

The NGO Web

Khokanyan'a Phiri

Issue 1 Volume 10



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a mutilation of our democracy

20 years of civil society;
reflections on LCN's milestones

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Celebrating
20 years
of successful Civil Society movement



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Welcome back to our most esteemed publication, the NGO Web after a short 'sabbatical' leave from circulation and I am indeed assuring you that this time the publication is here to stay. We come with new look after a complete make-over and I hope you like what you see!

This edition is special in that not only does it come with a new jockey but again it comes at the crucial and very fulfilling time when we celebrate almost over 20 years of existence in the quest to advance the plight of civil society. Most of us may not be quiet privy of how this august organization (LCN) came into being and the circumstances surrounding its establishment, so rest assured we have put up a very informative special series of editions whereby we look at some of the notable success stories and milestones of the Council since inception. So as to be sure not to twist history we have the privilege of the founding executive director Mr. Sello Nchafatso reminiscing with us on the Council's yesteryears!

The edition is also special because it comes at the time when the Council is on the verge of implementing one of the biggest grants in the NGO history,

the Global Fund Round 8 Project of which you as the members of civil society are final beneficiaries. I therefore implore you to make the best of this programme for the advancement of the Basotho communities. Congratulations to our implementing partners in this regard and good luck indeed.

This issue comes carefully packaged with impressive issues that you will not only enjoy reading but will leave you better informed and learned enough. They range from the beleaguered Land Bill 2009 that I must say thanks to relentless onslaught by NGO community led by LCN, the Bill is now on just about to become an Act in a much reformed shape than its original version. The *indefinite deferment of local government elections* is one of the most contentious issues of our democracy. We also interrogate this issue and wonder in awe of the trend whereby the rule of law will just be trampled upon simply to suit the interest of few individuals' entrusted with the very responsibility of upholding it. Just as how the politicians waited for the entire five years to realize on the eve of local government elections that the law on the women quota needs a relook beats common sense! Infact the NGO commu-

nity has always stood high above the rest proposing other alternatives as far as 2005. (check the article on page 3)

We therefore unpack the dire consequences of this trend on the article 'Beyond mutilation of democracy-local government under the microscope...!!'

And then we show how human rights approach can be better suited in fight against HIV and AIDS pandemic. These are just some of the sumptuous issues to feast your eyes on, on this issue. For the main course you just have to get yourself a copy of this illustrious edition.

We hope that the next issue will also feature some Sesotho articles to accommodate our diverse readership.

Let me thank you all for your anticipated support and wish you the best of reading. You can write to us through letters to the editor to tell us about what you think of the publication and we would be able to accept your most valued input! Till next edition! Have a nice one!!

Tankiso Sephoso
Editor

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Beyond Mutilation of Democracy:

Local Government under microscope

Writes Sofonea Shale



The agreement of political parties to postpone Local Government Elections which by law is due by end of April 2010 only demonstrates how easy it could be for Lesotho politicians to be undemocratic. Five years ago, Local Government was highly debated and many of the valid issues raised among others by civil society organizations could not be entertained, elections no matter what was a priority. What is it that has happened in the past five years to warrant postponement of elections? Why are leaders so strong that they could even see beyond the law? These are the same leaders who have been at loggerheads over seats allocation since 2007 general elections to date.

Historicisation of Decentralisation Dispensation

Following almost forty years of highly centralised political administration Lesotho went for local government elections in 2005, a move that was not immune from controversy. The local governance itself was introduced in Lesotho as early as 1943 with its representativeness developing in phases until fully elected in 1960. Representative politics in Lesotho

has grown and taken shape within local government that culminated into the modern government. When Lesotho attained independence it already had local government. The Councils were however abolished by the government in 1968. There are various explanations to the decision of the government. There are those who argue that dissolution was made because people elected to the councils were the supporters of the Basutoland Congress Party (BCP) and resisted whatever came from the central government which was led by the Basotho National Party (BNP). In this way local government could not function and hence it had to be dissolved. In his 1966 report of the '*Structure and Administration of Lesotho*' Willis Cutts indicates that Lesotho was not yet ready for local government and that the councils were an inconvenience to the fragile administration. After the second general elections in 1970, followed by seizure of power and the suspension of the Constitution, local government was never known in Lesotho. Several mechanisms such as *likomiti tsa kabo le kamoho ea mobu*, Village Development Councils (VDCs), Interim Councils (ICs) were used to involve people in governance.

The Local Government Act was promulgated in 1997 following a country wide consultation on local government White Paper. Dr Pontšo Sekatle, the current Minister for Local Government and Chieftainship was part of the team of academia leading the public discussion on the White Paper. It was only after eight years of the law that local government elections were held; 2005 when Dr Sekatle herself was a Minister. There is no doubt that there has been a rough patch towards local government in Lesotho. There was a lot of resistance to local government from political parties and other sectors of society particularly because it involved power and shift from its base. Political parties lifted their ban for their members to participate only 48 hours before elections due to

disagreements with government and the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC). Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN) proposed the alternative way of implementing women quota but not listened to. Civil society organisations were put under a fierce political pressure where some people in government targeted certain individuals in NGOs and labeled them as rebels against government. While it must be admitted that a lot has been done to return matters to normalcy, many people deceived by that turbulence still remain where they were put. Perhaps it is high time for those in government to realise that civil society organizations are their allies not enemies in decentralisation.

Election Postponement and the contentions

Political parties signed a Memorandum on the 10th February this year to the effect that elections for local government should not be held at the time the law stipulates. This will give time to review the law, look into the matters that political parties raised in 2005 and among them the issue of the manner in which reservation of one third seats for women was implemented, so it is heard. In this situation there are two important issues which need to be separated. First is that local government had issues when it was started in 2005, several issues were not addressed. At this time IEC was accused and rightly so for becoming resistant to talks and demonstrating some features of government department. These sentiments were shared with the then IEC chairperson at 'Manthabiseng Convention Centre at the pre Local Government Elections Seminar organised by LCN.

The issues such as the constitutional principle of equal representation was undermined by the disparity between the numbers of voters in councils and electoral divisions, some issues of demarcation such as in *Kuebunyane* where people



have lodged complaints could not be addressed, disagreement on the need for regulations of the law and generally the manner in which the ministry seemed to be reluctant to engage parties. From the civil society it was the manner in which women reservation was to be handled and the other issues which were raised earlier related to the jurisdiction of local councils. Besides, local government has run for the five years and civil society organisations such as Development for Peace Education (DPE) and Transformation Resource Center (TRC) have gone an extra mile to harmonise relations between chiefs and councilors, facilitate dialogue among stakeholders in local government and enhance public participation. This is full of experience and lessons. There is no doubt therefore that there are issues surrounding local government that warrant an immense scrutiny. Second is the manner in which the issues are raised and discussed. As indicated many of these were raised before 2005 elections. It then appeared that 'we were badly pressed that we could not listen; today we postpone elections for the issues raised five years ago to be discussed, why?'

As indicated nothing of the so called issues appealed to government in 2005, in fact it is surprising that government appears so convinced about the women reservation to the extent that it can agree to postponement of elections in the expense of the rule of law. The Local Government Act of 1997 provides that at least one third of seats in councils shall be reserved for women. The Local Government Elections Act of 1998 takes that further by stipulating that every third electoral division shall be reserved for women. The implementation in terms of assigning numbers to the electoral divisions was done by the IEC by applying random sampling techniques. This suggests that the next round and

the third would be done on the basis of the past. It is possible from this scenario to know which electoral divisions in the second local government elections would be reserved for women. The ruling party, Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) could know from this projection that it is going to lose its stalwarts in local government some of whom are key in the district councils if the law is applied as it is. This is the only reason that moves LCD to sponsor such a bizarre decision. It has never been in the mind of the government to review the law or even consider issues raised on local government. Referring to the contentious surrounding local government raised earlier by others is a scapegoat to solve a hidden political equation. As if governance belongs to politicians they sit and sign that the law should not be fulfilled, in fact they say people should not elect when it is time to do that. The next unfortunate step to follow this undemocratic move will be to table law in parliament. If parliament adopts such a law which legalizes the 'Victoria MOU', it will be colluding with those who are **muti-lating our democracy** and will be equally condemned.

Neither government nor IEC can deny knowledge that civil society organisations proposed alternative model to implement women quota in local government. If the reality was to review the women quota, there is no way that civil society could be sidelined. Why go to Tanzania on a so called learning mission without exhausting the issues and alternatives that were genuinely raised at home? It is difficult to comprehend why going to Tanzania comes so easily with such a huge delegation yet by use of technology and other means it could be found that Tanzania reserves seats not territorial demarcations or constituencies. Is it because there is no per diem involved in going to Ha Hoohlo-

the LCN offices? Should it be true that the process is genuine or just a camouflage? Was going to Tanzania part of the bigger scheme to hypnotise politicians and gain their support? As usual political appeasement particularly one that does not go to the people directly is highly costly.

Beyond Mutilation of Democracy

Now that elections have been postponed for review of the law, the process should be inclusive. Out of this bad situation Basotho would benefit if the process to review could be inclusive. In fact what civil society organisations should fight for is the thorough review. The civil society contribution is therefore thus:

1. Implementation of Women Quota-

This can be done through one of these two ways. First we can abolish electoral divisions for the purposes of composition of councils. This means they are kept only for the purposes of elections. The one third seats are reserved for women while the rest are contested by all. Or reserve one third seats first for every council which shall be contested by women only and use the remaining to demarcate electoral divisions which would be contested by all. Inherent to the first option is ability of the system to continue without necessity for bye-elections.

2. Reconceptualise Local Government-

The work of councils is limited by the schedules A and B. Remove this and limit their jurisdiction over all matters. Some activities that community councils cannot avoid such as: HIV and AIDS, sports, burial societies, agriculture, health, education, culture, tourism etc are not part of the schedules. The Gate Way Approach and the Financing of Community Councils by National AIDS Commission through Essential Services Packages are extremely good initiatives but sorry, illegal.

