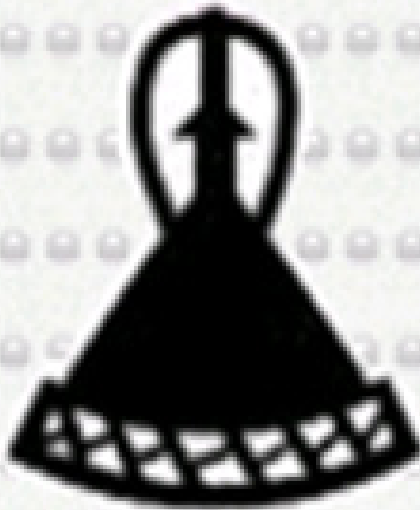


The NGO Web

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The Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (LCN) is an umbrella organization for NGOs in Lesotho. It was established in May 1990 with an objective of providing supportive services to the NGO Community. The Council implements this through networking and leadership training and development, information dissemination, capacity building, coordination, advocacy and representation when dealing with the government and the international community.

VISION

An effective and vibrant civil society within a democratic, peaceful and sustainable Lesotho.

MISSION STATEMENT

To stimulate, promote and build capacity within Lesotho NGOs so that, they are stable, democratic, transparent, skilled, empowered, sustainable and responsive to their beneficiaries needs and those of the voiceless and marginalized.

STRUCTURE OF LCN

At the helm is the Annual General Meeting (AGM) whereby the nine-member board of directors is elected. The board consists of three officer positions (President, Vice-President and Treasurer) and the six positions for sectoral representatives associated with LCN Commissions (Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Commission, Democracy and Human Rights Commission, Disaster Management and Humanitarian Relief Commission, Health and Social Development Commission, Women and Children Commission and Economic Justice). The board of directors and the Commissions are supported by a National Secretariat headed by the Executive Director who is also Ex-official to the board.

LCN CORE VALUES

In LCN Context, core values are guiding principles for the conduct of LCN business of which each structure should be aware of when operationalising the plans.

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Foreword

Kanono Thabane
Programmes Director



Editorial

Thandiwe Solwandle - Ntelo
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Lesotho like most of the African countries have turned a blind eye to its citizens needs and this makes it difficult for us to be happy that we are 50 years of age but there are no jobs, no peace and security and life expectancy has dropped to 49 years.

In this issue we have a wide range of articles from our members and also from Ntate Selinyane who is a free-lancer.

As we look at how we have developed, lets look at our tertiary institutions one will surely attest to the fact that theres still a lot to be done. The National University of Lesotho does not have enough and up to standard accommodation for its student and over half its students, live outside campus where security remains a challenge to date. In one of its Vice Chancellor interviews, Proffesor Nqosa Mahao said the entire universirty gets only M240 million which is reported to be given to one faculty at South African universities.

Lesotho is a beneficiary to AGOA and that allows our products to enter US market duty free. A large percentage of these products go to the US and about 40 000 have been in the textile industries but with Lesotho's security issues we might lose this opportunity and risk 40 000 jobs. Only God knows what will happen to these families if AGOA

got cut (Lesotho will not survive this). Lesotho government as we speak cannot produce more jobs for thousands of graduates.

As we continue to celebrate our 50 years golden Jubilee, lets not forget where we come from as a country and where we want to see ourselves in the next 50 years to come. Our progress seems to be slow, we need to have the right people at the right place and put a stop at any activities that are holding back our economic development potential.

We are open for suggestions and my office is forever waiting for contributions of articles to be featured on this publication. We thank everyone who submitted their articles.

The NGO Week preparations have started and we cannot wait to meet our member NGOs and discuss the development of work as well as sharing experiences.

Enjoy

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Editor

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A long journey back to barbarity? Fifty Years of Lesotho's Independence Politics

The story of modern politics of Lesotho arguably starts with the formation in 1952 of the Basutoland African Congress (BAC), which in 1957 changed name to Basutoland Congress Party (BCP). It was the first nationalist or independence-seeking party. In the face of the unmistakable colonial fusion of church and state, it strongly advocated separation of state from church, and keeping the latter out of provision and management of education; while also calling for equal pay and occupation in management for similarly qualified Basotho and colonial whites. This earned the party "curse" of being labeled "communist", though in practice it was far from the same. In fact communists in its ranks were hounded, forcing them to leave and form their own Communist Party of Lesotho as early as 1962. By the time of the independence elections in 1965, the paranoia of the leader about his leadership had led to exodus of yet other leaders, spawning the Marematlou Party and the Freedom Party, which later became the Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP), and the United Democratic Party (UDP). The puri-

tanist predilection of the BCP was evidenced by its alignment in the South African politics with the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC), formed in 1959 by an ANC lunatic fringe that rejected multiracialism as a future of South Africa's democratic governance. The BCP's vast popularity saw it win six of the nine district councils in the maiden local government elections of 1960.

