



UNITED NATIONS
LESOTHO



UN COUNTRY RESULTS REPORT 2021



Building Back Better

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FOREWORD

BY RESIDENT COORDINATOR

I write this foreword as the new Resident Coordinator in Lesotho, with great appreciation for the work done by my predecessors.

In 2021, the UN in Lesotho continued to support the COVID-19 response and recovery in strengthening health systems, social protection, protecting jobs, MSMEs and the informal sector, and supporting community resilience. The United Nations in Lesotho supported the government in ensuring that they accessed vaccines through the COVAX facility, and through COVAX, the first vaccine doses were successfully delivered to the Basotho people, first protecting health workers and vulnerable population.

Half-way through the year, by the end of June 2021, a total of 54 119 vaccine doses had been administered, and by the end of December 2021, through support and tireless work of UN teams on the ground in mobilizing and engaging communities, and this number had significantly increased to 857 925 administered vaccine doses. The United Nations will continue to support the government's vaccination roll out campaign to ensure that at least 70% of the Basotho population is vaccinated by June 2022 to reduce mortality through improved clinical management.

Going forward, UN in Lesotho will continue to work with the Government of Lesotho, and the private sector, communities and individuals to stop the spread of misinformation surrounding COVID-19 and to encourage the whole population to be vaccinated so that our lives and freedom may return.

We have entered the Decade of Action, with only nine years left we need to accelerate our efforts for poverty eradication, ensuring zero hunger, promote good health and well-being,



Ms Amanda khozi Mukwashi

quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry innovation and infrastructure, reduced inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, responsible production and consumption, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace justice and strong institutions and partnerships for the sustainable development goals.

The coming year 2022 will also draw us closer to the end of the current United Nations Development Assistance framework (2019-2023), a guiding framework which lies at the core of the work we do to support the government of Lesotho. The evaluation of the UNDAF, will provide a good indication of where we stand in achieving what we had set out to, as well a fresh impetus for the next Cooperation Framework.

The impact of our work in Lesotho for 2021 is clear in this report, testament that much can be achieved through collective effort, and through the leveraging of effective partnerships can we bear the fruits of a successful development agenda in Lesotho.

It is my hope that we can achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Lesotho by 2030, but this will require a concerted and coordinated effort from every person, including United Nations, Government officials, civil society, private sector and members of the diplomatic community, all Basotho, to work in unison and ensure that nobody is left behind.



UN COUNTRY TEAM

The UNCT in Lesotho is represented by eight Resident UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes – IOM, FAO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and eighteen Non-Resident Agencies - IAEA, IFAD, ILO, ITC, OCHA, OHCHR, UNCDF, UNEP, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNCTAD, UNECA, UN HABITAT, UNODC, UN WOMEN, UNV, UN World Tourism Organization and World Trade Organization.

UNCT Lesotho agencies, funds and programmes	
Resident	Non-Resident
 Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations  IOM UN MIGRATION	 ECA  UNESCO  UNWTO World Tourism Organization
 UNAIDS  WFP World Food Programme	 UN VOLUNTEERS  WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION  OCHA
 UNFPA  unicef for every child	 IFAD Investing in rural people  UN CDF Microfinance • Capital Development  UN environment United Nations Environment Programme
 World Health Organization  UN DP	 UNODC United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime  UN HABITAT  UN WOMEN  ILO
	 UNITED NATIONS UNCTAD  IAEA  International Trade Centre  UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS

Through the United Nations Human rights Office of the High Commissioner, a human rights advisor and a human rights officer were deployed in 2021 to assist the UNCT with the integration of human rights in programmes and implementation hereof, and support further strengthening of the national human rights capacities.



CHAPTER 1

KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Whilst the full extent of the adverse socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the Kingdom of Lesotho remains unknown, much more information has emerged over the course of 2021, compared to what was available at the end of 2020. What is evident, however, and key to note is that the lockdown had its most significant effects on the informal business sector and the textile industry - two sectors that mainly employ women.

The economy contracted by more than initially estimated in 2020 (by 5.4%)¹, under lockdowns, business closures and unemployment caused by the economy is not expected to grow sufficiently in 2021 to regain the losses of 2020; it is likely to take until 2023 for the economy to reach its 2019 size, and even longer for the economy to recover to its 2016 size.

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) offers hope for Lesotho's economic diversification, industrialisation, and development, and for increasing employment, but investment in infrastructure and greater regional integration is required to take full advantage of this opportunity. However, Lesotho is yet to commence the development of national strategies to implement the AfCFTA agreement and this should be prioritised going forward. The Government of Lesotho's increased attention towards digitalisation also promises economic rewards and innovation.

Unemployment stands at (25%)², but is particularly high for young women (41.5%) and young men (31.2%)³. As long-standing economic decline and high unemployment incomes have fallen to levels last experienced in 2008. Further, people's incomes may not recover to their 2011 high levels until 2025.

Falling per capita incomes, combined with a 13% fall in remittances (upon which between 17% and 30% of the population are estimated to be reliant), has contributed to a significant increase in poverty levels. Over thirty percent (30.5%) of the population are now estimated to live below US\$1.90 a day, and for the first time much of the newly poor live in urban⁴ areas .

1 IMF, 2021, World Economic Outlook, October 2021



Lesotho's sizeable social protection programmes have demonstrated their capacity to alleviate poverty and inequality, which will be essential in the near-term. The Government of Lesotho has demonstrated a concrete commitment to social protection, however efforts must be made to ensure that social protection programmes are progressive and implemented efficiently. Together with high unemployment, falling per capita incomes increases the threats to security, stability and socio-economic development and contribute to a rise in sex work, human trafficking, and other dangerous activities as many women and girls through desperation seek ways to feed their families.

The human capital index is also expected to have deteriorated due to disruptions in access to health and education⁵.

Focus on COVID-19 within the health sector has diverted financing from a more comprehensive healthcare system, causing deteriorations in the maternal mortality rate (544 per 100,000 live births), neonatal mortality rate (42.8 per 1,000 live births), under 5 mortality rate (86.4 per 1,000 live births), and adolescent fertility rate (92.4 births per 1,000 women aged 15-19). Nonetheless, Lesotho has achieved remarkable success in HIV outcomes: 90% of all people living with HIV know their status, 97% of all people diagnosed with HIV receive antiretroviral therapy (ART) and 92% of people receiving ART have a suppressed viral load. However, children, sex workers, men who have sex with men, prisoners and women who already have low socioeconomic status, limited decision-making power over their sexual and reproductive health and of which half under the age of 40 have HIV in urban areas have much worse HIV outcomes.

The COVID-19 pandemic, 2019 teacher strikes and the 2018 teachers' go-slow, and have severely disrupted education delivery, resulting in widening inequality and weakened education outcomes. Rural boys⁷, learners with disabilities and pregnant girls are all less likely to attend school, particularly at secondary level⁸ due to the pandemic. Furthermore, COVID-19 is likely to have widened the educational divide as learners from low-income families and rural areas are less likely to have been able to access digital learning solutions, or alternative learning methods. Poor health and education outcomes are likely to have a long-term impact on Lesotho's socio-economic development and inequality.

People with disabilities have typically faced higher exclusion than their non-disabled peers in Lesotho, including less access to health, education and social protection. Their exclusion became particularly pronounced during the COVID-19 pandemic as the health and education sectors were not able to cater to their specific needs, such as allowing a carer to accompany them to health

2. International Labour Organization, 2021, ILOSTAT database

3. International Labour Organisation, ILOStat, 2021, Country Profiles, Lesotho

4. World Bank, 2021, The World Bank in Lesotho

5. World Bank, 2021, The World Bank in Lesotho

6

7. Lesotho, 2018 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

8. World Bank, 2020, Basic Education Strengthening Project (BESP) Appraisal



centres or ensuring that remote learning solutions were accessible to the visually or hearing impaired. Yet in 2021, the Government of Lesotho demonstrated concrete efforts to include people with disabilities through enacting the Persons with Disabilities Equity Act (2021) and the Disability Grant, which will provide up to Maloti 400 per month for people with disabilities⁹.

In 2021, the United Nations undertook an evaluation of the Socio-Economic Response Plan (SERP), with inputs from development partners and civil society organisations. The SERP evaluation concluded that there was a lack of visibility surrounding the UN's COVID-19 response, in particular, for the UN's support to people with disabilities, the LGBTI community, informal traders and the WASH and social protection sectors. The UN Lesotho included people with disabilities and supported innovation and digitalisation in its COVID-19 response and should continue to prioritise both in 2021 and beyond. Inclusion of people with disabilities has focused heavily on visually impaired persons and should also include the deaf future. Furthermore, promoting innovative solutions and digitalisation should also focus on access to electricity and technology, to ensure that people are not left behind. Greater focus was needed on gender equality and women's empowerment in 2021, strengthening gender analysis beyond simple data disaggregation. In 2021, the COVID-19 SERP interventions were integrated into the UN's Joint Work Plans, so that COVID-19 interventions would continue, but would support long-standing development interventions.

Finally, the SERP evaluation recommended that the UN Lesotho should have more joint programmes for greater impact. Greater coordination with the Department of Aid Coordination (within the Ministry of Development Planning) would enhance the efficacy of both UN and Government of Lesotho interventions.

The above recommendations were taken on board over the course of the year. In July 2021, the UN Lesotho conducted an assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on people with disabilities, the results of which supported a series of issue papers and communication materials, drafted by the Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFOD), to inform policymakers, including the National COVID-19 Secretariat (NACOSEC), District Covid-19 Secretariats (DICOSEC) and Ministry of Health, of how they may better include people with disabilities in their COVID-19 response and recovery. The ongoing dialogue has also resulted in the Hon. Prime Minister appointing disability advisors within the Prime Minister's Office and NACOSEC.

Gender inequality continues to threaten Lesotho's development trajectory. Social, cultural, financial and legal barriers and structural gender inequalities create critical challenges for meeting women's development needs. In many settings women have limited autonomy and decision-making power, even over their own health care needs – and limited time to seek services due to caregiving responsibilities. Women are under-represented in politics and the private sector, particularly at senior levels. More damaging still, gender-based violence is prevalent throughout society and was very high before the pandemic (86% of girls already reported having been abused) and has increased throughout the pandemic.



Similarly, climate change also threatens Lesotho's development trajectory. The increasing frequency of droughts and floods has contributed to a steady deterioration in agricultural yields and an increase in food prices, particularly in rural areas. This has had a disastrous impact on the livelihoods and food security of many Basotho, especially those living in rural areas and dependent upon subsistence agriculture. Children are acutely vulnerable to food insecurity. Stunting is more prevalent in boys (36.6% of boys under 5 are stunted, compared to 32.7% of girls¹⁰ rural areas (36% of children in rural areas are stunted, compared to 28% in urban areas), and to children born to illiterate (58%) or adolescent (39%) mothers. Malnutrition is the leading cause of death amongst children, and poor children are five times as likely to suffer from acute malnutrition¹¹.

