



Annual Report 2016/17



Table of Contents

1.	Introduction.....	3
2.	Context.....	3
3.	Programmes and Project.....	3
4.	Capacity Building Programmes.....	4
4.1.	Capacity Building on Project Management, Financial Management and Monitoring and Evaluation.....	4
4.1.1.	Training on Project Management	4
4.1.2.	Training of CBOs on Monitoring and Evaluation.....	6
4.1.3.	Training on Financial Management.....	7
4.2.	Training on Engagement of UN Human Rights Treaty Bodies.....	8
4.3.	Training Youth on Civic Leadership.....	10
5.	Research and Public Policy Advocacy.....	10
5.1.	District Dialogues on Human Rights Trends.....	10
5.2.	Maseru Dialogue & Constitutional Reforms Dialogue.....	12
5.3.	17 th NGO Week.....	14
6.	Commission Work.....	14
6.1.	Health and Social Development Commission.....	15
6.2.	Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Commission.....	15
6.3.	Democracy and Human Rights.....	15
6.4.	Economic Justice Commission.....	15
6.5.	Women and Children Commission.....	16
6.6.	Disaster Management and Humanitarian Relief.....	16
7.	Documentation.....	16
7.1.	NGO Web (July – September)	16
7.2.	Website maintenance.....	16
7.3.	Twitter Account.....	16
7.4.	Annual Report (2015/16).....	16
7.5.	17 th NGO Week.....	16
7.6.	Press Releases and Statements.....	16
8.	Networking.....	18
9.	Resource Mobilisation.....	20
10.	Leadership and Management Support.....	21
11.	Conclusion.....	21

Introduction

This report reflects on the activities undertaken by Lesotho Council of NGO's (LCN) for the year October 2016 to September 2017. It is meant to inform LCN members about the progress made during this period with the purpose of improving the Council's accountability to the general membership. It is further used to meet the Annual General Meeting (AGM) obligation of playing an oversight as per LCN constitutional provisions. This year ending report outlines the activities undertaken by the Secretariat as an implementing arm of the Council and Board of Directors as a body trusted to play an oversight and leadership role. The structure of comprised by reflecting on the context in which the activities were undertaken, activities and a conclusion that would be made thereof. The AGM should be mindful of the existing development partners' commitments as they project the future and the LCN Strategic Plan 2014-2019. All activities are framed on the three (3) LCN Strategic Frameworks, namely: Capacity Building, Research, and Public Policy Advocacy, and Governance and Organisational Development.

Context

The recent political landscape in Lesotho has necessitated the change of power through democratic elections and this continues to be regarded as a good practice. It is noted that the challenges of consolidating democracy in Lesotho is like in other African countries where they are faced with the challenge of promoting participatory democracy as evidenced by low voter turnout during elections day and protracted tensions and conflicts. In most cases, some African countries are beginning to consider the importance of fighting corruption in all its forms, the strengthening of public institutions and their adherence to rule of law. In most African countries, the governance landscape is characterised by the lack of citizens' participation, their structural exclusion from governance processes and exclusion from the policy dialogue space hinder the expected outcome that Africans can excel in fighting poverty and promoting democratic governance. The net results of these are the entrenched and increasing vulnerability of these public institutions and perceptions on how they are constituted including entrenched voter apathy and not ac-

countable states.

The coalition politics in Lesotho has not yet matured to the level where they are able to bring necessary parliamentary stability hence frequent elections that comes before the end of five (5) year term. This reality should not be viewed as a bad thing but rather as a learning curve for Lesotho and African countries that are looking forward for coalition politics that are imposed by electoral systems. Thus, requiring civic education, a persuasive electoral education and electoral integrity processes that brings confidence to electorate.

The polarisation and proliferation of political parties in Lesotho is viewed as a point of concern particularly when they don't differ much on policy approach or even ideology but rather centred on personalities. This calls for more civic engagement and continuous dialogue that would cultivate culture of peace and tolerance to citizenry that would result into democratic consolidation. The preconditions for these to take place is for Basotho as a nation to consider reconciliation, rule of law and transitional justice.

Further, citizens are looking forward for strengthening governance institutions through Reform process in Lesotho targeting constitutional, public service, security, and media reforms. It should be noted that the current environment is highly polarised and required strategic and mature approaches.

The new Coalition government is faced with many challenges ranging from promotion of rule of law, political tolerance, peace, and reconciliation including management of public effective use of public resources. In addition, the requirement for undertaking Reforms remains a critical challenge for the coming government particularly taking into consideration the highly polarised society. The parliamentary stability is highly essential during this term because the weaker and vulnerable it may be would result into more floor crossing that may result into another snap election.

As the country is geared towards post-elections stability, reforms agenda are most critical as develop-

ment partners, civil society organisations and some sections of society are looking forward to and value so much as evidenced by the call to implement SADC decisions. The reforms agenda aims at building the institutions governance to transform institutions of governance such as public services, judiciary and media. In order for the reforms agenda to take place, there is a need for stability and conducive political environment. The current political environment in Lesotho is tense and explosive and requires all actors to arrest this situation. One of the actions to be undertaken is to save the reforms process not to be shelved by politicians and for this regard, there should be continuous engagement in this regard.