The rival Basotho National Party (BNP) formed in 1959, was launched on a platform of commitment to Christian worship and upholding the traditional authority in national affairs; and drew its flag-bearing personnel from Catholic teachers and minor chiefs. Between the BNP and the BCP as the main parties, both had chiefs on their national executive committees. In fact, despite the widely alleged but largely undemonstrated anti-chiefs platform of the party, Mokhehle was the bedrock of support for the regent Chieftainess 'Mants'ebo Seeiso, who maintained on her court the BNP's Leabua Jonathan, in her successful resistance of appointment of a South African (given its apartheid slant) as a governor to Lesotho in the last years

Nthakeng
Selinyane
Freelancer



of British rule. Both parties had no position on property rights beyond localization of the economy, and though the BCP made no commitment to worship it didn't have an anti-religion platform either. Indeed for all its much-touted socialistic credentials, the BCP in its short-lived rule of 1993 - 97 was the one that dismantled the socialistic trappings of a web of state-owned enterprises put together by the BNP over the years between 1974 - 1986, even if that could be credited to changes in the global ideological map. They both wanted the state instruments of force (the army) to be under the prime minister when they looked set to become one, and to be under the constitutional monarch when they looked fated to be out of power.

Where the BNP benefitted from apartheid South Africa's material campaign support that saw it form the first national government in 1966; the BCP similarly docked with the white supremacist regime and used its training, materiel and bases to launch attacks on the BNP regime, through its Lesotho Liberation Army (LLA), under the umbrella of Pretoria's "Total Onslaught" at the height of apartheid as UN-declared crime against humanity in the 1980s. This came after the cancellation of the 1970 first post-independence elections on claims of violence, and signature of an agreement for a re-run of the elections; which eventuality never materialized, giving way to an Interim National Assembly which ran until the sham elections of 1985. The 1973 Interim National Assembly split the main opposition through

the middle as some of its leaders went into exile while others entered it. The 1985 election, called under donor and diplomatic pressure, was patently a charade where the BNP candidates were "returned unopposed" as the main opposition boycotted it. The hefty monetary deposit for participation and requirement that electors queue behind their preferred candidates were some of the threats to participation, against the background of unbridled state harassment of leading opposition loyalists. It was somewhat taken seriously outside the main opposition, as witnessed by the formation of new parties like the Basotho Democratic Alliance (BDA), which was the first party to combine National and Congress elements, and the CPL whose activists as the only legally banned party formed themselves into a new outfit called the United Fatherland Front (UFF) of 1985, and later the Popular Front for Democracy (PFD) of 1991 which is in the seven-party coalition government of today.

Military rule: incubation of new struggles

The leader of the military regime Major-General Justin Metsing Lekhanya famously said in an interview with me (People's Choice FM, 9/12/1999) that he toppled his boss in order to save him from the pressure of South Africa, which had waged two military cross-border raids, imposed two border blockades, expelled Lesotho migrants workers from its mines, withheld much-needed customs revenue payout to Maseru, and destroyed infrastructure targets through the LLA surrogate activity and killed ministers. Blaming party politics for dividing, the regime banned it, placed legislative and executive powers in His Majesty King Moshoeshoe II (ex-

ercised through the Military Council and the Council of Ministers of high intelligentsia supposedly appointed by the monarch).

Yet Lekhanya would instantly assault substantially everything representative of Jonathan's legacy. The immediate, landmark events in the arrival of military rule was forcible evacuation of South African political exiles and hounding of their known remainder by the military operatives, establishment of diplomatic relations with Pretoria under the guise of a South African Trade Mission in Maseru, the signature of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP). The regime also roundly condemned the historic 1987 national strike of the National Union of Mineworkers in South Africa, led by many veteran Basotho unionists who were later deported. With the LHWP takeoff and later inflow of investment in textile and apparel industries into the 1990s, the national workforce expanded, and so did a political consciousness of this stratum as a social class and organised representation of its interests, as the injection of former NUM unionists among others fed an emergence of a new age of independent unions, no longer defined by their BNP or BCP incline as before. The youth, women, workers, professional groups, and political parties were all united in demanding prompt return to an election-based governance. Arguably the most eminent action-point of civil society activity in the country is the Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN), a federation formed in 1990 and bringing together a total of 250 organisations across a wide spectrum of categories at its peak, an enrolment which has declined to half the number at the time of writing.

This era also witnessed a proliferation

of new political identities in Lesotho. Eminent examples are Lesotho Labour Party (LLP) of 1992, later joined by the Social Democratic Party (SDP) after the 1998 elections, at which time the factory trade union-based Lesotho Workers Party (LWP) was also formed. These parties were not as ideological as their names suggested, though the LWP pushed a workerist and internationalist agenda of open borders and dual citizenship together with the PFD in the 2002/7 parliament. The first woman-led party, the Kopanang Basotho Party (KBP) of Limakatso Ntakatsane appeared in 1992, to be followed in 2003 by the Basutoland African Congress (BAC) of Deborah Raditapole - being another BCP splinter. Former LCD general secretary Keketso Rants'o formed the Reformed Congress of Lesotho (RCL) for the 2015 snap elections. Perhaps the most fascinating current experiment might be the Progressive Liberal Association (PALICO) of "independent" youth, including some who trade by la-

bel of Change Agents.