9. Government of Lesotho, 2021, Government allocates millions for Disability Grant

10. UNICEF, WHO, World Bank: Joint child malnutrition estimates

11. World Bank, 2021, Lesotho Nutrition and Health System Strengthening Project



Whilst Lesotho's high levels of food insecurity remain a threat to a large proportion of the population, an increasing number of initiatives have been launched throughout 2020-21 to provide a sustainable solution to the challenge, including the UN's Maximum Intervention Programme (MIP), launched under the Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger (REACH) initiative to promote dietary diversity and child feeding, and the World Bank's Lesotho Nutrition and Health System Strengthening Project to strengthen community-based nutrition service delivery. Further, improved rains may offer the rural population some temporary relief in 2021/22.

Only 44.6% of the population have access to electricity, and there is a significant rural-urban divide as 75.8% of urban households have access to electricity, compared to 32.2% of rural households. Lesotho needs to substantially increase its electricity generation and distribution to offer affordable energy to the population for both productive and consumptive purposes (and to benefit the economy), but this must be achieved in a clean manner. There is an opportunity for Lesotho to increase electricity generation through renewable sources given Lesotho's comparative advantage in solar, wind and hydropower. Opportunity exists to pursue off-grid solutions (through standalone micro and mini hydro solutions, for example) to supply electricity to communities, especially those in rural areas.

Finally, political instability, which has been a challenge in Lesotho since 2012 and has limited the capacity of the public sector to deliver long-term plans and strategies, is likely to heighten in the run up to the national elections, scheduled for September 2022. The risk of political instability in 2022 is further heightened by a lack of financing for the Independent Electoral Commission, which undermines the autonomy of the body mandated to hold free and fair elections. Political fractures and the increasing number of political parties exacerbate the challenges to achieving consensus and a majority government. However, there is hope from a series of Bills recently presented to Parliament from the National Reforms Authority that promise peace and political stability.





CHAPTER 2

UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM SUPPORT TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES THROUGH THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

2.1. OVERVIEW OF THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK

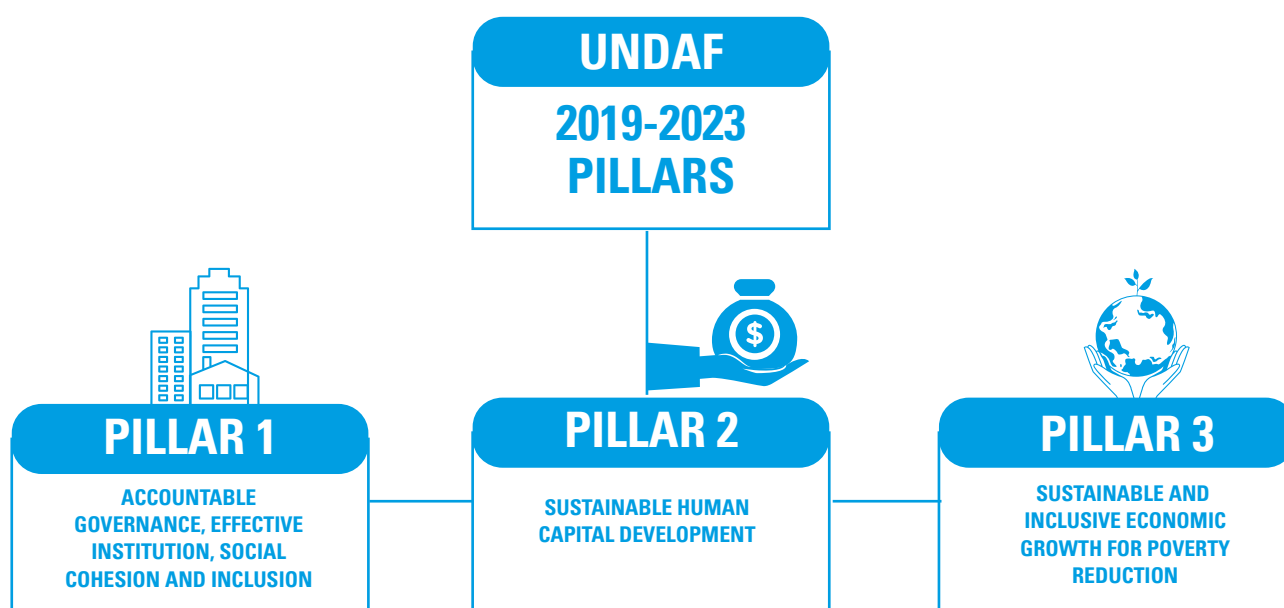
The United Nations Development Assistance Framework 2019-2023 (UNDAF)

The UNDAF is a guiding document of the work of all resident and non-resident agencies in Lesotho for the period 2019-2023. It outlines the strategic direction and results expected from cooperation between the government of Lesotho and the UN country team. The UNDAF is informed by the National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP II), and aligned to support Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and the African Union Agenda 2063, to which the UN in Lesotho has contributed towards achieving.

A robust, participatory common country analysis further informed the UNDAF, outlining development challenges in Lesotho such as persistent poverty, political challenges, challenges to gender equality, increasing environmental degradation and harsh climatic conditions. Three overall UNDAF pillars and four corresponding outcomes were informed by the NSDP II priorities.

UN Lesotho, 2020, The Government of Lesotho joins forces with the United Nations to address Malnutrition

World Bank, 2021, Lesotho to Strengthen its Nutrition and Health System with World Bank Support





OUTCOME 1.1

By 2023 government and non-governmental institutions deliver their mandates and uphold good Governance, rule of law and human rights, with all people having improved access to justice and participating in social and political decision making processes in a peaceful environment.



OUTCOME 2.1

By 2023, all people, particularly the most vulnerable benefit from gender responsive social policies and equitable realization of their rights.



OUTCOME 3.1

By 2023, government and private sector increase opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, improved food security and decent work especially for women, youth and people with disabilities.



OUTCOME 4.1

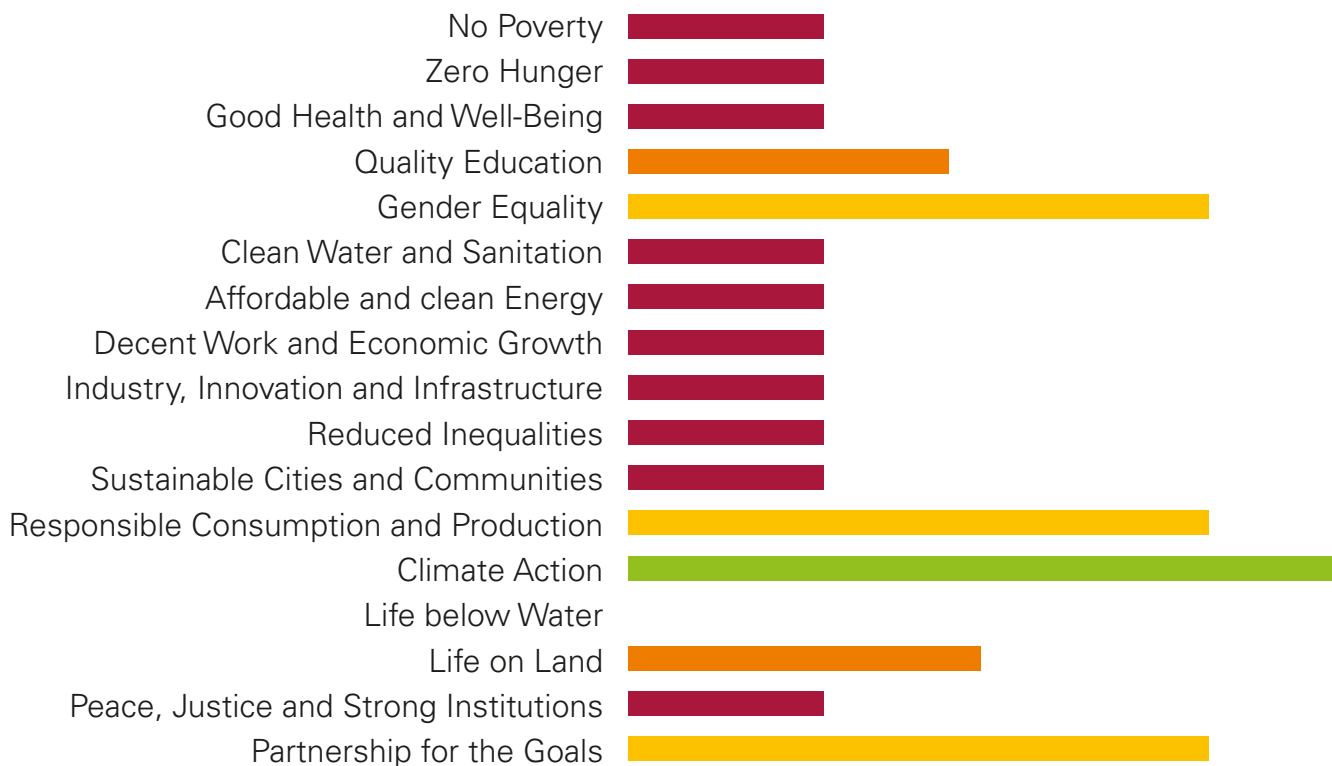
By 2023, the people of Lesotho use natural resources in a more sustainable manner and the marginalized and most vulnerable are increasingly resilient.

Sustainable development goals in Lesotho

The 2021 Sustainable Development Report presents major challenges in the attainment of 10 of the 16 goals in Lesotho (figure 1). This is a deterioration from 2020, when 9 SDGs presented major challenges and is a result of a deterioration in the attainment of SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities. The attainment of SDGs 15 – Life on Land and 17 – Partnerships for the Goals has also deteriorated over the year. In 2021, only SDG 13 – Climate Action is on track to be achieved by 2030, however this may be more a result of Lesotho’s limited development and industrialisation, rather than high levels of green economic activity. Despite Lesotho’s progress towards Climate Action, Lesotho remains highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change and significant investment is needed in green technologies and early warning systems to increase Lesotho’s resilience to climate change.



Figure 1: SDG progress



Red highlights major challenges, orange significant challenges, yellow challenges and green SDG achieved, the size of the bar implies the extend of the challenge or achievement. The longer the bar, the greater the challenge or achievement.

