



**STATEMENT BY THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO AT THE
OCCASSION OF THE 21ST MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE
ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION**

20-24 NOVEMBER 2023

THANK YOU MR PRESIDENT,

Lesotho aligns itself with the statement delivered by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group. My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Ambassador Göbel, for your election to preside over this 21st Meeting of the States Parties to the AP Mine Ban Convention. My delegation has great trust in your presidency and skillful leadership. We would like to assure you of Lesotho's support throughout the proceedings of this meeting.

Lesotho acceded to the Mine Ban Convention in 1998, and the Convention entered into force for Lesotho on 1st of June 1999. As a legal dualist, whose international treaties are not self-executing, Lesotho, implements the provisions of the Convention through the Internal Security Act of 1984, which prohibits any form of production or stock piling of mines. Further, worthy of note is that Lesotho also adheres to the obligations set out in the 1997 SADC Declaration, whose mandate is to ensure a Southern Africa, Free of Anti-Personnel Mines, as well as to, all the African Union strategies relating to the prohibition of anti-personnel mines.

MR. PRESIDENT

Lesotho views the Mine Ban Convention, as a landmark treaty, with profound significance for the international disarmament cause. In the past 25 years of its entry into force, the international community has been striving forward to achieve the noble objectives of the Convention and those of the Oslo Action Plan. While progress made is remarkable, we are still faced with serious

and complex challenges. There are still countries which continue to produce, stockpile and transfer land mines, and consequently, hundreds and thousands of civilian populations continue to be adversely affected.

New and emerging humanitarian challenges that are brought about by defiance of the Convention are on the rise, and this means that the Convention is yet to be effectively and fully implemented. In this regard, my delegation strongly believes that a great deal of work still needs to be done, if we are to achieve a total ban of anti-personnel mines. Lesotho reiterates its concern that, the consequential impact of armed conflicts bring about the most challenging humanitarian crisis of all times. We share the view that the burden placed by anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war on individuals, communities, regions and States remains high and unacceptable.

We thus firmly regard the Mine Ban Convention as an indispensable International Disarmament Instrument, which we could all draw inspiration from, in order to rid the past and persisting challenges, that continue to hinder the full enjoyment of the rights of civilian populations, due to land mines. Indeed, there is need, now more than ever, to scale up efforts to ban anti-personnel mines and help our societies to live in dignity and peace.

We further wish to register Lesotho's commitment to the universalisation of the Convention and to the full respect of the provisions of the Convention, in entirety. It is in this, context that

my delegation wishes to take this opportunity to appreciate the Implementation Support Unit, for the support it continues to offer states on the implementation and universalisation of the convention, including through the Sponsorship Program of the Convention.

MR PRESIDENT,

Even though Lesotho is among countries that have not been affected by the devastating effects of land mines, we are pleased to report that Lesotho does not possess anti-personnel mines, neither does it use, buy, or manufacture them. We therefore appeal to all actors to refrain from the production, acquisition, stockpiling or transfer of anti-personnel mines, and strongly condemn their use anywhere, anytime, and by any actor, whether States or non-State actors.

As a member of the international community, as well as a State Party to the Convention, we remain committed to the total ban of anti-personnel mines. Lesotho's commitment has been demonstrated by its active participation in the Oslo negotiations in 1997, that consequently led to the adoption of the very Convention which forms the premise of our gathering this week.

We would like to conclude, **MR. PRESIDENT**, by underscoring that, the Mine Ban Convention, still remains a vibrant and a living treaty that exerts moral, political and legal, de-mining obligations and duties to us all. It has saved thousands of lives and spared countless of children, who are disproportionately impacted, and

are a particularly high-risk group, with regard to anti-personnel mines. It is therefore, through the concerted efforts of the United Nations system, its international and national partners, international community, national ownership and the participation of all people around the globe that we can reclaim the Convention and inject fresh impetus into it.

I would therefore like to reiterate Lesotho's commitment to working in cooperation with all stakeholders, towards attaining a world that is free of land mines; where the cornerstones of humanity, solidarity, world peace and mutual trust prevail.

I THANK YOU MR. PRESIDENT!