The women and children situation remain the same in all development aspects where they continue to be classified as vulnerable group that requires more attentions and support. This is evidenced by persistence of domestic violence, rape, killings, and oppression across the board. In addition, there is repression and threats recorded for media houses agencies as evidenced by utterances of followers of political parties and listeners. This situation does not portray a positive picture for the country and is going against the principle of respect for human rights women's rights. In addition, the women are more susceptible to economic challenges.

LCN believes that in a situation where civic engagement and dialogue are not used a means to attain political stability, public accountability and peace would be in danger. Civil society organisations under LCN had developed some mechanisms which contribute to the building of the culture of dialogue and citizens engagement through public dialogues.

Programmes and Projects

During this reporting year, Lesotho Council of NGOs was engaged in the implementation various activities ranging from those targeting capacity building, research and public policy advocacy and governance and organisational development interventions. As far as projects are concerned, the projects that were implemented this year included Deepening Decentralisation and Non-State-Actors, Provision of Electoral Education for National Assembly and Local Government 2017 elections, Election Observations 2017, Civil Society Engagement

towards Fostering Rule of Law and Accountability in Lesotho and other interventions. It should be noted that the implementation of these programmes was based purely on the LCN Strategic Plan 2014-2019 hence the reason the reporting format should be aligned with the following:

- ⇒ **Capacity Building;**
- ⇒ **Research and Public Policy Advocacy;**
- ⇒ **Governance and organisational development.**

Capacity Building Activities

Unlike the previous years, the capacity building activities that were carried out this year are as stated below:

- ⇒ **Training on Project Management, Financial Management and Monitoring and Evaluation,**
- ⇒ **Training on UN Treaty Bodies for Civil Society,**
- ⇒ **Training on Youth on Civic Leadership,**
- ⇒ **Training on the United Nations Conventions on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW),**
- ⇒ **Training of electoral educators,**
- ⇒ **Training of elections observers,**
- ⇒ **Training of Health Providers**
- ⇒ **Training on Rights-based Advocacy**

Training on Project Management, Financial Management and Monitoring and Evaluation

This was the last activity under Local Non-State Actors for Constructive Engagement in Local Government supported by the Delegation of European Union to the Kingdom of Lesotho. It would be recalled that this Project aimed at developing organisational and institutional capacity of local non-state-actors to influence an inclusive development agenda at community level. The objective of this intervention was to empower the participating organisation on effective management, financial and monitoring and evaluation.

In order to achieve the overall objective of the project, one of the key indicator enhanced skills and knowledge of local Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to influence inclusive development agenda at community level. One of the interventions that work towards achievement of this indicator is training on Project Management, monitoring and Evaluation, and civil society organisations



Financial Management, this is about providing knowledge to the CSOs on how to keep records and run the effective financing management, delivering basic skills in project management, delivering basic skills in monitoring and evaluation. When acquired, CSOs will be able to manage development projects, donor funds, keep financial records, and monitor and evaluate results of projects. This will help them to run efficiently and effectively.

Following the Training of Trainers (TOT) civil society organisations rolled out this activity to their members but since associates for this Project are arms of LCN, they report to the Council. The associates and partners that participated in the process of rolling out this activity were able to reach 46% of women and 54% of men. Subsequent to the training, the participants were expected to train their respective organisations which they represented and help other organisations they are close by for a broader impact and results. The presumed impact is the participants demonstrated an appreciation of the concept and practice and this is based on the training evaluation forms.

Cumulatively, this intervention has reached 416 participants and some sending organizations are beginning benefit from the knowledge and skills gained. For example, Moteanong Wool and Mohair Growers Association, Re u bone Lesholu, Bolokang Liphamola and Malingoaneng Communal Botanical Garden are being funded.

Training on UN Treaty Bodies for Civil Society

This activity falls under Civil Society Engagement towards Fostering Rule of Law and Accountability Project funded by the Delegation of European Union to the Kingdom of Lesotho. This intervention aimed at increasing the capacity of civil society in Lesotho to enable them to engage and utilize human rights mechanisms. It came against a background where a range of human rights abuses remain unreported to the UN Treaty bodies as to SADC. An informed civil society can effectively mobilize, advocate, and contribute to policy dialogues and community empowerment.

The participants were exposed to processes of engaging Universal Periodic Review (UPR), African Commission as well UN Human Rights Monitoring Mechanisms. This intervention was delivered during the 17th NGO Week and was well attended mostly members of Democracy and Human Rights Commission.

It was evident that participants grasped the process and how to engage as evidenced by stories shared and readiness to engage further the international bodies on Lesotho human rights situation.

Training of Youth on Civic Leadership

LCN is implementing this Project that is being funded by United States Embassy in Maseru aiming at realising youth potential through exploration of opportunities at their disposal. It is being hosted at American Corner under Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Innovation Hub. LCN task is to convene seminars for the youth to be addressed on range of topic that borders around civil leadership and defending human rights. Up to date, LCN has delivered two exposures on NGO leadership and governance and public participation. Youth attended in good numbers.

Training on the United Nations Conventions on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW),

This activity falls under Civil Society Engagement towards Fostering Rule of Law and Accountability Project funded by the Delegation of European Union to the Kingdom of Lesotho. This intervention aimed at empowering and informing society to promote and protect culture of

human rights. It is expected to result in influencing ratification and domestication of human rights conventions and instruments. The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) is one of such conventions that Lesotho has ratified.