The still-born transition: All eyes on the trophy

The return to constitutional rule in Lesotho was in many respects like elsewhere on the continent. The Constituent Assembly of 1990, with party politics still banned, but parties still participated. The resultant constitution was, however, substantially similar to the independence text on which it was tailored, though the essential parts like socio-economic rights are stated only as principles of the state depending on state-professed availability of resources and not enforceable by law. The national conference convened by the LCN and the Heads of Churches to highlight the transition agenda and was a lively affair marred by the BCP boycott and the dispersed attention of the BNP arrested by leadership power struggles. The 1993 general elections which were won by the BCP (which had returned from exile from 1989 thanks to a Heads

of Churches mediation), to form a one-party parliament, was rushed through without cobbling national consensus on thorny issues including the fate of LDF and LLA. This omission would later result some army units abducted top cabinet ministers and later released them, killing the deputy prime minister; while government went on to promote those fingered by its own of Bishop Paul Khoarai commission as unsuitable to remain in military service.

This was perhaps the beginning of a reverse politicization of the army - weaning it from the lap of the BNP and planting on the lap of the BCP. Yet the military would still go on to defy orders to disperse protestors who camped outside the palace gates for weeks, forced closure of government offices and impounded its vehicles, to drive home their demand for dissolution of the new government following the 198 elections. After a South African military intervention and punishment of dissidents, the

commander was rewarded with a seat on the Senate in 2002. After the 2007 snap elections, the army would hound, abduct, torture and force into exile the security guards of the main opposition All Basotho Convention (ABC) leader Thomas Thabane, and threaten him with permanent disappearance if he won elections. Five years later he attempted to topple the government when Thabane as prime minister moved to release him from the command, refused to vacate post, and upon his formal reinstatement by the new government after the 2015 snap elections, the commander who had replaced was killed by soldiers purporting to arrest him for conspiring to kill other commanders.

Another issue that was glossed over in the transition was the return and restitution of His Majesty King Moshoeshoe II who was exiled to Britain by the military regime in 1990 amidst acrimonious palace-military power tussle that impinged on questions of rule of law. The express friction between the State House and the Palace, sometimes peppered with vitriol from the rulers, led to dissolution of government by King Letsie III in August 1994, where the army shot and critically wounded several protestors opposing the "palace coup".

The Gift of Democracy and the elusive Canaan

This "second independence" came with promotion of politics to an elite act or induction of elites into politics. Indeed, in the face of challenges to its readiness to rule in the run-up to the 1993 elections, the BCP's leader ordered a compilation of its intelligentsia, and a group called the Pressure Group soon emerged as a think-tank and first-line attacker and defender in the party's campaigns. Its virtual mo-

nopoly of influence was to lead to rebellion and birth of the breakaway Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) in parliament in 1997 under Mokhehle's defecting leadership while the BCP was relegated to opposition benches.

One of the first acts of the 1993 cabinet was to increase the parliamentarians' salaries by 350 percent, in an ambience of severe holding down of public service salaries, and in the face of a record government surplus accumulation realized through the austerity of the military years. Cognizance of the same, together with a push of genuine needs and legitimate expectation from a new democracy, the new dispensation was soon faced with a long catalogue of demands for improvement of salary and working conditions. The government fended these demands off as opportunistic ventures of ungrateful sections which had been given their first taste of freedom, and repeatedly consigned them to the corner of an assumed bitter yesteryear oppressors impatient to return to power.

This notwithstanding, these groups under the umbrella of the LCN staged a two-stage total work boycott which was critical to restoration of government when the king dissolved it in August 1994, and forced a second national dialogue conference whose most important resolutions included call for a national reconciliation commission, establishment of an independent electoral commission, and electoral model reform – the latter two of which were introduced in the 1998 and 2002 elections, leading to representation of no fewer than 10 parties in parliament ever since. At the same time the government took the community development fund of the LHWP out of the public service accounting system, and placed it in the hands of the parliamentarians to pursue "grassroots" projects in their constituencies. This opened flood-

gates of corruption and outright theft, sometimes explained away as mysterious disappearance of vast amounts of money which were replaced without consequences; while it also elevated individual parliamentarians into small-time emperors at the local level.

Consolidating Hegemony of Decadence
Upon winning election as leader of the LCD in 1998 the prime minister Mosisili made a public announcement that he wanted an educated cabinet, and brought in through the Senate experienced academics and career technocrats from the civil service and international institutions. This notwithstanding, the LCD was seen as growing more callous to citizens' needs and privatizing the economy in a handful of families and cronies – from civil service jobs and contracts to state corporations which were commercialized with steep hike of service tariffs almost every year; through to regular escalation of salaries and perks of the legislature and executive and ever-expanding "insulation circle" of beneficiaries, including parceling of some state properties to them in violation of established rules of disposal. In October 2006 the ABC was formed as splinter of the LCD, prompting the snap election of February 2007, it became the first real challenge to the Congress teaching of politics. It drew astronomical numbers of followers across the National-Congress divide, didn't these epithets in its, and adopted colours that placed it apart from either. The ruling brand majority had gone from 74.7 percent of the national vote as BCP in 1993, down to 60.7 percent as LCD in 1998, further down to 54.8 in 2002. It would emerge at a hairsplit 51.6 percent in the next elections of 2007, where the LCD was forced to enter into a controversial electoral pact with the NIP, a shred of the BNP, in a manner that artificially increased its majority to 68 percent in violation of the spirit of

the new Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) electoral model.