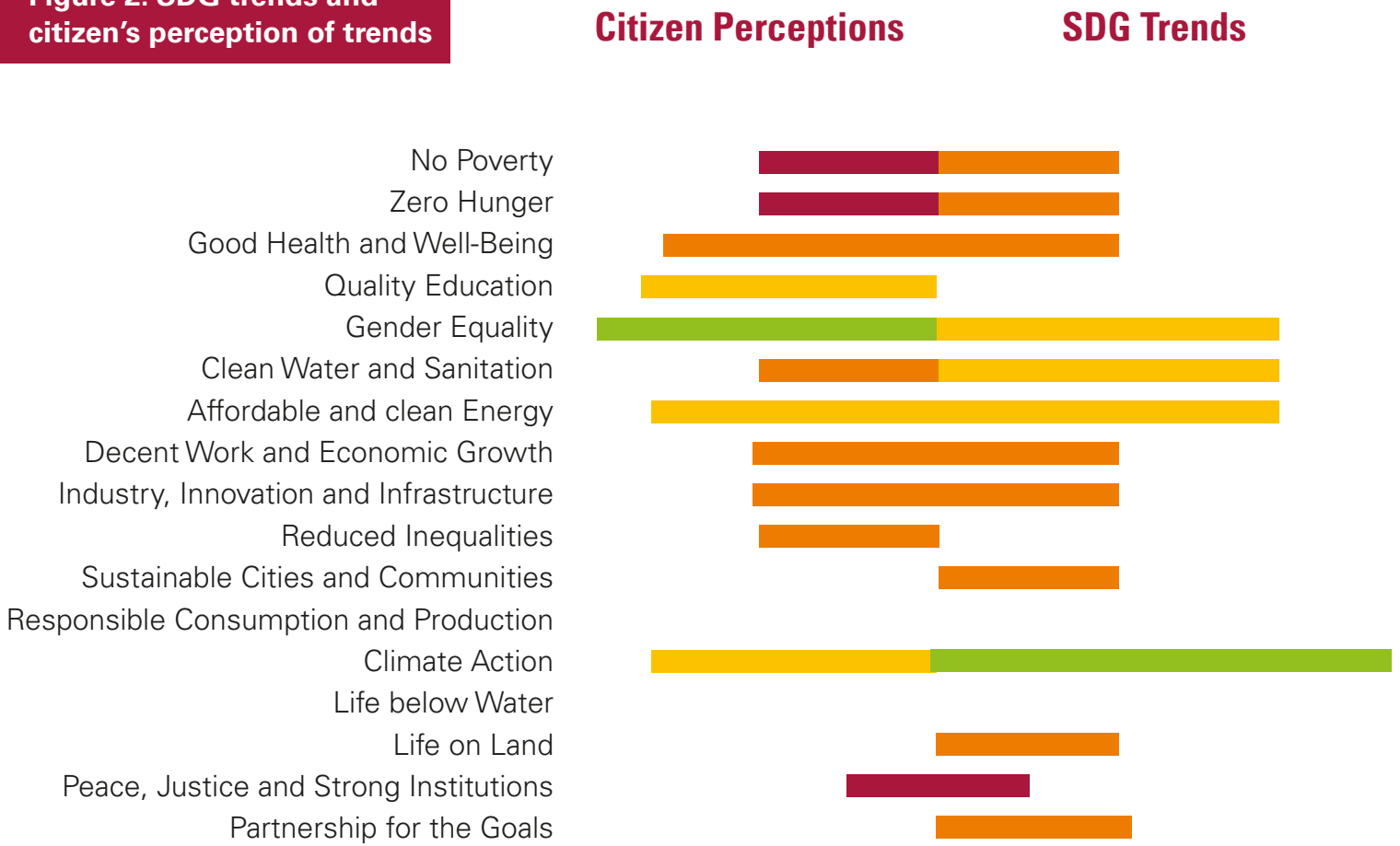
Source: 2021 Sustainable Development Report

As with progress towards the attainment of Agenda 2030, there has been a deterioration in the trends towards achieving the SDGs in 2021. In 2020, both SDG 13 – Climate Action and SDG 17 – Partnerships for the Goals were on track, whilst there were no SDGs in which progress was decreasing. In 2021, only SDG 13 – Climate Action remains on track, whilst progress in SDG 16 – Peace Justice and Strong Institutions has deteriorated. Progress has also deteriorated, compared to 2020, in SDG 2 – Zero Hunger, SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities, and SDG 15 – Life on Land. Progress has only improved in SDG 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy.

The AfroBarometer SDG Scorecard for Lesotho facilitates a comparison between SDG trends and citizen’s perception of SDG trends (figure 2). Basotho perceive that progress has been worse than presented by the indicators in SDG 1 – No Poverty, SDG 2 – Zero Hunger, SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation, and SDG 14 – Climate Action. Interestingly, Basotho perceive better outcomes than presented by the indicators for SDG 5 – Gender Equality, which may capture a gender bias in societal norms.



Figure 2: SDG trends and citizen's perception of trends



Red highlights a decreasing trend, orange a stagnating trend, yellow moderate improvements and green SDG on track

Source: 2021 Sustainable Development Report and AfroBarometer SDG Scorecard

The Government of Lesotho is highly committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and recognizes its transformative goal. The Government of Lesotho has mainstreamed regional and international commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals, into national priorities, defined through the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP II) 2018/19-2022/23. In 2021, the Government has agreed to the establishment of an SDGs coordination, oversight and implementation mechanism and institutional arrangements for monitoring national progress towards achieving the SDG targets of which the UN in Lesotho has supported.

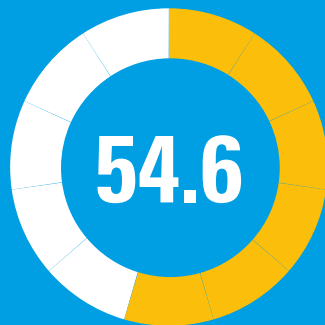
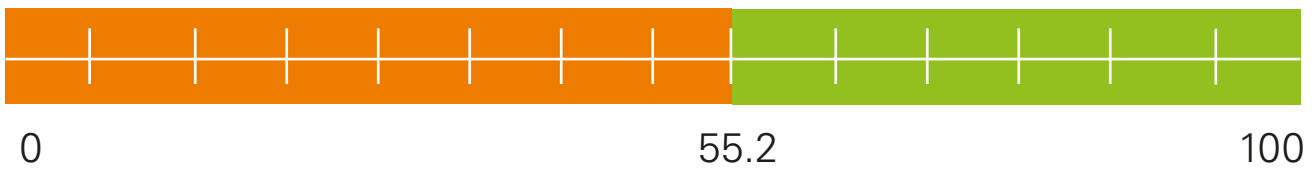
These involve multi-stakeholder committees that offer technical leadership and quality assurance on the implementation, monitoring and reporting of SDGs. One of these committees, the National Oversight and Advisory Committee hosts Members of Parliament and is chaired by the Prime Minister.



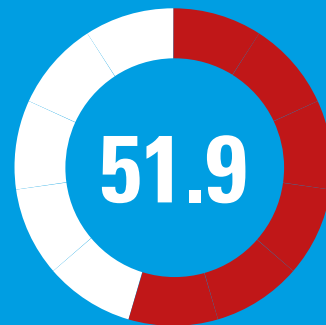
OVERALL PERFORMANCE
COUNTRY RANKING

135_{/135}

STATISTICAL PERFORMANCE INDEX
0 (WORST) TO 100(BEST)

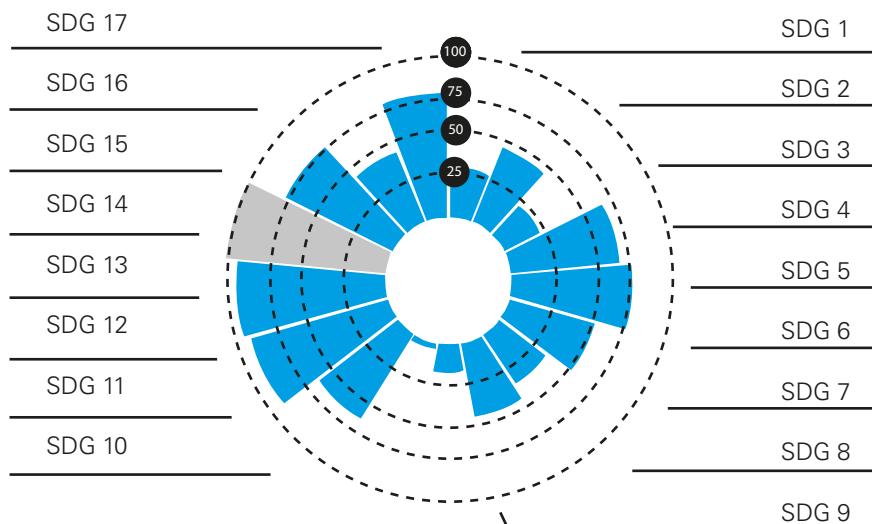


COUNTRY SCORE



REGIONAL AVERAGE

AVERAGE PERFORMANCE BY SDG



2.2 COOPERATION FRAMEWORK PRIORITIES, OUTCOMES AND OUTPUT

Pillar 1: Accountable Governance, Effective Institutions, Social Cohesion and Inclusion

RELATED SDGS: 5, 8, 10, 16, 17

UN AGENCIES: ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNWOMEN, WFP, WHO

Outcome 1: By 2023, government and non-governmental institutions deliver their mandates and uphold good governance, rule of law and human rights, with all people having improved access to justice and participating in social and political decision-making processes in a peaceful environment.

Support to Conflict Prevention and Management continued to be a critical area of intervention for the UN particularly as the proposed and impending Constitutional, Parliamentary, Judiciary, Security, Public Service, Media and Economic Sector reforms heighten the risk of conflict. In order to enhance National Capacities of Conflict Prevention, a project entitled “Supporting Conflict Prevention, Party Democracy and Consensus Building in Lesotho” continued to be implemented in collaboration with state and non-state actors. Under this initiative, two substantive studies were completed, and the publications were launched by Prime Minister Moeketsi Majoro in June 2021 focusing on (1) Intra-and-Inter-Party Democracy; and (2) Conflict, Peace and Gender Context, which identified the triggers of conflict, challenges of democracy and patronage as some of the salient issues affecting the deepening of democracy amongst and within political parties and society in the country.

These studies make a compelling case for capacity building to engage in conflict prevention and management, review of existing laws and policies,

reinvigoration of governance institutions and the need to speed up national reforms. In response to the findings of the studies, a series of trainings have been carried out for civil society organizations and political parties inside and outside of parliament in 2021.

Support to the establishment of context-specific **National Peace Architecture** (NPA) continued mainly through encouraging national and subnational dialogue among the Basotho and in collaboration with government, the National Reforms Authority, civil society and faith-based organisations. Parliament, senate and principal chiefs were trained on conflict management and resolution in anticipation of potential risk of conflict brought about by the reform process.

UN’s convening power and policy brokerage secured Government endorsement to coordinated development partners in generating coherent and comprehensive programming actions as well as mobilization resources to support implementation of agreed national reforms. Additionally, with the national elections scheduled for 2022, the UN eded deployed an Elections Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) which recommended UN support to the 2021 – 2023 Lesotho Electoral Cycle.



The UN supported the process towards the **establishment of a National Human Rights Commission** by organising several advocacy meetings with relevant Ministries and Departments as well as the National Assembly. As a result, the Eleventh Constitutional Amendment Bill 2021 and the Human Rights Commission Bill 2021 were cleared by Cabinet for presentation before Parliament. Capacity development was provided to government counterparts, civil society, journalists and security sector on the promotion and protection of human rights.