CEDAW is the only comprehensive international treaty guaranteeing women's human rights and prevention of discrimination against women. This convention provides a framework for protection against gender-based discrimination and it further addresses the advancement of women, describes the meaning of equality and sets for the guidelines on how to achieve it. This convention was adopted in 1979 but it has been noted that most people are not aware of it. Lesotho although having ratified CEDAW, it is still non-compliant with its provisions on discrimination against women, especially in its cultural practices.

Moreover, although having ratified CEDAW in 1995 it is still not domesticated in Lesotho's laws hence it has no direct legal consequence. During this reporting period, LCN convened a training on CEDAW. The training covered definitions of human rights as well as its violations as defined in the context of women. The training also examined the Lesotho legal framework, with a specific focus on the rights of women. The training managed to capacitate civil society with the content of CEDAW, obligations of Lesotho under CEDAW as well as the role Civil society can play in fostering and advocate for CEDAW compliance. Participants were drawn from different Commissions of LCN. In total there were about 34 participants where women constituted 47% while men constituted 53%.

Training of Electoral Educators

LCN organised three training workshops that lasted for three days for 144 electoral educators. The electoral educators were divided into three groupings, one was held at Blue Mountain Inn Hotel in Berea, the other one Good Night Hotel in Maseru and while the other one was held at Tip Top Guest House in Mafeteng. The rationale for the separation of the training was meant for effectiveness of delivering the electoral education training for electoral educators.

The objective of the training was to equip the participants with necessary skills for delivering electoral education. This was meant to standardise the message to



be delivered by foot-soldiers to be deployed in 24 constituencies. The content of the IEC Electoral Manual for National Assembly Elections was used as a basis for the facts and strategies.

Participants stated their expectations for the workshops and most of them bordered around the eager to improve their knowledge and skills on electoral education and appreciation of new strategies for delivering persuasive voter education. It should be noted that others emphasized that the training they expected the training to refresh them since they have been in this field for long. LCN delivered training of electoral education for 144 participants and the training that were held in three different venues covered the key elements of electoral education and below is summary of these topics:-

- ⇒ **Participatory democracy;**
- ⇒ **Principles of participatory democracy;**
- ⇒ **Duties of Members of Parliament;**
- ⇒ **Lesotho Electoral Model;**
- ⇒ **Elections Management Body;**
- ⇒ **Electoral Process;**
- ⇒ **Seat Allocation;**
- ⇒ **Community Mobilisation Strategies;**
- ⇒ **Voter Educators' Code of Code;**
- ⇒ **Conflict Management.**

These training workshops were facilitated by LCN Team of Facilitators who has vast experience on this subject. They have been exposed to the content by IEC in the past hence relevance to the task. In addition, they were able to orientate the electoral educators

on the above-mentioned topics with the sole purpose of positioning them at the level of delivering persuasive electoral education including the strategies for mobilizing voters. The methodology that was tailored in accordance to seven (7) chapters of the Electoral Education Manual. The Facilitators applied different combination when delivering the messages such as role plays, presentations etc. The number of Facilitators in all training were five (5).

Besides the topics outlined above, the trainees were exposed to management and monitoring tools to be used in the field as to familiarize themselves of the reporting tools. The immediate output of these training was the refreshed electoral educators who are equipped with knowledge and skills on electoral education for persuading voters to be ready for voting. In total, there were 144 electoral educators (foot-soldiers) trained.

Training of Focus Groups Electoral Educators

The Project Proposal anticipated that there are special groups or vulnerable groups whose voices are often omitted in the electoral education process. To this end, it has been observed that persuasive electoral education requires various approaches, particularly when the aim is to influence the social behaviour. It further aimed at eliciting information with regard to reasons why certain sectors of society or groups are not able vote and these groups are enabled to voice out their concerns since it is based on the bringing together people of similar characteristics, trustworthiness and natural groups.

The training attracted about 24 participants drawn from organisations working with herd boys, women and street vendors. The leading partners in these focus groups were LANFE and Monna ka Khomo for herd boys, FIDA for women and Khathang Tema Baits'ukuli for street vendors. The content covered were more like the same with the ones for 144 foot-soldiers.

The immediate output of this training was the refreshed electoral educators who are equipped with knowledge and skills on electoral education for persuading voters to be ready for voting with the emphasis on the focus group targeted.

Training of Elections Observers

LCN delivered nine (11) refresher training for about 510 elections observers and these training were in most cases delivered at district level with objective to introduce observers to prior developed check-list. The check-list was introducing a standardized approach to all elections observers that were deployed in 80 constituencies. The check-list was used as a standard instrument for all observers to determine whether the elections complied with the generally accepted standards for democratic elections. When formulating the checklist, careful consideration of local laws, SADC principles for democratic elections and international conventions guiding democratic elections was made. The about output of this intervention was refreshed electoral observers who were to observe electoral process across the country. This helped in the formulation of a statement. It was noted that there were problems regarding to deployment due to accreditation process between LCN and IEC and a result some individuals were not allowed to carry out the work due to this omission.

Training of Health Providers

In attempt to settle the LCN debt to Global Fund, it was agreed that LCN would deliver some activities in Lesotho that would be supported by Global Fund through PACT. LCN would bring her expertise in the implementation of these activities without charging PACT. The activities identified were development of Community Score Card and Community System Strengthening strategy. LCN has dedicated an officer to deliver this task. There are a number of activities that were carried out including meetings with District Health Management Teams, health providers at community level including civil society organisations. The training that were delivered were in the districts of Botha-Buthe, Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka, Qacha's Nek and Quthing earmarked for this Project.