When the party youth league started accusing the prime minister of failing to protect the party image, and calling for dismissal and transfer of many ministers for unchallenged charges of corruption against them in the mass media, and later calling for change of leadership for inaction on the same, he led to the exodus of majority of party parliamentarians to form the Democratic Congress (DC) and got the Speaker to name them as the new government, in February 2012. Calling snap elections as instantly, he failed to find coalition partners to form government in the resultant hung parliament, while the LCD its entered into coalition with the BNP and ABC. Leaning on the army commander whose insubordination it was openly instigating and publicly cheering, the DC was able to cajole the LCD into a an alternative-government pact that threatened a fall of government, and forced an early election, after which it formed and led a government with the LCD and other parties including the NIP. What was ironic here was that back in 2007 when the prime minister faced prospect of defeat at the ABC he reverted to the "puritanist" tack of arguing that everyone who was not of National identity could only be of National identity and the latter was irredeemably evil and inhuman, even as he entered an electoral pact with the NIP. He would return to the same to blackmail the LCD out of the first coalition government, though fear of arrest and prosecution for corruption and fraud was also an added motive.

Yet the 23 years of return to constitutional rule, leading to this golden jubilee of independence, have also seen creation of institutions of the state which are globally accepted as witnessing a commitment to consolidation of good governance. These included the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) whose dearth of resources and skills and technology still

leave much to desire, the IEC whose self-determination has been wanting at critical moments thereby compromising democracy, the Office of Ombudsman whose "advisory" status renders it toothless, the Police Complaints Authority is in place, where citizens can only lodge complaints by permission of the authorities. They habitually distort or omit stakeholder representations on laws or "smuggle" bills back to House for passage while concerned parties are still awaiting their turn or forming their input. The High Court bench is (roughly) equal number of men and women, and Lesotho has had indigenous captaincy of the high court and court of appeal, but their independence in state-involving cases still attract professional criticism. The published Auditor-General reports are only a few years behind date now, but nothing is done about their glaring findings of theft and misuse of funds and disposal of assets. The parliamentary portfolio committees introduced since sixth parliament lie to the House. Finally, in 2001, the country adopted the National Vision 2020, which above all its contents, states that "By 2020 Lesotho shall be a nation at peace with itself and its neighbours", yet there is much to desire in respect of progress on all indices, and all government's commitment thereto, with just four years to go.

Conclusion: beyond the art of squaring the circle

Two questions might be comfortably posed and answered on a concluding note: (1) is the politics of Lesotho still arrested at the supposedly primordial docking conjuncture of the Congress-National divide? and (2) Is there a philosophical difference between the two traditions? To both questions the answer is a definitive negative. Tossing positive answers to these ques-

tions as has been done over the years, and peculiarly in times of desperation for voter support and escape from the claws of the law, is naked insincerity. The fallacy of ideological incongruity between these traditions has been teased above. Those Congress ideologues who peddled this myth would in the same breath go on to publicly extol the harmony of power-giving arrangements they entered into with the self-same National parties, no fewer than three times in a mere eight years! Only as late as this end of September (24/9/2016) the deputy leader of the DC deputy leader and police minister was telling the party's public rally in his constituency to embrace all political persuasions.

While the ABC was the first main party to transcend the National-Congress, boasting prominent names from these two streams, it was actually formed by floor-crossing legislators of the LCD. It was not even the first to exit the Congress ethos. Indeed as their names and short characterization above shows, until the 1990s these splinters did not use the Congress names at all. Besides the PFD, and its defunct forebears in the UFF and CPL, and to a certain extent the LWP and the short-lived LLP and SDP, the main parties of the country are hard to classify by ideology; at best they just stumble along after the dictates of foreign funders and international finance. This might place them dubiously on the right side of the ideological map. The other new post-military parties are even further removed from the "dinosaur" divide of National and Congress. The failure to address democratization of civil-military relations in the 1990-93 transition, left the security forces susceptible to subjective control of political elites within and outside the state. The onset and galloping of state corrup-

Resolving Conflicts for Enhanced Service Delivery: Lessons from Mamants' Community

Introduction

This article is central on training on constitutionalism & democratization and conflict resolution mechanisms that was organized and conducted by Send a Cow Lesotho (SACL) in collaboration with Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (LCN) and Transformation Resource Center (TRC). The training was conducted upon request from the Mamants' Community Council. Through a project supported by the European Union, LCN has been building the capacity of local civil society on various skill which will promote greater civic participation in local government planning. The training were earmarked for community based organization and member of Community Councils. It is against this background that the Community Council of Mamants' specifically requested Send A Cow and its partners (LCN and TRC) to provide capacity for all members of the Council on constitutionalism, democratization, mediation

and conflict resolution.

Intervention

In responding to this request, Send A Cow convened a workshop training started with discussion of issues of concern amongst members of 'Mamants' Community council. Participants for this workshop included 21 Members of 'Mamants' Community Council and 2 local chiefs. Among others the Council had confusion concerning their roles in relation to those of local chiefs, lack of resources, more especially financial resource, to execute their duties as councilors, illiteracy for some of the councilors, party-line conflict of interest, lack of trust among the councilors etc.

