

<b>Denmark Lesotho Network</b>	<h1>Lumela.dk</h1> <h2>DLN – Newsletter</h2>	<b>Nr. 4</b>  <b>November 2004</b>
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## What is Denmark Lesotho Network?

The NGO Denmark Lesotho Network (DLN) was founded in 2002 by former Danish development workers in Lesotho and other good friends of the tiny mountain kingdom in Southern Africa. DLN aims at supporting NGO's in Lesotho in their work to develop civil society. DLN uses its network of people and organisations in Lesotho to pinpoint beneficiaries of DLN's support – and to keep an eye on that funding is used according to agreements made. DLN wishes to enhance knowledge of the living conditions in Lesotho and to seek funding from foundations, business enterprises and organisations for actual projects in Lesotho.

### Membership of DLN

Anyone, who can support the aims of DLN, can achieve a membership. Members contribute to support initiatives in Lesotho that develop and better living conditions in the country. Members will receive an electronic newsletter four times a year and be invited to DLN's annual general assembly. The cost of a membership is 100 Danish kroner yearly.

For membership contact cashier Karen Steffensen, tel.: +45 97578252, e-mail: [karen.steffensen@mail.dk](mailto:karen.steffensen@mail.dk)  
DLN's address is: Denmark Lesotho Network, C/O Helga Højsager, Asylgade 16, DK-5000 Odense C, Denmark

**Homepage: [www.lumela.dk](http://www.lumela.dk)**

## News from DLN's Executive Committee

### Annual General Meeting 2004

The Denmark Lesotho Network's Annual General Meeting 2004 was held on 18<sup>th</sup> September in Horsens, Denmark. After the chairperson's report there was a discussion about the information work of DLN and the handling of applications received from organisations in Lesotho. It was pointed out that there has been some progress in the work of DLN but that things could have gone faster. An important observation was that the contact with Lesotho has unfortunately been somewhat sporadic which calls for a strengthening of the network in Lesotho. The organisational structure of DLN was found to be too bureaucratic and too slow in working forward. It was generally agreed that the structure of the organisation should be changed so that the Project Identification Group and the Fund-raising Group become one. The members were very motivated for discussing the future work of DLN and showed a great interest in strengthening the organisation. But getting into real action is another thing. The part of elections was difficult, since only

few of the present members found themselves able to commit time for DLN work. After a while the following people were elected:

Executive Committee:	Karen Steffensen, Helga Højsager, Daniella Hansen, Karina Ruby
Deputy members:	Ninne Ildvedsen, Karsten Lund
Auditing:	Claus Løschenkohl, Preben Eskerød
Project-team:	Claus Løschenkohl, Karsten Lund, Laurids Green
Information-team:	Michael Hansen, Peter Rathmann, Karina Ruby, Keld S. Nielsen
Party-team:	Anne Andersen, Peter Rathmann, Ulla Abildtrup

Read the minutes in full on the DLN homepage <http://www.lumela.dk/> under Minutes, Sept.04.

Latest update (Nov. 2004):

Unfortunately one of the members of the executive committee, Daniella K. Hansen, is leaving Denmark for Cairo in Egypt. We wish her good luck in Northern Africa. This means changes in the committee, only two months after the AGM. None of the deputy members are able to commit time for committee work at present, which means the executive committee consists of three persons now.

## **Groupcare.dk**

The former chairperson of DLN, Keld S. Nielsen, has established a forum for DLN members to debate on the internet. Groupcare.dk is a free host for group-chat-rooms, and the group called Denmark Lesotho Network is meant for members of DLN as a forum for discussions and debates about the activities of DLN and other issues of interest for the DLN members. You have to be invited by one of the members of the group to be able to participate – if you haven't got an invitation already, you can drop an email to Keld Nielsen [keld.s.nielsen@kochsgadenet.dk](mailto:keld.s.nielsen@kochsgadenet.dk) and get an invitation. See more about Groupcare on <http://www.groupcare.dk/>

## **Change of language**

At the AGM it was decided to change the language of the DLN-newsletter and the homepage from Danish to English. This is one step on the way to increase the element of networking with Basotho. It was agreed that even though some of the members in Denmark may find it difficult to read everything in English, it would be more important to meet the needs of our partners in Lesotho. The aim is to use English as the main language in the newsletter and the homepage, but there might appear a few articles in Danish now and then.