LCN has reached 34% males and 66% females. Since this task involves many actors, it has not yet brought conclusion until all are satisfied.

Training on rights-based advocacy

This activity falls under Civil Society Engagement towards Fostering Rule of Law and Accountability Pro-

ject funded by the Delegation of European Union to the Kingdom of Lesotho. The purpose of this intervention was to expose civil society organisations on the concepts and practice of rights-based advocacy. This activity was attended by organisations in Northern of Maseru and were exposed to various aspects of human rights orientation such as origins of human rights, principles of human rights, importance of human rights and generation human rights as contained in the constitution of Lesotho just to mention a few.

The training attracted 39 participants of which women constituted 56% of the participants.

RESEARCH AND PUBLIC POLICY ADVOCACY

During this reporting period, LCN delivered activities in accordance to Research and Policy Advocacy pillar of Strategic Plan 2014/19. The following were key activities:

- ⇒ **Public Dialogues on the Status of Human Rights Trends,**
- ⇒ **Maseru Dialogue and Constitutional Reform Dialogue,**
- ⇒ **17th NGO Week,**
- ⇒ **Consultative Meeting with Ministry of Law and Constitutional Affairs,**
- ⇒ **Stepping-Up to Sustainability –Advocacy for Environmental Education,**
- ⇒ **Deployment of Electoral Educators,**
- ⇒ **National Political Leaders Forum,**
- ⇒ **Deployment of Electoral Observers**

Public Dialogues on the Status of Human Rights Trends

This activity falls under Civil Society Engagement towards Fostering Rule of Law and Accountability Project funded by the Delegation of European Union to the Kingdom of Lesotho. The LCN rolled out human rights dialogues in the nine (9) districts of Lesotho. The dialogue served as a platform for the critical review and appraisal of the democratic and Human Rights consolidation, as well as to identify key human rights issues and patterns. Amongst its objectives, the dialogue highlighted human rights trends and interrogated the approaches to be adopted for the national reforms

initiative.



he dialogues were also important to raise awareness on the rights-holders of their entitlements. They were instrumental to generate evidence in different ways about the nature of rights violations, and impact of services on rights holders. During the discussions, the evidence was collated from community leaders or oversight institutions or government departments responsible for various human rights promotion, protection and service delivery. These dialogues also revealed most human rights violations ranging from rape cases, rampart and violent stock theft in the rural areas, police and military brutality to suspects, slow judiciary processes for suspect held in correctional service to mention a few.

These trends were picked from existing cases, individual or collective and any potential issues viewed as rights-violations and the dialogues proved to be very effective mechanism for affording the public to present the nature of human rights trends. The participants included district government ministries, representatives from Lesotho Correctional Services, Lesotho Mounted Police Services, National Security Services, health services and civil society organizations.

Maseru Dialogue and Constitutional Reform Dialogue

This activity falls under Civil Society Engagement towards Fostering Rule of Law and Accountability Project funded by the Delegation of European Union to

the Kingdom of Lesotho. The Maseru district dialogue was combined with issues related to views of civil society on reform agenda. The participants discussed range of human rights violation happening in the country and the participants were main supported by the contribution of DPE, CCJP, TRC, CCL and MISA which shed a light on the trends noticed and compiled from their areas of operations.

With regard to reform, it was emphasised that the process should be participatory and open for all stakeholders and should be people driven rather than government driven as to avoid unnecessary and excessive government dominance. It was concluded that process is very important to be defined from equal footing. The dialogue proved to be effective and enhanced knowledge of the rights-holders about entitlements.

17th NGO Week



This event aims at creating platform for engagement by articulating difference issues at public discourse. It has now in its 17th year and from year to year it keeps in attracting different stakeholders ranging from government, private sectors and academia. The regional representatives continues to support this event not only by finances but also their presence. SADC-CNGO is one of these partners.

The theme of the 17th NGO Week was Demanding Rule of Law, Accountability and Civic Participation in the next Semi-Centennial of Lesotho. It was officially opened by Honourable Lekhetho Rakuoane who outlined the importance of Basotho unity towards addressing national issues. At the same breathe, the UNDP Representative in Lesotho emphasised the need for rule of law and accountability and invited civil society to play a meaning role in the reforms process. The 17th NGO Week addressed various topic including *Moving towards establishing national poverty observatory in Lesotho, The Lesotho I want campaign-what kind of reforms do Basotho want? Preliminary citizens voices, Food security policy: Is it hampering or enhancing our agriculture? International and regional human rights norms and the right to participation through local government, Government of national unity: principles and relevancy in Lesotho* just to mention a few.

The key issues of convergence were presented in the official 26th AGM of LCN and were adopted as programmatic issues for the Council.

Consultative Meeting with Ministry of Law and Constitutional Affairs

This activity falls under Civil Society Engagement towards Fostering Rule of Law and Accountability Project funded by the Delegation of European Union to the Kingdom of Lesotho. The LCN undertook a consultative meeting with the Ministry of Law and Constitutional Affairs. The meeting served as a platform for the Ministry to report to members of the Democracy and Human Rights Commission on the status of human rights state party reporting in Lesotho. The meeting gave an overview on how Lesotho has reported in the various treaty bodies of which Lesotho is a party.