In order to address the concerns of 'Mamants' Council, SACL procured 25 copies of National Constitution of 1993 and 25 of Local Government Act of 1997 and distributed them among the workshop participants. Then there

Mokete

Nyaphisi

Gender and Social
Development
Coordinator

Send a Cow

Lesotho



Mr. Lira Theko explaining to the workshop participants' about roles of local councilors and those of local chiefs. Mr. Theko overemphasized the fact that it is through reading and comprehension of relevant legal documents that the councilors and chiefs would fully understand their roles to avoid conflict. " I assure you ladies and gentlemen that it is only when you have bought these relevant legal documents that you will have clear understanding of your roles as local authorities..." expressed Mr. Theko.

was discussion about relevant sections of these two documents in addressing the stated concerns. This was facilitated by Mr. Theko from TRC and Mr. Ramabolu from LCN.

The facilitator took the participants through the process of decentralization as per National Decentralization Policy of 2012. They also explained ways to access social services and legal ways citizens follow to claim them.

SACL Gender and Social Development Coordinator (GSDC) also took the participants through different personality traits that influential in interpersonal conflict. This interactive session yielded positive results in that the participants pointed that they began to realize their differ-

ent personality traits, their strengths and weaknesses in conflict resolution mechanisms and they committed to come up as different characters in dealing with conflict.

following are the key messages:

- The current organization structure of local government authority in Lesotho leads to conflict between councilors, chiefs and permanent public officials;
- Lack of clarity and the presence of overlaps in the roles and functions of councilors, chiefs and permanent public officials create conflict;
- Lack of conflict prevention and management mechanisms leads to continuous conflict between councilors, chiefs and permanent public officials;
- Differences in the levels of education between councilors and permanent

public officials result in disharmonious relationships between councilors and permanent public officials that in turn lead to prevalence of conflict

- Scarcity of financial and material resources and the poverty of the councils and councilors result in the scramble for the limited resources which is manifested in the form of conflict.

Recommendations

In summary, the following are the key recommendations following the workshop:

- 1 There should be linkage between decentralization framework and local financing and fiscal authority to the service provision responsibilities and functions of the local government. This



Chief Makotoko Mojela expressing his happiness regarding the training. The chief indicated that as local authorities, they have eyes opened by the workshop and he recommended that this workshop be held for members of other local councils. "I think this very informative and refreshing session should be 'tasted' by our fellow councilors in the neighboring councils..." expressed the chief

gears towards the point where local politicians are in the position to bear the costs of their decisions and deliver on their promises;

2. The local councilors must seek proper information about the costs of services and service delivery options involved and the resource envelope and its sources - so that the decisions they make are meaningful. Participatory budgeting is one way to create this condition;

3. Local authorities especially chiefs and local councilors should take part in paving clear mechanisms by which the community can express its preferences in a way that is binding on the politicians --so that there is a credible incentive for people to participate;

4. There must be a system of accountability that relies on public and transparent information which enables the community to effectively monitor the

performance of the local government and react appropriately to that performance- so that politicians and local officials have an incentive to be responsive; and,

5. Local authorities must have and read legal documents relevant to their assignments in serving their community members.

Conclusion

It is very imperative to take into cognizance the fact that the notion of power rests into two key cornerstones of any nation's development and these are constitutionalism and democratisation. For the purpose of this report, constitutionalism is comprehended as restrained and divided powers. Thus a framework where the rights of an individual citizen are protected but also defines the way the powers and democracy should be managed. Democracy on the other hand is proposing the unified and unrestricted approaches

where people are free to exercise their rights. Government of Lesotho executes its governance under democratic rule. In 2012, Lesotho has established Decentralization Policy which is meant to provide a framework for deepening and widening the economic and social benefits of democracy to all citizens and the key players are Local Government Councils and they are informed by Local Government Act of 1997. Due to lack of knowledge on and/or access to these important documents, most of local councilors often experience confusion and conflict interests and roles in relation those of local chiefs.

It therefore follows that local authorities should constantly seek information on decentralization, relevant procedures and their roles. This would be substantiated by regular debriefing sessions in the form of counselling.

INTRODUCING THE DISTRICT FARMERS FORUMS

NTSOAKI

Rural Self-help
Development

Association



Maseru Agricultural District Unity Association

Rural Self-help Development Association (RSDA), with the objective of supporting smallholder farmers' to improve their living conditions and their influence through mobilising their social capital and dialogue with private sector and the Government of Lesotho, is collaborating with farmers in the districts of Leribe, Berea, Maseru, Mafeteng and Mophale's Hoek through district farmers forums. The initiative is financially supported by the

Denmark Lesotho Network (DLN). The objective of the district farmers' forums is to transform the mind set of smallholder about commercial agriculture in their respective districts through building on their social capital (trust, confidence) which will enable farmers to have honest communication and work with private sector and Government of Lesotho to follow through commitments pledged in the CAADP Compact. The District Farmers' Fo-



Leribe District Farmers Union

rum has a potential and may be a breakthrough towards active dialogue among farmers and their stakeholders. The farming community in the 5 Districts have recognized the opportunities associated with re-energizing small-holder commercial agriculture in their respective districts.

This collaboration with farmers is to support the National Agriculture Investment Plan (NAIP) draft document of the Kingdom of Lesotho program of which its objective is to help farmers to increase production and productivity and to graduate from subsistence farming to semi-commercial status. This would be achieved through the use of appropriate technologies and strengthening agriculture as a business while at the same time helping other actors in the agricultural value chain to increase their incomes. The

program would improve the enabling environment, contribute to reducing poverty and ensure sustainable food security for the Basotho both at household and national levels by improving production, productivity, diversification and commercializing food production and developing high potential value chains and good functioning markets, improved access to rural finance and infrastructure.