3. Clarify Structural Arrangement-

The role of district administrator in relation to that of the district council secretary should be clarified. Composition of District Planning Unit should be changed to be made of planners. District Development Coordinating Committee should be a formal platform for engagement of all actors in the district not a matter of choice and con-

venience. It is not practically efficient to have heads of departments accountable to DAs while their subordinate staff account to DCSEs.

4. Decentralise Local Government Local Government in Lesotho remains centralized. Give councils money to allocate according to their needs even if some mechanisms could be in place to

ensure utilization monitoring by central government. Let councils have power to discipline secretariats, the same power principal secretaries (PS) have over civil servants. Decentralise responsibilities of all ministries related to local government. In order to deal with the current resistance, the budget for those responsibilities should be directed to councils, people will follow.

Surely with a bloody nose sanity must prevail for our politicians and government to open the process for public participation and give NGOs as well as the people themselves a space to inform the local government.

Budgeting for Development and equitable economic growth:

Analysis of the 2010/11 National Budget

Writes 'Mabulara Tšuene



One of the major roles of civil society in the National Budget is to ensure government accountability and delivery of the public development services as outlined in the very budget and development policies.

Budget formulation should therefore be as consultative and participatory as possible across all the elements of the budget cycle to promote public learning as well as improve social and economic justice through improved policies and resources allocation. In the Lesotho context, engagement of stakeholders including civil society organization is still very remote as budget formulation and implementation is mainly a government domain. More often, civil society organizations and other stakeholders get involved only upon presentation

of the budget speech in Parliament. The entire budget cycle is primarily driven by the government with limited or no access to information to external stakeholders. National Development Policy and Execution.

While the budget is expected to answer social and economic needs of the people, the link between policy and its implementation in the current budget is missing. The current budget is based on the Vision 2020 objectives. This strategy was long term and too broad to enable effective tracking and monitoring of policy priorities. In 2009, Lesotho finalized the (African Peer Review Mechanism) (APRM), which is expected to guide reforms in economic management, governance and ethics, and accountability. It would only be rational that the 2010/11 budget targets achieving some outputs identified by the APRM, to an extent that there is a link to the national long term vision, Vision 2020. In view of this, the 2010/11 budget is essentially made in vacuum, and cannot have traceable linkage to national economic priorities; hence the pronouncement for formulation of the National Development Plan is highly welcome. It is only imperative that the process becomes as consultative and participatory as possible.

The establishment of the National Planning Board is long overdue, thus limiting support and requisite guidance for economic development. While measures are being considered to operationalise the Board,

any amendments to the Constitution relating to the Board must retain its independence. The proposed amendment should also be consultative and open for public participation. The government in this regard should be seen to implement this Constitutional requirement than to amend the law as insinuated in the Budget statement for this year.

The essential good practices for economic management and development should be inherent within the government. Upon drafting of the budget, the decisions on expenditure priorities should be based on performance; budget expenditure should be accounted for and assessed for effectiveness, which is not the case in Lesotho at least for this year. Audit of public funds and expenditure has never been performed since 2006/07, which posits a challenge on the ability of the government to account for expenditure of the public funds. A proposal to establish a statement of affairs on the government funds did not absolve the government of this Constitutional obligation, which should ideally form a basis for subsequent allocation of public funds. Civil society organizations are calling for immediate finalizing of all outstanding annual reports, and to maintain annual audit reports of all government financial reports.

Revenues and expenditure

The theme of the 2010/11 budget, "An aggressive domestic resource mobiliza-

tion and expenditure prioritization is an imperative” is considered a bit ambitious based on the background provided; dwindling national and international economic conditions. The reality presented in the budget is not reflective of expenditure prioritization as other sectors seem to have gained more budget support than important economic and social development sectors. The recurrent budget for 2010/11 proposes a 100% increment to statutory bodies, relative to budgetary decline to other key sectors such as education, agriculture and social protection payments. In which case, statutory allowances and salaries are exempted from belt-tightening, with increase from 2009/10 M11.8 million to M22.9 million in 2010/11. The proposed ‘belt – tightening’ then becomes vague and a hypocritical, the belt-tightening should infact be across the board.

Furthermore, the sources of revenue for Lesotho are traditionally limited to taxes and customs revenue through the Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU). The pronounced decline in the SACU revenues has always been anticipated and the current tax collection is not adequate to sustain the government expenditure. Relative to the proposed deficit, how long would the accumulated government deposits be able to sustain the increasing government expenditure, and how sustainable is domestic public debt (bonds)? In view of the ongoing negotiations at the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the declining international market conditions, it is not clear how the SACU revenues can be expected to increase soon, as such a rigorous assessment of other alternative public revenue sources becomes imperative to reduce Lesotho’s vulnerability.

Social protection and services

Old age pensions have become an integral source of income and livelihoods for the aged, to meet various basic needs as well as support orphaned and vulnerable children. In view of the current economic crisis increment may not be possible, but in real terms this should be reviewed to maintain consistency with inflationary demands and costs for basic needs.

The Child Support Grant, what implications does it have on the cultural safety networks? Who is family in this context?

the M360.00 is not even enough to provide basic needs for household food security needs. Studies by the Action Aid and LVAC reveal that a basic food basket costs M600.00 for a household of 5 people.

The budget does not provide any support towards the disabled. Although this may be encompassed within the vulnerable groups, this in most cases is addressed towards children; a broad definition of this group shall enable provision of a direct support to the disabled.

‘statutory allowances and salaries are exempted from belt-tightening, with increase from 2009/10 M11.8 million to M22.9 million in 2010/11. The proposed ‘belt – tightening’ then becomes vague and a hypocritical, the belt-tightening should infact be across the board.’

HIV and AIDS remains a major threat to economic and social development of the country. The support of the Global Fund and other partners in this area is appreciated. In this case, LCN is happy that at least M50 million of these funds have been allocated towards civil society interventions for the next 2 years. However, the commitment of the government in the fight against the pandemic is undefined; relying on external sources only can be very unpredictable and unreliable. Furthermore, the budget does not mention the poor women who have bailed out government by providing basic health services to HIV and AIDS patients in the villages; there is need for more support at that level.

Education for all should be translated to be accessible, quality and inclusive edu-

cation. Attainments of Millenium Development Goals (MDGs) are necessary for social development, but provision of quality education should be a broader driver than numbers going through the system. While Lesotho seems to be on track to meet this MDG, the quality of education is also going down the drain.

Food security and agricultural development

The government has committed to support development of infrastructure and systems to enhance productivity of the sector, these should be monitored closely to ensure returns. The agricultural sector is identified as an alternative productive economic sector for the country, but this is not reflected in the budgetary allocations of the 2010/11 budget. Only 2% of the budget has been dedicated to the sector, against the 10% recommended by the SADC Declaration. Malawi has improved from being the food case to being the food basket in Southern Africa, and lessons learned from this model could benefit Lesotho from small holder farming to a productive agro industry.

On review, the idea of block farming was a progressive move; however, the implementation process was flawed as no support mechanism was provided for participants. This has in turn resulted in a higher vulnerability on government, through unrecoverable loans and the ordinary villager participating in the scheme, due to low productivity or skewed sharing processes, resulting in higher food insecurity.

Declining agricultural productivity is also due to climate change, adaptability strategies should be pronounced in the budget. Lesotho Council of Non – Governmental Organizations (LCN) as an umbrella organization of civil society organizations and NGOs in Lesotho and as an alternative defacto voice of the poor sees a need to develop Lesotho socially, politically and economically, by promoting public participation in all development processes including assisting in creating a more responsive and equitable budget. And perhaps through inclusive participation, our budget would inevitably respond directly to the people’s needs.

We have come this far!

Writes Tankiso Sephoso

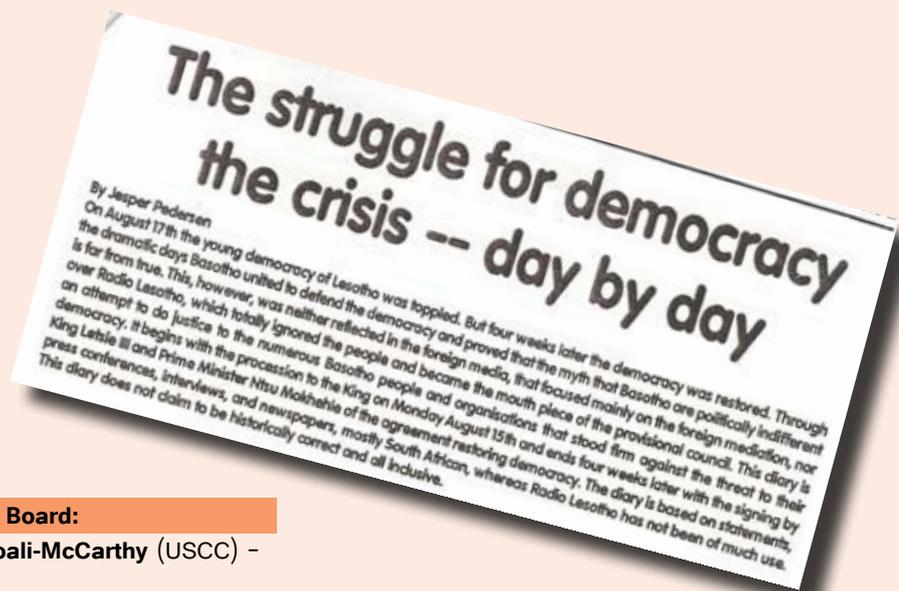
As one of the many efforts we are currently undertaking in celebrating our 20th Anniversary that will culminate into the NGO Week that usually takes place in November, our publication will carry a series of milestones and success stories the Council has both taken and partaken in its envious years of existence of advocating for good governance and democracy among others; but first lets start where everybody else start; in the beginning!

Historical Background of LCN-How LCN came about.