The objectives of the meeting were to have a joint meeting between Democracy and Human Rights Commission members and representatives from ministry responsible for Human Rights with the aim of appreciating Ministries' bottlenecks and challenges for reporting on Human Rights as expected. The meeting was a valuable dialogue that elicited information that was important for the Commission members.

Stepping-Up to Sustainability –Advocacy for Environmental Education

This activity was supported by WESSA through financial assistance of USAID. Stepping Up to Sustainability concept incorporates the Sustainability Commons which includes a range of sustainability technologies that support more sustainable lifestyle choices. They include reducing, sorting and managing waste better, installing renewable technologies, conserving and teaching about water management, as well as, providing experiential courses on biodiversity. The objective is to put into practice the lifestyle choices needed to change lifestyle. These innovative concepts are set to expand as we all step up to sustainability and seek to do something about minimizing our environmental footprint. We can reduce our “footprints” or grow our “handprints” (actions for good) through our own “Stories of Change”.

During the reporting year, LCN launched the Stepping Up to Sustainability project with the aim of advancing environmental education amongst civil society in Lesotho in Lesotho. The event provided presentations to civil society on different sustainability commons to be adopted in workplaces. These included the following;

- ⇒ **Improving water systems,**
- ⇒ **Improving Energy system,**
- ⇒ **BEE harvesting at LCN’s yard,**
- ⇒ **Information dissemination of the Sustainable Commons technologies.**

This intervention is important for civil society and community to cope with hicking cost of energy and water and has the following benefits:

- ⇒ **Reduced Energy Usage,**
- ⇒ **Increased Light Quality,**
- ⇒ **Increased Light Levels,**
- ⇒ **Longer Lasting Products = Reduced Maintenance Costs,**
- ⇒ **Light Level and Color Uniformity,**

Deployment of Electoral Educators

The 144 foot soldiers who were trained were deployed

in the 24 constituencies, in the districts of Butha-Bothe, Berea, Mafeteng and Quthing from the 13th April 2017. As we complete the electoral education for 2017 General Elections, the electoral educators have managed to undertake door to door, public gatherings, voter education bonanzas and candidates’ forums strategies to persuade the voters. It should be noted that the herd boy (Balisana), street venders (Baits’ukuli) and women were targeted by the electoral educators who were deployed a week later as of 16th April, and 28th April 2017. A total number of **139,703** voters have been reached through combination of the two strategies, namely; door to door and public gatherings (Lipitso) and this amounts to a total of **59,176** women, **40,341** of men, **39,484** of youth and **702** disabled people.

This excludes the number of voters reached with electoral education targeting focus groups. The number of voters reached through this strategy stand as **745** herd boys (Balisana), street venders (Baits’ukuli) **3,145** of women were reached were **1573** and women focus groups stands as **1,344**.

In all 24 constituencies, LCN successfully held candidates’ forums where candidates presented their manifestos to voters. The voters were afforded opportunity to ask questions. This activity was meant to promote accountable governance and culture of tolerance amongst the voters of different political parties. It contributed towards facilitating mature political campaigns through debating policy issues rather than personal attacks. The experience gained from this activity varies from one constituency to another. For example, in Mabote #29, the voters were intolerant to each other towards the end of the event which led to stoppage of the event through consensus with all candidates. The reason for this intolerance has been caused by personal attack by voter to candidates rather than focusing on policy issues. Overall, in other constituencies everything went as planned. Voters are thirsty for the dialogue with their representatives and this move should be maintained. In total the candidates’ forum attracted about **43,500** drawn from members of political parties, voters and public at large. In addition, LCN

organised 24 voter education bonanzas that helped to bring mob voters that were not reached by other strategies. The activities under this strategy included soccer tournaments in other constituencies, athletics, choir competitions etc. In total, we were able to attract about **12,800**. It should be noted that the figures for candidates' forums and voter bonanzas are not included in the total number of **139,707** because this might double count the voters reached through either door to door, lipitso or focus group.

Media Engagement

Media play an important role in deepening democracy and LCN utilised this platform for mobilising and pursued voters to vote for the coming elections. The electronic and print media were targeted as effective platform for ensuring that LCN achieve this goal. This had a multiplier effect to the initiative of pursuing the voters who might have been missed during the delivery of voter education strategies. Below is a table that depicts the media utilised with dates.

Table 1: Media Engagement

DATE	MEDIA HOUSE
3 rd May 2017	PC FM @ Sehlohlolong Programme
5 th May 2017	LNBS @ Thahameso Morning Programme
8 th May 2017	SABC @ News bulletin
12 th May 2017	Radio Lesotho @ Reea -Tele Programme
17 th May 2017	Molisa ea Molemo @ Mats'oanafike
31 st May 2017	Radio Lesotho @ Reea -Tele Programme

In addition to this media slots secured, LCN utilised the social media, namely Facebook and Twitter. Facebook updates were done using #IECLesotho and #2017NationalElections. It should be noted that other messages were tweeted @LcnLive.