The UN Human Rights Due Diligence Policy Assessment was updated to reflect the current realities of the security sector of Lesotho as regards human rights promotion and protection. A baseline study on the public on human rights-related satisfaction, concerns and perceptions on the services provided by security institutions in Lesotho was commissioned. The findings of the study will be used to address human rights violations attributed to the security sector.

Integration of gender and human rights in national planning, programming and budgeting is pivotal for the realization of Goal 5 on Gender Equality. UN supported the Ministry of Gender to carry out a pilot audit on gender budgeting, gender mainstreaming using three government

ministries. OHCHR and UN Women supported Ministry of Gender to prepare a report under the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). UN supported the establishment of a National Mechanism for Human Rights Reporting and Follow-up (NMRF).

UN supported the Ministry of Police through the Crime Statistics Unit to be able to have a comprehensive crime data that can be disaggregated into various variables including crimes that are related to Gender Based Violence. Support was also provided to conduct an informative study on prevalence of domestic homicides and sexual offences within the context of the home. The findings are intended to inform a country wide study of domestic homicide.

Support to Implementation of National Reforms: Through technical support, thought leadership, policy advisory and financial contribution of UN and partners, The National Reforms Authority was fully operationalized to effectively discharge its mandate in close collaboration with the Basotho. An enabling legal and policy framework was created through development of enabling/supplementary legislation to operationalise the Authority, establishment of a fully functioning Plenary, seven thematic sub-committees and a secretariat staffed with competent personnel.

High impact-oriented outcomes towards improved democratic governance and economic performance through targeted short-term legal, policy and institutional reforms in the Constitutional sector; Justice sector; Parliamentary sector; Economic sector; Public service sector; Security sector; Media sector were initiated with 36 pieces of legislation and constitutional amendments processed by National Reforms Authority were approved by Cabinet and tabled in parliament through the Omnibus Bill. The Bill constitutes a transformation that will the Kingdom of Lesotho to leapfrog to progressive path of democratic governance.



To ensure gender is mainstreamed in the reforms process, 36% of project budget supported activities that directly contribute to Gender Equality and Women Empowerment. These include policies, legislations, and capacity building interventions. Of the 49 proposed amendments in the Omnibus bill, 60% directly contribute to Gender Equality and Women Empowerment.

In December 2020, a National Security Sector Reform and Peacebuilding Project (NSSRPP) was endorsed by the Government of Lesotho, in partnership with UNDP, UN OHCHR, UN Women, and the UN Peacebuilding Fund. The project seeks to set the foundations for future SSR through the development and implementation of a national security policy and strategy, and review of sectoral laws; strengthening internal and public oversight mechanisms; conflict resolution, negotiation and peacebuilding; and enhanced government engagement with society and citizen participation in security sector reform and related peacebuilding initiatives (now and in the future); with a strong gender, youth and human rights emphasis. A UNDP expert was hired in November 2021 and is leading the UN's support to implementation of this important project.

Cross-border migration and internal displacement were significantly affected in 2020 and contributed towards rising vulnerability. As a result, the UN supported the Government of Lesotho to undertake a study on internal displacement and provided training for the National Consultative Committee on Migration and Development to enhance utilization of migration data in Government development planning for inclusion of migrants and formulation of migrant sensitive policies including providing meaningful

strategic contributions to Voluntary National Reviews and supporting implementation of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM).

Generation, access and use of evidence to inform policy formulation and decisions, relating to the implementation of political, social and economic programmes including SDGs was supported by UN in 2021. Under the joint programme SDG Financing, the Development Finance Assessment was undertaken with participation of a wide range of stakeholders, private sector, civil society, development partners, government Ministries and agencies. The Development Finance Assessment (DFA) provides an Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFF) roadmap which outlines the actions that need to be undertaken to address challenges to development finance mobilization with 28% of the DFA recommendations having been engendered. With support from UN, the Ministry of Development Planning concluded the Mid-Term Review of the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP II), with identified gaps in data and strategic information that is critical for monitoring progress on the NSDP II and key recommendations on strategic prioritization for the remaining period in the NSDP II.

National monitoring and evaluation systems for policy, strategy and program implementation were strengthened to promote sustainable national development through implementation of the National Evaluation Capacity Development (NECD) project that started in 2020 aiming at building capacity of governmental staff on M&E and development of a National M&E Policy);



the Ministry of Health was supported to update the integrated web base data warehouse that uses the DHIS2 platform and a scoping assessment of development of digitized planning functions, and management of public sector investments was conducted with the Ministries of Development Planning and Ministry of Finance.

UN continued its support to government responses to the people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Lesotho, through greater monitoring and reporting. For the very first time, UN supported the generation of community level HIV estimates. District AIDS officers and senior counselors were trained to better monitor and report on patients and to cascade their enhanced knowledge through their communities. Improved HIV/AIDS monitoring and reporting will ultimately enable resources to be better directed to where they are most needed, to communities with the greatest HIV/AIDS burdens and to those that demonstrate a sudden surge in infections.

The Ministry of Health was supported to generate the 2020 HIV and AIDS Estimates, including the HIV incidence by age and gender, the number and percentage of PLHIV who are on ART and the percentage that have achieved viral suppression. HIV estimates were modelled at community council level, for the first time, using the UNAIDS Naomi Model which enables the generation of various indicators at sub-national level. Additionally, the National AIDS Council was supported to resuscitate the Cabinet Committee on AIDS and increased awareness for Parliament on HIV.

With support from UN, the 2020 Child Poverty analysis Report and the Child Poverty Policy Brief (applying Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis methodology to the 2018 MICS datasets) were finalized and report produced and disseminated.

The lack of disaggregated, reliable, timely and comparable migration data for evidence-based policy making is a challenge that is facing several IOM Southern African member states, and Lesotho is not an exception. The under-utilization of data is also one factor that contributes to formulation of policies that are not backed by evidence. Lesotho has started addressing this challenge with support from the IOM Development Fund (IDF).- To enhance evidence-based policy making and to promote demand of data by technocrats who influence policy, the UN provide support to the National Consultative Committee on Migration (NCC) and the Migration Data Working Group (MDWG) by building the capacity of data producing ministries and institutions on the supply side of data and the NCC on the demand side for utilization of data in policy formulation.

With less than 8 years to the end of the 2030 Agenda, national SDG coordination mechanisms are important to ensure effective implementation, monitoring and reporting on the SDGs, UN supported the establishment of a SDG national coordination platform to facilitate implementation, monitoring and reporting of the SDGs to facilitate of SDG-aligned planning and implementation of national development strategies.



The UN supported the capacity building of two officers of the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) of Lesotho who attended a two-week placement at the FIU of South Africa in November 2021. The two officers had theoretical and practical training on conducting analysis, exchange of information, dissemination of intelligence among others.



Human interest story

UN convenes human rights training for Lesotho Correctional Service officers
Through the National Dialogue process of 2018 and 2019, recommendations were made which included reforms to the security sector in Lesotho, to ensure that security sector agencies conduct their operations in line with international human rights standards. The reforms call for capacity building of officers working in the security sector on human rights.

The Senior Human Rights Adviser to the UN in Lesotho who spoke on behalf of the acting UN Resident Coordinator quoted a popular saying by one human rights defender who once said: “A society should be judged not by how it treats its outstanding citizens but by how it treats its criminals”

“I hope this training will remind you all of your duty to respect and ensure that the rights of inmates are respected, because they also have rights” remarked Assistant Commissioner of the Lesotho Correctional Services, Mr Sekila Joel Majara.

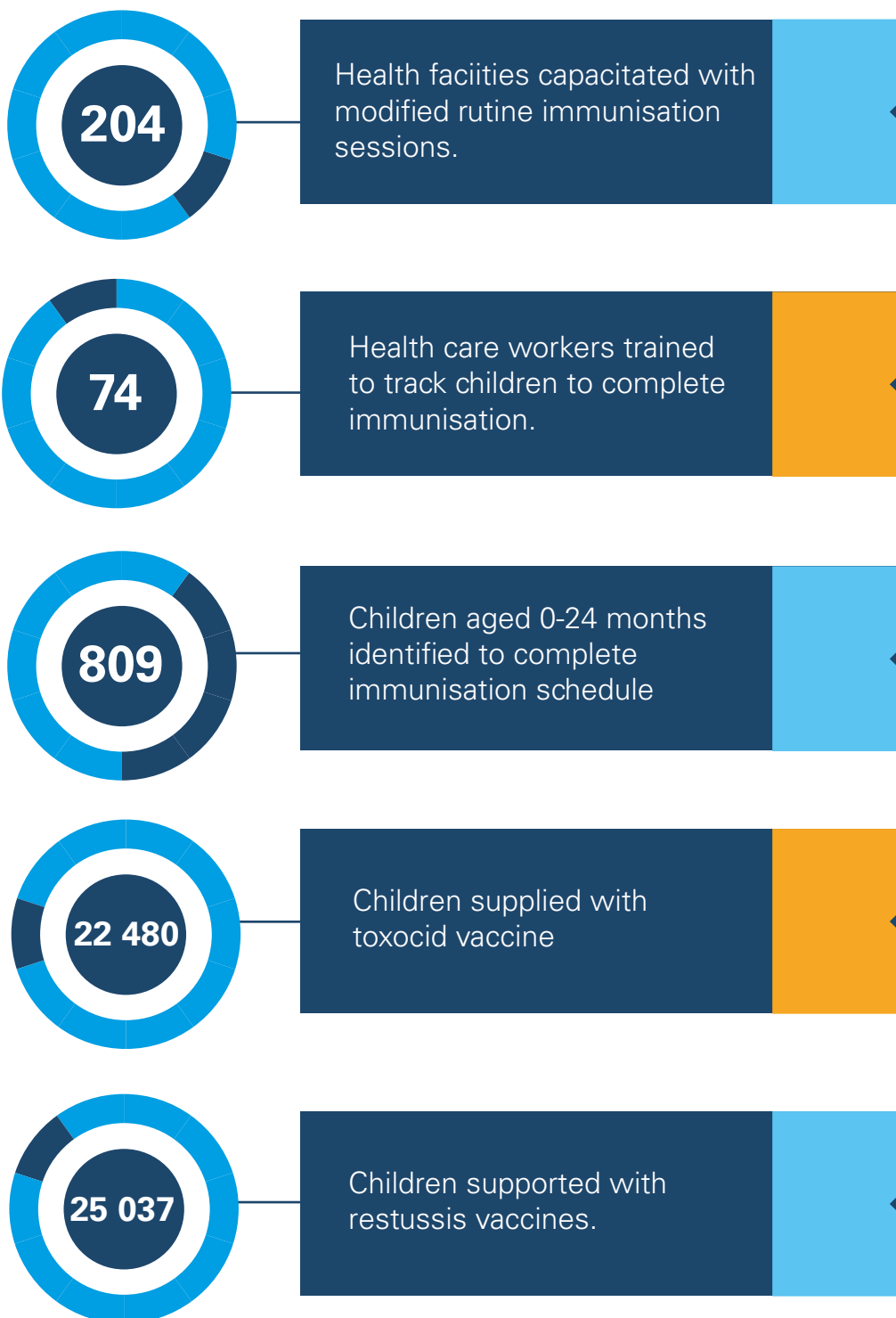


Pillar 2: Sustainable Human Capital Development

Related SDGS: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17

UN Agencies: FAO, IAEA, ILO, IOM, ITC UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN-WOMEN, WFP, WHO, UNESCO

Outcome 2: By 2023, all people, particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from gender-responsive social policies and programmes for the sustainable and equitable realization of their rights.



