

BRIEF NOTE ON COUNTRY OFFICE GENDER EQUALITY RESULTS



Recipients of training & mentorship for women-led enterprises under the #HerEmpire Initiative

GOVERNANCE

Associations for women, youth and persons with disabilities became active players and allies in shaping the direction of national reforms. The reforms include constitutional, security sector, parliamentary and judiciary reforms, targeted at finding lasting solutions to political and security challenges in the Kingdom. The key avenues for an inclusive national reforms process have been UNDP-supported in-district consultations, National Leaders Forums, and presentations of position papers to the National Dialogue Planning Committee (NDPC), which was established in August 2018. UNDP facilitated the Lesotho National Youth Conference that was convened in Maseru and came up with the position paper of the youth on the reform process and content. Similarly, relevant government ministries and CSOs convened the National Women's Conference on 23-24 October 2018, which came up with the Basotho Women's Common Position on the Lesotho We Want. The Lesotho Federation of Organizations of the Disabled (LNFOD) also developed the position paper of the persons with disabilities. All these sectoral position papers expressing the views of various interest groups were submitted to the NDPC, and integrated into national policy documents that can be found via: [Reforms – Government Of Lesotho \(www.gov.ls\)](http://www.gov.ls)

The legitimacy and inclusivity of national reforms coordination committees was strengthened by placing 4 women leaders at the center of oversight functions. Of the 9 chairpersons of the technical committees under the National Reforms Authority (NRA), 5 are males and 4 females. The committees include: the constitutional reforms committee, (b) the parliamentary reforms committee, (c) the security sector reforms committee, (d) justice sector reforms committee, (e) economic sector reforms committee, (f) public sector reforms committee, (g) media sector reforms committee, (h) rules and ethics committee and (i) budget committee.

Women's presence on these committees improved gender responsiveness in the operations and oversight functions of the NRA. Part of the operations in 2021 for the NRA, was a stakeholder engagement meeting to discuss increasing the number of parliamentary seats elected through proportional representation, which targeted formulating legal proposals on increasing the representation of women and members of other underrepresented groups.

Gender issues were integrated into the dossier of 90 national reforms proposals submitted to parliament in 2022 and in the subsequent Bills. Gender issues pertaining to improving the status of women in security services, financing the implementation of laws against gender-based violence, gender-responsive electoral reforms and guidelines, were integrated into the dossier of 90 proposals submitted by NRA, on 11th April 2022, to the Minister of Justice and Law, under Section 8 (1) (h) of the NRA Act. This has facilitated the mainstreaming of gender equality provisions into pending bills.

Sixty percent (60%) of the 49 proposed amendments in the Omnibus bill are focused on gender equality. Other gender-sensitive bills include the Tenth Amendment of the Constitution Bill, 2022, the National Electoral Act Amendment Bill, 2022, and the National Assembly Electoral Act Bill, 2022. Once passed into law, women's rights will be effectively guaranteed in line with the International Convention on all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and the SADC Gender Protocol (2017).

Dialogues on security sector reforms have nurtured partnerships and policy mechanisms for advancing gender equality. Through workshop events and public consultations at national and district level, the capacity of duty-bearers to mainstream gender equality and human rights into national security sector reforms strategies has been enhanced. The issues of reducing recidivism amongst men, gender parity amongst staff in the security sector, standards on monitoring complaints, investigation and punishments for rolling-back impunity for gender-based violence, and the role of women and youth in community policing committees, have become central to capacity development and dialoguing mechanisms with CSOs and the leadership of Lesotho's four security agencies: The Defense Force, Mounted Police Service, Correctional Services and the National Intelligence and Security Service. Such gender issues have been prioritized in Security Sector Reform Seminars organized by the Government and the SADC Prevention Mission in the Kingdom of Lesotho. This has triggered a multi-stakeholder process for developing a comprehensive Gender Mainstreaming Strategy for the Security Sector, which is aligned with the National Security Policy to ensure mutual integration and domestication of international and regional frameworks, mainly the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security).