Main Observation as Observation Statement

The Observation Mission was mandated to concentrate on key elements of the check list that LCN developed. Some of these key elements include the voting stations, elections materials, elections management, multi-party representation in the polling stations, external environment surrounding the polling stations, security of the ballot papers, secrecy for vote, participation of vulnerable groups such as elderly people and people with disability, voting, counting, and announcements procedure and results. In addition, consideration was put on dispute resolution and thereafter the overall assessment. LCN Observation Mission noted that generally voting stations were accessible though physically chal-

lenged people still face constraints in constituencies located in mountainous terrains. LCN Observation Mission observed that most of the polling stations were opened on time and properly closed as stipulated by law. Besides that, as observed in the past, the Correctional Services was one of the few voting stations which continued to open way after the time prescribed by the law. This issue should be addressed so that it complies with the law or the law should accommodate polling centres of this nature.

LCN Observation Mission observed that elections materials were adequately distributed on time to all polling stations although the Mission observed the shortage of indelible ink. This concern has been raised in the previous elections but it seems that it is not taken care by the IEC as to avoid delays in counting in the polling stations. Generally, the conduct of IEC staff was independent and impartial.



The Mission noted some isolated incidences where the polling stations officers portrayed lack of confidence during the counting or decision-making processes in the polling stations. It can be concluded that majority of the polling staff had little or lacked proper training about the electoral process, perhaps this matter continues to be experienced due to the nature of Lesotho elections and therefore requires new approaches by IEC.

In these elections, LCN observed nominations of candidates across all the constituencies and IEC delivered this exercise well and the level of tolerance that was observed was good ingredient for the promotion of multi-party democracy. It can be concluded that Lesotho is on the right path towards maintaining a generally permissive environment for multi-party participation and indeed there were various political parties and independent candidates contesting elections were paraded by IEC to canvass. This is highly encouraged and considered as ingredients for sustainable democratic governance. In these elections again, our Mission observed that there was generally permissive environment for multi-party participation and indeed there were various political parties and independent candidates contesting elections. However, it has been observed that some polling stations some of the political parties did not have agents at polling stations. The representation of candidates is highly encouraged and

considered as ingredients for sustainable democratic governance.

The Observer Mission looked at all prevailing events that could have had a bearing on the election processes. The general observation depicted a conducive environment where a general calm reigned despite an incidence where some liquor shops were still open. The presence of heavily armed military officers in the vicinity including inside the premises of the polling stations. This caused intimidation to some voters taking into consideration the historical background of Lesotho regarding the military. Despite IEC directive that they should vacate voting premises, they did not comply. The Mission notes that presence of the military militarized the elections and as such poses a challenge for free electoral process.

The Mission observed that the elderly and physically disabled were given preference while voting and were not requested to stand in ques. The mission noted that a special braille ballot paper was provided to the visually impaired, unlike in previous elections where the visually impaired voted through assistance, which compromised the secrecy of their votes. However, the mission observed that the majority of polling stations are not accessible to the physically challenged. During counting, the Mission observed that counting was done in a transparent and open manner, however in some instances counting was done under poor lighting and in big rooms especially where there was no electricity and caused delays in counting process. It was observed that IEC officials together with party agents, worked together to jointly resolve disputes whenever they occurred during the electoral process hence such disputes had no negative bearing on the electoral process.

Though voter registration in Lesotho is compulsory for any citizen who is 18 years old or is about to attain the age of 18 at the time of elections, in 2017, the registration took place under abnormal political environment that triggered interest among the first-time voters and the elderly, as such there was congestion for registration of which the IEC was not able to cope with in

terms of human resource and equipment. This also was complicated by huge transfer requests by voters which resulted in failure to have their names in the voters' roll. The net effect of this is denying other eligible voters from casting their votes, especially where they did not find their names in the desired constituency.

Local Government Elections - Electoral Education



Monitoring

The local elections in Lesotho have been characterized by low voter turn-out on polling day, the IEC therefore saw it fitting to intensify electoral education as it is her mandate to persuade the electorate to vote as this is their democratic right to do. The electoral education usually targeted both new and old electors with the purpose of awareness raising and encouraging electorate to participate effectively in the process of electing their representatives. Pursuant to fulfilling her mandate and also pursuant to forge strategic partnership, IEC saw it fitting to outsource expertise from other bodies such as civil society organisations support in delivering electoral education. The benefit envisaged stems from the fact the civil society organization proved to have enormous experience of working

with citizens in their own programming and ability to adapt to different working context institutionally.

It is against this backdrop that the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), engaged local Civil Society Organisations to provide Electoral Education in anticipation for the Local Government Elections. The elections scheduled local government dated 30th September 2017 came immediately after National Assembly Elections and that was organized under very political polarized environment. The IEC engaged twelve (12) civil society organisations to implement electoral education across the country.

It is worth noting that the organisations contracted were deployed in all the 10 districts of Lesotho, in all the councils of the country. The contracted organisations also had different target groups ranging from women, herd boys, academic institutions, street vendors, people with disability as well as those focusing on the general population.

The Lesotho Council of Non-governmental organisations (LCN) was contracted by IEC to monitor and co-ordinate the NGOs engaged in electoral education. This exercise was the first of its nature to be carried out by LCN under the auspices of IEC. It is worth mentioning that LCN held a consultative meeting with all implementing NGO's to discuss LCN's mandate in the project as well as to solicit expectations from implementing NGO's. Below were specific objectives:

- ⇒ To oversee provision of electoral education by NGO's countrywide,
- ⇒ To monitor implementation of all NGO's electoral education for 2017 Local Government Elections,
- ⇒ To monitor delivery of content of electoral/voter education,
- ⇒ To ensure adherence to code of conduct by contracted NGOs in providing electoral education,
- ⇒ To provide periodic/interval reports to IEC focal point,
- ⇒ To ensure conflict resolution in partnership with conciliatory committees in relation to delivery of electoral education,
- ⇒ To hold regular meetings with IEC focal point as to

determine extent of accomplishment of the work contracted to NGOs,

⇒ To recommend to IEC focal point the NGOs disbursements based on agreed deliverables.