HEALTH SECTOR STRENGTHENING

UN provided guidance under Pillar 9 of the **COVID-19 strategic preparedness** and response plan on Maintaining Essential Health Services and Systems continued to be implemented, establishing practical actions at national, subregional and local levels to reorganize and safely maintain access to high-quality, essential health services in the pandemic context.

The first batch of **COVID-19 vaccination** was facilitated by the UN. UN supported the procurement (through COVAX) and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines in Lesotho. In March 2021, Lesotho received its first batch of 36,000 COVID-19 AstraZeneca vaccines through COVAX, a multilateral facility lead by CEPI, GAVI, WHO and UNICEF to promote equitable access to vaccines. The vaccines were prioritised for frontline workers and those with co-morbidities. Since March, the UN in Lesotho has supported additional deliveries of vaccines, has trained all 206 health facilities in administering COVID-19 vaccines and has provided cold chain equipment to **178** health facilities. By December 2021, Lesotho surpassed WHO vaccination targets with 45% of the eligible population fully vaccinated.

As a result of the protection of essential health services, all 206 health facilities in the Kingdom of Lesotho have modified routine immunisation sessions in line with COVID-19 IPC regulations. 30 health centres and 74 healthcare workers were trained to track children that have not completed their immunisation schedule. As a result, 809 children aged 0-24 months were identified and supported to complete their immunisations. Overall, the UN supported BCG vaccinations (against tuberculosis) for 22,480 children and diphtheria tetanus toxoid and pertussis (DTP3) vaccines for 25,037 children.



81 healthcare workers were trained to deliver long-term family planning to the benefit of 168,925 women, who received maternal healthcare throughout 2021. 20,265 women benefitted from antenatal care, 17,263 women from postnatal care, 10,276 women were supported during delivery by a trained midwife or obstetrician, and 118,382 women were provided with suitable family planning

Support was provided to Ministry of Health to for an enabling environment through policy formulation and capacity development in various programmatic areas. Review of strategic documents to improve the quality of services provided to Adolescents and Young People (AYP) and for the development of the national, district, and facility level HIV targets to improve programme efficiency were completed. These targets will feed into the review of the National Strategic Plan on HIV's M&E framework and the 2022 PEPFAR Country Operational Plan. This review exercise enabled Lesotho to understand its position in the pathway to elimination of mother to child transmission of HIV and became an opportunity to develop subnational targets for COVAX among adolescents and young people.

Governance capacities of Ministry of Health were strengthened through training on leadership and management competencies to drive the health sector reform goals (UHC, SDGs) and effectively address the rapidly changing pandemic context. Development of guidelines on tools on Integrated Intrapartum, Emergency Obstetric, Postnatal Care services and the improvement of the national data through strengthening the web-based DHIS2 was provided. This included improving the content and data elements, data management, analysis and reporting at different levels of the health system. Capacitated MOH to implement the social accountability initiative to improve the quality of adolescent-friendly health services (AFHS) in 77 (35%) health facilities, which enabled the MOH to monitor access to health services during COVID-19.

7,608 Adolescents & Young People (AYP) were mobilised through scorecard administration around SRHR/HIV and COVID-19. The results of the scorecard were presented during the quarterly AYP technical working group and are being used to inform interventions to address the declines in service uptake. The results show that the number of AYP accessing HIV testing services among adolescents 15-19 decreased 40% from 2020 numbers.

The Ministry of Health was supported to use "U-Report" as a platform to bring AYPs voices. 5,725 AYP (63%F, 37% M) were reached in the areas of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), HIV, and COVID-19. Additional 1890 adolescents and young people were reached with Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) out of school activities, 45% of them received SRH/ HIV/ Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) services as well. Adolescents and young people, including those with disabilities and of the LGBT community were engaged in the development of the Accelerated Action Plan for the Health of Adolescents, which includes SRHR/HIV/SGBV. Health service providers serving key populations in Maputsoe catchment were supported on delivery of SRHR.



Review of Family planning guidelines including RMNCH coordination in two districts Mokhotlong and Qacha's Nek, factoring in the context of COVID-19 pandemic was supported.

The National AIDS Commission (NAC) was supported to build capacities of district AIDS Committees leading to strengthened coordination of HIV/TB programs in all 10 districts. Civil society was strengthened for delivery of district level TB/HIV services to reach key populations, youth and Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW).

Nutrition

The Advocacy, Social and Behaviour Change Communication strategy on nutrition to tackle rife malnutrition which is largely embedded in behavioural issues was finalized. Strategic stakeholders including media practitioners and influencers were capacitated on the strategy aspirations and roles stakeholders need to play to create demand for nutrition services.

Maximum Intervention Programme (MIP) was rolled out in the four priority districts with highest stunting prevalence through the training of multi-sectoral nutrition stakeholders was done. Collection of baseline data and analysis on core nutrition actions was fulfilled through REACH funding.

The Nutrition Investment case study which prioritizes interventions to avert stunting in Lesotho with indications for more budget allocation was conducted to inform advocacy towards annual allocation of 3.5% of GDP to avert stunting. Furthermore, evidence building support focused on the effect of COVID-19 on children's diets was done, the results show that more than 30 percent of children under the age of five years receive suboptimal nutrition as a result of COVID-19, thus reducing meal frequency and consumption of fewer food groups.

A total of 26,919 mothers and caregivers were reached with Infant and Young Child Feeding(IYCF) community services and 17,842 children aged 6 to 23 months received micro-nutrient powder.

One hundred and forty-eight health workers and 287 community leaders were trained on IYCF and HIV to support the promotion of healthy nutrition practices. Promotional activities included training of 20 field officers on edutainment to increase uptake of nutrition and HIV services.

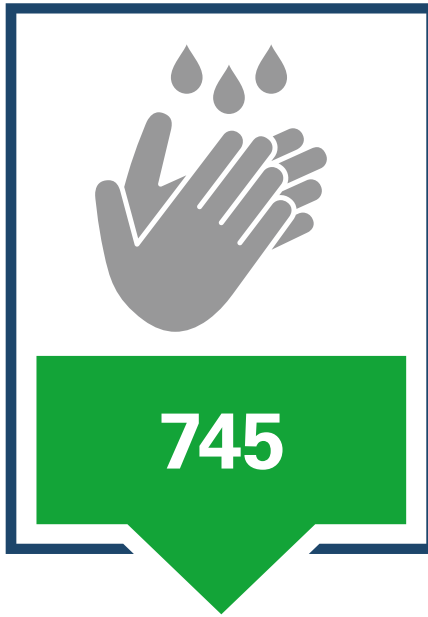
A total of 30,000 pregnant women received iron-folate supplements as part of antenatal care. Vitamin A was administered to 22,661 children aged 6 to 11 months and 58,579 aged 12 to 59 months. A total of 2,300 children with severe acute malnutrition were treated at outpatient and inpatient care centres across the 10 districts.



EDUCATION SECTOR STRENGTHENING



Masks provided to schools for safe re-opening



Schools supported with hand-washing stations



Disadvantaged children provided with bursaries.



Children enrolled in early childhood education centres.

Education sector continued to be impacted due to the pandemic in 2021. Schools reopened in April 2021 after having remained closed since March 2020. A shift system was introduced which meant that children could attend school only on selected days of the week.

The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) was supported to strengthen systems to respond to COVID-19 and USD 3.47 million was mobilized from Global Partnership for Education (GPE).

The Ministry of Education (MOET) was supported for safe reopening of schools through provision of 934,700 masks for students and teachers in all the schools in the country. 745 schools were equipped with hand washing stations to support and hygiene promotion training provided to teachers in 800 schools.

In all schools in the country, COVID-19 focal points were identified and trained on implementation and monitoring of the safe school protocols and support in case infections were reported.

COVID-19 prevention messages continued to be disseminated through radio and other mechanisms in schools and communities. These message were done in accessible formats such as brailled, large print and audio in order to reach the children and people with disabilities.

As a mechanism to support return to school, 3,483 most disadvantaged children were identified in collaboration with Ministry of Social Development and bursaries were provided. Accelerated learning to support learning loss was initiated with 10,000 children benefiting from the community-based program and 30,040 children are being supported in schools in the districts of Botha-Bothe, Berea, Quthing and Mohale's Hoek.

9,800 children benefited from capacity development of teachers/facilitators of early childhood education centers (ECCD). This will be critical for learners to be ready to transition to primary level of education, an area previously ignored in Lesotho. 52,000 children enrolled in ECCDs located in remote locations were reached with wet feeding.

MOET was supported to finalize Learner packs in the core subjects for children from pre-school to grade 11 to support continuity of learning.

Further support was on finalization of the Grade 11 Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) curriculum guided by International Technical Guidance. The Ministry was also supported to develop and pilot a CSE specific classroom monitoring tool used by Education Inspectors to monitor effectiveness of CSE delivery.



The Ministry of Education was assisted with in-service training of secondary school teachers with skills to deliver quality Comprehensive Sexuality Education, and 3,000 learners were reached.

Civil society were engaged for school community-based Parent-Child Communication Programme in Quthing and Mokhotlong, the two districts highly affected by early and unintended pregnancies and child marriage.

UN supported development of Learner Pregnancy Prevention and Management Policy that aims to give the Ministry of Education a structured approach in the preventing pregnancy in schools, through improved linkages between schools and health centres for young people to access services. The policy also standardises mechanisms to deal with learners who fall pregnant.

UN supported review of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy.

Gender Based Violence, Violence against Children and Human Trafficking

The Ministry of Gender and Parliament stakeholders were supported on advocacy initiatives for enactment of the Law against Domestic violence. A radio drama on GBV, SRHR and HIV was supported and aired on Radio Lesotho. 25 community level volunteers/ Change Agents were mobilized for uptake of SRHR, HIV and GBV information and services. 4000 migrants, sex workers and young vulnerable people were reached through the community volunteers. Ministry of Health was supported on the development of the GBV register and training manuals in line with guidance on Essential Health services. The Register is available and associated training of health professionals was fulfilled.

Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) was supported to improve data collection tools to incorporate sufficient data on GBV in line with ESP on Justice and Policing. Through this exercise 16 LMPS officers from different departments were trained on how GBV manifests in different scenarios that maybe presented at LMPS.

UN supported the operationalization of the Child Helpline for managing child protection activities. Community based structures were strengthened through capacity building of 30 social service workforce, 248 teachers and other relevant personnel to provide child protection services including protection from Violence Against Children (VAC).