## **Applications**

At the moment DLN has four applications from NGO's Lesotho. The executive committee has looked into all applications and decided on the further process. To qualify the work we are doing, the applications will undergo a process whereby the members of the committee have delegated the work among themselves to contact the respective NGO's, explore expertise and help from former DW's, who know the particular organisations and field they are operating in. The procedure will be followed, and as soon as we have the needed information the applications will proceed to the project-committee for further assistance towards financial support.

A brief description on the particular applicants and what they apply for:

Lesotho Child Counselling Unit (LCCU) is a NGO working at community level to protect the rights of orphaned and vulnerable children. They provide temporary place of safety by a family or community member for children who are victims of sexual abuse.

The organisation applies for financial support, approximately M 48.000 (= ca. DKK 48.000)

The objectives for the workshops are to educate and train groups of volunteers. The volunteers will be able to assist the children and also empower community members to change the present situation in their areas. Subjects as basic counselling skills, children's rights and how to identify abused children will be some of the main focus items in the workshops.

The LCCU has responded to the requested information. At the moment we are waiting for their constitution. As soon as we receive the document the case will be handed over to the project-committee.

Chaplin Athletics Development Club (CADC) is an athletics club in Maseru for young talented runners and other athletes. The aims of the club are to prevent crime and drug abuse among children, to identify and support talents from disadvantaged families, and to fight against poverty and HIV/AIDS. CADC applies for financial support to buy running shoes and track suits, approximately M 44.400 (= ca. DKK 44.400).

Many of the best runners in Lesotho are members of CADC, and the coach Mr. Chaplin Mokete Mpomane went to Athens with a team of athletes to represent Lesotho at the International Olympic Games this year. In Athens Mr. Chaplin took initiative to get in touch with the Danish National Coach of Athletics, Mr. Lars Nielsen, and told him about their connection to Denmark via their Danish friend Karina Ruby (who did a bit of training with them while she was living in Maseru).

According to an email from CADC to Karina Ruby the conversation in Athens had also been about CADC getting some support from Dansk Atletik Forbund. When she emailed Mr. Lars Nielsen about this, he seemed to be a bit surprised, not really remembering any talk about support. Dansk Atletik Forbund does not have money to donate for supporting third world athletes but they could be willing to support in other ways than financially.

DLN is now working on finding a way to get support for CADC, either financial support or material support in the form of running gear.

Rural Selfhelp Development Organisation (RSDA) is an organisation of farmers in the western part of Lesotho. RSDA supports small scale farmers on improving their farming methods with the purpose of increasing their living standards. They have applied for financial assistance to run a large project, which seems to be a bit overwhelming for DLN to go into. We have instead suggested RSDA to come up with an application for a smaller part of the project. DLN is in a dialogue with former DW at RSDA, Anders Hedegaard. He has provided useful advises on how to initiate the co-operation with RSDA.

## **News from Lesotho**

### **Looking for a major face-lift – Lesotho**

*By Lawrence Keketso*

While the Kingdom of Lesotho celebrated its 38<sup>th</sup> Independence on Monday October 4, 2004, Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili made yet another challenging announcement that may see the country having to dig back into the dark political past. The suggestion is to change the present National Flag as well as the National Anthem.

The main reasons for the government's desire to change both the flag and the anthem are purely political being that the present flag was imposed by the military government following the 1986 coup de tait, while the national anthem is said to have been brought about by the former colonial masters at the time of independence in 1966.

Whilst the colours of the national flag fully corresponds to the national motto of "Peace, Rain and Prosperity", Mosisili said time was ripe for the nation to revisit the national flag with a view of replacing the traditional shield emblazoned on the flag with the more appropriate Basotho hat.