⇒

LCN approach to this assignment proved to augur well with her mandate of coordination and representation. LCN planned a workshop for contracted civil society organisations in view of presenting developed reporting tools. It was also planned to recruit a team of monitors whose task was to make follow up visits, provide backup support and intervene to rectify identified shortfalls and these contributed towards achieving the specific objectives that included to overseeing provision of electoral education by NGO's countrywide, monitoring implementation of all NGO's electoral education for 2017 Local Government Elections, monitoring delivery of content of electoral/voter education and ensuring adherence to code of conduct by contracted NGOs in providing electoral education.

In addition it was LCN strategy to build linkages with conciliatory committees as a way of any conflict that may arise during the delivery of electoral education. It was envisaged that LCN would review all the reports of the contracted CSOs before causing their transmission to IEC and also communicating with relevant CSO on the final feedback from IEC and to recommend to IEC focal point the NGOs disbursements based on agreed deliverables. It was envisaged that LCN strategy was to serve as a bridge between IEC and contracted civil society organisations and also hold regular meetings with IEC focal point as to determine extent of accomplishment of the work contracted to NGOs. Below were key deliverables:

- ⇒ Development of reporting instruments;
- ⇒ Periodic/interval reports;
- ⇒ Follow-up visits; backup support and
- ⇒ Intervention to rectify identified shortfalls.

It is a known fact that the specific terms of reference were geared towards to attaining the above-mentioned deliverables. This means this report would therefore reflect key inputs towards attainments of the key deliverables.

LCN first designed both narrative and financial reporting instruments and felt that it would not be prudent to expect compliance without first meeting and discussing with contracted civil society organisations as to build necessary understanding and appreciation. A one day workshop was organised where civil society organisations and IEC where the mandate was interrogated including agreeing on key reporting instruments were discussed and considered. CSOs were also encouraged to adopted strategies that would facilitated the delivery of the assignment.

LCN designed reporting templates for both narrative and financial reports which were validated during this meeting. These templates were shared and discussed with implementing organisations at a workshop held by LCN. It expected that every implementing CSOs must submit master work plans as to enable LCN monitors to deliver the given task.

LCN was expected to furnish IEC with periodic reports and when unpacking this task we agreed with IEC that due to limited time, it was only visible to maintain regularly updates with relevant IEC office and this was made through telephonic updates. In addition, 10 master work plans were transmitted to IEC office. In some instances, LCN shared weekly work plans as to enable IEC monitors to follow the implementing CSOs including regular meetings with IEC whereby some issues were discussed. LCN engaged a team of eight (8) monitors who were divided in to four (4) teams comprising of two (2) people each. The four teams were deployed in different districts of the country.

Local Government Elections Observations

The practice of holding elections is a welcome democratic responsibility for good governance and one of the pillars of such is to allow stakeholder's participation in various forms such as elections observation . A team of observers mission has covered all the ten districts of the country in the following councils; Community, Urban and Municipality Councils.

The observer mission concludes that the local government of 2017 were fairly conducted in the transparent manner, despite some few challenges

Networking

Organisation	Event	Date
Ministry of Health	2015/16 Health Sector Annual Joint Review Meeting	05/10/2016
National AIDS Commission	Support to Commemoration of World AIDS Day 2016: Planning Meeting	07/10/2016
GEF and UNDP	Global Environmental Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme Capacity Building Workshop	10/10/2016
Ministry of Finance	National Micro-Finance Forum	10/10/2016
Lesotho Save the Children	Presentation of Lesotho Save the Children Strategic Plan	26/10/2016
NUL	Moshoeshoe I Institute of Leadership Concept Note Workshop	3/11/2016
Prime Minister's Office	Official Launch of the three National Nutrition Milestones	20/10/2016
Ministry of Health	Palliative Care Stakeholders	20/10/2016
Sentebale	One Day Strategic Plan Meeting	27/10/2016
Ministry of Gender	Preparatory meeting for 16 days of activism	20/10/2016
IEC	Workshop on Gender Policy, legal Assessment and Legal Reform	14/11/2016
NUL	A conference to mark 50 years of independence	11/11/2016
US Embassy	Reception to Welcome Back the YALI 2016 Mandela Washington Fellow	01/11/2016
Cognitive Behaviour Psychological Consultancy	Anti-Bullying month event	29/10/2016
Ministry of Health	National Launch of LEPHIA	3/11/2016
Procurement Tribunal of Lesotho	Institutional Support for the Enhancement of Public Financial Management Project	1/11/2016
Social Development	Social Protection Technical Coordination Workshop	5/11/2016
Ministry of Justice and Human Rights	Restoration of Justice and Diversion Workshop	5/11/2016