The National Peace Architecture has enabled women exercise active citizenship in conflict mitigation and national reconciliation processes. UNDP has supported the SADC Secretariat, government institutions, faith-based and women-led organizations to nurture partnerships for strengthening the capacity of women mediators in effective gender-responsive conflict management and resolution. Through UNDP-supported trainings on conflict management with the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (LCN) and the Christian Council of Lesotho (CCL), with their local peace structures in communities, capacities have been enhanced in peace-making, local conflict management capability, and mediation skills. Political parties, parliamentarians and NGOs have worked together on a set of guidelines on the inclusion of women and the youth in conflict management and peacebuilding, during the period that led up to the 2022 General Elections. This was achieved on the back of a series of stakeholder workshops supported by UNDP. **Follow:** [Building a National Peace Architecture: Equipping Political Parties inside Parliament with Conflict Management Skills | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#) [A Social Discourse on Human-Centric Development: The 21st NGO Week | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)

There is improved capacity to oversee credible and inclusive electoral processes. During the 2022 General Elections, UNDP alongside its partners, including the Independent Elections Commission (IEC), the Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organizations (LCN),

SADC, the European Union, and African Union, co-implemented voter-rights education, and election monitoring interventions, which contributed to an increase in the number of female registered voters. There were 767, 158 women and 616,868 men as registered voters, with an increase of 129,652 newly registered voters since the 2017 Elections. Women candidates and elected officials from political parties and in the out-going National Assembly, played a pivotal role in speeding up the process of forming the current governing coalition between the Revolution for Prosperity (RFP), the Alliance of Democrats and the Movement for Economic Change party. This has forged a new political ground for working with women in leadership around effecting the gender equality clauses contained in the Omnibus bill and other pending electoral and constitutional reform bills.

"I am so grateful that UNDP Lesotho doesn't discriminate against people in their projects; even people with disabilities are accommodated."

RETHABILE SEREBA
Youth Participant from Mafeteng District

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ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

Gender equality has gained recognition in policy and financing mechanisms for climate change adaptation and mitigation. By supporting Lesotho to enhance its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), UNDP has engaged with religious leaders, communities, youth, women and key vulnerable groups, during the review and assessment of the key sectors that have potential to increase the country's mitigation and adaptation ambition, and the setting up of Monitoring, Reporting and Verification systems and mechanisms. UNDP has supported Lesotho to develop the NDC implementation plan and an investment strategy that contains specific policy measures and actions on the role of the private sector in promoting the integration of gender equality and social inclusion in climate financing. **Follow:** [Lesotho | Climate Promise \(undp.org\)](#)

Investments in greening agricultural value chains have broadened women's livelihood choices and increased their autonomy over household financial decisions. In Mohale's Hoek and Quthing communities, the Green Value Chains (GVC) Project contributed to the national COVID19 recovery agenda by promoting the green economy through value chains, building capacity and resilience in the local agriculture sector where women dominate, and building sustainable production systems, processing, and marketing. through the project 'M'e 'Makatleho received production and marketing training which helped her learn how to grow her business. Today she can turnover \$120.00 on a good month. **Follow:** [UNDP Lesotho Resident Representative Field Mission to Energy and Environment Projects | United Nations Development Programme](#)

Women farmers have become change agents with learning platforms for local communities. A case in point is the wetlands of Semonkong, in which lies a little village called Tšenekeng. Close to the road leading into this quiet community, is the Tšenekeng Botanical Garden which was founded by Mofumahali 'Makholu Mahao (Chieftess of Tšenekeng) as a call to improve her community. She proudly spoke of the hard work which she and her community put into the collection and nurturing of endangered species within the garden. This has inspired and demonstrated to Basotho Women, how they can be leaders of Climate Change Action and Biodiversity Preservation, while increasing returns to productive work as well as an increase in women's decision-making power in the family. **Follow:** [Basotho Women Leading the Cause in Climate Change Action and Biodiversity Preservation: Gender Equality Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)

Local communities are leading the adoption of energy-efficient technologies amongst female and male-headed households. In Seapapala, under the Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All) project, UNDP has focused on the installation of mini-grid solar panels to supply electricity to about 800 homes (323 female-headed households and 477 male-headed households). This has potential for significant gender impact including initiatives for support to women and young people for "green livelihoods"; promotion of green and renewable energy technologies that can reduce women's drudgery while addressing environmental degradation.

