND OF
LAW AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS OF THE KINGDOM OF
LESOTHO, HONOURABLE MRS. MPEO MAHASE – MOILOA AT
THE HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT FORUM OF MINISTERS
RESPONSIBLE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS HELD IN GENEVA,
SWITZERLAND FROM 12TH TO 30TH MARCH, 2007**



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**YOUR EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT
OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

**UNITED NATIONS HIGH COMMISSIONER
FOR HUMAN RIGHTS**

EXCELLENCIES

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

Allow me, Mr. President, to bring you very warm greetings from the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho. My delegation and I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to you for having afforded us this opportunity to make some observations and contributions, and to share some thoughts and pertinent experiences during the institutional building process of the Human Rights Council. Permit me also to commend you and your able team, Mr. President for steering this Council so skillfully, and being able to make major strides despite stormy and rocky conditions in its formative stages. Worthy of praise also are members of the Inter- sessional Working Groups, active Ambassadors and Permanent Representatives and their staff who worked tirelessly, making invaluable contributions and forging compromises so that convergence and consensus could emerge on critical issues. All these efforts have not gone on unnoticed.

A statement made and a comprehensive report circulated by the High Commissioner for Human Rights have laid good ground for discussions during this Session of the Council. Her efforts are fully acknowledged and appreciated in assisting institutional building process of the Human Rights Council. Noteworthy among the inputs can be mentioned the strengthening of special procedures, supporting substantive participation of mandate holders, coordinating special procedures, and assisting with review of complaints procedures, Universal Periodic Review mechanism, expert advice, and over and above that the establishment of a rapid response Unit with geographical desks, the decentralization of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and many other efforts. One of the few remaining challenges is to achieve geographical balance in the staffing of the office of the High Commissioner without compromising quality.

Mr. President, let me point out from the onset that as my delegation intervenes on some critical principles and mechanisms regarding the Human Rights Council, it associates itself with the statements made on behalf of the African Group and the Non – Aligned Movement.

Indeed one notes with gratification the good progress that has been made towards meeting the requirements of resolution 60/251. At the core of, and of particular importance to, the work of the Human Rights Council is the thrust of the agenda. My delegation, Mr. President, would like to echo that the new agenda of the Council should be structured in a manner that would provide certainty, and clarity on those critical issues of concern that the Council would deliberate upon in each session.

My delegation concurs that the Council should adopt an agenda that is predictable, transparent, objective, non-selective, and enables

accountability. We join those who yearn for an agenda that provides for the interdependence and the indivisibility of civil and political rights with social and economic rights, in particular the right to development and the elimination of widespread abject poverty. This is imperative if the least developed countries are to make significant strides towards the socio - economic betterment of their people. The agenda issues tabled for discussion should ideally focus solely on items intended to promote and protect human rights standards.

MR. PRESIDENT

EXCELENCIES

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My delegation welcomes wholeheartedly the initiatives that are underway to review mandates and the working procedures of the Council. The Universal Periodic Review Mechanism meant for enhanced accountability represents a major milestone if all parties concerned cooperate fully. We agree fully with those who urge that the Special Procedures mechanism on thematic and country specific issues be improved and maintained. Human Rights reporting obligations under the various United Nations international human rights instruments need to be harmonized and rationalized. This would allow a unified reporting treaty body mechanism that eliminates duplication and overlapping to be put in place. The 1503 complaints procedure needs to be retained with slight modifications. The confidentiality nature of this procedure requires change. Furthermore, it needs to be used as an early warning signal to the Universal Periodic Review.