STATEMENT

BY

H.E.MR. KELEBONE A. MAOPE
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

DURING THE

UNDP/UNFPA/UNOPS EXECUTIVE BOARD,
CONSIDERATION OF ITEM 10 ON THE UNCDF

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Mr. President,

Allow me to take this opportunity to express my delegation’s appreciation to the 2013 Bureau that was under the able presidency of Djibouti. May I congratulate you Mr. President and the newly elected bureau and assure you of our full confidence in your leadership.

I wish to thank the UNDP Administrator Madam Helen Clark, for her insightful remarks delivered during the opening of this Session. My delegation appreciates her relentless efforts to make the development agenda reality in our countries. My delegation aligns itself with the statement delivered by Tanzania on behalf of the African Gorup.

Mr. President,

Lesotho is one of the least developed countries that is plagued with daunting challenges to her development endeavours. These include: vulnerability to external shocks and environmental problems, particularly, serious land degradation to mention just a few. Lesotho, therefore, attaches great importance to the work of UNDP as a long standing development partner to Lesotho. We are grateful for the UNDP’s support in various development programs particularly those focusing on poverty eradication.

Mr. President,

Gender inequality manifests itself in many ways. But when it is demonstrated by barriers to development, the worst cannot be imagined. Lesotho has noticed with concern the existence of a gender gap when it comes to accessibility to financial services. Women particularly in the rural areas have open access to informal financial products while their male counterparts have access to the formal financial products. This situation stalls development in the rural areas where economic activities are mainly carried out by women. In this regard, the Government of Lesotho is working on a joint programme with UNCDF and UNDP entitled: Support Financial Inclusion in Lesotho (SUFIIL). The main objective of the programme is to encourage financial service providers to facilitate access to financial services for women and to offer pro-poor products.
Mr. President,

The Government of Lesotho believes in good governance and accountability across sectors. The Government through the Ministry of Local Government, has thus, sought to entrench democratic principles through improved decentralization. In this connection, the Government is partnering with the European Union, UNCDF and UNDP to establish a project on: *Deepening Decentralization Project* (DDP). The project seeks to promote decentralized service delivery for social and economic development through development of transparent funding mechanisms and improving the accountability of local authorities. The emphasis is of the project is on improving local development funding. It is our hope that noble initiative will receive the sustained attention from the development partners through continuous and predictable funding.

As I conclude, Mr. President, I wish to reiterate that we look forward to continued support from UNDP to in our development programmes aimed at improving the livelihood of our nation.

I THANK YOU.