Over the years farmers have been challenged by a number of bottlenecks that has restricted them to produce maximally, these include,

- Low productivity and poor quality agricultural production,
- Government policies that not inclusive and are not farmer friendly,
- Weak farmer networks and associations that cannot demand and monitor Government programs and

- Poor understanding and knowledge of market and market linkages.

Therefore farmers in these districts have taken a huge responsibility of communicating, raising awareness and understanding among fellow farmers to unite for peer to peer support, to increase productivity of agriculture commodities and coordinate marketing of their produce.

A Farmers' Forum is a meeting place for likeminded farmers' associations; each district coming together to share challenges, experiences and lessons; for synergies, collective action and one voice for the farmers to explore opportunities which the Lesotho's smallholder agriculture can play a much greater role in creating jobs to increase disposable income and sustain household food security.

These forums exist for;

**Rural Self-Help
Development Association**

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RSDA
Since 1991

Empowering smallholder farmers.

- Peer to peer support, exchanges to share skills and technologies, collective action-bulk buying and marketing of products.
- Collective voice and action in engaging with government for policy, laws and capital
- Collective voice and action in engaging with business for inputs, finance and output market.
- Organizational support to farmers groups/associations for creating sustainable entities for good governance – membership drive, accountability and transparency.

The farmers' forum is represented by various farmers groups and associations based on commodities produced in the district e.g. poultry, grain, piggery, horticulture, wool and mohair, forestry etc. This has been facilitated with assistance from the District Agricultural Offices of the districts mentioned.

The theory of change underpinning this engagement is that government

as a primary duty bearer has a significant role it plays in increasing agriculture production through infrastructure development, proper planning, policy formulation and execution, but particularly through resource allocations for the agricultural development targeting the Lesotho farmers where over 80% are small holder farmers! Therefore, for the smallholder farmers there is need to have their voices to positively engage and influence the government for changes in the lives of small holders' farmers. To have a unified voice for policy change and effective resource allocation and utilization, there is a need for farmers need to come together to have a platform that facilitates the engagement so to amplify their united voices on a range of issues affecting agriculture value chain from production, processing and marketing. The effective engagement can only be realized once farmers understand how government operate especially understanding the policy formulation and execution (resource allocation), particularly their ability to engage and track the budgeting process and monitoring it. This takes efforts to capacitate farmers to be able to engage the government and other stakeholders meaningfully hence why

RSDA had organized the 3 day workshops to train each forum on governance and social accountability.

The process of farmers' engagement with the duty bearers is expected to be participatory in nature where issues are taken up right from grass root to the district then to the national level to inform the CAADP processes.

RSDA was registered in Lesotho in 1991, as a non-profit making organization with the objective of promoting self-help initiatives among rural Basotho people. The development approach used by RSDA has three pillars: strategic service delivery to smallholder farmers to produce from their land, Capacity building and policy influence and social accountability. Our theory of change is that each pillar cannot be implemented in isolation from other two pillars. Strategic service delivery generates evidence for policy influence for uptake by Government and private sector and is a springboard on which capacity building is focused.

Promoting Youth Civic Leadership for greater Civic Participation in Lesotho

LCN is currently implementing a programme on Civic Leadership with the support of United States Embassy, Maseru. This programme integrates with the Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) Innovation Hub implemented as American Corner, State Library Maseru. The YALI Leadership Innovation Hub provides the tools, opportunities and leadership skills tailored to empowering young African leaders in entrepreneurship, public sector management, and civic society. The YALI Leadership Innovation Hub is built on existing institutional capacity in Lesotho to provide high quality training, mentoring, and networking support to a greater number of young leaders than can be reached through the Mandela Washington Fellowship. As a result, Lesotho Council of NGOs was tasked with providing civic leader-

ship to exceptional young leaders between the ages 18 and 35 from a wide range of backgrounds and diverse experiences and education level.

The trainings are aimed at empowering youth to start community based civil society organisations which seek to redress adverse externalities on social, political and economic ills. The training explored various methods of civic engagement on the areas Community Service and Volunteerism, Community Building, Public Education, Community Development, Voting and Political Participation, Social Entrepreneurship etc. The activities are held as a series of sessions at the American Corner of State Library. These activities are held monthly.

In an interview with one of the

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Ntelo

Information
Communications
Officer



ing, Mr. Nyeoe Ntene from Young Christian Students (YCS) said they benefitted a lot as an organization from taking part in the civic leadership training. He further mentioned that YCS has been training students on civic education at different schools around the country and this training provided some of the requisite skills needed. LCN had undertaken some of the trainings in collaboration with YCS.

In another interview with LCN's Economic Justice Commission (EJC) Coordinator Mr. Sekonyela Mapetja, who facilitated various trainings on Leadership, NGO Governance, Community Service and Volunteerism, said participants are highly interactive during the trainings. He further mentioned that the participants frequently raised pertinent issues relating to different democratic issues visible in mainstream media. He added that the trainings on NGO Governance were the ones which the participants indicated a high interest.

