



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

BY

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TO THE

FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION OF THE
COMMISSION ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN

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NEW YORK

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Chairperson,

The Government of Lesotho adopted the *The Education Sector Strategic Plan 2013-2018*, which among others, strives to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education, and achieve gender equality in education. The plan focuses on the following areas: i) Integrated Early Childhood Care (IECC), ii) Basic Education, iii) Secondary Education, iv) Technical and Vocational Institutions, v) Higher Education and vi) Life-long learning and non-formal education.

The Government has progressively made basic education free, accessible and now compulsory to all. Lesotho has exceeded gender parity in access to primary education, with 63% for girls and 75% for boys, with higher completion rates for girls. In addition to the provision of formal education, life-long learning and non-formal education have been instituted for the less privileged. There is also the child sponsorship programme which targets children at secondary and high school levels. Government offers considerable educational grants to children, children who have been identified by the Social Welfare Department and teachers as needing financial assistance to pursue their studies. Furthermore, there is also the business loan scheme which awards loans to persons who are at a technical and higher education level both in and outside Lesotho.

Chairperson,

Turning to employment creation, in particular for women, we wish to underscore that, as a general rule, the Government of Lesotho is committed to creating employment as a means of eradicating poverty. Moreover, in line with the *Convention on Women's Equal Access to Full Employment and Decent Work*, the Government of Lesotho has reformulated the country's legislation in order to guarantee equal opportunities for fair and equal remuneration for equal work. Maternity leave is also mandatory under the Labour laws of Lesotho. Support services, in the form of women's entrepreneurship and skills training, as well as access to credit have also been initiated. This has gone a long way in boosting the economic activities of the women.

Chairperson,

In conclusion, I wish to point out that these achievements would not have been possible without the support of our development partners and civil society organizations. We therefore seek your continued support for the betterment of the lives of women and girls.

I thank you.