He said the Basotho hat or *Mokorotlo* distinguishes Basotho from all the nations of the world while the shield on the present national flag was used by many countries in the African continent on their flags.

He also called upon the Basotho nation to revisit the national anthem saying that it did not properly project the sense of nationhood and the pride of Basotho as a nation.

Mosisili said it was high time that the nation considered improving the lyrics of the national anthem or change it completely since it was composed by foreigners who did not understand the situation and the peculiarities of Lesotho as a country.

The Lesotho Independence National Flag, which was Blue, Green, Red with a white Basotho Hat was changed by the government of Major General Lekhanya after the 1986 military coup which had deposed the then dictatorship government of Chief Leabua Jonathan which had ruled by the iron fist since 1970.

It is not the first time that the government of Lesotho has tried to make changes on the national flag since the country went back to multi-party democracy in 1993. The first attempt was in 1994, but had to be aborted as it created and contributed to the then constitutional crisis in the country.

With the new suggestion aboard, fresh political contestations are beginning to mount up and could erupt into a brand new feud for the country.

However, as suggested by some political analysts, the new mixed member parliament in Lesotho could bring about a surprise turn in the way that Basotho settle their disagreements. "With almost all the political parties represented in Parliament, the new system has leveled the ground for debate. Everybody is onboard, so why would anyone throw a stone from outside?" asked a political commentator during recent debates.

The Basotho nation have already adopted the national vision for the Year 2020, and that is believed to have changed a lot of thinking amongst political divisions, coupled with the many socio-economic challenges that the country is already facing.

This is the fourth year that the country has been experiencing one of the hardest droughts with crop yields and moisture much below normal. The HIV/AIDS prevalence is also very high with an estimated over 30 per cent of the population of just over two million infected.

*Lawrence Keketso is editor of the Maseru based weekly paper Mopheme*

## **Queen Calls for Establishment of an Arts Council**

A somewhat subdued sixth Morija Arts and Cultural Festival was held at Morija over the Independence Day long weekend. The reasons advanced for the low turn-out the ban on the sale of alcoholic drinks and the fact that it is being held at almost the same time as the Mangaung Arts and Cultural Festival (MACUFE), a long time crowd puller.

Queen 'MaSenate Mohato Bereng Seeiso, closing the Festival on its last day, advanced yet another possible cause; a reduction in the sponsorship, which caused organizers to cut the celebrations down to three instead of the usual four days.

The Festival has however been hailed for continuing to afford Basotho from all over the world opportunity to take celebrate and pride in their culture, their nationhood and oneness. It is an occasion allowing citizens of this country to forget about past differences brought about by differing political outlooks, which had torn the country apart.

Continuing the theme of the festivities since their launching six years ago, King Letsie III urged Basotho to take a new oath to foster understanding, peace and love from within families, villages, work places and the country as a whole because "love and understanding are the foundations of peace and prosperity within a nation."

Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment, Ms Lebohang Nts'inyi, paid tribute to Morija as having established itself as the fount of education in the country. It is continuing along this tradition but this time also promoting Basotho culture, she said.

The Queen also said the Festival, in its role as the country's "cultural train", should also help Basotho think about establishing an Arts Council to help drive the promotion of people's artistic creations both locally and internationally.

The Festival also drew visitors from Zambia, Botswana as well as the MEC for Sports, Arts, Culture, Science and Technology of the Free State Province of the Republic of South Africa, Mr. Mpho J. Mafereka.

07 October 2004, <http://www.lesotho.gov.ls/>

## **World Bank funding to mitigate water shortages**

*- A report from UN's Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) Oct. 2004*

Lesotho is to receive a US \$14.1 million loan from the World Bank for the extension of water and sanitation services to peri-urban and under-served urban neighbourhoods.

The Lesotho Water Sector Improvement project aims to "ensure adequate supply of clean water and sanitation services for consumers living in the Lowlands," the Bank said in a statement. "It will finance needed infrastructure for increasing urban water supply in the capital, Maseru, paying particular attention to fast-growing peri-urban and industrial areas."