The history of the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisation (LCN) span a period well over 20 years to 1986 when the Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) Coordinating Committee was formed to look into the establishment of the umbrella organization to coordinate the activities of NGOs in Lesotho. In November 1989, delegates from fifty NGOs and 14 observers from Government, representatives from donor agencies and foreign embassies assembled for a three day workshop on the 'Coordination and Collaboration' of NGOs with the objective of offering NGOs and interested role players an opportunity to discuss possibilities of establishing an umbrella organization for all NGOs.

A consensus was reached at the workshop to form a council to be known as the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisation (LCN). The workshop elected an Interim NGO Coordinating Committee from among the delegates, charged with the responsibility to prepare a funding proposal and draft a constitution for the council among other tasks. In May 1990, six months after the election of the Interim Committee, the inaugural Conference for LCN was launched, the conference approved the draft Constitution and the Plan of Action.

The first Executive Committee of LCN was elected.



1990-1992 Board:

Mrs. L. Khoali-McCarthy (USCC) -

President;

Mrs. Lea Molapo (Hlokomela Bana) -

Vice-President;

Mr. Thabang Mokatse (ADF) -

Treasurer;

Mr. Sehoai Santho (NULASA) -

Member;

Mr. R. C. Mokoma (LRCS) - Member;

Mr. J. T. Hlalele (MADWA) - Member;

Mr. B. Bryer (SCF-UK) - Member;

Ms. T. Mofomobe (LNLVIP) - Member;

and

Ms. Mpho Mofolo (FIDA) - Member.

The conference also commissioned the 'Management and Technical Needs Assessment Study of the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations'. The report under the same name was approved by the second Extra-Ordinary General Meeting of the Council in December 1991. A key recommendation of the study, was the establishment of Six Commissions. These commissions include; Agriculture,

Environment and Natural resources (AEN-RC), Democracy and Human Rights Commission, Disaster and Humanitarian Relief, Health and Social Development Commission, Women and Children Economic Justice. The six commissions shape the LCN strategic interventions even today.

Government support and endorsement of the establishment of LCN was evidenced by the presence of 14 delegates from Government as observers in the 1989 workshop and the presence of the Head of Government and the principal secretary, Ministry of Planning at the inaugural meeting of the Council in the May 1990.

A notable characteristic in the evolution of LCN is that although the establishment of the Council was an indigenous

initiative, the continued sustenance of the Council right from its inception has largely depended on external donor support. The situation has not changed much in the twenty years of the organization. This in view remains the greatest challenge to the growth and capacity building needs of LCN. Strengthening democratic governance and the achievement of national development objectives has always required a strong civil society. And LCN's relentless onslaught in championing this objective has not wavered in any way.

Early after its inception, LCN and the Christian Council mobilized support for the return to democracy after the August 17, 1994 announcement on dissolution of Government and Parliament. The period signaled one of the most testing weeks for human rights and democracy NGOs of Lesotho. NGO crisis committee was promptly formed, a statement issued and a press conference held just after the announcement both first of many. LCN became the center where media, individuals and donor organizations called and visited for updates and reliable information on the impending fracas. NGOs not only partook to help facilitate the smooth transition to the democratic rule; apart from participating in voter education (the responsibility that LCN is still performing even in present times), but also sitting on the electoral advisory committee and monitoring the electoral process itself LCN further committed itself to protecting the fragile democracy.

This should explain why this Council voiced very strongly, its objection to the acts that questioned the outcome of the 1993 elections, which NGOs had witnessed and branded free and fair.

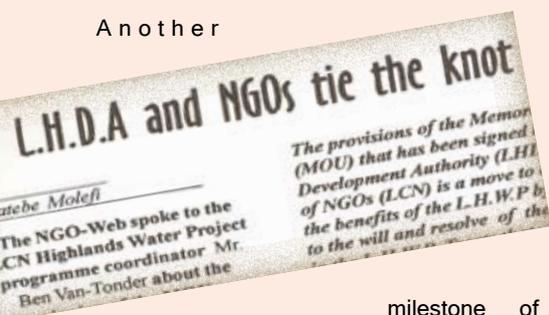
1992-1994 Board Members:

- Mr. Sehoai Santho** (President)
- Mr. Peete Lerotholi** (Vice-President)
- Mrs. M. Ntlhakana** (Acting Treasure)
- Mrs. Vuyelwa Kotelo**
- Mrs. Mathabiso Mosala**
- Mr. RC. Mokoma**
- Mrs 'Maseoehla Molapo**
- Mr. Moses Masemene**
- Mr. Sello Nchafatso** (Executive Director)

The 1992-1994 activities of LCN were dominated by the significant responsibilities that reflected the Council priorities and concerns for the years; The National Drought Emergency Relief Programme that was implemented between June 1992 to May 1994 and the monitoring of the democratisation process in Lesotho in the Pre-Election phase, Election Phase and Post-Election Phase where the fragile democratic political system faced tremendous challenges of instability and ineffective governance.

LCN was significantly involved in the distribution of 23, 485 metric tons of food all over Lesotho where 362, 370 Basotho benefitted from the Relief Programme. The successful involvement of LCN with this Drought Emergency Relief Programme must be seen in the context that it coincided with the process of political democratization in the country that had experienced long years of political polarization. It is the efficiency and political neutrality of NGOs that safeguarded food aid from abuse and the transparency of the very NGOs which ensured a high degree of accountability.

Another



milestone of this era was the pervading Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) project that was spearheaded by LHDA/NGOs Liason Committee that was established primarily to monitor the development impact of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) among the affected



communities.

1994-1996 Board:

- Mr. P.J. Lerotholi** (President)
- Mrs. Thakane Chimombe** (Vice-President)
- Mrs. 'Mampai Lebeko** (Treasure)
- Mrs. Sehloheng Maqelepo**
- Mr. Chabeli j. Ntsoale**
- Dr. Ntsiuoa Rathabaneng**
- Mr. Ben Van Tonder**
- Mr. Lekhethe Rakuaone**
- Mr. Teboho Mothae**

The election of third board 1994-1996 led by the previous Vice-President Mr. Peete J. Lerotholi among other things did continue with significant LCN's role on the on-going promotion of sustainable people driven developmental programmes for the welfare of the affected communities by the LHDA project. Perhaps one of the notable milestones of the board's era is the pivotal role LCN played in the long term negotiated cease fire between the factions of the military This is why LCN had led a peace rally along Kingsway and delivered a petition to the then Prime Minister (PM) Dr. Ntsu Mokhehle during the crisis that turned the two military camps against each other. The commitment should also shed light on why members of this Council, jointly with civil groups, initiated an urgent national conference, following another uprising which led to the assassination of the then Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Selometsi Baholo, in April 1994.

Even when the efforts towards a national conference ended up in a deadlock, NGOs vigilance on the infant democracy continued to have constitutional rule restored, this council spearheaded the pressure and eventually, mediation that succeeded in averting an imminent disaster.

This board further partook in a further con-

solidation of democracy. Facilitation and formation of National Dialogue on Peace, Stability and Development became one of the issues that dominated the agenda for LCN during this era. It was still during this era that LCN became the founding chair of Southern African Development Council of NGOs (SADC-Council of NGOs).

The SADC-Council of NGOs aims at bringing together national umbrella organizations into the mainstream regional development agenda and also to contribute towards the creation and sustenance of enabling environment for NGOs at national and regional levels. The body further represents the interests of civil society in the institutions of SADC thereby creating a forum aimed at sharing best experiences and skills on development issues affecting the region together with encouraging its members to promote and adopt practices that ensure NGOs' accountability and transparency.

The apex of the education crisis in 1995 that culminated in laying-off of tools by teachers followed by a government unilateral formation of the controversial Education Bill left LCN with nothing but to roll up its sleeves and facilitated for the convening of a forum where every sector of the society would discuss and resolve issues pertaining to education. The culture LCN still practices even to this day of providing a platform and forum to discuss issues of national interest in a more open and inclusive manner.

As a non-partisan umbrella body, LCN has a mission to promote national development. To fulfill that, LCN has set itself some principles, among which protecting Lesotho' peace and stability is paramount. That is why LCN is determined to see this ideal translate into long-term economic growth and prosperity for all.

Look out for another dose of LCN milestones in the next issue!!!

Birth of a Giant: Launching of the Lesotho Council of NGOs

Writes Nchafatso Sello, LCN Founding Executive Director

Historical Background

Way back in the 1980s, there had become a discourse among local and international NGO and Civil Society activists, as well as within Government and between development partners alike, around the need for coordinated efforts towards rural, community and grassroots development. Ultimately in 1986, a widely representative NGO Coordinating Committee chaired by the then Country Director of a Lesotho based Unitarian Service Committee of Canada (USCC), Mrs. Lisebo Khoali-McCarthy, was set up. The objective was to deliberate on the possibility and need for establishing an NGO umbrella or coordinating body. The NGO sector was represented by USCC and TRC (Mrs. Judy Gay). Government was represented by the Ministries of Development Planning and of Interior. Development partners were represented by the UNDP (Ms. Marie Korner). The business or private sector was represented by an independent consultant (Mrs. Madeline Williams). This group worked hard and tirelessly for almost four years to come up with data worthy of a widely representative Stakeholder Forum to share and validate their report.



2nd President of LCN
Mr. Sehoai Santho

In 1989, about 50 NGO delegates, 14 observers and 7 Resource Persons converged at a three-day Forum in the capital Maseru, to deliberate on the need for a coordinating NGO umbrella body. The theme of the workshop was entitled “NGO Workshop: A Step Toward the Establishment of an Umbrella Organisation/National Council in Lesotho”. Mr. Tom Tuoane, the then Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development officially opened the workshop. A Keynote Speaker at the forum was the Director of a Zimbabwean based NGO coordinating agency then called VOICE, whose name subsequently changed to Zimbabwe National NGO Coalition. Gamanya was not only an experienced NGO leader in his own right, but was also chairman of the NGOMESA (Non-Governmental Organisations Management for Eastern and Southern Africa).

