



**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE PRIME MINISTER OF LESOTHO  
DR. PAKALITHA BETHUEL MOSISILI, MP**

**AT**

**THE THIRD UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HOUSING AND  
SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HABITAT III)  
QUITO – ECUADOR**

**17 – 20 OCTOBER 2016**

**Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,  
Distinguished Co Chairs,  
Secretary-General of Habitat III,  
Distinguished Members of the Bureau of Habitat III,  
Honourable Ministers,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great honour and privilege for me to address this Third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development Habitat III. Allow me from the onset to thank our host, H E Rafael Correa, President of this great Country, the Government and the people of Ecuador for the warm hospitality extended to us since our arrival here. I also wish to thank the UN-Habitat, the Secretary General and the Bureau of Habitat III for working tirelessly with all stakeholders to make this conference possible.

Lesotho welcomes the recently adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in particular SDG 11, mirrored so eloquently in the eight pillars which are the hallmark of the African Union's transformative Urban and Human Settlements Agenda. The First Pillar places great emphasis on the need to harness the potential of urbanization to accelerate structural economic transformation and inclusive growth. This Pillar seeks to, among others; promote connectivity between rural and urban areas to harness the full potential of the urban-rural linkages. For us in Lesotho, inspired by this lofty ideal, we have embarked on a program of construction of rural access roads under the auspices of local councils. This has

created employment for rural communities, thus initiating economic growth that is so critical in our effort to ***end hunger and eradicate poverty (SDG 1 and SDG 2)***. We place emphasis on people-centered Urban and Human Settlements development through promotion of community-driven participatory initiatives, which ensure accessibility to housing and urban basic services for all, inclusive of vulnerable people such as children, the elderly and people with disabilities.

## **Co-Chairs**

### **Distinguished Delegates**

I wish to reaffirm Lesotho's commitment of achieving sustainable urban development by highlighting our National Vision statement (I quote):

***"By the year 2020, Lesotho shall be a stable democracy, a united and prosperous nation at peace with itself and neighbours. It shall have a healthy and well-developed human resource base. Its economy will be strong, its environment well managed and the foundations for if technological advancement well established"***  
***(unquote).***

In pursuit of this vision, the Coalition Government, which I lead, committed to (I quote) ***".....build the capacity of local government and realign the relationship between central and local government. There will be a more balanced***

***relationship between the two structures to ensure greater direct financial and technical support to local government authorities. The decentralization of support and services to local government will be accelerated” (unquote).***

To accord credence to this commitment, in August this year, His Majesty King Letsie III launched an aggressive, endogenous leadership program, which seeks to:

- galvanize all tiers of leadership, from Central Government all the way down to the village leadership, to clearly define their respective roles and performance indicators within the health system;
- execute and account for performance of roles identified;
- create a conducive resource environment for leaders to execute their defined roles in the health system.

This leadership program, which starts within the health sector, already incorporates Local Government structures in line with our Decentralization Policy, which was adopted in 2014. The Leadership program falls directly under the Office of The Prime Minister and will permeate other Government Ministries later. This program is further supported by Africa’s 2063 commitment to (quote) ***“have capable institutions and transformative leadership in place at all levels” (unquote).***

We applaud the luminary vision of the architects of the “Africa we Want” Agenda which includes Africa’s desire to ensure that (and I quote) ***“Cities and other settlements are hubs of cultural and***

***economic activities with modernized infrastructure, and people have access to all the basic necessities of life including shelter, water, sanitation, energy, public transport and ICT” (unquote).***

Since the adoption of the SDGs in September 2015, Lesotho has embarked on an intensive education program to familiarize all relevant stakeholders with the contents of the laudable global programme. Lesotho is currently reviewing its National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2012/2013- 2016/2017 to align it with Agenda 2063, SDGs and the Paris Climate Agreement amongst others. The review will also incorporate the priorities of the New Urban Agenda.

**Co-Chairs,  
Distinguished Delegates**

We are committed to reform our land administration to respond to contemporary land issues. In this regard, we enacted the Land Act in 2010 as the main legislation, which for administration of land, including granting and converting title of land (primary leases), land expropriation for public purposes, systematic regularization and adjudication, creation of related land courts and dispute settlement mechanisms.

As already indicated, we have embarked on road – infrastructure projects with designs to improve accessibility within our settlements.

Tremendous impact has been achieved through the construction of new roads, upgrading of existing ones and building of bridges. Government is in the process of developing the National Housing Policy within the overall framework of UN-Habitat Global Housing Strategy. This policy aims to reposition housing at the centre of the national and urban development, which is an imperative for a future of economic, environmental, cultural and socially inclusive cities. We are also in the process of reviewing our Town and Country Planning Act, which is the principal legislation that regulates and guides orderly development of our human settlements.

## **Co-Chairs**

### **Distinguished Delegates**

In conclusion, allow me to associate my delegation with the Common African Position on Habitat III (CAPH3). We applaud the zeal and energy of its architects. They have produced a document we are proud to own. We reaffirm the principles agreed upon in Ndjamená that (quote) “.....the African Urban Agenda should be owned and driven by Africa, informed by African realities and based on Africa’s current priorities as well as future needs; be **implementable** and results focused.....” (Emphasis added). The delegation of Lesotho will indeed stand to be counted as we chart a new path to the New Urban Agenda.

**I thank you**