One component of the project will focus on policy implementation and capacity building in the Ministry of Natural Resources; another will focus on the extension of Maseru's water supply, including selected civil works to increase water treatment and expand the distribution system.

Lesotho's public water utility, the Water and Sanitation Authority, will also sign a performance agreement with the government.

"This agreement is aimed at strengthening the commercial, financial and technical operations of this public utility agency, as well as its autonomy and accountability," the Bank commented.

Access to water is a critical part of Lesotho's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), and the Bank noted that the current "unreliability of urban potable water supply presents a disproportionate burden on the poor, who are more likely to pay higher rates for water through informal markets".

One of the most effective strategies for helping the poor under the Lesotho Water Sector Improvement project would be to expand the current distribution system, with particular emphasis on extending the water supply and appropriate sanitation services to peri-urban and under-served neighbourhoods.

"Generally, the most effective and efficient way to serve the urban and peri-urban neighbourhoods is through a technically sound and financially viable utility," the Bank suggested.

*IRIN is part of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*

## **Food crisis deepens**

*- Excerpt from a report from UN's Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN) Oct. 2004*

Crop production in the mountain kingdom of Lesotho has steadily declined over the past three years, mainly due to drought and the impact of HIV/AIDS.

Factors such as a shortage of arable land and rising unemployment have also aggravated the situation, with an estimated 68 percent of the population living in poverty.

Earlier this year, following another poor harvest, the government of Lesotho made an appeal for food aid to feed some 600,000 people. It is now predicted that up to 948,000 people will experience food shortages - nearly half the population, according to unofficial estimates.

Aid agencies, including the World Food Programme (WFP), had hoped they would be able to end their emergency operations in the country this year. WFP had planned to shift its focus to a post-crisis recovery operation by 1 July but has had to extend its emergency operation (EMOP) to June 2005.

"For the third consecutive year, bad weather has led to drastically reduced agricultural production and severe food insecurity," WFP said.

Tiny Lesotho's dependence on South Africa has made the country highly vulnerable to the effects of rationalisation in their neighbour's mining industry. Thousands of Basotho miners have been retrenched over the past few years, resulting in shrinking household incomes, while the cost of living has increased simultaneously.

"The adult population HIV prevalence rate of 31 percent adds to the poverty profile of the population and reduces the availability of productive community members over time, while also increasing the care burden," WFP noted. The orphan population also increased from 85,000 in 2001 to 91,000 in 2003, according to a Disaster Management Authority/WFP survey.

"We see the impact of HIV/AIDS on food security, although the hectareage of land not planted due to HIV/AIDS has not been established, the number of orphans is rising all the time. The official population is 2.2 million, but it's estimated at 1.8 million, and UNFPA [UN Population Fund] predicts that it could go down to 1.6 million (due to HIV/AIDS)," said Mads Lofvall, WFP deputy country representative for

Lesotho.

He added that "we could have a situation where 10 percent of the population are orphans", and warned that HIV/AIDS was one of the "biggest challenges facing the humanitarian community in Southern Africa".

"But because it does not have Darfur kinds of images, it's not considered with the same seriousness. I have a feeling that people talking about HIV/AIDS in Southern Africa are being seen to be crying wolf," he said. "The concern for WFP is that people should understand the link between good nutrition and HIV/AIDS."

Lofvall told IRIN that hopes for a recovery following this year's harvest depended on favourable rains, which usually arrived by August, and the availability of agricultural inputs. But very little rain had fallen by early October and fields in the rural areas were not being worked.

"If the warm weather continues, the soil will dry up again, preventing the farmers from preparing the ground and, therefore, another year of low harvest output can be predicted. However, it's still a little too early to determine the impact, as a lot will depend on what is happening over the next month [October]," said Lofvall.