Gamanya was supplemented by Professor Ted (*Rapeipi*) Jongerious who presented a paper analyzing the weaknesses of NGO Coordinating Bodies in Africa. The latter, together with his co-consultant colleague, Mocheko Sebatane, were to subsequently play a significant supporting role for the LCN leading to and following its establishment. Other resource persons included Mr. Tlelima Hlalele of the UN Association in Lesotho, Dr. Anthony Setšabi of the Lesotho Association of Non-Formal Education (LANFE) all of whose contributions made significant input and informed deliberations at the forum.

Towards Establishment of the LCN- Interim Committee and Founding Board Members

The 1989 forum reached a consensus that Lesotho should work toward establishing an NGO Coalition for coordinating development efforts in the country. An Interim Committee was then elected which saw the reinstatement of the visionary Lisebo Khoali-McCarthy as Chairperson. This

was in recognition of her efforts, dedication, leadership qualities and burning desire to see this idea come to fruition. Members of the Interim Committee included Mrs. A. Limema of the Lesotho Federation of Democratic Unions (LFDU); Mrs. Lea Molapo of Hlokomela Bana; Ms. Theresa Mofomobe of the Lesotho National League of the Visually Impaired Persons (LNLVIP), Ms. Lineo Nketu of Transformation Resource Centre (TRC); Messrs Thabang Mokatse of the African Development Foundation (ADF); K, Senkhane of the Lesotho Planned Parenthood Association (LPPA), and Thabo Makara and G. Maja both alternates for the Private Health Association of Lesotho (PHAL), which subsequently changed its name to CHAL (Christian Health Association of Lesotho).

Lisebo then continued to lead this group of development and civil society activists that worked tirelessly on an agreed mandate. Their tasks included compilation of the forum’s report; development of a funding proposal towards establishment of a Secretariat; selection of a name and development of a logo of the proposed Coalition; drafting of the Constitution based on the recommendations of the workshop; as well as organization of the launching Conference.

The workshop recommendations and resolutions concerned, among many other things, the services and functions of the coalition; the form of cooperation and collaboration between it and Government and Cooperating Development Partners; the relationship with international NGOs; as well as its organizational and management structure. The time-frame within which this six month mandate constituting among other things, hard work of fundraising was to be implemented by May 1990. Within that time, the Draft Constitution was also to be ready for tabling at a Stakeholders’ widely representative NGO Forum.

The founding Convention of the LCN was

finally convened at the same venue from 22 to 23 May 1990. This constituted the First Annual General Conference of the membership. Invitations had been extended to 80 Lesotho registered and based NGOs, 29 observers comprising Heads of Diplomatic and Aid Missions, Government and interested parties. Ultimately participation at the forum constituted 51 NGO Delegates, 19 observers and representatives of National NGO Coalitions from 4 SADC member states. Diplomatic Missions included the British and Canadian High Commissions; Embassies of the Federal Republic of Germany, Sweden and of the United States of America; the Danish and Irish Consulates. Bilateral Agencies included Canada Fund; USAID; DANIDA; SIDA (Swedish International Development Agency). International Development Cooperating and multi-lateral partners featured the EU Delegation, UNDP, UNICEF, and WHO. A strong Government of Lesotho (GOL) delegation, led by the then Government Secretary, Mr. Sekhonyana Bereng included the Ministries of Interior, Youth and Women's Affairs, Health and Social Welfare; Planning and Economic Development; and Labour.

The opening and closing addresses were given respectively by the Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, and the then Head of Government, Major General Justin Lekhanya. The agenda of the two day launching forum included report back of progress to date since November 1989 by the Interim NGO Committee; voting on the name of the Coalition; Constitutional Review and adoption co-facilitated by Ms. Mpho Mofolo of FIDA and Mr. Thabo Makeka of the Association of Lesotho Employers (ALE); Election of the First Executive Committee; sessions on Policy Issues co-facilitated by Ms. Mofomobe (LNLVIP), Mrs. Limema (LFTU) and Messrs Senkhane (LPPA) and M. Davies (ILO/Social

Welfare); Resource Development Strategies by Messrs Victor Mabulu (LAESA), Maja (PHAL), B. Bryer (SCF-UK) and Mrs. Mapetla (LRCS); and on the Plan of Operation by Khoali-McCarthy (USCC), Ron Cadribo (NUL), M. Davis (ILO/Social Welfare), and M. Gardiner (Financial Markets Specialist).

Other Resource Persons, some of whom constituted the Conference Secretariat included Ms. Evelyne Guindon-Zador who effectively became the first Interim Coordinator of the Secretariat; Dr. Frank Baffoe of Baffoe and Associates who also was a designated chairperson of the launching conference; Professor Jongerious, Ms. Tšali Mapetla and Mrs. Makhakhe both of the Ministry of Planning; Mr. Amunda Salm and Ms. 'Mamonyane Moleko both of USCC. The latter was also concurrently Administrative Secretary for the LCN. The three conference volunteers were Ms. Letlamoreng Mosenene, Mrs. Tšeli Tlelai, and Mr. Thabang Motsoasele.

The SADC Regional Coalitions that participated included the Coordinating Assembly of NGOs in Swaziland; Tanzania Council of Social Development; Malawi Council of Social Welfare Services; and VOICE of Zimbabwe.

Funding Agencies that had supported the process from 1989 to the launch in May 1990, included Canada Fund and USCC, both of which had provided grants towards financing of the establishment of the Council; UNDP incurred expenses towards the establishment of the Secretariat; and USAID covered costs towards development and drafting of the Constitution and other incidental costs.

The Launching Conference adopted as the official name of the coalition "Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN), and elected

the First substantive Executive Committee. The first Executive Committee then appointed the author of this article, Mr. N Sello, as its first Executive Director (ED) in September 1990. Subsequent to his appointment, the ED set up the Secretariat and recommended for approval that the



Founding Executive Director of LCN
Mr. Sello Nchafatso

Executive Committee be elevated to a Board of Directors. The Secretariat grew steadily from a one-man show in 1990 to a very strong team of more than a dozen individuals by 1995. The ED had the support of three professionals constituting his Deputy and Director of Programmes, Ms. Palesa Tšoene.; Mrs. 'Makano Morojele who was Director of Human Resource Development.; Mrs. 'Mateboho Green who was the Public Relations Officer Mr. John Bailey, funded by SCF-UK coordinated the Drought Relief Operations, while Mr. Jesper Perdersen of the Danish Volunteer Services (MS-Lesotho) was counterpart to Mrs. Green.

*Celebrating
20 years
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Human rights based approach to HIV and AIDS

can go a long way into curbing discrimination and stigmatization

Writes Sekonyela Mapetja



UNAIDS Publication- 'The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS', states that bringing Human Rights thinking together with sound public policy is of fundamental importance in the field of HIV and AIDS. Though the guidelines support routine testing which the Prevention of Mother To Child Transmission (PMTCT) is part, emphasises that pregnant women can opt in or out of mandatory testing.

The intended HIV and AIDS Bill of does not per say single out PMTCT, however the bill has a clause under Section 8 on Informed Consent. The said clause stipulates exceptions where consent is not sought in HIV testing. Ironically PMTCT is not among the cases, yet practice out there proves otherwise.

While it may be morally correct to protect the rights of the un-born child Public Health Policy on PMTCT must however determine the legal and ethical balance between the adult patient's autonomy and to-be-born child's well being. This can be achieved through approaches that are not coercive, that are mandatory. Studies show that mandatory testing on pregnant women deter most women from the health care services. However since many countries recognize the state's interest in potential life, considerations and priority is put on child's health and rights. Studies have also shown that in many countries the rights of the potential life is given a priority. Lesotho is no exception in this regard. What becomes a worrying factor in Lesotho is the fact that there is no clear policy on PMTCT though. It is more of a political undertaking than a policy. In celebrating National Aids Day in Mahabong two years ago the Minister responsible to Health made a strong political statement that every pregnant woman seeking public health services will be tested in order to prevent transmission from mother to

child. The practicality of the matter is that chances of allowing such women to opt out are very limited. Firstly it could also be understood that opting out puts the health care workers at risk of contracting the disease if they are not aware of the status of the person they are dealing with. However on the other hand Lesotho is classified under a generalized epidemic and as such the UNAIDS guidelines recommends a universal precautions for health workers in such regions.

In other words not a single parent would want their babies born infected with HIV and AIDS but the coercive strategy used in our health care provisions deter more women from accessing the services.

So a big question then becomes; should all pregnant women be forced to test for HIV in order to protect the un-born baby? If men were one day to be pregnant will the mandatory testing succeed? Some of us men do not know and do not want to understand the trauma pregnant women are subjected to. Why does PMTCT target only women? What about the father to the same child, who in some cases infects the partner? Perhaps Human Rights Approach must now be considered in the quest to fight this pandemic.

The Model Law on PMTCT

Chapter II of the Model Law on PMTCT Section 9 stipulates that; Women living with HIV shall have access to counselling, information and services enabling them to make informed and voluntary decisions in matters affecting their health, including decisions about reproduction. And that;

The State shall ensure that programmes on the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV are available to all pregnant women living with HIV. Such programmes shall include psychosocial

support, follow-up services and nutritional support for disadvantaged mothers. The State shall also provide pregnant women living with HIV with relevant and scientifically proven information regarding breastfeeding and alternatives to breastfeeding with the view to reducing the risk of HIV transmission.

What is clear with the law here is that emphasis is put not on testing but on providing services. The section also comes clear on the importance of proper information regarding alternatives to breastfeeding. In this instance the law assumes that there is a room for people not to be decisive on the first visit to the services. Clause 2 of the same section is very clear that voluntary decision in matters affecting ones health is a matter of priority. Therefore the issue of coercive mandatory testing has to be debated openly if we are to achieve optimum results in PMTCT.

