



**STATEMENT BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE PRIME
MINISTER OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO**

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AT THE UNITED NATIONS**

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Madam President,

It is a great privilege for me to deliver remarks at this auspicious occasion marking the centenary of the birth of Nelson Rolihlahla Mandela. Indeed, it is befitting that this Summit is entitled "Peace Summit". The contribution of Nelson Mandela to peace, freedom, democracy, peaceful conflict resolution and the promotion of human rights is unparalleled. The peace that we enjoy today, in Africa and beyond, was earned through the sacrifices of brave and selfless men and women including Nelson Mandela.

Madam President,

Nelson Mandela is undoubtedly one of the greatest leaders and statesmen of our time. I stand before this august body today, bearing testimony and acknowledging the fact that my country had occasion to benefit from the wisdom of this great man in resolving our own internal conflicts. In 1998, when my country was in great turmoil and had plunged into internal strife, through his unique and unifying leadership, skill and humanity, he ably negotiated a breakthrough; and here we are today as a Nation.

We, in Lesotho, also witnessed first-hand the brutality and suffering that the Black People of South Africa and their Liberation Leaders, including Nelson Mandela, went through under the apartheid yoke. It was through the leadership of former President Nelson Mandela and other Revolutionary Leaders, that the People of South Africa remained hopeful in the face of despair, and ultimately defeated the enemy.

Mandela lived a courageous life, epitomized by resilience, forgiveness and commitment to a cause bigger than himself. This is the giant who, all in the quest for peace, selflessly embraced challenges that seemed impossible to many.

In the context of the struggle for liberation by the Black People in South Africa, he said the following words, "**I cannot pinpoint a moment when I became politicized, but a steady accumulation of thousand slights, a thousand indignities, a thousand unremembered moments produced in me, a rebelliousness, a desire to fight the system that imprisoned my people**". Today, we speak of a free and democratic South Africa because of Nelson Mandela and his colleagues.

Madam President,

Mandela and other Liberation Fighters across the globe have done their part. However, there is still a lot more that needs to be done. Today, humankind is suffering from multidimensional crises such as terrorism, denial of human rights, economic intolerance, oppression of the weak, and many others. All these factors, not only disturb the equilibrium of peace, but are an indictment on us all as Leaders.

As we honour Madiba in this Summit, I challenge all of us to individually and collectively take a page from his life. Let us resolve to emulate and continue the legacy that he left by striving to have a positive effect on others around us. Let us embrace the values that he championed, which include, eradication of poverty, economic development as well as creating a better life for all. Our commitment should be to follow in his footsteps to make the World a place where we can all live in peace and harmony.

I thank you