As a result of the training workshops conducted, one youth organization which is already registered with Law Office has since applied for membership with LCN. There is also a group of youth whom the EJC Coordinator is helping with their constitution for it to be registered with Law Office. Other youth are being referred to BEDCO young entrepreneurs' initiative and is being helped to solicit funding from the Maloti Mountain Brewery grants

for young entrepreneurs.

LCN has managed to deliver a total of 11 capacity building interventions addressing different topics such as the role of Civil Society Organisations in promoting Social and Economic Justice in Lesotho, Promoting Public Participation in Lesotho and Youth Participation in Good Governance that reached 187 young people. These activities had managed to incite the youth to take civic leadership roles within their respective village including organising themselves into different formations.

YALI was launched in 2014, it brings up to 1,000 African

civic, business and community leaders aged 25–35 for six weeks of academic coursework, leadership training and networking at U.S. universities. Through the 250,000-member YALI Network, young Africans can connect with other leaders in their community, access free online courses in topics ranging from climate change to entrepreneurship to human rights, and receive invitations to special events.

The four YALI Regional Leadership Centers — in Kenya, South Africa, Senegal and Ghana, train young leaders in leadership, entrepreneurship and professional development. They also provide a great place to network.

Towards Gender Based Violence Free Lesotho.

Gender Based violence (GBV), particularly violence against women and girls (VAWG), is one of the most serious human rights violations across the globe. Gender Based Violence constitutes one of the most widespread human rights abuses and public health problems in the world today, with devastating long-term consequences for victims' physical and mental health. Simultaneously, its broader social effects encompass the social development of children in the household, the unity of the family; the social fabric communities as well as the wellbeing of the society as a whole.

Gender based violence has been identified by different studies in Lesotho as one of the key challenges facing the country given its high prevalence. For example, The Study conducted by Gender Links Lesotho reveals that 86%

women in Lesotho reported experiencing some form of violence over their lifetime, and 41% men corroborated these findings.

A major shortcoming for addressing Violence against Women (VAW) in Lesotho has been the absence of specific domestic violence legislation. The CEDAW Committee, in response to the Lesotho Country Report, referred to the absence of specific legislation to eliminate VAW, including domestic violence and the absence of mediation in cases of violence- which lead to re-victimisation of women who have suffered from violence- as issues that need to be addressed by the Lesotho Government. The government was also urged to establish more safe spaces to augment the existing roving legal-aid clinics and the Lapeng Care Centre.

Another key challenge faced

John

Tainemwangire

Chair -

GBV Network



by Lesotho is that there is no accurate measure of the true levels of VAW. Due to social pressure and stigma, most VAW cases are not reported to the police and cases are often withdrawn from the courts. A fraction of GBV cases is successfully prosecuted. Many forms of GBV such as emotional, verbal, psychological and economic abuse do not have police classifications so they go unrecorded. As a result socio-psychological support is lacking in most National Action Plans to end GBV.

As far as the media is concerned, gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the least talked about violations of women's rights: most of it takes place within the private domain and is never reported (Gender Links, 2002).

It's therefore important to note that every sector literally has a role in GBV prevention but unfortunately its only in a few sectors where GBV prevention efforts are visible. This leaves a glaring gap in the response subsequently perpetuating the vice.

To address Gender based violence challenge, there must be a multisectoral response with each stakeholder optimally working towards society that is GBV free.

We therefore call upon all stakeholders to work as a collective to;

1. Enact stand alone law on Gender Based violence prevention.
2. Enact sector or institutional specific Gender policies
3. Enhance compliance mechanisms or systems to the gender policies and laws.
4. Enhance a protective environment for victims of Gender Based Violence.
5. Increase the capacity of all structures in the country that deal with GBV prevention related interventions.
6. Prioritize financial investment in GBV prevention programs
7. Improve Coordination and collective action among GBV prevention stakeholders.

TRC's Position on the Amnesty Bill, 2016

The Phumaphi Commission has since become the cornerstone of efforts to restore stability in Lesotho, prompted among others by the killing of former LDF Commander Lt-Gen Maaparankoe Mahao in June 2015 and the continued torture and arrest of soldiers deemed as mutiny suspects. However, the implementation of the recommendations of this commission has since stalled. Amidst the expectations and confusion of the Basotho for the Phumaphi implementation there now emerges, "Amnesty Bill 2016

A. TRC's Concerns

TRC has a number of issues of concern regarding this AMNESTY BILL, 2016

1. There is no acknowledgment of the Phumaphi Commission in the Bill

- Is the Bill a response to Phumaphi as it had been one of the recommendations that there should be amnesty to the mutiny suspects?
- If it is a response to Phumaphi, the dates are quite confusing: what is the justification of dating amnesty crimes from 2007?
- What other criminal activities is this Bill addressing that happened in 2007?
- The Prime Minister had in one of his speeches clearly pointed out that Phumaphi had gone beyond his mandate (acted ultra vires) by covering issues that happened before 2014, why then does this Bill cover this period?

2. As far as the Bill is concerned, all the groups covered are deemed to be all liable for criminal offenses and if there was an opportunity for

"fair trial" they would all be equally charged and prosecuted. However,

- Only Category 1 and Category 2 "offenders" are to be retired from the LDF, but those in Category 3 get to be retained. Why?
- Why not retire all the three categories if they are equally guilty? Alternatively, why not retain all in LDF employment?