UN supported development of messaging on prevention of VAC, GBV and development of two dramas and radio advertisements. These messages were disseminated reaching around 11, 000 households. A partnership with the Ministry of Police-Child and Gender Protection Unit created awareness raising sessions on GBV and human trafficking targeting households in Mokhotlong, Thaba Tseka, Maseru and Qacha's Nek districts.



Technical support was provided to the Ministry of Health to develop GBV registers, tally sheets and reporting tools, including training and mentoring health workers on-site; printing of copies of data collection tools for monitoring and evaluation of the following programs: ANC Register; ANC Tally Sheets; Post-Natal Care Register; Post-Natal Care Tally Sheets; Labour and Delivery Tally Sheets and specific guidelines for the area of family planning and GBV training manual. UN supported capacity building of 17 psychiatric nurses from 15 hospitals on SGBV, with special focus on psychosocial support as part of management of survivors of GBV. This activity will contribute to sustainability of psychosocial support services for survivors of GBV.

Under support on migrants and trafficking in persons, Government was supported to develop the Trafficking in Persons awareness raising strategy, the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking in Persons and Standard Operating Procedures for Law Enforcement. A legal assessment of the Trafficking in Persons situation was conducted. Sensitization workshops with 102 Local leaders (chiefs, councillors and religious leaders) in the districts of Mofeng's Hoek and Leribe were conducted on human trafficking. With 139 community-based protection committees trained on Trafficking in Persons and referral, and 2500 students in schools reached. A handbook on Trafficking in Persons for diplomats was developed and 52,000 persons in Lesotho reached with TIP Information through local Radio programs. A total of 18 Victims of Trafficking (VoT) housed at a VOT shelter were supported.

Social Protection

UN supported the Government on the development of National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS II) 2021-2025 which commenced with a situation analysis through strategic engagements with stakeholders culminating in a high-level workshop. The Implementation Plan and Monitoring and Evaluation Framework have been validated by stakeholders.

UN continued its support to the Government Social Registry the revised National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) GeoSpace was commissioned to conduct field data collection whose aim was to locate and enumerate an estimated 216,000 households (685,000 individuals) in the 11 Urban Councils and 1 Municipal Council (Maseru City Council) using a revised NISSA methodology. A total 56,136.00 were supported with cash top ups to counterbalance the effect of COVID – 19. In particular, 47,974 already existing Child Grants Programme (CGP) beneficiary households benefited from the COVID-19 emergency cash transfer top-up amount of LSL1,500 in one quarter (once-off) in all the ten districts of Lesotho. 8,162 newly enrolled households from the districts of Mafeteng, Mofeng's Hoek, Botha-Bothe, Quthing and Qacha's Nek received a once off cash transfer amount of LSL2,268.

A total of 57,545 households (230,174 individuals) who lost their livelihoods due to adverse impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on remittances, and employment were assisted. These people included migrant workers returning from South Africa following loss of employment and negatively affecting their households. A combination of food and cash vouchers and a variety of vegetable seeds were distributed. Beneficiaries were in Mokhotlong, Thaba Tseka, Maseru, Mofeng's Hoek, Qacha's Nek, and Quthing districts.





Civil society organizations were engaged at community level to sensitize young people and women of childbearing age to up take health services, and the target groups included people with disabilities. As part of operationalizing the strategy media practitioners and influencers were engaged to advocate the strategy.

Human interest story:

Encouraging communities to get vaccinated...

Thabo Masia, a 53-year-old village health worker from Moshoeshoe II in Maseru who received his 1st vaccination dose and encourages people within his community to get vaccinated.

“Our role is to give health services to people in the community. On the issue of COVID19, there has been a lot of misleading information that misguided people. Because people no longer attend public gatherings, we had to resort to a door-to-door outreach campaign where we approach people with chronic illness and encourage them to get vaccinated as well as providing them with the right information.”

He further explains that being a health worker entails more than just doing advocacy work but also assisting sick people and ensuring they take their medication.

“Patients in the village come to me because the health centers give us medication to dispense to patients and keep daily records. Some of our patients are HIV/AIDS patients. We also help them in the community to access their medication. Our job is also to make sure that infants get all their necessary injections from the time of birth.”



Pillar 3: Sustainable and inclusive economic growth for poverty reduction

Related SDGS: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17

UN Agencies: FAO, IAEA, IFAD, ILO, IOM, ITC, UNCDF, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIDO, UN Women, UNWTO, WFP, WHO

Outcome 3.1: By 2023, government and private sector increase opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, improved food security and decent jobs

Under Entrepreneurship and private sector development, UN Lesotho continued to support the Ministry of Small Business Development to establish a platform for registration of the Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs), informal businesses and street vendors, collating all necessary information and details as may be required by different stakeholders.

The platform is accessible both online and as an application to enable self-registration to help address the challenges of data and informality issues. The platform enables registration and certification of the MSMEs sector to be able to get some basic support services directed to them such as the recent relief funds for COVID-19.

The UN supported the Ministry of Trade and Industry to facilitate data disaggregation of the national business register to discount information on business ownership (gender), registration and longevity of businesses especially in the priority sectors. With the support of UN, the Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology finalized a review of the ICT policy, to enable development of the new policy that is consistent to the development and growth of ICT sector and to facilitate contribution to economic development.

Under trade facilitation, UN conducted an assessment on the COVID-19 situation and the impact on informal cross border traders especially on women, and jointly organized National Consultations and High-level Dialogue on African Continental Free Trade Area Protocol on Women in Trade and Informal Cross Border Traders in collaboration with UNWOMEN, UNCDF and African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Secretariat. This resulted in recommendations for the AfCFTA and Action Plan which will be a basis for the joint programming of UN and Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade (EIF) under the World Trade Organization (WTO).

UN continued to support government in promotion of an enabling environment for Basotho Diaspora to contribute to the national development. The National Diaspora policy was launched by Prime Minister.

Youth empowerment and community engagement - UN supported the Ministry of Small Business Development in the commemoration of the 2021 International Women's Day, by running a campaign through a docu-series that profiles women business leaders, their challenges and experiences especially due to the COVID-19 impact.



In collaboration with the private sector, UN is implementing a supplier development and value chains development project aimed at building national capacities to improve production quality, quantities and to advance economic growth of the agriculture sector. The project has completed a supplier development model as a strategic catalyst to transform selected horticulture and livestock value chains to be more resilient, green, and self-sufficient. The model has also recommended a variety of green and digital technologies that will be piloted in 2022 to integrate technology in agriculture targeting youth and women.

UN collaborated with government ministries and the private sector to promote adoption of Global Good Agricultural Practices (Global GAP) to enhance opportunities for participating in local and regional markets. 50 local experts from the government ministries, academia, private sector and farmers have been capacitated to acquire internationally recognized certification to provide technical support to farmers on adoption of food safety standards as part of national and institutional capacity building.

UN supported the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture to implement a project on plastic-life cycle management to promote sustainable environment and consumption relative to plastics and expose opportunities for livelihoods derivative from the sustainable management and use of plastic. A notable achievement was the launch with the Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture, private sector and civil society of the weekly “plastic free day” campaign to promote advocacy for a plastic free society

reduce plastic waste and promote use of more sustainable products to help protect our environment. The campaign aims to raise awareness on the plastic pollution challenge in Lesotho as well as influence behaviour change to reduce use of commercial single-use plastic carry bags. Unfortunately, the experiment faced challenges with retailers refusing to increase the number of days from Wednesday only, citing lack of legal instruments to support the initiative. The campaign is a country wide initiative where stores in the districts and those with branches across the country are taking part. Every Wednesday, retail stores do not issue plastics to customers after purchases have been made. Grants have been awarded to youth, women, men and People Living With Disability (PLWDs) to enhance their capacities on work around plastic repurposing and recycling, migration, Sustainable livelihood for returnees, destitute migrants. The UN Lesotho also supported the annual Lesotho Science and Maths competition themed around plastic waste management carried out in five districts (Mokhotlong, Leribe, Berea, Maseru and Quthing) with 47 schools taking part in the competition composing of 14 primary and 33 post-primary schools.

The UN continued to support youth empowerment, provide an opportunity for decent jobs and transformation of their lives to be self-employed rather than risking being exploited or becoming the victims of human trafficking. Skills training was provided to youths of which 160 graduates from the skills training have formed a company and started business in manufacturing and catering.



Under the reintegration of returnees into the community of origin, UN intends to provide community development projects in five migration affected communities in five districts. The feasibility study was done in the identified communities, and the proposed idea are apiculture, layer production, vegetable production, fish production, and food processing. The implementation took place towards the end of 2021.

Technology and innovations - The online learning platform, the Learning Passport, has been developed and content that includes audio and video lessons covering Grades 1 to 11 has been uploaded (206 audio lessons and 54 video lessons). 2,206 teachers have been trained on how to create content on the platform and discussions on zero-rating of the platform to allow access to learners both in and out of school are ongoing with the mobile network operators. The digital skills modules targeted for adolescents have been developed and will be uploaded on the Learning Passport once the review has been completed.

Small-holder farmers and private sector – UN with support of GLOBAL G.A.P. as one of the highly recognized international food safety consultancy firms to increase national capacity for adoption of safe, socially and environmentally responsible farming practices has provided capacity building and complementary teaching aids for 178 pilot farmers on adoption of good agricultural practices and food safety standards, agribusiness and marketing principles. Majority of these farmers have adopted some of the recommended practices and are recognizing improvement in their production and this is contributing towards improved livelihoods, and it is also strengthening their resilience against economic shocks.

UN supported the smallholder farmers groups in the districts of Mohale's Hoek and Quthing to access existing markets in the mentioned districts for their surplus production of a variety of vegetables and pulses. Development of bylaws and constitutions for the registration of these farmer groups was also initiated in the reporting period with support from the Ministry of Small Business Development and Cooperatives.

UN is providing support to vulnerable food-insecure people in the three southern districts (Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing) through engagement of community and household assets creation activities. The household level assets include vegetable production, small stock rearing.

For dual purposes of consumption and sales, bee keeping, savings clubs to accumulate capital for inputs for homestead projects. Community projects include brush control, land rehabilitation, soil and water conservation.

In support of the Government's initiative of creating employment through commercialized farming, UN procured a total of 18,000 fruit trees worth LSL 756,000.00 for establishment of orchards across the three operational districts (Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing).

To assist Smallholder Farmers (SHFs), selected individuals and organised groups that have suitable and enough land to produce fruit trees were buoyed to establish orchards and engage them in group marketing for their varying produce.



Food insecure communities and smallholder farmers have been trained on smart agricultural practices to facilitate vegetables production for markets throughout the year using tunnels, green houses and newly introduced planting technologies and improved seeds that can withstand extreme weather conditions.

In response to drought exacerbated by the COVID-19 situation, UN provided drought emergency assistance in Thaba-tseka, Mokhotlong and Maseru districts that ended early June. The assistance was targeting rural and urban community councils using cash and commodity voucher modalities. Each household received USD 54.75 per month and in the rural areas, the assistance was administered through a network of 139 local retailers.

