

LESOTHO

**Chairperson**

**The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

**Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers**

**Excellencies Amabassadors**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is with profound sense of humility that I acknowledge this opportunity to address this distinguished gathering on behalf of delegation of the Kingdom of Lesotho. I wish to begin by congratulating you and members of the Bureau for your exceptional leadership skills which will, with no doubt, map a course of action for the deliberations of the 70<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (EXCOM). I am particularly happy to be speaking at this forum at the time when we take stock of what has been achieved during this mid-term of global Plan of Action

to end statelessness. The forum is evidence of how far we have come in our collective resolve to address the problem of statelessness in the world. I am particularly touched to have heard the gravity of the problem from formerly stateless persons themselves.

### **Chairperson**

The Kingdom of Lesotho aligns itself with the statement made by Zimbabwe on behalf of the Africa Group. We also wish to subscribe to the sentiments expressed by previous speakers in wishing farewell to the outgoing chair of EXCOM.

### **Chairperson**

In 2011, the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho was among states that made concrete pledges to address statelessness in areas ranging from accession to the United Nations stateless conventions and law reform to prevent statelessness and remove gender discrimination from

nationality laws. We also plan to establish statelessness determination procedures. The Kingdom has also embarked on mass mobile registration of citizens as well as refugees who are now part of our National Population register. The Government is aware that, without documents, people face hardships in their daily lives and are vulnerable to violations of their human rights. For instance Government of Lesotho, among others, has done the following:

- Participated in the drafting of Ministerial Declaration and Regional Action Plan to End Statelessness in the SADC region;
- Is party to the 1954 and 1961 conventions on statelessness;
- Enacted a constitutional reform in 2019 which uphold citizens' equal ability to confer nationality on spouses
- Integrated several migration thematic areas into National Development plan two (NSDP11), including human trafficking and smuggling.

This is a testimony that the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho considers migration as a very important issue.

### **Chairperson**

The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho has deposited some pledges to end statelessness and commits, among others to do the following:

- Adopting the bill that grants nationality to children of unknown origin found in its territory, and provides for a safeguard to grant nationality to children born on the territory who would otherwise be stateless by 2020
- undertaking a study and publishing a qualitative study to better understand the situation of groups and individuals, who are stateless or at risk of statelessness, staying on its territory, with a view to finding a solution to their situation by 2020

I wish to end my statement by pointing out that Lesotho remains committed to improving the lives of refugees, stateless and internally displaced persons.

**Chairperson**

Allow me to once again reiterate my delegation's confidence in your abilities to execute your mandate efficiently. I thank you for your kind attention.