

Press Release

Launch of three Civil Society projects funded under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights



Maseru, 10 August 2016

Introduction

Three local civil society organisations, namely; Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organisations (LCN), Transformation Resource Centre (TRC) and Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA) have received funding from the European Union (EU) to carry out projects on democratisation and human rights in Lesotho.

The projects will run for an average of two years and aim at addressing some of the most pressing challenges of democratisation and human rights in Lesotho. These include public education on rights and the institutionalisation of human rights culture, protection of the rights of marginalised members of society, and strengthening of civil society participation and capacity building in human rights matters.

The projects are

- **LCN** “Civil Society Engagement towards fostering the Rule of Law and Accountability”.
- **WLSA** “Real talk real action: preventing and eliminating early marriages, discrimination on inheritance and violence against LGBTI persons as a strategy to attain gender equality in Lesotho”.
- **TRC** “Advocacy for the establishment and governance of a fully-fledged Human Rights Commission”.

These NGOs are among those who have been on the forefront of promoting and protecting human rights in Lesotho.

The projects have received funding under the EU's 'European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights' is a key financial mechanism designed to assist in the capacity, operation and promotion of organisations around the world working on issues of democracy, accountability, human rights and good governance; and to promote and entrench partnerships that will build and sustain the shared values of the European Union and all democratic nations around the world.

Overall aim

The aim of this event hosted by the three implementing organisations is to launch the implementation of three EU funded projects.

Objectives

- To publicise the projects
- To begin a conversation and reflections on the state of Human Rights in Lesotho.
- To present expert opinion on issues surrounding human rights and civil society 's engagement in fostering the rule of law

The event:

The launch occasion includes presentations of the above projects by Civil Society Organisation, key addresses delivered by H.E. Ambassador of the European Union, Dr. Michael Doyle. Hon. Minister of Law, Constitutional Affairs and Human Rights, as well as Her Ladyship the Chief Justice of Lesotho.

Participants/Guests

This activity targets key national human rights stakeholders, including

- **Parliament** (the National Assembly Portfolio Committee on Law and Public Safety, Senate Portfolio Committee of Law)
- **Members of the Executive** (Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Law, Constitutional Affairs and Human Rights)
- **Members of the Judiciary** (Chief Justice, legal practitioners)
- **National and International Civil Society Organisations and NGOs**
- **Diplomatic representatives** (locally-based embassies and consulates)
- **State security Institutions** (National Security Services, Lesotho Defence Force, Lesotho Correctional Services)
- **Oversight and democracy-supporting institutions** (Police Complaints Authority, Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences, Office of the Ombudsman)
- **Academics**
- **Media**