In the urban councils where markets are functional, equivalent of cash was offered and beneficiaries redeemed the cash through Vodacom Mpesa mobile money agents to allow beneficiaries the flexibility to buy other foods and non-food essential items. A total of 50,752 (26,391 women and 24,361 men) people were assisted in June and the total amount injected into the local economy through this response in the month of June is USD 955,507.00 (Equivalent to LSL 13.6 million).

As a response to malnutrition which is rife in the rural councils, the voucher included nutrient-dense food items to improve the dietary diversity of nutritionally vulnerable groups such as children, pregnant and lactating women, people living with HIV & AIDS, hosted by targeted households.

Investments in wool and mohair production increased returns for farmers. Management of assets and access to shearing facilities were improved allowing quicker and more equal access. Fodder was distributed with UN support at discounted price to allow farmers to maintain their productive assets despite COVID induce economic constraints.

Outcome 3.2: By 2023, the people of Lesotho use natural resources in a more sustainable manner and the marginalized and most vulnerable are increasingly resilient.

Private investment in the energy sector – Through UN support, 8 concession agreements were signed between the government and one energy developer for development of mini-grids that will generate electricity for rural off grid communities in the five mountainous districts of Lesotho. The financing agreements are worth a total amount of US\$480 000. 7 Village Energy Centres were established and operational in 5 districts, selling renewable energy technologies including energy efficient stoves, solar lamps and other solar powered devices and accessories. Facilitation of renegotiation of Concession Agreements between Ministry of Energy and Meteorology, and the energy developer enabled access to additional resources worth about USD15 million as blended capital from European Union and the United Kingdom.



Notable progress has been made in developing institutional capacities and improving the governance of natural resources for the benefit of rural communities that depend on ecosystem services for their livelihoods. Under the leadership of the Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation and in collaboration with critical technical ministries like agriculture, water and environment; communities in different agro-ecological zones have been supported to diversify and sustain their livelihoods through engaging in climate smart and conservation-based production initiatives.

This is increasingly building resilience to climate change by adopting sustainable land and water management practices that protect the fragile ecosystems like wetlands and rangeland, which are critical in supporting their livelihoods.

Approximately 20 hectares of range lands were improved through managing invasive species and soil conservation measures. 6 conservation structures covering 13858m³ were constructed to rehabilitate gullies and 215 metres water diversion structures to manage and control soil erosion were completed.

60 communities were engaged in natural resources management and climate risk management activities including rangelands, wetlands and other fragile ecosystems; and 1368 Members of community groups engaged in NRM and climate risk management activities (PICSA & GAs).

Water harvesting structures in the form of roof water tanks, sand dams and check ponds were constructed to conserve and improve access to water for both domestic and agricultural use.

25 209 forest and 18000 fruit trees were planted ;1200 keyhole gardens were established for vegetable production; 4 X 4 metre shade-nets distributed to 31,000 households to protect their vegetable production from adverse weather elements (hail and scorching heat) ; vegetable seed packages (six varieties) were delivered to 10,000 households; 300 metric tonnes of maize and bean seeds distributed to 15,000 vulnerable farming households in support of this cropping season and 800 metric tonnes of potato seeds distributed to 1064 farming households to diversify their production from cereals to commercially viable and agro-ecologically suitable crops.

Energy efficient stoves were provided to 304 households participating in the Land Rehabilitation Programme. The stoves use a small amount of fuel hence discourage over harvesting of biomass and they also contribute to climate change mitigation.

Participatory Integrated Climate Smart Agriculture training was provided to over 5000 farmers to better organise their farms in view of climate changes.

19 agricultural investment projects were implemented to minimize climate change impacts on natural assets and sustain agricultural production. (Climate proofing, shade net, biogas digesters.) 101 competitive grants projects (CGP) implemented to promote climate change resilience.



Climate awareness raising & communication campaigns were designed & implemented with 1058 beneficiary households; 858 farmer beneficiaries attended climate change awareness raising forums.

Smallholder farmers contributed five percent (5%) of the 635 metric tonnes of maize meal procured from the local miller for the school feeding programme.

24MT of fodder seeds (8 different grass and fodder seeds) procured to promote supplementary/stall-feeding and reduce pressure on rangelands.

22 portable water systems have been constructed and are supplying communities with clean water in Mohale's Hoek; 64 Agricultural Investment Projects were funded to increase the adaptive capacity to climate change; 94 targeted sub projects have received climate proofing funds for construction of shade nets, tunnels, water provision (mainly through boreholes).

Nine hundred and eighty-three (983) members of community groups were engaged in Natural Resource Management (NRM) and climate risk management activities (PICSA- Participatory Integrated Climate Services for Agriculture).

A total value of USD 1,063,002 in cash grants was provided to 6456 vulnerable households that were participating in the creation of household and community-based assets during the lean season period.

Trained and facilitated national market linkage forum 116 people (55 men and 61 women) who produce and those who buy agricultural products in Lesotho.

Communities were supported with skills to enhance sustainable food production including permaculture principles and practices that led to establishment of 20 Permaculture gardens in Mohale's Hoek.

UN supported with the development of the climate change communication strategy which was completed in 2021 and is awaiting validation by the government through the Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS) department.

The Ministry of Forestry Range and Soil Conservation was supported in establishing a Socio-Economic Unit which is critical in informing the design of new programmes and monitoring the effectiveness of ongoing initiatives. Necessary technical capacities including assessment of cost benefit analysis have been developed for this unit.

Key personnel were recruited to provide technical support in revising land cover atlas and updating baseline information in six priority sub-catch for the Integrated Catchment Management programme. The Mohale's Hoek district team that included line ministries and NGOs supported were supported to develop adaptation plans, through participatory local-level planning, under Local Climate Adaptive Living (LoCAL) mechanism.

A total of USD 2 840 589,64 was invested in 121 smallholder agriculture projects aimed at increasing the efficiency and resilience to climate change of smallholder production through a demand-led approach. Measure included climate proofing of production systems (shed nets, water access, improved inputs).



Fifty-two (52) teachers (31 females & 21 males) from various schools in the Mhale's Hoek district trained on efficient management of shade net structures that have been installed at various schools. The knowledge gained will be translated to learners. The produce from the shade nets is complementing school feeding.

65 (38 males & 27 females) community councillors including the inter-council committee on management of shared natural resources were trained on governance and management of natural resources and government officers were trained on climate variability and climate change induced threats on agriculture.

50 officers that included project field officers, District Irrigation Officers, District Nutrition Officers, District Crops Production Officers and Agricultural Technical Officers from 10 districts were trained on climate modelling and production systems outlooks, conducted by the University of Cape Town.

287 farmers were trained in production practices and/or technologies (ratio formulation) to improve animal feeding practices ; Fifty-two (52) Shearing Shed Association members were trained on viable enterprise development (business plans, income generating activities and record keeping); Nineteen (19) youths received training in wool and mohair processing, product design, and bookkeeping.

The Government through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security has been supported to undertake a situational assessment on Post-Harvest Losses in cereals, vegetables including root and tubers, pulses and fruits and vegetables, through which recommendations on post-harvest management technologies that smallholder farmers can implement will be made.

UN supported the development of the Soil and Water Conservation Policy that will enable government to provide a technical leadership in the implementation of soil and water conservation programmes.

Early warning systems

The health sector was supported to develop the multi-hazard response plan that provides a framework for the health sector response to health-related emergencies. The plan outlines the early warning mechanisms, activation of rapid response teams, processes for conducting rapid risk assessments, coordination mechanisms under different scenarios, and processes for escalating the response from the lowest to the highest level of the national response mechanisms and how to deactivate the response.

Draft contingency plans were developed for thirteen prioritised hazards (antimicrobial resistance, COVID-19, road traffic accidents, rabies, flooding, measles, anthrax, shigellosis, highly pathogenic influenza, heavy snowfall, drought and Ebola).



Humanitarian support was provided to the returnees and other vulnerable populations in migration affected areas. Furthermore, UN generated evidence on migration flows in four target districts (Mohale's Hoek, Mafeteng, Quthing, Qacha's Nek) which will inform preparedness and response plan in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important to note that returnees and seasonal migrants continue to cross over to South Africa both through official and unofficial borders.

Human interest story:

Developing Lesotho's first ever electronic Farmer Registry

It is a sunny afternoon in Berea, a district west of the capital Maseru. Ramokhitlane Matlapaneng, a data collector, is at 'Me Letuka's home to collect data of her household including, the names of all the family members, area of residence and the kind of farming they do - livestock rearing or growing crops. He has four more households to cover before he wraps up the day. He and his team each register at least 10 households a day.

The information gathered and recorded electronically will be used to create the first ever Lesotho National Farmer Registry under the project technically and financially supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and food security.

"First of all, the government did not have a database of all the farmers in the country, and without data you cannot make any informed decisions. The new electronic registry will help us to identify who does what and where. For instance, we will know how many farmers are in substance farming, diary, pig-gery and other agricultural commodity value chains," said Maoala Khesa, National Project Coordinator from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security.



Key Challenges

The COVID-19 pandemic made us rethink our approach to programme delivery. With a drive to 'stay and deliver', in 2021, we continued with remote work which was challenging, both for the UN in Lesotho and our partners. Technical support was provided to our government counterparts and implementing partners to overcome the gaps in technological infrastructure. In the first part of the year, regulations and measures implemented to contain the spread of COVID-19 partially prevented implementation of activities.

Delays in implementation, delayed delivery of supplies, restrictions of movements, localized flooding that destroyed roads and infrastructure and affected the accessibility of roads in some areas, and limited internet access in the communities affected emergency outreach in the field. Food deliveries to facilitate wet-feeding within pre-school centers were suspended since centers remained closed due to COVID-19. As a result, the nutritional challenges faced by under 5 children could not adequately be addressed.



The pandemic has significantly reduced fiscal space to finance development expenditures, both within the Government of Lesotho and among multilateral donors. As resources were redirected to the COVID-19 response, there was a paucity of funds for long-term programmes in many sectors, such as nutrition. Due to limited funding some planned crisis response beneficiaries were not reached.

The pandemic has also revealed major weaknesses in Lesotho's national food system including its vulnerability to external threats and disruptions.

On the governance side, managing and eliminating conflict of interest among stakeholders on national reforms leading to prolonged consensus building process and fatigue remains a key challenge to the national dialogue and reforms implementation. Lesotho remains politically volatile with politicization of the key institutions mandated to oversee national dialogue and reforms process such as the National Dialogue Planning Committee and the NRA as well collapse of coalition government and political wrangles in the government.

In terms of combatting illicit financial flows, there remains great potential for Lesotho to investigate and prosecute money laundering, as well as ensure the forfeiture of proceeds of crime. Although some capacity is being enhanced through Lesotho's participation in the Asset Recovery Inter-agency Network of Southern Africa, more work remains to be done, particularly with law enforcement, the judiciary, prosecution and the FIU.