"Having said that, it should also be noted that yet another year with low production will reinforce the bad cycle of people having to resort to depleting assets [such as livestock] for the fourth consecutive year," Lofvall explained. The big question was whether "the poor households still have any disposable assets to overcome the food shortages".

When WFP's current EMOP ends next year, the agency plans to move into a Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO), which will run for three years.

"From a WFP point of view, we will monitor the situation closely ... within the [regional] PRRO there is an unallocated emergency reserve, to be used in countries where things are not picking up according to the predictions. In case Lesotho will need to continue the emergency assistance after June next year, due to yet another failed cropping season, we will request an allocation from this emergency window," Lofvall added.

As WFP's relief activities end after the next harvest in June 2005, he said, "we hope to focus on food-for-work activities and target HIV/AIDS affected families [and] orphans, and promote the prevention of mother-to-child-transmission [of HIV]. As we are giving food to pregnant and nursing mothers, it is a good opportunity for UNICEF [UN Children's Fund] to reach people - [for] UNAIDS as well".

## **IMF issues final poverty reduction loan**

*- Report by IRIN September 2004*

Lesotho's poverty alleviation programmes have been given a vote of confidence by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), although the country continues to struggle with an ongoing food crisis.

The World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that around 600,000 people will require food aid in the tiny mountain kingdom, where people's ability to withstand shocks has been diminished by deepening poverty. The agency warned earlier that poor winter harvests and the late onset of planting-season rains could only increase food aid needs in the months ahead.

Last Friday the IMF announced that it had released the last tranche of a US \$36 million Poverty Reduction and Growth Facility (PRGF) arrangement. The PRGF is the IMF's concessional lending facility for low-income countries.

Progress on the development of Lesotho's full Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), a blueprint for tackling poverty in the country, had been satisfactory and had provided a "sound basis for continued access to IMF concessional assistance", the IMF said in a statement.

"Lesotho has made commendable progress under the current PRGF-supported programme. Economic growth has been above the average for sub-Saharan Africa, macroeconomic stability has been largely achieved, and the public debt has declined. Macroeconomic performance has remained strong, despite the continuing drought and an unfavourable external environment," IMF deputy managing director and acting chairman, Takatoshi Kato, was quoted as saying.

The textile and clothing industry continued to be the key engine of growth, but the IMF noted that "drought has worsened the humanitarian situation and a substantial part of the population might need food assistance".

"The authorities remain committed to pursue sound macroeconomic policies and to accelerate the implementation of reforms. This will be important to meet the substantial challenges Lesotho faces over the medium and long term in its quest to raise economic growth, reduce poverty and improve social conditions," Kato said.

These challenges included increasing global competition following the phasing out of export quotas on textiles and clothing, a decline in miners' remittances from South Africa, the fragile food situation, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Particular emphasis needed to be placed on maintaining fiscal discipline, Kato added.

## **Public Works Minister Moerane has passed away**

The Minister of Public Works and Transport and a Member of Parliament for Koro-Koro constituency, Mr. Mofelehetsi Salemon Moerane, passed away at the New Kensington Clinic, Johannesburg, on Tuesday, 28 September 2004, after a long illness, the Prime Minister, Mr. Pakalitha Mosisili, has announced.

The country will be in a state of mourning, with national flags flying at half mast from Tuesday, 5 October until his burial at Mokema on Friday 8th October.

A memorial service in his honour will be held at the 'Manthabiseng Convention Centre in Maseru on Wednesday, 6th October, starting at one o'clock in the afternoon, according to the Office of the Government Secretary.

Meanwhile in a procession led by The Prime Minister, army officers, Members of the two houses of Parliament, Cabinet Ministers, the Chairman of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), the Clerk of the Senate, members of the ruling LCD and the public were at the Maseru Border Post on September 30 to escort the remains of the late Minister to the MKM Funeral Parlour in Maseru.

May His Soul Rest In Peace.

