

CONFERENCE  
**CONSULTATION OF THE PARTIES TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (UNFCCC)  
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STATEMENT  
**SPEECH BY HEAD OF LESOTHO DELEGATION MRS. H.M. MHLANGA**

HONOURABLE PRESIDENT OF THE COP3, MINISTER OHKI,  
HONOURABLE MINISTERS  
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

On behalf of His Majesty, King Letsie III, His Government and the people of the Kingdom of Lesotho, I wish to salute all of you at this special event, the third Conference of the Parties (COP3) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). We have convened here in Kyoto from all parts of the world with the common objective, the objective of consolidating our efforts to strengthen the Climate Change Convention

The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho fully supports and associates itself with the Climate Change Convention and its ultimate objective of stabilizing Greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere at a level that would prevent interference with the climate system. **It is our hope that here in Kyoto, we adopt a Protocol that commits the developed country Parties to reduce their Greenhouse gas emissions to the 1990 levels by the year 2000 as a starting point. And then achieve a 15% emissions reduction by 2010 followed by an emission reduction of 35% by the year 2020.**

## MR PRESIDENT

I represent a country that is potentially extremely vulnerable to Climate Change. My country is situated in the sub-tropics, with a characteristically variable climate. It exhibits extremes of weather like drought and floods, sub-zero and high temperatures. It is mountainous and possesses an extremely fragile ecosystem. It faces the most serious problems already in large-scale land degradation and desertification. The physical environment is deteriorating rapidly as the dessertification process relentlessly intensifies; and the land carrying capacity is diminishing at an alarming rate. In the last twenty years, the percentage of arable land shrank from 13% to approximately 9% of the whole country. My country in more than one way meets the criteria of a special country as stipulated under *article 4, paragraph 8* of the Convention. It is partly because of these factors that we attach a great significance to the question of Climate Change and its impacts.

Currently my country is under severe drought associated with the **EI NIÑO** phenomenon. We are told that this drought is not necessarily a manifestation of Climate Change, but a normal climate fluctuation, and that Climate Change itself would bring more negative impacts, especially at the latitudinal position of my country. We are advised that with the Climate Change, the hydrological cycle would intensify, and in my country we would see not only more severe droughts, but also heavier floods when it rains. Mr. President, this makes us get even more concerned with Climate Change, as we realize that climate is a fundemental factor in sustaining the Earth's natural ecosystems, human health and socio-economies of nations in general. It becomes therefore impossible for nations to plan development, if the future climate



behaviour is uncertain. We realise that a stable climate is a basic condition for sustainability of life itself.

I therefore Mr. President, wish to emphasize the position of my country by urging a successful adoption of the protocol on the Framework Convention on Climate Change that addresses Climate Change adequately as guided by the IPCC and other scientific sources. This protocol should have a binding and a meaningful Greenhouse gas reduction level target and timetables as I mentioned earlier. It should also include commitments by Annex I country Parties to help the developing country Parties. It is our view that the planet Earth is a home for all of us, and that climate knows no political boundary. We advocate coordination and unity of action amongst all countries of the world to protect and sustain our most fundamental resource, the climate of the Earth. All of us, all nationalities, carry an enormous responsibility for safeguarding the future climate of the Earth, as future generations have a right to enjoy hospitable climate.

#### MR PRESIDENT

My country is totally committed to the UNFCCC. However, our capacity to contribute effectively to the international effort to mitigate Climate Change is severely limited by insufficient financial, technological, institutional, and human resources. It is for this reason that I call for strengthening of programmes between the developed Country Parties and my Country as well as other developing countries Parties. Such cooperation should aim at long-term capacity building to enable the developing countries to prepare and timeously submit their National Programmes to mitigate Climate Change and to develop Response and Adaptation Strategies.

At the same time, my government realizes that the responsibility of combatting Climate Change lies not only with the developed countries, but with each and every country on this planet Earth. Despite the difficult economic situations that various developing countries may face, it is nevertheless crucial that we non-annex I countries rededicate ourselves to engage in more action to implement the UNFCCC. Through the Protocol, the developed countries should take the lead as the Protocol is the only the first of the many steps to be taken on the road to meeting the objective of the Convention.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the work done by **WMO**, in bringing to the fore the question of Climate Change. Indeed it is no wonder that the reputation of **WMO** as a leading organisation within the UN family has grown by leaps and bounds in the last few years. I wish to commend also the **UNEP** for their work in highlighting the potential effects of Climate Change on environment. I congratulate the **IPCC**, established by **WMO** and **UNEP** for producing reports that have guided negotiations that led to the conclusion of the Climate Change convention. It is my hope that the **IPCC** and other Organisations like **ICSU** will continue providing advice and guidance to the Conference of the Parties and its Subsidiary Bodies.

I thank You all.