

Statement Delivered by the Prime Minister in House of
Assembly on Monday 1st April 1968.

In view of the proposed attempted visit of the United Nations Council for South West Africa, to South West Africa, and because of the present concern of the United Nations Organisation with the Rhodesian and South West African questions, I feel it necessary to make clear the attitude of the Government of Lesotho in these important matters, and I know that this honourable House will wish to have from me a first-hand statement of our attitude.

Firstly, let me make it plain that, as a member of the United Nations Organisation, we accept the obligation imposed on us by the United Nations Charter.

Secondly, let there be no doubt that we support whole-heartedly the principle of majority rule.

Thirdly, we do not believe that the solution to these problems can be found in the use of force - either in the form of military action, or in the form of economic sanctions. They can be resolved only by honest and sincere negotiations.

Fourthly, as regards the Rhodesian question, we have always maintained that this matter is the sole responsibility of the United Kingdom Government, and that the United Kingdom cannot shelve that responsibility by reference to the United Nations. Any attempt of this sort constitutes tacit recognition of Rhodesia's independence.

Finally, my Government's attitude on these questions must, in the last analysis, be determined by its prime responsibility which is to the people of Lesotho. Our first concern must be for their security, and for their safety. If the peace, order, and economic or political stability of Southern Africa are threatened, they will be in the front line. We are an integral part of the Southern African Economy, and we belong to the Rand currency area. The application of force or sanctions to South Africa cannot damage South Africa without damaging Lesotho, and her sister states of Botswana and Swaziland. Indeed, we are more vulnerable than our rich and powerful neighbour, since she will naturally look first to her own interests, while our infant economies are weak and dependent on hers, and our people are poor.