Local innovators have advanced gender equality in the environment sector. The UNDP Accelerator Lab team has utilized innovation safaris to local communities, to map and enhance the visibility of women-led solutions around the use of Wool and mohair, recycling waste and protecting endangered species, such as the one-eyed eagle. The innovations are being used at advocacy platforms for accelerating the attainment of targets under NSDP II and SDGs. **Follow:** [A ONE-EYED EAGLE OF MAFETENG SOLUTIONS MAPPING | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)



Female farmer capacitated by SGP

POVERTY REDUCTION AND INEQUALITIES

Knowledge products have credibility amongst government counterparts and are bringing gender perspectives into public discourses on national reforms. Such knowledge products mainly include the National Human Development Reports (NHDR), Lesotho Development Finance Assessment Report (2021), Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19, and SDG implementation thematic reports. These have been utilized in academic and policy circles as reliable sources of data and analysis on poverty reduction, accelerating digitization and building resilience interdependently. These UNDP-supported knowledge products have shaped the content of the National Covid-19 Response Plan and have been referred to in the Economic and Financial Management Reforms Report, including how to radically reform the public procurement system to the benefit of women and youth entrepreneurs. **Follow:** [ECONOMIC-REFORMS-Final-Report-version-NDPC-23-OCTOBER.pdf](#)

2 sector-specific gender policies are being developed. Under the Sustainable and Inclusive Economic Growth (SIEG) project, UNDP facilitated cross-sector collaborations amongst the Ministry of Gender; Ministry of Public Service; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Development Planning; and the Lesotho Millennium Development Agency (LMDA), through a gender audit exercise with relevant departments. This has contributed to deepening synergy in developing sector-specific gender policies that are supportive to the National Gender + Development Policy (2018-2030), and National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP II, 2018-2023). The inclusion prohibitive and disciplinary clauses on sexual harassment and exploitation at the workplace, in the revision of the Public Service Act and attendant regulations is being fast-tracked and coordinated by the Ministry of Public Service. The Ministry of Finance, through the Budget Controllers Office, has taken lead on integrating clauses on gender responsive budgeting in the amendments to the Public Finance Management and Accountability Act, for consistency and alignment with constitutional guarantees and provisions on gender equality and women empowerment.

The national planning system is gender responsive. Through UNDP-supported gender trainings for staff that influence planning and policy reform implementation processes, government was able to develop and oversee the implementation of a gender responsive National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP II, 2018-2023). Gender equality is well addressed in two out of the four priority areas of NSDP II, namely: strengthening governance and accountability systems; and strengthening human capital. A gender responsive budgeting pilot initiative has been included in the budget statement for Financial Year 2022/23, with a focus on capacity building for the Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports, and Recreation (MGYSR), Ministry of Social Development and Ministry of Education. The Ministry of Gender was able to coordinate reporting on how government planning, legalization and reform processes have implemented the international gender norms and standards, enshrined in the Beijing Platform of Action (1995) and the CEDAW (1979). The Beijing+25 Report and the CEDAW Report for Lesotho, have been presented to national and international forums, including at the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women took place from 14 to 25 March 2022.

Cohorts of women entrepreneurs are tackling barriers to women economic empowerment. UNDP has supported the creation and visibility of a women entrepreneurs' cohort known as 'Her Empire'. It is part of Lesotho's response to ensuring that women are integrated into supply chains as economic agents and equal competitors for emerging economic opportunities. Through two-week trainings and boot-camps, the women's capacities and techniques on business management, finance and markets were refined to enhance sustainability and resilience of their enterprises and were introduced to the UNDP's procurement policy and requirements, as prospective vendors, to become more aware and responsive to potential opportunities for getting contracts from UNDP, globally. **Follow:** [Capacity Building for Women-led Enterprises in Lesotho | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](#)

Tourist operators and marketing companies are focusing efforts on reducing youth unemployment and increasing female labor force participation: UNDP Lesotho

Accelerator Lab hosted stakeholders in the tourism industry to gather insights on how tourist attraction sites in Lesotho can be documented. This work with the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC) has connected tour operators and hotels with travel influencers and involved women and youth in marketing Lesotho as a travel destination of choice. The creation of tourism jobs for women and youth, is through a collaborative effort with Limkokwing University to assist LTDC with creating a strategy for marketing tourist attraction sites through digital technologies and lifestyle influencers. Follow: [Collective Intelligence: Documenting Tourist Attraction Sites and Development of a National Photo Bank | United Nations Development Programme \(undp.org\)](https://undp.org)



Basotho women winnowing sorghum