



# STATEMENT

by

**The Deputy Prime Minister and  
Minister of Home Affairs and Public Safety,  
and of Parliamentary Affairs of  
the Kingdom of Lesotho**

**Honourable Lesao Archibald Lehohla MP**

at the

**Intergovernmental Ministerial event of  
Member States of the United Nations  
on the occasion of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1951  
Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and  
the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1961 Convention on the  
Reduction of Statelessness**

**07<sup>th</sup> and 08<sup>th</sup> November, 2011** AM  
**GENEVA, SWITZERLAND**

**Mr. Chairman,  
Your Excellencies  
Honourable Ministers  
Your Excellency the High Commissioner for Refugees,  
Distinguished Delegates  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Mr. Chairman,**

Having had the honour and privilege of airing the African voice permit me, at this juncture, to pass on the greetings from the Kingdom of Lesotho to this august gathering. Allow me to look at issues through the Lesotho prism. They are entirely consistent with those of the Group. Let me commence by assuring you, Chair, of the full support of Lesotho always. Equally be assured of Lesotho delegation's full co-operation and constructive engagement over the two days.

This gathering of all Member States of the United Nations is a glaring testimony to the significance attached to the two Conventions in focus. It is a response that is also reflective of the commitment and immense interest of the international community to the plight of vulnerable members of humanity despite being challenged by the financial and economic obtaining strains and in the aftermath of a series of humanitarian crises that befell and touched every part of the whole world in recent years.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Presence of delegations in Geneva today and tomorrow has no other purpose less than to commemorate the multi-decades anniversaries of two paramount instruments in the international human protection regime. Indeed this event is both timely and necessary for purposes of reflecting on the operational context of these international standards. How

else can the international community, therefore, remember the two Conventions than to periodically reassess and reflect on their continuing applicability in this ever-changing landscape. As the terrain transforms and dynamics continue to unfold, periodic stocktaking seems to be the logical step in our estimation. It is only following monitoring and evaluation exercise that need to adapt, if any, will be revealed. Americans are fond of saying: " ... if it ain't broken don't fix it...". In the view of Lesotho delegation the two Conventions are as befitting to-day as they were when first ratified by the state parties.

It is in this spirit that Lesotho is convinced that the Conventions have stood the test of time and we believe that their relevance to today's forced displacement challenges is indicative of their enduring value. We, therefore, remain steadfast in our determination to ensure their validity as critical protection instruments for refugees and stateless persons.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Of primary concern at this event are refugees and stateless persons. The focus should be on ensuring that refugees and stateless persons receive the requisite protection and assistance. Such protection and assistance at the global level, as it turns out, is guaranteed by the very Conventions whose anniversaries delegations are commemorating today.

Lesotho, therefore, is committed to promoting humanitarian Conventions at regional, continental or global levels. For Lesotho the implementation of these Conventions, shall remain a priority. To this end, Lesotho will, henceforth, continue to raise awareness among her citizenry on the critical importance of the Conventions and ensure that refugees in her territory continue to have access to basic services for their welfare and well-being. Accordingly, all

Members of the United Nations family are encouraged to work together for the attainment of the goals and objectives of these precious Conventions.

**Mr. Chairman,**

Last, but not least, allow me to express Lesotho's appreciation of all and sundry humanitarian responses by countries inundated with refugees, be they in protracted situations or following current waves of displacements. In the same vein, Lesotho applauds all countries that contribute in various ways for the attainment of durable solutions. The High Commissioner and his team ought to be commended for their dedication and commitment to their work in very challenging and difficult circumstances.

In conclusion, **Mr. Chairman**, Lesotho proposes that as this event closes tomorrow, and delegates leave Geneva heading back to their respective countries, they should be imbued with the spirit of international solidarity, burden and responsibility sharing, best practice and experiences sharing, networking and information flow, and genuine empathy in addressing the plight of refugees and stateless persons. May an understanding prevail that will challenge each and everyone in respective countries to adopt and apply the Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness.

May deliberations of this gathering bear fruit for the sake of humanity, especially those that are helpless and therefore particularly vulnerable.

**I thank you for your kind attention.**