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Madam President,

New Zealand welcomes the participation of Lesotho today.

New Zealand **commends** Lesotho’s wide ranging constitutional and security sector reforms, and **acknowledges** its ongoing commitment to fighting corruption.

New Zealand is **concerned** about Lesotho’s high rates of preventable maternal mortality and morbidity and the lack of health care access for poor and rural women. We **recommend** that action be taken to improve maternal health and ensure equitable access to health services.

New Zealand also **recommends** that Lesotho decriminalises consensual same-sex relationships between adults, and introduce comprehensive anti-discrimination laws which include sexual orientation and gender identity.

Finally, New Zealand **recommends** Lesotho work towards abolishing the death penalty, [including through ratification of the Second Optional Protocol of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights].

Thank you Madam President.