

SPEAKING NOTES FOR DEPUTY PRESIDENT CYRIL RAMAPHOSA DURING THE LESOTHO POST-ELECTION NATIONAL DIALOGUE, 18 OCTOBER 2017, MASERU, LESOTHO

Deputy Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Lesotho, The Honourable Monyane Moleleki

UN Representative in the Kingdom of Lesotho, Salvator Niyonzima,

The Leadership of the Lesotho Council of NGOs,

Representative of Political Parties,

Traditional and Religious Leaders,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a very special honour to be visiting the Kingdom of Lesotho on this historic day.

It is indeed an honour for us to participate in this crucial engagement whose task is to unite this nation behind the vision of a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Lesotho.

I wish to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the leadership of the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (LCN) for their kind invitation.

Most importantly, I commend the Council for initiating this inclusive dialogue on the future of a member of the SADC family whose pain we have shared in recent years and months. All of us here today share the hope that this Post-Election Dialogue will go down in history as the beginning of Lesotho's recovery from conflict and instability.

I deem it appropriate at this point to express our deepest condolences to the Government of Lesotho, the family of the late Lieutenant General Khoantle Motsōmotsō and those of other military officials who lost their lives on the 5th of September 2017. I also wish to express appreciation to all Basotho stakeholders for the support given to the Organ Troika Ministerial and Chair Fact Finding Mission that visited the Kingdom from 6-7 September 2017. This

appreciation extends also to the supported accorded to the Technical Assessment Mission from 24 -28 September 2017.

The cooperation extended by the government of Lesotho, political parties, non-governmental organisations and the religious community enabled these respective Missions to conduct their assignments.

As witnesses to this historic Dialogue, we commend all stakeholders for responding so affirmatively to the urgent call by SADC for a shared vision in the Kingdom on institutional reforms, the deepening of the rule of law, and the support for nation building efforts.

The convening of this two-day Dialogue process crowns the involvement and intervention of SADC in recent months in efforts to guide Lesotho onto a new path. This Dialogue process provides an opportunity for everyone to put their views, to build bridges, and to forge trust.

It is when we engage openly and listen to all views that we become better poised to fashion a common approach to build a better future. We are confident that this discussion will succeed in building consensus and in laying new ground for policies that will transform the lives of all citizens of Lesotho. The challenges of Lesotho – like challenges in many other countries – require a political solution that is informed by the wishes and dreams of the people of Lesotho themselves.

They require bold, courageous, and visionary leadership not only from politicians, but from the abundance of leaders found in civil society, labour, and business. They require the wisdom and contribution of leaders in our churches, traditional authorities, the arts as well as the media.

They must be informed by the hopes and dreams of the poorest of the poor in this nation.

It is the downtrodden among us who suffer disproportionately when those who occupy political office neglect their pain and ignore their aspirations for development. At the heart of the discussions, there must be an appreciation that the future direction of this country is in the capable hands of the people of Lesotho.

There must be an appreciation that Lesotho's challenges are neither innate nor externally imposed. They can be resolved because, in the main, they are political and arise from conditions within the Kingdom.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This facilitation by the Lesotho Council of NGOs evokes the history and legacy of the founding father of this nation, the great and visionary King Moshoeshoe I. The hallmarks of his reign were diplomacy and consensus building.

He rose to lead the Basotho in its darkest hour of disasters during the territorial wars of African kingdoms and European settler wars in the 19th century. As a brave warrior and a wise and benevolent leader, he achieved the status of an exceptional and selfless statesman.

King Moshoeshoe forged a respectable nation and defended it in a period of great uncertainty, adversity and insecurity.

Legend and history testify of his reputation for justice and compassion. He showed us that through dialogue, forgiveness and social justice, nations could escape the ravages of conflict, vengeance and retribution. He knew that the office of leadership was an institution that derived legitimacy from the will and consent of the people.

The King accepted he could err in his decisions and actions, thus allowing his people to appeal against him at a Lekhotla, whenever it was held. He embraced diversity as a value, not as a threat and source of division. Various linguistic and cultural communities that sought refuge from him, found refuge with him at Thaba Bosiu, the sanctuary and cradle of Basotho identity.

Under him, tolerance for democratic and civilian values thrived and flourished.

Although he was famous for his rock-solid integrity and for following up on his promises, he remained cordial and understanding of human imperfections.

His rule was based on forging alliances and strengthening alliances with other leaders within his kingdom.

The alliances and loyalties went beyond the boundaries of his land

He lived each day to contribute to the building and maintenance of a united, peaceful, and cohesive nation.

He had the political acumen and foresight that enabled him to enter into alliances for the benefit of the people he led.

In 2017, the Kingdom of Lesotho faces its own unique challenges.

However, we are confident that the legacy of your great leader will inspire the Basotho of the 21st Century to raise again, based on your pursuit of consensus and peace. We therefore express the hope that this Dialogue – these talks about talks - will be guided by the principles of inclusivity, transparency and ownership by all those who have the best interests of Lesotho at heart.

Once more, we encourage the Government of the Kingdom to expedite the development of a Comprehensive Roadmap and the implementation of the SADC Decisions to report at the envisaged Double Troika Summit at the end of November 2017.

Furthermore, we acknowledge and recognise the role being played by the Oversight Committee as an early warning mechanism and its support to the Facilitation.

We reiterate SADC's commitment to working with the Government and People of Lesotho in search of a lasting solution to the political and security challenges facing the country, much as this, pleasantly, is subsiding. This is demonstrated by the SADC's decision to deploy an expanded Oversight Committee as well as the proposed Contingency Force, which was welcomed by the Prime Minister and his delegation at the last Double Troika Summit.

As stakeholders embark on this journey of debate and discussion, there will be moments of tension and points of difference. However, these instances should not derail the shared focus on a future where all Basotho will prosper in conditions of peace and stability.

We must remain mindful that engagements such as these are not about self-preservation for those around the conference tables, but it is about national stability, cohesion and a better future.

And to achieve this better future, it is essential that our agreements and disagreements must ultimately produce practically implementable plans, supported by the political will to implement what is agreed.

Given that this is a representative forum, it is essential that the outcomes of this Dialogue be shared with the nation as a whole and the world. Public discussion on and ownership of this Dialogue process is a vital component of establishing trust and participatory democracy in Lesotho.

As the people of the region, we know that when this Kingdom rises, the whole of Africa will also rise.

We are invested as a region and as the people of Africa in the progress of the Kingdom because a better Lesotho means a better region and a better world.

We have no reservations that the efforts of the LCN and its social partners will be a resounding success for the country and our continent. We wish you well in your deliberations and look forward to receiving your resolutions.

I thank you and commend you once again for this magnificent effort.

ISSUED BY THE PRESIDENCY

18 October 2017