This defeats the objective of the bill (bringing peace and tranquility within Lesotho). It gives the impression that it is set out to protect some elements of the LDF at the detriment of others.

3. On the issue of retirement "according to the law that governs"

- What is the relationship between "the law that governs" and the bill on retirement? Eg. The law that governs determines the retirement age of each soldier especially those of category 1 and 2 (which in essence could be the formal retirement age) or does their retirement begin immediately when the law becomes effective?
- For the exiled soldiers whose salaries have been frozen for months now can they expect to recover their halted salaries?

4. To get redress as per section 4 one has to satisfy the Minister of Finance

- Why would those whose rights have been violated then seek redress from the Finance Minister? Could this be an attempt to buy justice with money? Or rather to cover up for those who committed atrocities and attempt to appease the disgruntled using the government coffers.

5. Ministers Regulations: The minister may make regulations for giving effect to the provision of the Act

- As civil society, we have lost confidence in the under dealings of the Ministry of defense due to the long journey we have travelled since the mutiny charges, hence the suspicion that the regulations when done at a later stage by the Ministers office alone could pose threats for those it is meant to protect, hence it would be fair to expect that the regulations should already come out so that when the bill is passed into law every Mosotho knows what to expect.

B. Summary of Concerns

In summary, TRC's issue with the proposed law revolves round three points:

1. Apparent continuation of impunity and lack of accountability (and therefore denial of justice)

It is our view that this Bill will promote impunity and fail to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions. It is our stance that those who have committed crimes against humanity (such as violations of human rights) should face the law, and should not be seen to be protected by those in power.

In this regard, the Phumaphi report has it that there is clear evidence to the effect that there have been cases of mur-

der, torture and bombings among others, the doers of these actions are known but nothing has been done to ensure that the rule of law is observed. On the other hand, the same commission has also noted that there was no act of mutiny, however the Amnesty Bill attempts to put the recorded wrongdoers and the innocent in one basket as if that was not bad enough, the former are to continue to ensure that the wrongdoers enjoy more lucrative benefits.

2. Protection and security of human rights

As a Human Rights organization we feel we are not in a position to embrace a law that continues to put the interests of the human rights violators above everything else. We cannot stand by and watch human rights be exchanged for money (and indeed there is no guarantee that those wronged shall be compensated as they have to satisfy the Minister of this). We have watched and heard the cries of the soldiers and their families for a long time now and we feel that the Bill will not do them justice if it means that their tormentors get better treatment and all their wrongs are just swept under the carpet. This indeed becomes the recipe for disaster if it means those in the wrong get out scot free and those on the right side of the law lose their jobs and their only source of livelihood –and have to prove to Government that they have been wronged.

3. Promotion of stability and harmony

It is difficult, without further interrogation, to see how the bill in its

current form will contribute to the restoration of peace and stability in the LDF and in Lesotho:

Firstly, it has been the consistent and insistent position of the government of Lesotho that the country is stable and peaceful, and that the same applies to the LDF. Yet the proposed law is intended to restore stability. There needs to be acknowledgement that the Government's stance has been flawed, and that the Phumaphi Commission was correct in identifying serious and deep-rooted divisions within the Lesotho polity and LDF. Only this acknowledgement can place the nation in a position to address its problems.

Second, failure of the Bill (especially in the explanation of objectives) to link wit/acknowledge the larger context of i) historical animosities among Basotho ii) intra-LDF rivalries and iii) boarder reform agendas, points to a failure to look at the bigger picture, and a tendency to approach matters in a piecemeal, uncoordinated fashion. In order to genuinely address stability and recalibration of governance, the Bill has to be part of a larger package of initiatives that address the fundamentals of Lesotho's crises, not just the mutiny plot and exile issues. The Phumaphi Commission has been a significant element of this, and in the absence of an attempt to even allude to it, it is difficult to see how this act

will indeed bring stability to the country.

C. Recommendations

In light of the above, therefore TRC would recommend as follows:

1. Strengthen amnesty by applying all its provisions equally across the board (either retire all soldiers associated with the crimes outlined –serving and otherwise- OR retain them all). This would remove the perception of favoritism, promoting impunity and/or victim vs perpetrator among the those granted amnesty

2. Make the amnesty conditional on full disclosure of crimes, so that the course of law can take effect on those refusing to own up to their wrong-doing. This would ensure historical record is retained while forgiving, and would counteract impunity (even if in limited fashion)

3. Allow full and comprehensive redress and compensation from the state for those wronged –and not place the onus of “convincing the Minister” on them. Effecting disclosure would ensure “evidence” is available to enable the state to compensate; and full disclosure would open the door to healing (closure and acknowledgement for those wronged, and therapy and opportunity to be forgiven for wrong-doers)

Democracy and Human Rights Commission



- Commission Meetings
- District Public Dialogues on trends in human rights issues
- Training on Rights-Based Advocacy
- Deliver training on constitutionalism and democratisation

Economic Justice Commission



- Commission Meetings
- Community Parliament Preliminary preparations
- Public Dialogues on the Human Rights Trends
- Preparations for NGO Week

Women and Children Commission



- Preparing for 16 days activism against gender based violence
- Preparing for universal children day
- Reviewing associates report - this is the main responsibility of WCC office to see to it that quality assurance is done
- Participating in implementing partners activities and attending their meeting as well as net working
- Hosting WCC meeting