Read more about the late Minister's profile on <http://www.lesotho.gov.ls/cabinet/> 30 September 2004



## **Three SA cattle rustlers killed**

*BY THULO HOEANE , Public Eye*

The ongoing scourge of cattle rustling in the district of Mokhotlong took another bloody turn when three rustlers from the province of Kwazulu-Natal were killed by villagers from the village of Ts'oana Makhulo, writes the Maseru based paper Public Eye.

According to Captain Tanki Mothae, the public relations officer of the Lesotho Defence Force a group of rustlers from Kwazulu-Natal in South Africa, raided Ts'oana Makhulo village, sized 17 head of cattle and fled towards the South African border.

No sooner had the raiders disappeared into nearby hills and an alarm was raised. Village men then pursued the rustlers but as night fell, the rustler hid in the rugged mountain terrain. The villagers retreated but kept a close watch on the area.

The following morning at dawn, the villagers resumed their search and spotted the rustlers. A fierce gun battle then ensued and three rustlers were killed and another was apprehended and is now in police custody in Mokhotlong. All the stolen cattle were recovered.

Meanwhile cattle rustling within Lesotho itself has intensified in the last year or so, despite the passing of the Stock Theft Act of 2000 last April, which imposes stiff penalties of up to 20 year's imprisonment for repeat offenders.

Stock theft has become a national disaster and last week the National Security Task Committee visited Koro-Koro and issued a stern warning that lawlessness would not be tolerated. The Koro-Koro area has seen an escalation of stock theft often accompanied by violence and death.

In Roma and its environs cattle rustling has reached alarming proportions and this week the animal pound at the Roma charge office was full of cattle, although there were also some sheep, goats and horses.

Trooper Sibanda, a member of the stock theft unit at the Roma charge office, told me that most of the impounded animals had been found grazing in open rangelands abandoned and further said that as a result no one would be charged and that the animals will have to be returned to their owners.

*Public Eye, <http://www.publiceye.co.ls/> Nov. 2004*

## **Cultural Village to be Set Up at Thaba Bosiu**

A cultural village is to be built, as part of an overall strategy to conserve places of heritage and indigenous plants, in the the Thaba Bosiu foothills.

In a statement in the National Assembly on November 10, Minister of Tourism, Environment and Culture Ms. Lebohang Nts'inyi, said the two phased project would begin as soon as the feasibility study, currently underway, has been completed.

The first phase will involve the building of a cultural village that will become a sort of museum of Basotho culture for coming generations as well as for tourists. There would also be a cultural centre with live performance of traditional dances and songs, as well as a repository for indigenous plants and herbs.

A study on where the village should best be situated and how much it would cost was on-going, the Minister said.

The second phase will be the development of Thaba Bosiu plateau, she said, highlighting the fact that the building of the cultural village corresponds with Government's project to develop and preserve the plateau, the virtual birth place of the Basotho nation.

There were also plans to develop and preserve other places of heritage such as Major Bell's Tower at Hlotse in Leribe; Fika-le-Mohala, near Mazenod and another place in the Botha Bothe district as venues where Moshoeshoe I used to hold public gatherings.

Other tourist attractions such as Ha Baroana at Machache where Bushmen paintings are found have already been protected and are able to give Basotho opportunity to display their handcrafts. Another similarly protected area is Moyeni, Quthing where Dinosaur footprints are found. Here the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Environment is working in conjunction with the Quthing Wildlife Development Trust.

The Ministry is also collaborating with the Maluti Drakensberg Transfrontier Project to develop and improve Menkhoaneng, where the history of the Basotho can be said to originate, and other places such as Ts'ehlanyane, and Liphofung.

<http://www.lesotho.gov.ls/> 10 November 2004

Lesotho government launches parliamentary reforms programme:

## **Deepening the roots of democracy**

*By Lawrence Keketso*

In its efforts to deepen democracy in Lesotho, the government has accepted a reforms programme that will see major changes in the way that the country's highest constitutional institution having to operate in a more democratic and accountable way.

One of the major challenges that have been facing the country's parliament was the way in which the people's representatives could be held accountable and do their work in a more efficient way.