Wilful Transmission

Section 16 of Public Health Order No.12 of 1970 has an array of preventive measures of communicable diseases. One of the explicit measures is quarantining people who may in the opinion of the minister responsible for health are likely to spread the disease. The section is very dangerous in the light of HIV and AIDS since it places too much powers on the minister who in



his or her opinion can quarantine those infected with HIV should s/he feel that doing such is the answer to the reduction of the spread of the pandemic. The Order further provides for criminalization of willful transmission, that

'Any person who while suffering from any communicable disease willfully exposes him/herself or others without taking proper precautions against spreading the said disease in any street, public place, shop or public conveyance shall be guilty of an offense.'

In Lesotho the Sexual Offences Act of 2003 criminalizes willful transmission of HIV, as well as consensual sex where one of the partners fails to disclose his/her HIV status. The Act categorises levels of punishment an offender can receive after being found having the virus. The penalties range from whether the perpetrator knew before hand or whether they did not know. What the law does not establish is whether the survivor has been infected or not or whether it is the other way around. As a result of all this the law somewhat perpetrates stigma and discrimination in that the existing criminal laws make ample provision for the prosecution of deliberate transgressors; and that an HIV specific crime would merely serve further to stigmatize the disease with appalling effects especially for women who form the great bulk of those diagnosed.

Why do laws have to know whether the rapist is HIV positive or not? Rape is bad irrespective of what. What messages are being portrayed here? Does this mean that a rape from a HIV sero-negative person is a glorified one? Surely the HIV status must be known for intervention meant for the victim not for sentences purposes. Issues of privacy and confidentiality must also be considered. Isn't it that people especially women would be scared to report rape since they know that should they get to the courts of law and should it be found that the perpetrator is HIV positive the society almost immediately stigmatise them and assumes that they too are HIV positive.

The Work Place Policy on HIV and AIDS

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) is a leading UN Agency in work place pro-

grammes. Its HIV Workplace Policy sets a platform for all other HIV policies worldwide. For any HIV policy to be internationally acclaimed it has to follow a human rights based approach. It is within such understanding that the intended HIV and AIDS Bill must derive its objectives from. The intention of the Act is to provide for the protection of persons living with and affected by HIV and AIDS, for the prevention and control of HIV and AIDS, and related matters. Section 7 (3) of the Bill clearly stipulates that no employer shall require any employee or person seeking employment to undergo HIV testing. While this may be highly commendable in Human Rights milieu what obtains in the ground leaves much to be desired.

Can the recruiting personnel in the national security agencies come clean on this one? Can we be told openly what does it mean to say someone has failed a general medical fitness? What constitute the medical fitness? Does one HIV positive status mean inability to perform duties?

Legal and Ethical issues in Bio- Medical Research

The importance of bio-medical research cannot be over-emphasised. If it were not for it, how would we know the most effectiveness for ARVs and other drugs. While we do not dispute its importance there should be a policy to directly deal with it because without one people would be treated as guinea pigs.

Without proper research agenda our shelves are packed with nicely packed sachets with all enticing labels on how effective they are in improving the people's immune system. Since HIV and AIDS is one of the most stigmatized diseases, people start buying them to boost what they do not know how weak it is. On the other hand streets are filled with concoctions that also have not been tested; people continue to drink at ease under the pretext that such boost ones immune system.

The Rights of the MARP

The rights of the Most At Risk Populations (MARP) in Lesotho should be given the serious attention it deserves. They include Lesbians Gays Bisexual Transsexual and

the prison inmates.

Lesbian and Gay Community

Is it correct to condemn this community? People may justify so supporting their positions with the biblical verses and cultural beliefs but in the light of HIV pandemic it may be suicidal to do so, let alone looking at it from the human rights perspective. Studies have shown that a majority of men who have sex with other men are married men living in families. So if we turn a blind eye what happens to their female partners who do not know that they share them with other men? The scourge of HIV and AIDS knows neither bible nor any culture.

Prison inmates

A lot of research conducted within correctional services premises come to one conclusion in as far as men who have sex with other men is concerned, and that there is a high sexual activity that happens in prison. Odunsi and Nwafor could not have vividly augmented this point in their Law Journal Vol.16; 2006 No.2. The study reveals that there are many reasons associated to sexual activity among the inmates. Their study also reveals that in most cases sex is done through coercion and force especially to young and arriving inmates. The 2003 Ombudsman Report also reveals similar findings. Now, should we bury our heads in the sand and pretend these things do not happen? What about the spread of HIV and AIDS and most importantly what about the spouse of those inmates when they return home? Surely it is time to rethink the strategy and perhaps adopt a more human rights approach to fighting HIV and AIDS before it too late!



Gays and Lesbians Plight needs a broader perspective before condemning them

Writes Hoolo Nyane



Not so long ago the practice of same-sex was not only in the horizons but was also the taboo in our cultural-religious edifice. The practice was detested for being satanic – to be rude – and against Sesotho culture. Very surprisingly, the phenomenon was abhorred even under Roman Dutch legal teachings. Hence, sodomy and other same sex practices were criminalized – even marriage was thought of as ‘marriage between the male and the female’ so much that any purported marriage inimical to this nomenclature would be rejected. It was further rejected as being against public policy and morality. No sooner than later the phenomenon has greeted our shores and we are coerced to consider it in any how we may wish to, but we have to give it a thought.

Regarding international trends as far as same-sex is concerned; sexual partnerships in Lesotho is very imperative, not only because Lesotho is a member of the family of nations but also because it will be very critical in informing our social debate on this subject matter. In so doing, one may be tempted to mention that Lesotho has acceded to a pool if not a sea of international values and norms that holistically sanctify the universality of human dignity. Thus, human dignity is the springboard for all human rights – including the right to sexual orientation. As United

Nations (UN) High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour noted in August 2006 ‘neither the existence of national laws nor the prevalence of custom can ever justify the abuse, attacks, torture and indeed killings that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) persons are subjected to because of who they are or are perceived to be.’

The apparent principle here is that the rejection or denial of the rights of gays and lesbians unashamedly fly into the face of international human rights law whose protection and promotion is under the auspices of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. It is not surprising, however, why the international human rights law could be expected to cherish the rights of LGBTs because it could easily be remembered that human rights as a concept gained currency in human relations as a sequel to the ascendancy of liberalism whose key tenants are freedom, justice, liberty and equality. These were the values that made liberal democracy to triumph in the international political chessboard.

Thus, Lesotho as a member of the family of nations has the moral obligation to toe the line. It should however be remembered that when we become pedantically legalistic, international law is never binding unto the country until it has been nationally statutarised. That notwithstanding, the practice of international relations bears practical testimony to the fact that only countries that deliberately detest human rights will refuse to be bound by the international law on the ground of non-domestication – countries would normally conduct their affairs according to international standards regardless of non-domestication. Coming from that perspective therefore, it becomes apparent that if we were to ask the international law whether to endorse the rights of LGBTs the answer will almost invariably be in the affirmative.

National Legal Infrastructure

This is one area which is very controversial as far as LGBTs are concerned. In the like manner, the proper grasp of the key values of our constitutional edifice is also

particularly imperative. By the way, by constitutional values we don’t mean sections of the constitution – we mean those innate principles that stand behind and explain the purpose for which the black letters of the law were put up. People normally shy away from the constitution because they perceive it as a purely legal document and as such deprive themselves opportunities provided by the constitution in shaping the society we want to live in. The constitution is indeed procedurally a legal document but substantively it is bigger than law. It is the intersection of law, politics, sociology, and religion – even the customs that define and shape the society we are living in.

Consequently, constitution is the muster not only for our legal relations but even for our socio-political and economic interrelations. The constitution of Lesotho is very succinct in its abhorrence of discrimination based on any ground – even sexual orientation. This principle of non-discrimination exists side by side with other entitlements such as equality before the law, freedom of conscience and opinion, right to personal secrecy and many more whose underwriting values are human dignity, equality and liberty. So it may not be exaggeration to deduce from our Bill of Rights that the key values of our constitution are human dignity, equality and liberty. These are the values which have even shaped the way we design our institutions of government – the executive, judicature and the parliament. They have been designed this way to protect, it can be argued, these key values. Thus, regard being had to these key values that undergird our values, it becomes very probable that our constitution may give the green light to LGBTs.

Despite this liberal nature of the constitution, there are certain aspects of our ‘received’ common law which prohibit same-sex relations under other incarnations. For instance, the practice is still understood either as against public morality or perpetration of the obsolete crime of sodomy. In another way, marriage is still conceived, under custom or civil rites, as a union between people of different sexes. As such, the practice of same-sex relationships still

remains on our statutes books as either criminal or a civil wrong, or just a social taboo. This is quite ironical because this would present a situation slightly at tension with the values of the Constitution that espouses right to choice and association among others. Unlike in other countries where these laws have been brought to and have dismally failed a constitutional test, in Lesotho these laws regrettably remain untested. Thus, a picture given by the legal infrastructure is a very discomfoting one whereat the Constitution remains in tension with 'lower' laws. It may be advisable that sooner than later these laws either be reviewed or tested to oil up the friction that exists between them and the Constitution.

The Drama of Religion

One of the strongest oppositions to same-sex relations in Lesotho is that it is 'un-religious'. The church in Lesotho is at pains trying to condemn homosexuality. What cannot be contested though is that the church, at least Christian Church, is guided by the Bible and the teachings of the Bible massively condemn as sinful the practice of same-sex relations. This is the truism on the stilts. Undeniably, the Christian Church is beholden to the Bible. However, it is a matter of common course that certain denominations within the Christian family are already battling with this phenomenon, not even in and amongst the Christians but, rather very surprisingly, within the clergymen.

Be that as it may, we should be very slow to condemn homosexuality using the Bible because we all know for a fact that unlike the Constitution which binds all and sundry, the Bible is only morally binding on those members of our polity who have consciously chosen to be bound as such. There are so many practices that are permitted by one religion but cursed as sinful by the other even in the same Christian family. Hence, the right to religion, belief and conscience are normally understood collectively because they leave it with an individual to make a choice of conscience. If an individual's conscience gives him or her that s/he cannot believe something, it is squarely within his or her rights to so do.