Social Development	Validation of Disability Equity bill	28/11/2016
Ministry of Health	Commemoration of World Diabetes Day	28/11/2016
MATRIX	Facilitation of Executive Committee Elections	10/11/2016
Ministry of Local Government	Validation of Training of Trainers Manual for sensitisation of Decentralisation Policy	11/11/16
Ministry of Social Development	Launch of a cash transfer book	17/11/2016
Ministry of Law and Constitutional Affairs	Launch of Report on Legal Environment Assessment for HIV and AIDS in Lesotho	17/11/2016
PSI Lesotho	Feedback Assessment on Post Violence Care Centre: The Dreams Project	17/11/2016
LNFOOD	Closing Ceremony of Deepening Decentralisation for Non-State Actors Project	24/11/2016
UNICEF	Launch of Book; From Evidence to Action; The story of Cash Transfers and Impact in Sub-Saharan Africa	17/11/2016
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Deployment of Oversight Committee	16/11/2016
Department of Water Affairs	Land and Water Resource Management Workshop	17/11/2016
UNDP	Validation Session of the UNDP Country Program Evaluation	17/11/2016
GIZ	Year-end Function	30/11/2016
UNICEF	Validation workshop on the finding of Integrated Social Safety Nets	24/11/2016
Lesotho Workcamps Association	Annual General Meeting	3/12/2016
Ministry of Local Government	Design Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility	28/11/2016
Ministry of Development Planning	Aid Coordination Forum	22/11/2016
Ministry of Development Planning	NSPD Review Stakeholder's Validation	23/11/2016
Habitat for Humanity Lesotho	HFHL Advocacy Program Workshop	7/12/2016
Bureau of Statistics	African Statistics Day	24/11/2016
Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture	Workshop on Public Access to Information and participation in decision making on living modified organisms	8/12/2016
RSDA	25 th Anniversary of Breakfast Meeting	09/12/2016
DCEO	Anti-Corruption Symposium	5/12/2016
Lesotho Save the Children	Launch of LSC New Name	13/12/2016

The membership and sectoral engagement of LCN is clustered into six (6) sector Commissions based on

mandates and programmatic orientation of members. The purpose of the Commissions is to cluster organisations with a similar mandate together to facilitate programming and coordination. All Commissions members were extended invitation that reflected the agenda that include the following:

- ⇒ Refresh Commission members with broad mandate as per LCN Constitution,
- ⇒ Exchange of members programmes for year,
- ⇒ Identify similar advocacy issues, and
- ⇒ Any other business.

Under the leadership of the Commissioners, who are also members of the Board of Directors and chair the meetings, and supported by the Secretariat, the Commissions are expected to perform the following:

- ⇒ Coordinate civil society advocacy and voice on issues that affect them,
- ⇒ Facilitate exchange of information, experiences and lessons between members,
- ⇒ Provide a linkage between the Secretariat and member NGOs for effective participation,
- ⇒ Provide information and technical support to NGOs on relevant national policies, laws and international agreements.
- ⇒ Promote partnership between member NGOs and strategic partners to influence policy change and inform national policy.

Resource Mobilisation

During the reporting year, LCN re-worked on OSISA Project Proposal as per OSISA demands that the first Project approved on Voter Education was supposed to be closed. This process took most of the staff time. In the final stage approval of \$151,000.00 was approved for electoral observation and post-election multi-

stakeholders' forum. Another component was allocated for MISA implementation as per OSISA requirement. LCN secured funding from UNDP amounting to \$51,590.32 to cater for national election. This funding complimented OSISA funding since single mode couldn't be adequate.

The third proposal was secured from IEC on provision of electoral education for the 2017 General National Assembly Snap Election that amounts to M3.385.95m. The Local Government Elections was supported by IEC with a tune of M1.4m to under taking monitoring of 11 voter education implementing civil society formations.

Leadership and Management Support

During this year, the LCN Secretariat was busy with fundraising and working end projects including reports production. The two elections and working of Global Funds recoveries stretched the small team we have at Secretariat. However, the Management held several meetings to discuss issues related to management of the organisation. The meetings focused on staff issues and fundraising. It should be noted that another issue that dominated the meetings included Global Fund recoveries from LCN as stated above. Again, it was a year where the management was dealing with some end of staff contracts that were working on that projects and this impact on the existing team in terms of motivation.

The Board of Directors and Executive Committee held several meetings to address key leadership issues ranging from the status of incumbent president position regarding his partisanship, considering and approving quality reports of the Council. The Board of Director orientation was delivered as most members were new.

Staff Complementary

Executive Director
Finance and Administration Manager;
Economic Justice Coordinator;
Democracy and Human Rights Coordinator;
Accountant;
Driver; and

Office Assistant.

It should be noted that other staff were released as the Project phased out while the Programmes Director resigned due to furthering his studies. It is not in the plan to replace all the officers until LCN complete and secure new funding with EU that has been postponed for unforeseen circumstances and delays from the side of government.

Conclusion

This year has been a challenging year for the Council due to competing demands while at the same time there has been limited resources both human and financial and this had negatively impacted on some LCN Commissions that were not able to hold schedule meetings. The perceptions and expectations from the members and public were more on the Council including support on political and reform processes in country including LCN strategic role of supporting SADC-CNGO during this challenging time of its existence. It can be concluded that in this year, the programmatic work was not that busy due to current challenges ranging from completion of projects including provision of electoral work.

Though there are some challenges both at the management of human resource, resource mobilisation just to mention a few, LCN continues to raise the civil society flag in most forums that needed the voice of civil society organisations.

