



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

BY

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE PRIME MINISTER

DR. MOEKETSI MAJORO, MP

**AT THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE HIGH LEVEL FORUM ON THE STATUS
OF IMPLEMENTATION OF LESOTHO NATIONAL REFORMS**

MANTHABISENG CONVENTION CENTRE

MASERU

04 APRIL, 2022

Programme Director, allow me to pay homage to:

[Salutations]

It is my singular honour this morning to deliver a keynote address at this remarkable occasion which marks significant strides made in our national reforms journey. The road to here has not been without challenges. We have, however, remained true to our resolve and commitment to turn a new page and build a new stable and prosperous Lesotho.

At the very outset, I would like to thank the National Reforms Authority (NRA) and all other key stakeholders for their dedication to the reform process. When the NRA was inaugurated nearly 18 months ago, there was fear that it was too big and that it would not perform its mandate. It is pleasing today to note that the Authority, has produced a draft of the 11th amendment to the constitution of Lesotho.

My thanks also go to the Leader of the SADC Facilitation Team, who has persistently kept us on our toes persistently. His commitment to our course has not gone unnoticed. In the same token, I thank SADC for its support to Lesotho. This sub-regional body did not give up on us even when many thought there was no chance of turning Lesotho around. At the same time, the African Union (AU), the Commonwealth, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the European Union (EU) have steadfastly supported our reforms programme, some financially and others with provision of technical expertise. To them we are eternally grateful.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

When our Leaders signed the Pledge to prioritize National Reforms after the 2017 General Elections, they did so with all the seriousness and determination to walk the talk. It was not surprising that immediately after June 2017 General Elections, the Government of Lesotho drafted the Roadmap for Comprehensive National Reforms, which defined the path towards a lasting solution to our political and security

challenges. The overall aim to stabilise the Lesotho political landscape is so that we can create a conducive environment for an economically prosperous Lesotho.

Government not only mobilized funding for the reforms from Lesotho's friends and Development Partners, but it also allocated funding to the process from its own purse. That speaks to our commitment as Government and indeed our political will to creating a new Lesotho that will be the pride of every Mosotho. The same commitment which we made at the beginning of the process, is the same that we are reiterating today. We will not rest until we attain the Lesotho Basotho Want. We should not wait until we have achieved a peaceful and stable country.

The current international political landscape points to the fact that we are at the intersection of several dimensions; both positive and negative. Internationally, we are witnessing what we thought in this era would exist only in the realm of dreams. Not by any stretch of imagination did we discern, even faintly for that matter, a physical war between two civilized European Nations. I could be wrong, but I certainly doubt if anybody can boldly claim he saw it coming; a tragic episode of a total collapse of dialogue between Russia and Ukraine, and a physical armed confrontation that has ensued. It is not within my space to blame any of the two nations. My purpose is to conscientize you that the conflict in question is an example of how peace can be a volatile and elusive phenomenon. Peace cannot be taken for granted; it requires constantly working on it; and by everyone.

Lest we forget, the central issue in our national reforms process is attaining sustainable peace, national unity, healing and reconciliation. This is because unless we attain peace amongst ourselves as a nation, the reforms we are undertaking will amount to a naught. Thus, our journey to the re-birth of Lesotho will not be complete until we attain sustainable peace, national unity, healing and reconciliation. Indeed, the Devine Book is on point when it says that "Ntlo e itoantšang e fetoha lesupi" – which is translated "A house divided cannot stand".

We can pass laws and adopt reforms. However, peace and security will require reconciliation, forgiveness and atonement. At this point I wish to invite all religious,

traditional and political leaders to continue to play their part to help us reach these goals as a nation that is preparing for a peaceful and prosperous future.

We are undertaking reforms to strengthen democracy as a foundation on which to build peace and stability. But Basotho's faith in democracy is at its lowest, as indicated by the Afrobarometer surveys. I would like to call all political leaders to reflect deeply on how we have contributed to dejection of democracy by our people and how we can change course. Baetapele ba Lipolotiki ba re lipolotiking ha se kerekeng. Sena se buuo ho sireletsa liketso tsa baetaple tse soabisang. Polotiki a Basotho ha ebe kerekekeng, kannete.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is with pride that today, as we take a moment to reflect on our reforms journey, we do so at the backdrop of almost 90 constitutional amendments submitted to Government by the NRA, styled as the 11th Amendment to the Constitution. These laudable strides did not come easily. The NRA had remained resolute in the face of adversity occasioned by several factors including COVID-19. The Authority had to work tirelessly and with dedication to achieve what it has achieved today. The amount of work done in relation to the period in which it was undertaken is indeed unprecedented. The omnibus Constitutional Bill will be tabled before the National Assembly in the coming weeks. We will do everything in our power to ensure that the bill smoothly runs its course all the way to enactment by Parliament.