So, if the conscience of same-sex partners gives them that despite the condem-

nation they receive from the Bible (and the Christian Bible for that matter) they proceed with their practice, it is squarely within their natural inalienable rights. While we should all promote the freedom of religion, we should at the same time disallow any religion to be a fortress for the suppression of human rights. Perhaps it may be at this juncture that one may hasten to dispel the normal rhetoric that 'Lesotho is a Christian country' because it is also often used when people want to be religiously hegemonic. It may not be accurate to label Lesotho as such. This country, by its Constitution, accords the freedom of religion, and no exception is given that the word religion means Christianity.

The Threat of Custom

Ever since the public advent of the same-sex relations in Lesotho, they have been visited with serious resistance under the guise of custom particularly the Sesotho custom or culture. It is fairly true that same-sex practices are unknown to Sesotho culture. In fact we should put it much more broadly and say that human rights as they are understood in the modern parlance are pretty alien to the customs and cultures of Basotho. Those virtues such as child rights, women's rights and many more were unknown to Sesotho culture. So, we should be careful when we deal with the right to sexual orientation not to exaggerate and say it is exclusively against custom.

Our society is generally grappling with the phenomenon of human rights so much that as a society living today, we should not hide our suppressive traits under the rubric of culture. It would be very unfair! No generation which has lived, or will live, on this planet has the pre-ordination to prescribe to the succeeding generation how it should live. Every generation has a right to shape its own societal fabric even the values that define that fabric. So, the case of custom as a deterrent for same-sex practice is honestly very weak. If the practice of same sex relationships is cropping up as a new social trait, we should be very slow to adjudge it as against custom outright. Our society will metabolically deal with it and with time we can be able to tell whether it has been assimilated in the ambit of our custom or not.

Conclusion

Having sketched these multifaceted perspectives to the phenomenon, it becomes apparent that the scale of probabilities will tilt more in favor of the rights of LGBTs than against them. Perhaps the lesson we get from the foregoing discussion is that we are geared by our Constitution and international trends towards cherishing the values that open our society rather than those that close it. A closed society has the propensity to be rotten than an open society. Perhaps, this article makes an attempt to get the message of human rights across. Admittedly, the phenomenon of LGBTs is not a simple human rights matter. It is not only inherently complex but it is also naturally controversial.

Even in those countries where it emerged earlier in the history of mankind, it still remains a very hot potato. So, such moments will almost invariably arrive in the growth of any society. History will obviously judge us not in terms of whether or not we admitted such phenomena when they knocked but on how we dealt with them as and when they emerged. For now, one may be very blunt to tell whether the practice of same sex partnerships is right or wrong – only society will in the long run tell. At the same time we should hasten to add that some of the traits that have already emerged from some sections of our society are repressive and foreclose the necessary debate within the society. Further, one may forewarn those who normally hibernate under those grounds such as public policy, culture or religion to condemn LGBTs that those virtues should never be used to suppress the necessary development of human rights as a culture.

At this point one is tempted to take comfort and conclude with the heartbreaking words of the Constitutional Court of South Africa that, 'The impact of discrimination on gays and lesbians is rendered more serious and their vulnerability increased by the fact that they are a political minority not able on their own to use political power to secure favourable legislation for themselves.' Drawing from this instructive quote, we should be a society that is broad-eared enough to listen even to the craziest of ideas.

Good relationships in the team are a powerful motivator

Writes Tankiso Sephoso

“Every little compliment is an emotional deposit, which will grow into an emotional investment. Avoid the destination disease which will allow you to rest on your laurels; team building is a journey not a destination.” Tad Msipa one of the renowned Zimbabwean born capacity builders, told the Lesotho Council of Non-governmental Organisations (LCN) staff in their team building exercise held at the famous Katse Village recently.

The 10-member-staff would have even left the most of gender activists green with envy as the most balanced and gender sensitive dream team. The team left on Monday 8th February for the five-day session to commence one of the most invigorating exercises aimed at recharging the secretariat juggernaut in order to carry out the Council's assignments diligently. Between 2009 and 2010, LCN both lost and engaged new staff members at the Council. Most of the new arrivals are expected to facilitate implementation of the grants management, while others filled

some existing vacancies within finance and programs management units. The major gap has been realized in the programs management unit. It was against this background that the council deemed it necessary to undertake a team building program that would build staff morale and confidence, as well as facilitate responsibility sharing to enable achievements of LCN strategic objectives. Besides the overall objective for this activity of enhancing performance of the Council, there were specific objectives such as to facilitate development and ownership of an annual operational plan among the members of the board and staff members, to rekindle commitment and operational expectations from staff members and Board of Directors with the following expected outputs; a team that has a joint vision and outlook for enhanced performance, a clear understanding of the LCN vision, objectives and projects and a comprehensive work plan and budget that can be used at the Council for planning, implementation and reporting of various programs at the

Council.

The better part of the five-day session was devoted to the importance of working as a unit at the Council. It was stressed that in as much as the Council is comprised of quiet diverse individuals with various technical expertise it was therefore imperative that all these knowledge be used effectively to attain the objectives of the Council. Thus to accomplish large goals and meet high standards, we need to work together. Effective team building development and exercises bring together a group of people from diverse backgrounds, with different skill sets, and often competing interests, so that they cooperate and maximize their effort, productivity, and success.

Importance of Team building:

Team building as a process of establishing and developing a greater sense of cooperation and trust between team members includes an interactive exercises, team assessments, and group discussions that en-





able groups to cultivate the greater sense of teamwork. The proper functioning and successful development of an organization largely depends on teamwork efficiency. Good team relationships can make it into a productive group with great morale and motivation. Therefore, at Katse the staff also employed the team building activities that were aimed at improving communication and collaboration skills within and among staff members. Generally team activities help the team in self-assessment which is very important for improving the ways of further collaboration within the group. Team activities allow for defining



Football exercise

the team's current strengths and weaknesses, identifying any gap between the desired state and the actual state, and designing a gap-closure strategy.

The staff indeed engaged in a number of activities that saw two teams emerging to log horns against each other on both netball and football five-a-side respectively. Netball team led by Ms Lindiwe Seotsanyane comprised of Mr. Tankiso Sephoso, Mrs. 'Mabulara Tšuene, Mr. Refiloe Mpholo, and Ms Ntšitsa Mahloane could have easily sailed through like hot knife through butter over their rivals had it not been through last minute equalising gasps

that finally redeemed the sinking ship that comprised of Mr. Sekonyela Mapetja, Mrs. Puleng Mokhothu, Mr. Rethabile Nonkonane, Ms. 'Mabolaie Mohasi and Mr. Silas 'Mote respectively.

The football match between the two rivals was much the same with the former's torrent of first half

goals stealing the show although the sympathy time added by the consultant-turned referee Mr. Msipa enabled the later to take the lead until the eventual final whistle. The game had its own highlights that included several spy-twos from both sides.

Of all the games undertaken in the fresh atmosphere of Katse Dam, a tug of war produced most injuries that caused 'doctors in the making' of Mr. 'Mote and Ms. Mahloane's overtime make Haiti mission appear like a walk in the park, compared to the casualties the two members of the finance unit had to deal with.

As team building has to do with cooperation, bridge building, planning, and effective use of resources, the benefits team building activities may bring are countless: improvement in planning skills, problem solving, decision making, time management, friendly competition, personal confidence and morale.

The last two days reserved for planning session with the arrival of the board members were interestingly exigent. It appeared the Council had bitten more than it could chew for such a minimal time as most of the finishing touches of the planning session had to be applied on arrival at the office the following week.

And if there is one thing the team had taken from the capacity building endeavour is that healthy communication habits and collaboration skills have to be somehow developed and sustained. Sharing emotions is the principle of interpersonal communication.

The entertaining team games assisted in developing communication skills. People learn to handle arguments, support one

another, discuss and make decisions together so that everyone feels an equal member of the team through communication. Facing common challenges and the sense of achievement as the result of team work helps to build a positive mood in the team.

Moreover, challenges help to see the people you work with in a new light. And the more you know the person you work with, the easier it is to understand them, tolerate their differences and appreciate their attitudes or at least learn how to avoid meaningless conflict.

If therefore lessons learned from this exercise do not motivate the Council staff to perform better nothing may as well never will.



Tug of war



Group discussion

ADAAL in a mission to conserve the environment and reduction of substance abuse Mount Moorosi

Writes Mphonyane Mofokeng



Anti-Drug Abuse Association of Lesotho (ADAAL) is implementing an environmental protection project in Mount Moorosi in collaboration with the communities of Mount Moorosi through a structure called "KHOTLA MORENENG". Khotla Moreneng is community based body that is comprised of various role players and stakeholders that include Member of Parliament (MP), councilors, Business people in the area, herdsman, kopanang banna, police, and other departments of government at the district level. Khotla Moreneng was established as coordinating body to all community development activities in Mount Moorosi.

The project is funded by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through an agreement with the United Nations Office of Project Services (UNOPS) in connection with a project financed by the Global Environment Facility/ Small Grants Programme (GEF/SGP).

Mount Moorosi is a historical mountain rich in both natural and cultural heritage, found in the district of Quthing. The natural vegetation is predominantly cape aloe which is harvested for production of cosmetics, health drinks and other herbal remedies; and some olive trees. Caves with Bushmen paintings, some ruins and graves and bullet shells from historical wars are also found in the mountain. Other natural resources include water sources, some wild animals and birds. All these make this mountain a tourist attraction site which is enjoyed freely. Despite being under protection like all aloes, cape aloe is harvested and sold to companies that process it without ploughing back into the community. The above project is meant to develop some parts of Mokotjomela Community Council through protection of natural resources focusing mainly on cape aloe and other natural resources that may be found in the project area.