SGBV continues to be prevalent across Lesotho. A 2015 UN report was called Lesotho "the Rape Capital of the World" and a 2020 Netflix docuseries on Lesotho prisons indicated that 45% of inmates were there for rape and sexual assault. Unlike other prisons around the world, rapists are not separated from the general population (for fear of reprisals from other prisoners), indicating the level of tolerance for SGBV in Lesotho.

Disturbingly, Lesotho also ranked 6th highest in the global homicide rate in 2021.

Key lessons learned include the importance of prioritizing community engagement based on both global best-practice and the culture of consultation in Lesotho, especially through participatory social mobilization and engaging young people to increase the impact of interventions.

Investments in capacity building are essential for strengthening institutions, supporting communities and enhancing resilience. Where internet access exists, digital solutions emerged as the best way forward for everything from communications and coordination to cash transfers; however, this is seriously challenged by the lack of access to electricity for 55% of the population.

The value of communicating has never been clearer – both with government and other development partners to keep abreast of developments and regularly discuss bottlenecks, as well as with staff and other partners to maintain cohesion. The year underscored the importance of partnerships with the Government, international organizations, donors, civil society, the media, the private sector, communities and key actors on the ground.



2.3 SUPPORT TO PARTNERSHIPS AND FINANCING THE 2030 AGENDA

The UN system, in partnership with the Ministry of Development Planning and the Ministry of Finance, mobilised funds from Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) to implement the joint SDG Fund project to support Lesotho in establishing a functional and sustainable integrated planning and Public Financial Management ecosystem that contributes to accelerated achievement of SDGs targets and the NSDP II. In line with the priorities of the NSDP II, the joint programme aims to support the Government of Lesotho to achieve private sector-led economic growth and employment creation, by facilitating creation of conducive policy environment, strengthening PFM processes, providing platforms for dialogue and generating evidence for private–public collaboration.

In 2021, the project completed a gender sensitive Development Finance Assessment (DFA) and produced the INFF roadmap. The report has recommendations for the financing strategy which will be used to inform financing dialogues in preparation of the financing for development framework for Lesotho.

A Medium Term Expenditure exercise was also initiated in October 2021, where three sectorial Ministries relevant to children (Education, Health and Social Development) have embarked along with the Ministries of Planning and Finance in a journey that should leave the country with a functional Medium Term Expenditure Framework.

The collaboration between the Government of Lesotho and the UN system has led to the revision of the Lesotho Partnership Policy. The policy is an important milestone in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 17 on Partnerships on the implementation of the SDGs. Another important milestone is that the UN system supported the development of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Policy. The policy defines the role and entry points for participation of civil society organizations in development processes. In other words, the two policies provide mechanisms for improved cooperation between government with all development partners including CSOs towards financing and implementation of national priorities and the SDGs; and address the challenges of aid effectiveness and fragmentation of development efforts. In pursuit of UN principle of “leaving no one behind”, the UN system partnered with the disabled people organizations and their federation to ensure that persons with disabilities are included in development process and enjoy benefits that accrue from such processes on equal basis with the non-disabled counterparts. The partnership resulted in persons with disabilities having representation in COVID19 coordinating and decision-making structures of the Government.



2.4 RESULTS OF THE UN WORKING MORE AND BETTER TOGETHER: UN COHERENCE, EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

The UN communications group collaborated to develop the One UN Communications strategy aligned to the UNDAF (2019-2023), the NSDP II strategic pillars, the AU Agenda 2063 and the SDGs.

Joint communication efforts proved effective with the Communications Group having produced quarterly newsletters which showcased the work and impact of UN programmes to the people of Lesotho and served as a means of amplifying the voices of the people we work for, the beneficiaries. The newsletters were mainly distributed online to a wide range of stakeholders and audiences including UN staff members, government, civil society organizations, development partners and private sector. Offline, the newsletter was inserted in "Lesotho Times" the largest media outlet in Lesotho with over 500 000 subscribers and distributed throughout all ten Lesotho districts. Five issues of COVID19 situation updates were produced, these are informational products which update the public and other stakeholders on the UN's COVID19 response programmes and interventions monthly.

Interagency communication was further bolstered through the publication of human-interest stories to the new UN Lesotho website, together with integrated social media sharing to the UN Lesotho twitter and Facebook, both accounts with a growing followership of over 19 000.

With the 2030 Agenda of Sustainable Development being at the core of the work we do, the UN communication group launched an SDG action campaign for schools in three high schools, engaging over 500 learners in Maseru and Mafeteng districts through joint efforts as agencies together presented SDG lessons. The SDG learning sessions were aimed at promoting awareness among learners and proving a better understanding of the SDGs, realizing that schools are important stakeholders in catalyzing the sustainable development agenda for 2030. The schools were further provided with UN Lesotho branded SDG learning materials for the use of both teachers and learners which also enhances the visibility of the UN widely at community level.

The Operations Management Team capitalised on increasing Long Term Agreements (LTA) so as to maximise on economies of scale thereby increasing business efficiencies with 11 LTAs used in 2021.

In pursuit of utilizing green energy in line with Smart UN Facilities and the SDGs, UN Lesotho was selected last year for the development of a business case document on a solar photovoltaic (PV) panel solution for the UN House in Lesotho.

Power Consumption Monitoring & Measuring devices (PCMM) and Grid Analyzers were installed to measure the consumption of the main line, that measures the entire UN Compound,



each floor within the building and the generator line. Given the inaccuracy of the data from the PCMM, the data from the Grid Analyzer was used to build a load profile, this keeping in mind that the current office occupancy is at only 30%. With support from the UN Green Energy Team, a Business Case was prepared using data gathered from information on local energy resources, and project objectives. This Business case provides findings for the UN Country Team to make a well-informed decision regarding its future energy system.

The proposed solution is a 55 kWp solar PV system which covers a renewable fraction of around 32.8% and generates a total of approximately 102 051 kWh/year of energy. The switching to renewable energy has strong environmental incentives.

The proposed system can save approximately 58.6 tonnes of CO2 emissions yearly, effectively reducing the carbon footprint and burden on the environment. This supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, while also promoting green energy solutions and inspiring local communities to adopt similar solutions. The UN Country Team will explore further this option in 2022.

2.5 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

UN expenditure by outcome

		UNDAF Outcome	2021 Available resources	Expenditure	Delivery Rate (%)
Outcome 1:	Good Governance	Rule of Law and Human Rights, Access to Justice	6,821,275	5,724,659.47	84%
Outcome 2:	Sustainable Human	Capital Development	27,115,611	20,514,729.57	76%
Outcome 3.1	Inclusive and Sustainable Economic Growth	Improved Food Security and Decent work	16,703,826	10,015,569.76	60%
Outcome 3.2	Resilience	Climate Change and Natural Resources	13,885,681	10,383,371.20	75%
Total			64,526,393	46,638,328.00	72%



CHAPTER 3

UNCT KEY FOCUS FOR NEXT YEAR

The current UNDAF ends in December 2023 with the new Cooperation Framework (CF) to commence in January 2024. The development of the new Cooperation Framework commences in 2022 with the evaluation of the UNDAF and the preparation of a Common Country Analysis to inform the design of the CF. This transition from an UNDAF to a Cooperation Framework will require the UN system in Lesotho to strengthen coordination as ONE UN, in partnership with the government and in consultation with civil society, the private sector and communities. This engagement will commence from the UNDAF evaluation to the design of the CF.

Direction of the key results for 2022 are in the following areas;

Elections support and national reforms - In 2022, the government of Lesotho will hold their elections. The Kingdom of Lesotho has a long history of political instability and security concerns. Following election-related violence in 1998 that required intervention from the South African military, Lesotho's election model was changed from first past the post (FPP) to a Mixed Member Proportion (MMP) system that enables multi-party representation.

Under the constitution, the elections should take place between September and October 2022, and Parliament should be dissolved 3 months prior. There is a risk that politicking will continue throughout 2022 and erode public sector delivery. UN will continue its support to the government for free and credible elections.

Climate adaptation and food security - Lesotho is highly vulnerable to the impact of climate change.

The increasing frequency of droughts and floods, which have in turn increased the frequency of landslides, land degradation and soil erosion,

have had a disastrous impact on the livelihoods of many Basotho, in particular those living in rural areas and dependent upon subsistence agriculture. From 2017 to 2020, agricultural yields in Lesotho steadily declined, whilst food prices steadily rose due to climate change-induced droughts and floods, high input prices and, more recently, COVID-19. Climate smart agriculture should be intensified to build resilience in the drought-prone agriculture sector.

The purchasing power of the rural population (71% of the population) has been eroded, income opportunities lost and food security has deteriorated due to climate-change induced declines in food production.

Youth Unemployment - The lack of a thriving private sector has in turn resulted in limited employment opportunities, substantial labour emigration, brain drain, and a high dependence on remittances, whilst also reducing public revenue streams.



Unemployment is estimated to stand at 25% in 2020, but is particularly high for young women (41.5%) and young men (31.2%). Support to the growing MSMEs sector through addressing technology, finance product quality and product market challenges should be elevated to enable entrepreneurs to be competitive in the face of the opportunities from the AfCFTA.

Affordable and clean energy - According to the 2021 Sustainable Development Report, major challenges remain in the attainment of affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), in particular major challenges remain in access to electricity and access to clean fuels and technology for cooking. There is a significant rural-urban divide in access to electricity; 75.8% of urban households have access to electricity, but only 32.2% of rural households. Further, rural access to electricity is prone to declines, perhaps due to the impact of climate change on weak infrastructure.

Lesotho has significant potential to generate additional green energy. The Kingdom's high altitude (ranging from 1,400m to over 3,480m above sea level), clear skies, high sunshine hours (3,211 per annum, or 8.8 hours a day), high levels of solar radiation (estimated to be between 5,700MJ/m² and 7,700MJ/m² per annum) and mountainous terrain provide a natural advantage to develop solar, hydro and wind power. The development of standalone renewable energy systems should be prioritised for affordable off-grid solutions to rural communities.

Gender inequality continues to threaten Lesotho's development trajectory.

Women are under-represented in politics and the private sector, particularly at senior levels. More damaging still, gender-based violence is prevalent throughout society and has increased throughout the pandemic.

Fragile economic base not able to create jobs and government revenue: 2021 showed that the economy of Lesotho is fragile and depends on few economic sectors. While textile and diamonds performed satisfactory, lower transactions from SACU affected government budgets which in turn led to lower investments in made. UN will require close support to GoL in its ambitions to improve the economies performance to generate more revenue for required investments and create jobs for youth and rural people.

Agriculture picking up in few areas but lags bigger productivity gain: Agriculture remains the back-bone for rural Basotho and more than 70% of the population rely on it as source of their livelihoods. Productivity, diversification and resilience remain low on average.

Export is limited to a few farms and commodities and mostly dominated by wool and mohair. UN will require to work with key ministries on improved farm-level productivity, diversification and on-farm investments, while equally supporting private sector taking a stronger role in service provision and access to markets for smallholders.