With the constitutional amendments passed by parliament and the nation, there will be need to draft subsidiary legislations and, in some cases, create institutions to provide checks and balances, segregation of duties and separation of powers that had hitherto been absent in the current governing framework. It is hoped that the reform era will usher in a strong power sharing and accountable political landscape that is free of conflicts of interests. Transition from the old structures to new ones has to be put in motion, while general implementation has to be carefully thought out and executed.

In addition, we have requested the NRA to prepare a workplan on critical reforms work that needs to be undertaken before the upcoming elections. This workplan will inform the Government's and stakeholders decision on how to proceed with the process post 30th April, 2022 when the life of the NRA comes to an end. Be that as it may, Government is committed to ensuring that the process continues in a sustainable, transparent and inclusive manner, as to do otherwise now will erode all the strides made thus far.

Other NRA successes, so I have observed, include successfully hosting of two National Stakeholders Fora, namely Sustainable Peace, National Unity, Healing and Reconciliation, as well as the National Workshop on the Development of the Roadmap for the National Security Policy and Strategy. The importance of these two events cannot be over-emphasized. They served to underscore the sensitivity with which the NRA has handled three hallmarks of successful reforms implementation process contained in international best practices guidelines, namely inclusivity, transparency, and accountability. I note that the outcomes of the two events are a subject of discussion in this event. I hope this Forum will further enrich the work done by the NRA on these two issues.

I was equally elated to notice a few days ago that the NRA has launched its own website which will collate all the reforms initiatives undertaken at the national level for ease of access by Basotho and the international community. The website will serve as a repository for all the reform initiatives we have undertaken as a country from the 1990s, maybe even earlier, to date and beyond. This effectively means we can keep the shoulder to the wheel with renewed vigour and vitality, knowing that our efforts now have a preservation hub for generations to come. This is a welcome initiative which we shall ensure that achieves the purpose for which it was intended.

Let me now speak in my mother tongue,

Basotho ba heso ke tlaleha mona hore Lekhotla la Naha la Tlhopho-bocha le atlehile ho etsa setšoantšo sa molao sa Sehlomathiso sa Molao Theo, eleng thomo eo le le Sechaba le ba fileng eona. Ha re bua tjena Setšoantšo sena se se filoe Letona la

Molao le Toka 'me lona le tla se tekela Lekhotla la Matona pele se ea paramenteng moo se tla sebetsoa ka matla ho se fetola karolo ea molao oa Naha oa motheo.

Ke rata ho leboha Lekhotla la Tlhopho Bocha ka mosebetsi oa bona o tsoileng matsoho. Ka mokhoa o tšoanang ke leboha Mokena-Lipakeng (President Cyril Ramaphosa le Moahloli Likhang Moseneke) ka tšebetso e boima ea bolisa, boitelo le mamello ea bona. Ke boetse ke leboha Mokhatlo ea Linaha tsa SADC, European Union, United Nations, le African Union, Commonwealth tse kentseng letsoho katlehisong ea morero ona oa rona oa tlhopho bocha.

Excellencies,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies & Gentlemen,

Let me end my remarks on one happy note. If I may slightly digress, I am gratified to openly share with you that our country's international image is steadily improving. During the month of March, Lesotho, through our Ambassador in Addis Ababa, chaired the African Union Peace and Security Council and this was signified the Council holding its meeting here in Lesotho last week. On 31st March 2022, the United States Government approved Lesotho's \$300 million second compact. In mid-May this year, Lesotho will sign the compact.

It should be recalled that the negotiation on this compact began in 2014 but was periodically hampered by governance challenges along. Its conclusion signifies progress in this area by the Government of Lesotho. As we all now know, Lesotho has deployed its forces in Mozambique to assist a fellow country that assisted in the past when there was need. This deployment alone signifies that Lesotho has now taken its position in the brotherhood of SADC. Finally, as our sister kingdom, Eswatini begins its reform process, Lesotho is the first country it is contemplating to visit to share in our experiences. This is a credit the efforts Lesotho has undertaken to reform itself. But what we have achieved so far is not the end of a process, but the beginning of a long journey of renewal.

In conclusion, I wish to once again reiterate the Lesotho Government's unwavering support and commitment to the national reforms process. **It is now my honour to declare this forum officially open.**

I THANK YOU.

KHOTSO PULA! NALA!