The overall objective of this project is to enhance the livelihoods of the communities of Mount Moorosi through the protection,

conservation and sustainable utilization of local biodiversity, especially the Aloe ferox. The objectives of this project are:

- To put in place a plan for the protection of the area's indigenous plants, in particular, the local aloe (Aloe ferox).
- To establish a nursery in Mount Moorosi for the production of Aloe ferox seedlings and those of other indigenous plants under threat found in the area.
- To empower and capacitate,



through different types of training, the people of Mount Moorosi to be able to protect and conserve, manage and utilize the Aloe ferox in a sustainable manner.

Khotla Moreneng and ADAAL hold monthly meetings to facilitate the proper implementation of this project. A study tour to Katse Botanical Garden was undertaken by 18 members of Khotla Moreneng including the District Environmental Officer and the Forestry Officer working in Mount Moorosi for a comprehensive training skills transfer and mentoring in order to rehabilitate the nursery.

The nursery which had been unattended for years was allocated to ADAAL by the Forestry Office in Quthing. The communities of Mount Moorosi started clearing and

cleaning the nursery in January and this nursery will be used by Khotla Moreneng to prepare aloe seedlings which will be planted at the Moorosi Mountain as a means of replacing that which will be harvested for sale. Khotla Moreneng will also sell the seedlings to interested persons.

ADAAL and Khotla Moreneng are now working on the publicity of the project and will be convening several public gather-

ings for the communities and herd boys in the some of the villages of Mount Moorosi starting from March this year. There will be meetings with Mokotjomela Council and the Environment Office of Quthing to discuss the legal aspects of protecting Mount Moorosi. Officers from Katse Botanical Garden will visit Khotla Moreneng to assess the nursery and advice appropriately so that the nursery can take off.

ADAAL's relentless quest for a better Mount Moorosi is further manifested by the second project the organization is engaged with, with the Mokotjomela Environmental Protection and Development Project. ADAAL has started working in schools to implement a Schools Training on HIV/AIDS and Drugs Programme funded by PEPFAR through Pact. Maseribane High



An aloe nursery allocated to ADAAL by the Forestry office in Quthing

School is one of the schools in which the project has started. Peer Education is one method employed for promoting abstinence and faithfulness among school children. ADAAL also secured funding from National Aids Commission (NAC) through the umbrella body Lesotho Council of Non-governmental Organisations (LCN) to support the schools programme by addressing and targeting the out-of-school youth.

In Mount Moorosi, Chief Thesele 'Maseribane has allocated his buildings to ca

ter for youth activities where ADAAL and Khotla Moreneng have started a 'Youth Centre' with the assistance of the US Peace Cop assigned to ADAAL and working in Mount Moorosi. The youth centre is meant to respond to the lack of entertainment options in the community where young men and women spend a majority of their time idle and or looking for small jobs to do. It is the thinking of ADAAL and Peace Corp Volunteers (PCV) together with Khotla Moreneng for development of Mount Moorosi about the creation of a safe space for creative activity and scho-

lasticism which will provide youth with a holistic approach to capacity building. Thus the components of the youth center will include arts and crafts, counselling and peer support, health education, media resources, sporting activities, environmental activities, drama, a resource centre and computer training.

ADAAL and Khotla Moreneng have started raising funds for the renovation of the building to be able to cater for this activities. At present the building has been painted and some information is put up for youth to read. This centre is presently benefiting both out-of school and in-school youth including young people who are married.

Observations and experiences in working with these young people are that they can do a lot of work voluntarily when they know how they will benefit from their work.

Earlier this year, ADAAL conducted two training workshops for out of school youth of Quthing, Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek. In Quthing Masitise, the training was from the 1st - 3rd of February, while Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek came together at Mohale's Hoek IEMS from the 1st - 3rd of March 2010 whereby 67 youth were trained. And the participation by the youth was very good.

ADAAL Announcements

ADAAL (Anti-Drug Association of Lesotho)

1.

EVENT: ADAAL AGM

DATE: 30TH APRIL 2010

PLACE: TO BE ANNOUNCED

WHERE: MASERU

CONTACT: LETHOLETSENG SELAI CHAIRPERSON/
MAMAKOLOI KANETSI SECRETARY

2.

EVENT: OUT OF SCHOOL GROUP
DISCUSSIONS MEETINGS

DATE: EVERY WEDNESDAY

PLACE: HA MAPOTSANE

WHERE: MOHALE'S HOEK

CONTACT: MPHONYANE MOFOKENG EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR

Why you must always monitor and evaluate your programmes

Writes Refiloe Mpholo

'If you don't care about how well you are doing or about what impact you are having in addressing any particular problem, why bother to do it at all?' Until you monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of your work, against both your action and strategic plans you may as well never bother at all. These are some of the famously encouraging words for anyone undertaking a project.

In order for monitoring and evaluation to be really valuable, organizations do need to have planned well. Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) of programmes designed to improve health and promote development are old news. Basically, M&E systems track what is being done and whether the programme is making a difference. M&E systems allow organizations to calculate how to allocate resources to achieve the best overall result. An organization may want to implement a project aimed at strengthening the civil society organizations to respond better to HIV and AIDS impact, such organisation will need to develop a results framework or performance framework to track and be sure that it is in the right direction with its implementation. The results framework will have a clear set of indicators (Outputs, Outcomes and Impact indicators) that will be the guiding tools for that organization to have a direction.

So, then what is this "Monitoring and evaluation"? M&E is sometimes regarded as if it is only one thing, monitoring and evaluation are, in fact, two distinct sets of organizational activities, related but not identical.

CIVICUS World Alliance for Citizen Participation; an international organization that among others deals with monitoring and evaluation defines **Monitoring** is the systematic collection and analysis of informa-

tion as a project progresses. It is aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of a project or organization. It is based on targets set and activities planned during the planning phases of work. It helps to keep the work on track, and can let the project management know when things are going wrong. If done properly, it is an invaluable tool for good management, and it provides a useful base for evaluation. Monitoring helps to determine whether the resources you have available are sufficient and are being well used, whether the capacity you have is sufficient and appropriate, and whether you are doing what you planned to do.

Evaluation is the comparison of actual project impacts against the agreed strategic plans. It looks at what you set out to do, at what you have accomplished, and how you accomplished it. It can be formative (taking place during the life of a project or organization, with the intention of improving the strategy or way of functioning of the project or organization). It

can also be summative (drawing learnings from a completed project or an organization that is no longer functioning).

It is not enough for organizations' communicators to simply tell the world about the great work their organization does. Today organizations are expected to demonstrate their impact. Knowing how well your organization performs will help it to improve, develop, inspire and influence the right people.

It is high time that non-governmental organizations, private sector and line ministries and NGOs adopt a concept of Results Based Management (RBM), which is one of the core concepts of monitoring and evaluation that can help organizations to demonstrate results. Results -based management can mean different things to different people. A simple explanation is that RBM is a broad management strategy aimed at changing the way institutions operate, by improving performance, programmatic focus and delivery. It reflects



the way an organization applies processes and resources to achieve interventions targeted at commonly agreed results.

Results-based management involves and requires a team-based approach to focus on achieving defined and measurable results and impact. It is designed to improve delivery and strengthen management effectiveness, efficiency and accountability.

RBM helps to move the focus of programming, managing and decision-making from inputs and processes to the objectives to be met. At the planning stage it ensures that there is a necessary and sufficient sum of the interventions to achieve an expected result. During the implementation stage RBM helps to ensure and monitor that all available financial and human resources continue to support the intended results.

To maximize relevance, the RBM approach must be applied, without exceptions, to all organizational units and programmes. Each is expected to define anticipated results for its own work, which in an aggregative manner contributes to the achievement of the overall or high-level expected outcomes for the organization as a whole, irrespective of the scale, volume or com-



plexity involved.

RBM seeks to overcome what M&E practitioners normally call the 'activity trap', i.e. getting so involved in the nitty-gritty of day-to-day activities that the ultimate purpose or objectives are being forgotten.

This problem is pervasive in many organizations: project/programme managers frequently describe the expected results of their project/programme as "We provide policy advice to partners", "We train journalists for the promotion of freedom of expression", "We do research in the field of fresh water management focusing more on the type of activities undertaken rather

than on the ultimate changes that these activities are supposed to induce, especially in relation to a certain group of beneficiaries in some cases.

An emphasis on results requires more than the adoption of new administrative and operational systems, it needs above all a performance-oriented management culture that supports and encourages the use of new management approaches. While from an institutional point of view, the primordial purpose of the RBM approach is to generate and use performance information for accountability reporting to external stakeholders and for decision-making, the first beneficiaries are the managers themselves. They will have

much more control over the activities they are responsible for, be in a better position to take well-informed decisions, be able to learn from their successes or failures and to share this experience with their colleagues and all other stakeholders.

In the next issue let us discuss the "twelve components of a functional M&E system"



The Infamous Land administration reform in Lesotho: Where are the poor?

Writes 'Mabolae Mohasi



Dr. 'Matumelo Ponto' Sekatle

Minister of Local Government & Chieftainship, chief proponent of the Land Bill 2009

Administration of land in Lesotho has been done both under the customary land tenure system as provided for under the Laws of Lerotholi on the one hand and the Land Act 1979 as amended on the other. The customary land tenure system was one applicable in the rural areas where initially, land was administered in the traditional way by the chiefs having the allocating powers. This however shifted over time with the establishment of the land allocating authorities that diluted the absolute powers that the Chiefs had in matters of land allocation. This kind of system ideally suited the ways of living as well as the traditions of the Basotho people.

The land administration in Lesotho has not been without flows, which included amongst others issues of mal-administration with regard to the allocation of land, issues of corrupt practices, and tedious procedures in registering property, agricultural land that lay dormant for years, weak law enforcement mechanisms which resulted in unplanned settlements. It was apparent therefore that there was need to

reform the system in order to best address the needs and concerns of the Basotho people. The works of Mapetla and Ramolibeli Commissions in the 1980s and 1990s respectively come to mind as some of the very initial efforts that were embarked upon towards the land administration reform. There were also two Land Bills that were drafted, namely, the Land Bill 2004 and the current Land Bill of 2009, both of which were meant to address the challenges observed in Lesotho' land administration.