Parliamentary reforms will also seek to include more women in parliament at the decision making and policy making position.

The reforms for the Lesotho parliament, if adopted will form a bedrock that will make the country's legislative house more responsive and adaptive to changes, without having to wait for signs from the society of disillusionment and loss of trust.

Speaker of the National Assembly, Ntlhoi Motsamai said Monday at the launch of the parliamentary reforms programme that the envisaged changes are considerable and will constitute a framework for reviewing operations on a continuous basis.

The reform process is meant to complement Government's goal of high performance in the public sector, said the Speaker, adding "By virtue of the nature of its mandate, the reforms Programme will introduce significant changes in the relationship between citizens and parliament. It will also usher in, innovation in the way the business of this country's Legislature is conducted".

Among the objectives of the Lesotho parliamentary reforms programme, it is to create a foundation that will form the bedrock for sustainable democratic practices in Lesotho; to empower parliament as a custodian of values and principles of democracy to fulfill its constitutional mandate of legislation, oversight and representation; to raise the visibility and image of parliament; and to increase public participation in parliamentary processes.

The 30 member reforms committee, build from seven cabinet members, 19 MPs from the National Assembly and four Senators is expected to produce a report that will among others also look into the

present practices and procedures in relation to public business, as well as reviewing the processes of including women in Parliament.

Speaking at the launch, Lesotho's Prime Minister, Pakalitha Mosisili was also grateful that efforts are being channeled towards achieving real democracy in Lesotho.

"It is my sincere belief and conviction that efforts must be constantly made to review our democratic institutions, processes and practices so that they can command public confidence, promote participation, are more representative and capable of working for the common good," he said.

While he admitted that the task facing the reforms committee was huge, he also appealed to its members to work through the task and not fall away until the journey has been completed.

"We are faced with a great challenge - a choice between remaining stunted or growing and flourishing as a key institution of the land; a choice between people-centred institution or allowing ourselves to be separated from our constituents;.....In other words, we must vindicate and, indeed, justify our people's belief in the efficacy of Parliament and parliamentary democracy," said Mosisili.

He also said the reforms will give the nation a deserved privilege to engage in debate that will enhance the development of a long-term vision for parliament.

In his speech at the launch, the President of the Senate Chief Sempe Lejaha made a special request to the entire nation and other stakeholders to open their doors and cooperate whenever the reforms committee seeks audience with them.

"This parliamentary reforms process could not have come at the right time," said Lejaha who added that with so many challenges facing the people of Lesotho, such as poverty and starvation, stock theft and the high rate of HIV/AIDS and its effects on the nation, Basotho are looking towards parliament for solutions.

He concluded by urging the members of the committee to work together and in harmony to achieve success.

Lesotho has already availed its for the African Union (AU) peer review with an announcement made by the Prime Minister last month. The peer review mechanism under the AU is meant for member states to help each other realize true democratization as well as cleaning up the old practices that undermined the rule of law and human rights.

The reforms programme which is expected to take 24 months is also supported technically and financially by cooperating partners such as UNDP, AWEPA, DIFID and DCI, amongst others.

*Check for news from Lesotho on the homepages of local media and the government:*

<http://www.lesoff.co.za/news> <http://www.publiceye.co.ls/> <http://www.lesotho.gov.ls/>  
<http://www.leo.co.ls/>

## News from members

Dear member. You are very welcome to participate with an article, an opinion nor just any comment on the work of DLN. Just send it on e-mail to someone in the information group:

Karina Ruby:	<a href="mailto:karinaruby@bigfoot.com">karinaruby@bigfoot.com</a>
Peter Rathmann:	<a href="mailto:petula.rathmann@mail.dk">petula.rathmann@mail.dk</a>
Michael Hansen:	<a href="mailto:haslund@cool.dk">haslund@cool.dk</a>
Keld Nielsen	<a href="mailto:keld.s.nielsen@kochsgadenet.dk">keld.s.nielsen@kochsgadenet.dk</a>

**KHOTSO – PULA – NALA**