LESOTHO

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

BY

THE HONORABLE MINISTER
IN THE PRIME MINISTER’S OFFICE

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AFRICA - ARAB PLATFORM FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

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TUNIS

Chaiperson
Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

Fragile livelihoods have become a cause and an outcome in most of our countries for the ever increasing level of vulnerability to even the slightest shocks that continue unabated to devastate communities throughout the world.

Coupled with the relentless onslaught of extreme weather events, it has become even more difficult for countries to protect their development gains and by extension, the huge burden of the very poor sectors of our communities to recover from the effects of disasters. Reduction of mortality, damage and losses, number of people affected by disasters as required by the Sendai Framework is as a result becoming increasingly hard to achieve. This also has an implication on our countries' capacity to achieve sustainable development goals.

It is against this background that countries have to look into more sustainable strategies that have potential to target the root causes of vulnerability, of which the dominant one is the fragile unsustainable livelihoods.

Chairperson,
My country, Lesotho, is also currently developing frameworks and engaging in programs that are aimed at strengthening the livelihoods of the very poor sectors of our communities who, more often than not, find themselves at the receiving end of the devastation brought about by disasters.

To begin with, we are finalizing the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) which will form a basis for national Development programming. We are currently working on mainstreaming the National Strategic Resilience Framework which is also in its final stage of development, into the NSDP in an effort to facilitate full integration into all development programming.

The resilience framework aims to facilitate integrated programming that aims directly at communities’ livelihoods which are at the center of a deteriorating level of vulnerability in Lesotho. Contained in the framework, are issues that aims to address some underlying risk factors in our country such as HIV and AIDS, malnutrition, unemployment, severe land degradation and poor agricultural production.

We are also looking towards strengthening the country’s preparedness capacity to respond to fast developing prevalent hazards such as recurring
drought, heavy rains, hail storms and strong winds. This is being done through national multi hazard contingency planning. The expectation is that the country, working together with our cooperating partners will allocate financial resources to enable effective disaster response and recovery. We are also exploring possibilities of putting in place, appropriate Risk Financing Mechanisms to assist in disaster response and recovery.

Another important process which our country is exploring is Shock Responsive Social Protection which is expected to become the most timely and effective disaster response mechanism for reduction of the impact of disasters on the vulnerable populations. The process also includes reviewing the efficiency of existing social protection measures with the aim of targeting better.

We are fully aware that early warning is a very important part of disaster risk reduction and preparedness in particular. To this end, we are finalizing the People Centered Early Warning System which was acquired through the assistance and facilitation of the World Bank and the World Food Programme.

Education, training and awareness creation of DRR and related programs and frameworks are also an important part of our DRR programming in Lesotho. Integration of DRR into primary school curriculum is almost complete and we are starting to work with tertiary institutions to integrate as well as introduce independent courses on DRR.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Having said this, I would like to indicate that we intend to review our existing DRR legal framework to integrate the Sendai Framework for DRR and to also start to monitor its implementation through the use of the prescribed monitor in the near future.

Despite all the efforts that our country is taking to protect its citizens, property and infrastructure, Lesotho still remains highly vulnerable to shocks and stressors. The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho pledges it’s commitment to join the rest of the world to take the lead in creating a conducive environment for disaster risk reduction and urges our Cooperating Partners to continue to work with us to ensure a better future for Basotho.
KHOTSO!    PULA!    NALA!