



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

*815 Second Avenue  
8th Floor  
New York, NY 10017*

## **STATEMENT**

**BY**

**MRS. 'MAROANE DINGISWAYO  
PRINCIPAL SECRETARY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT,  
CHIEFTAINSHIP AND PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS OF THE  
KINGDOM OF LESOTHO**

**DURING THE  
SECOND SESSION OF THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEE FOR THE  
UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON HOUSING AND  
SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HABITAT III**

**14-16 APRIL 2015  
NAIROBI**

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**Co-Chairs,**

It is an honour for me to address the Second Session of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III). Firstly, allow me to commend you for the outstanding leadership you have shown since inception of this preparatory process. I assure you of my delegation's unwavering support.

I would also like to thank the Secretary General of the Conference for the comprehensive report on activities undertaken by the Secretariat in preparation for the Conference to be held in 2016.

**Co-Chairs,**

Almost two decades ago, at Habitat II, the international community resolved to explore the opportunities presented by urbanization. Guided by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, we jointly committed to implement the Habitat Agenda. We considered the fact that human beings are at the very center of concerns for sustainable development, including adequate shelter for all.

The world has indeed changed since Istanbul. New opportunities and challenges have emerged. More than ever before, we now understand the power of well-planned urbanization for sustainable development. Urbanization is a driving force for development. It has the power to change and improve lives and livelihoods of people at grassroots level.

**Co-Chairs,**

This Second Session is held at an opportune time when the United Nations is celebrating its 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and when we will soon be adopting the Post-2015 Development Agenda in September. We need to be cognisant of these once-in-a-generation opportunities, to further unite the international community in common cause towards realization of a better world. Our deliberation could not have been timelier.

**Co-Chairs,**

Allow me to share with you certain milestones that my country has covered towards implementation of the outcomes of Habitat II and also on new and emerging challenges of the New Urban Agenda. Firstly, let me thank UN-Habitat and the sponsoring Governments for making the preparation of Habitat III national reports possible, particularly in Least Developed Countries.

Our National Habitat Committee is in place and functional. A series of Habitat Agenda Partners' consultative meetings, to raise awareness of the Country's commitment to the Habitat Agenda, were held towards the end of 2014. National workshops to review current national and local plans of action and their implementation have been held. Local authority consultations at district-level are ongoing. All these processes are organized in the form of open and inclusive discussions with a broad-based and gender-balanced group of stakeholders. In this regard, we hope to submit our national report in the next coming months.

Furthermore, we are currently completing a housing profile study as a first step towards compiling a National Housing Policy. The Policy will guide the



implementation of housing, not only as social and economic good, but as a way of creating employment for the youth. We believe that the Policy will establish a *nexus* between the dynamics of urbanization and the overall process of national development.

**Co-Chairs,**

Despite our efforts, we still face a number of challenges as we continue exploring ways on how urbanization can be an effective tool for the integration of all the dimensions of sustainable development. Lesotho has a rugged terrain that covers 90% of the land area. This poses a challenge to our developmental efforts as providing services to the remote areas requires huge capital outlay. For us in Lesotho, the intimate linkages between rural and urban areas are important.

The main driver of urbanization in Lesotho is rural-urban migration caused by rural poverty and a decline in agricultural production due to adverse effects of climate change. As a result, youth unemployment has become a great concern to us, as the youth increasingly migrate to urban areas in exploration for new adventures. To address this challenge, the Government of Lesotho intends to encourage direct investment in the small and intermediate towns (secondary towns) to retain and attract a significant percentage of the youth population.

**Co-Chairs,**

This preparatory process has given us a unique chance to create a new model, to set a new course that truly balances the imperatives of robust growth and economic development, with the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable prosperity and human well-being. Now is the time to act with

broader and long-term vision. We should ensure that Habitat III results in an innovative, forward-looking and action-oriented outcome document.

Habitat III is gradually approaching. Let us continue to keep the spirit of the preamble of the Habitat Agenda, which stressed the importance of international cooperation and solidarity for improving the life of Peoples around the world. The New Urban Agenda will not attain its desired impact without renewed and visionary political commitment.

As I conclude, **Co-Chairs**, allow me to reaffirm my Country's commitment to the Habitat Agenda and to the goals and objectives of Habitat III. Lesotho recognizes Habitat III as a unique opportunity to develop a new urban agenda that could contribute to harnessing urbanization as a positive force for present and future generations, thus advancing the quest for equity and shared prosperity for all.

**I thank you.**