



**REMARKS BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE
KINGDOM OF LESOTHO,
DR. MOEKETSI MAJORO**

**ON THE OCCASION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE EXISTENCE OF
FORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS BETWEEN THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO
AND JAPAN**

29th JULY, 2021

Program Director, please allow me to begin by paying my respects to:

- **His Majesty King Letsie III,**
- **Honourable Deputy Prime Minister,**
- **Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers,**
- **Your Excellency the Ambassador of Japan to the Kingdom of Lesotho,
Mr. Maruyama Norio,**
- **Senior Government Officials,**
- **Distinguished Guests,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

As I begin my remarks this morning Your Excellency, I wish to note that the Government of Lesotho has learnt with a deep sense of regret of the passing away of your dear father a few days ago. I therefore take this opportunity to convey to you, and through you, to the entire family, our deepest condolences and words of sympathy for this untimely loss of a loved one. Our hearts and minds are with you during this challenging time.

Today, is a great day in the history of our two countries. A day on which I join you, with great pleasure and jubilation in commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the Kingdom of Lesotho and Japan. On this auspicious day in the history of our two sister countries, I invite You, Your Excellency, and all those who are with us today, to congratulate ourselves for the long standing cordial bonds of friendship and cooperation that have so happily subsisted between our two countries and their peoples. As we often say, the good relationship between nations is built on friendship between the people. On the other hand, friendship between the people derives from mutual understanding.

Since the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between Lesotho and Japan in 1971, our two countries have reaped a lot of benefits in different areas that include;

political cooperation, people to people relations, bilateral cooperation and frequent consultation on issues of mutual interest discussed at multilateral fora.

**Your Excellency,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Although, we stand thousands of miles away from each other, separated by vast oceans, seas and mountains of the world, we have traversed a common journey of development together for the past five decades. A journey characterized by the shared commitment to develop the livelihoods of our fellow citizens, a journey of cooperation and mutual trust that has enhanced our bilateral ties, a journey of brotherly friendship that has imprinted in our hearts now and for the years to come.

Your Excellency,

It is with a deep sense of gratitude that I convey to You, and through You, to the Government and the People of Japan, special words of thanks from the Government and the People of Lesotho, for the invaluable support and assistance they have provided to us over the years. This support has contributed immensely towards Lesotho's socio-economic development. Lesotho has benefitted from this cooperation in many fields that include infrastructure development, technical cooperation, and financial assistance. Furthermore, cooperation has also been in areas such as climate change, health, capacity building, agriculture, and food security.

This cooperation has been channelled through grant assistance; technical cooperation; grassroots grant program; non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and multilateral organizations; and under the framework of the Tokyo International Conference on Africa's Development (TICAD).

Under the Grant Assistance program, Lesotho has benefitted immensely in education, agriculture and food assistance, and climate change sectors. In the education sector, the Government of Japan financed the construction of both primary and secondary schools, and the upgrading of facilities in the already existing ones, to the tune of about **USD 25, 7 Million (M346 Million)**.

Furthermore, Japan has continuously donated food stuffs to Lesotho through the World Food Program (WFP). I have reliably been informed that this year again, your Government has decided to extent this generous gesture of good will. We will forever be grateful for your support Mr. Ambassador. In the past, the Government of Japan further provided agricultural implements such as tractors, irrigation pumps and fertilizers to Lesotho as contribution towards improving agriculture.

Japan also contributed towards alleviating the impact of climate change via the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) program. In addition, the Government of Japan financed the project for the introduction of clean energy through solar electricity generation at the Moshoeshoe I International Airport with an estimated amount of **USD 9.3 Million (M138,245)**.

Your Excellency,

**Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen**

Throughout history, the Government of Japan has contributed to Lesotho's human resource development needs by training more than 500 Basotho students in different fields in Japan. In some instances, the Japanese volunteer teams were also sent to Lesotho to enhance people to people relationship between the two countries. In addition, Japan provided grants for grassroots projects to local communities and NGOs through the Japanese International Cooperating Agency Program (JICA).

Under the assistance through the NGO's and Multilateral Organizations, Japan has worked closely with Lesotho under the UNDP "Africa Adaptation Program, UNICEF HIV/AIDS, the Education Sector Development Program under the World Bank (Policy and Human Resources Development Fund, and the NGO (Care-Japan Lesotho for the Health, economic and Agriculture livelihood training Project.

**Your Excellency,
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen**

In reciprocity, the Government of Lesotho continues to offer its support for Japanese candidatures for international positions.

On the other hand, our two sister countries have maintained a good momentum of high-level exchange visits with a view to deepening mutual political trust. In this regard, we recall with a deep sense of satisfaction the visit of Their Majesties the King and Queen to Japan in 2016, in commemoration of the 45th anniversary of formal diplomatic relations between Lesotho and Japan. During that trip, Their Majesties visited Sendai in support of the victims of the triple disasters of the Earthquake, Tsunami and Nuclear Disaster that had hit Japan in March, 2011. It was during this visit again when the Hiroshima Peace Memorial presented the Stone for Peace to His Majesty the King, as a symbol of appreciation for His visit and a sign for the Japanese resolve to advocate for global peace and security.

Furthermore, the same visit also culminated in the handing over of the 10 Dialysis Machines donated to Lesotho by the Tokushukai International Corporation. We are grateful to report that the said machines have been put to good use and have saved the lives of our many fellow citizens who suffer from kidney failure. All these bear testimonies to the true friendship that our two countries have enjoyed and continue to enjoy. Their Majesties also visited Japan in 2019 for the Enthronement Ceremony of Emperor Naruhito of Japan. This is a true testimony to our warm relations.

In addition, to the above visits, former sitting Prime Ministers of Lesotho and other high serving dignitaries within Government (including myself as Minister of Development Planning at the time) have in the past also visited Japan to attend TICAD meetings.

Through TICAD, Japan is hailed for its assistance in different countries in Africa for them to realize their developmental aspirations. Lesotho is no exception in this regard. Since the launch of TICAD in 1993 Lesotho has loyally participated in its activities

guided by the tenacity of purpose and the zeal to cooperate with strategic partners in development.

Today, as we look back to history, we will forever be grateful for the special relationship between our two countries. As we forge ahead, we wish to register our unreserved commitment as the Government of Lesotho to work towards elevating this relationship to greater heights.

As a further effort to strengthen the health and medical systems, in August, 2020, and at the request of the Government of Lesotho, the Government of Japan launched a new grant aid project to the tune of about M16 Million. Under this project, Japan will provide to Lesotho two ambulances and medical equipment that include; several oxygen concentrators and blood gas analyzers to assist Lesotho to further improve its capacity and preparedness for the fight against COVID-19. I therefore call on our officials who are working on this issue to expedite all processes that will facilitate the ultimate handing over of the said consignment at the earliest possible time.

In conclusion, It would be remiss of me, Your Excellency, if I were to conclude my remarks without congratulating the Government and the People of Japan for being entrusted by the international community to host the **2021 Olympics**. Lesotho has sent two athletes and their officials to these games. It is befitting to note that these games are happening during the most challenging time in the history of mankind. However, as always, your Great Country has once again demonstrated its capability and ability to deliver the best games for the world. We wish the best team victory in this regard.

Finally, let me now take this opportunity to wish His Imperial Majesty Naruhito, Emperor of Japan, continued good health and the people of Japan peace and prosperity in the years to come.

I thank You!!!!