Now, the question then becomes whether the Land Bill 2009, which is now at a very advanced stage of becoming an Act of parliament is going to be ideal in solving the challenges faced with the current land administration. While it is admitted that reforms were necessary, the civil society considers the approach taken by the current Land Bill 2009 not to be in the interests of the Basotho people. Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN) engaged in a lot of advocacy, highlighting short-comings transpiring from the Bill as observed by NGOs. While a number of issues emerged

as quite problematic with this Bill, there were major issues that directly form the core of LCN's concern with the Bill.

Public consultations

Most democratic states consider thorough and extensive public consultations a norm on issues of national debate. It is through these consultations that the people are able to participate in the decision making processes hence making democratic rules a reality. The right to participate in government which in itself includes the right to decision making processes is embedded in the Constitution of Lesotho under Article 20. It is on the basis of this that the people are important not only on the voting day, but are important throughout the entire political discourse.

The importance of the process of land reform cannot be over emphasized and by its nature calls for the inclusive process at all levels where Basotho are able to participate in the development of the new land administration processes. It still baffles even to this day why the government of Lesotho saw no value in thorough public consultations being important in informing the Bill itself. For them, the work done by the Mapetla and Ramolibeli Commissions, to some extent the regional consultations appear not to be enough in gathering the views of the people on the Bill. All these processes are not deemed enough to support the view that adequate consultations were made. Firstly, the number of people reached by Ramolibeli Commission was just too small to be representative of the views of Basotho. The Commission was able to gather the views of about 27,346 of almost 2 million in this country. The figure is clearly low, particularly when dealing with matters of land. Secondly, the regional consultations done on the current Bill would also not suffice to pass the test of real consultations. To start with, the people who took part in such consultations that were held at Maseru National Convention Center to-

wards the end of 2009, were public officials from offices such as the Master of the High Court, District Administrators, a Local Councillors and a few civil society organisations. Can it really be argued that all these people had mandates and views from the people at the grassroots level? The mere fact that these were done at the regional level limited the quality and depth of the consultations.

Most people still remain in the dark on land reform process in this country. The people have expressed their concerns particularly on consultations on various fora including public gatherings and radio programmes as observed by LCN and some other NGOs. Land administration reform remains one of the few avenues that the country can properly explore in its efforts to eradicate the extreme poverty that many Basotho people are facing hence the need to give this process a very careful thought with the interests of the Basotho people at heart. The country cannot afford to speed passing this Bill on the basis of meeting the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) project time lines.

Abolishment of the customary land tenure system

The Bill aims at abolishing the customary land tenure system that Basotho are used to and takes the direction of treating land as a mere commodity with an economic value and nothing else. As a matter of fact, the people relate to land in a deeper sense which gnaws down on the beliefs and values of Basotho. For others, they connect with their ancestors through the land that they inherited from them and therefore feel the connection while still in occupation of such property. While this may seem to be of little significance, it actually is very important to the Basotho people. The customary land tenure system is able to accommodate the poor in that it is quite flexible due to the informal land holding where people are able to easily adjust land holding to suit their livelihood needs and purposes. With the

current shift, the importance of this kind of land holding is undermined much to the peril of the people in the rural areas, who happen to form the greatest part of the poverty stricken population of Lesotho. LCN has always therefore strongly advocated for customary land holding or land tenure to be left intact even as changes are made with regard to land holding.

Foreign land holding

The Bill introduces a new development of wantonly opening up land holding to foreigners. While foreign land holding may have been provided for under the Land Act 1979 as amended, it was restrictive in that only companies with Basotho as majority shareholders could have the right to hold the title to land. The current Bill now seems to be opening up land holding to foreigners in a less restricted manner. The greatest fear on this development is that Basotho are going to face the greatest competition from the foreigners and chances are that most Basotho will not be in a position to compete financially with these foreign investors. This is therefore seen as a threat not only to the people of Lesotho but the very ones that live in abject poverty. Time may have been extended before tabling the Bill in parliament for the second time, but again no efforts can be claimed by the government to ensure proper consultations. The extension has therefore served no purpose.

While it may be acknowledged that the latest edition of the Bill comes with a number of amendments, some issues still remain to be re-visited.

An amendment has been made to the effect that there should at least be 20% shareholding by the Basotho citizens before a foreign enterprise can become eligible to hold title to land, something which the initial draft of the Bill did not require. This development is commendable but we should maintain the minimum of 51% shareholding by Basotho citizens as espoused by Land Act 1979 as amended.

The roles of the Chiefs in matters relating to land still remain unclear even in the latest draft. The initial draft completely made no mention of Chiefs on land matters and this was seen as a big omission as chiefs still remain important in the eyes of the Basotho people, particularly in rural areas. The latest draft of the Bill simply says that the chiefs shall be consulted by the allocating authorities in respective areas but it however remains unclear if these consultations are merely for purposes of informing, in which case the chiefs' views may or may not be considered.

The latest Bill still maintains some powers of the minister on matters of land administration. This has always been a concern in the initial draft that land administration should be free from political influence as much as possible. This therefore still remains Achilles heel of the Bill. With the establishment of the Land Administration Authority, the powers that are given to the Minister should be given to neutral body like the Authority.

Chances are very high that the Bill is likely to pass into an Act of Parliament in its current form. The Bill has been discussed in the National Assembly and will soon pass to the Upper House of Parliament. However, even if the Upper House were to have objections with the passing of the Bill, according to Parliamentary regulations the National Assembly has the powers to exercise its discretion whether or not to consider the views expressed by the Upper House.

The Lesotho Council of NGOs once again wishes to reiterate that land in Lesotho as in many countries is of extreme importance and any move to make changes in its administration should be an inclusive journey that considers at least thorough representative views of Basotho.

RESOLUTIONS

for 20th Annual General meeting 3rd December 2009



EDUCATION

We resolve to work towards transforming educational system that reflects societal needs: accessibility, quality, affordability, democratic, inclusive of Basotho and also that enforces good management practices.

LAND BILL

We resolve to campaign for the delay of the Land Bill into Act to enable a more comprehensive and inclusive public participation and further oppose foreign land-holding and dispossession of land from the poor due to inability to utilise land.

CLIMATE CHANGE

We resolve to mobilise and raise public awareness on the effects of climate change on development, thus promoting climate adaptability. We further resolve to be part of the global campaign for the reduction of emissions that affect the ozone layer.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE

We resolve to promote women and other vulnerable groups to effectively and duly participate in local governance.

We resolve to support women participation not only in numbers but also in duties allocated to them.

We further support women participation in local governance, without discriminating men.

We support meaningful decentralization in its truest form of resources and decision making to the Community Councils for improved public services delivery.

HIV and AIDS

We resolve to prioritise on HIV and AIDS mitigating efforts to be more evidence and research based in order to achieve stronger impact against the pandemic.

RESOURCE MOBILISATION

We resolve that LCN should support members' initiatives on resource mobilisation. And LCN should further encourage and facilitate for capacity building for members to strengthen their competitiveness to accessing donor and other funding.

GAYS AND LESBIANS

We resolve to stop condemning and discourage efforts to condemn gays and lesbians, while the Council should promote a debate and thorough learning exercise on the human rights position on Gays and Lesbians. We again resolve to encourage all efforts that take a human rights position and consideration on the issue of Gays and Lesbians.

NATIONAL PLANNING BOARD

Council should lobby and push for the appointment of members of the National Planning Board.

Government should be lobbied, notified and encouraged to respect the rule of law, especially on the formulation of the National Planning Board as well as timeous and auditing and publishing of the government financial statements as required by law.

NETWORK

LCN should take strong measures against organizations that come into direct conflict and competition with LCN in coordination of member NGOs and their activities.

Current LCN Governing Structure

Board Members:

President: **Mr. Lira Theko**

Vice President: **Mr. Molefi Mafanti**

Treasurer: **Mrs. Thusoana Ntlama**

Democracy and Human Rights Commissioner: **Mr. Khotso Lehloka**

Health and Social Development Commissioner: **Mr. Lemohang Molibeli**

Disaster and Humanitarian Relief Commissioner: **Mrs. 'Matseko Thulo**

Women and Children Commissioner: **Ms. Ntsoaki Khosi**

Agriculture, Environment and Natural Resources Commissioner: **Mr. Sechaba Mokhameleli**

Economic Justice Commissioner: **Mr. Daniel Maraisane**

Current Staff:

Executive Director- Vacant

Programs Director: **Mrs. 'Mabulara Ts'uene**

Grants Manager: **Mr. Sekonyela Mapetja**

Finance and Administration Manager: **Mr. Silas 'Mote**

Monitoring and Evaluation officer: **Mr. Refiloe Mpholo**

Accountant: **Mrs. Puleng Mokhothu**

Finance Officer: **Ms. Nts'itsa Mahloane**

Capacity Building Officer: **Mr. Rethabile Nonkonane**

Programs Assistant: **Ms. Lindiwe Seotsanyana**

Democracy and Human Rights Coordinator: **Ms. 'Mabolae Mohasi**

Information and Communications: **Mr. Tankiso Sephoso**

We are happy to announce that the Lesotho Council of NGOs has been nominated as the Principal Recipient of the Global Fund Round 8 Grants, on behalf of the civil society and private sector.

The grant will contribute in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Lesotho.

It is also focused on the following programs,

- Community outreach and schools
- Community systems strengthening
- Workplace programs
- Strengthening national policy frameworks
- Stigma reduction.

The grant will be implemented in five years, in two phases. LCN has signed a grant amounting to approximately USD \$6.8 million for the phase 1, 2010-2012.

Look out for our NEW look website: www.lcn.org.ls

Celebrating
20 years
of successful Civil Society movement