

News from the DLN

Atter er et år ved at gå på held og det fjerde nummer af Lumela.dk dette år er udkommet. Denne gang er der meget læsestof, og meget handler om den politiske uro i Lesotho, men der er også blevet plads til andre spændende artikler – og der er rigtigt mange billeder at se på. Rigtig god læselyst, glædelig jul og godt nytår. På gensyn til næste år.

Dato for generalforsamling 2015 er 7. marts. Den bliver igen afholdt i Århus. Sæt x i kalenderen!



Chris, the guide from Morija on the cliff of dinosaurs' footprint

Another year has passed by and the Fourth edition of Lumela.dk is out this year. This time there are many articles about the political turmoil in Lesotho, but there is also room for other interesting articles - and there are many pictures to look at. Happy reading, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. See you next year.

The next part in Danish is about the tourist trip next year October to Lesotho.

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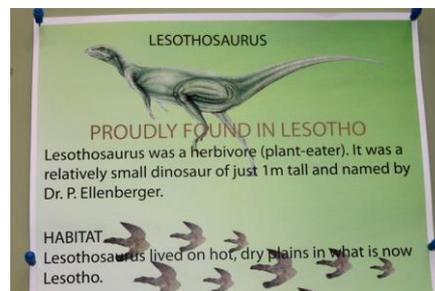
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Membership of DLN



Nyt om kultur/naturen til Lesotho i efteråret 2015!

Som vi skrev i sidste nyhedsbrev, er Denmark Lesotho Network (DLN) i gang med at planlægge en rejse til Lesotho i efteråret 2015.

Planlægningen er så godt i gang, at vi vil løfte sløret for flere detaljer ;-), så hvis du synes, at programmet ser superspændende ud, så sæt kryds i kalenderen, tæl sparepengene og send en melding til os på 1@askw.dk, mathiasen1@hotmail.com, eller aan@nrdsn.dk om din interesse. Så er du sikret en plads på forhånd. Kender du nogen, du tror, vil være interesseret, fortæl endelig om rejsen og giv detaljerne videre.

En aktiv oplevelsesferie i det sydlige Afrika

Hovedoverskriften er en aktiv kultur- og naturen rejse. En rejse som også vil indeholde spændende aktiviteter, der går ud over hvad en 'normal' eksotisk ferierejse kan tilbyde. Vi skal møde de lokale, høre om Lesothos historie, opleve enestående natur og fascinerende kultur og selvfølgelig også slappe af og nyde lækker lokal mad.



Både program og fakta er foreløbige, da ikke alle aftaler er på plads endnu, men i grove træk, ser planen således ud:

Fakta:

- Vi rejser lørdag den 3. oktober 2015 og er tilbage lørdag den 17. oktober 2015
- Prisen bliver omkring kr. 15.000,-. Prisen inkluderer flybilletter, fælles transport, udflugter, overnatning og udvalgte måltider
- Vi skal være min. 10 og max 20 personer for at rejsen bliver en realitet

Program:

- Lørdag den 3. oktober afgang fra København med kurs mod Lesotho

- Søndag den 4. oktober ankommer vi til Maseru i Lesotho. De næste 4 nætter tilbringer vi i hovedstaden Maseru. Vi skal opleve Maseru og undervejs deltage i åbningen af et Community Parliament, på byrundtur, besøge en børnehave, en pigekostskole, det hellige bjerg og meget andet. En tur til dinosaursfodspor, kan det også blive til.
- Torsdag den 8. oktober sætter vi kurs mod Ramabanta og oplever undervejs Lesothos smukke landskab. Fredagen byder på landsbyrundtur og frokost i Ramabanta.
- Vi tilbringer fredag og lørdag i det pragtfulde Semonkong. Vi skal se det sydlige Afrikas længste vandfald. Der vil være mulighed for vandretur, tur i 4x4 eller en tur på hesteryg!
- Efter en betagende køretur ankommer vi til Sehlabathebe National Park, hvor vi tilbringer søndag og mandag. Parken, der er Lesothos første nationalpark, blev etableret i 1969 og ligger i Maloti Mountains, som er en del af Maloti-Drakensberg World Heritage Site.
- Tirsdag bevæger vi os mod Durban. Undervejs overnatter vi i KwaZulu-Natal, Sydafrika i en dejlig lodge og ankommer til Durban dagen efter. Onsdag og torsdag oplever vi Durban ved det Indiske Ocean. Durban er den største by i KwaZulu-Natal provinsen med godt 3,3 mio. indbyggere. Her er det et must at spise indisk mad! Der kan købes forskellige ture f.eks. til Vally of a 1000 Hills med zuludanseopvisning eller en tur med fokus på Mandela og Gandhi, eller der kan gås på opdagelse, bades og slappes af.
- Vi forlader Durban i løbet af fredag eftermiddag og lørdag er vi tilbage i København – mættet af indtryk fra Lesotho og Durban.

På gensyn!



Don't worry. Business as usual!

By: Signe Marie Hedegaard

On a very clear and sunny day with the blue, blue sky that is SO characteristic for Lesotho, and the sun setting over the yellow, burned grasslands of Free State, we arrived at the Maseru Bridge border post. Smiling Basotho wearing border uniforms – or just coats, sweaters, blankets and their characteristic variety of headgear such as Basotho hats, colourful scarves and caps met us this Friday afternoon, when we finally reached this very

Don't worry – business as usual!

Af: Signe Marie Hedegaard

Skyfri blå, blå himmel, som den kun findes i Lesotho. Klar luft og en sol, der så småt var på vej ned over de svedne græssletter i Free State. Og smilende basothoer klædt i grænseuniformer – eller bare jakker, trøjer, tæpper og deres så karakteristiske og mangeartede hovedbeklædninger lige fra basothohatte og farvestrålende tørklæder til kasketter og strikhuer mødte os denne fredag eftermiddag, da vi endelig nåede grænsen ved

familiar gate (barelegged and sandal-clad!) "Lumelang", broad smiles and a "Don't worry. Business as usual!" was the answers to our greetings and questions about the current political situation of the country.



Since August 30th, when we heard that Prime Minister Thomas Thabane and some of his allies had fled to South Africa due to a (seemingly) attempted military coup, we had crossed our fingers and hoped for the best. The attempted coup seemed to be the latest development of the escalating political disagreements that had gone on in Lesotho for a while. The Coalition Government that was a result of the 2012 elections had faced huge and ongoing challenges, and in June Thabane called for a prorogation – or a "time out". Now the conflict (when simplifying) seemed to have developed into a power struggle between the army and the police. A week previous to the attempted coup we/the DLN project group had applied for funding from CISU for a Joint Finalisation trip to Lesotho to complete our project application together with our partner RSDA. Anders and I were to spend week 42 in Maseru, in case we had an approval of our application. And on October 2nd we had very good news:

1. CISU had approved our application and would sponsor our finalisation trip
2. Encouraged by the SADC countries and with Cyril Ramaphosa, Deputy President of South Africa, as

Maseru Bridge (i sandaler og bare ben). "Lumela", brede smil – og så et "Don't worry. Business as usual!" som svar på vores lettere bekymrede spørgsmål til "rigets tilstand". Lige siden den 30. august, hvor vi kunne læse på diverse netaviser, at Prime Minister Thomas Thabane m.fl. var flygtet til Sydafrika efter et attentatforsøg mod ham og hans partifæller, havde vi krydset fingre og håbet det bedste. Et militærkup-forsøg syntes at være seneste træk i de eskalerende uenigheder, der havde hersket i Lesotho hen over sommer og sensommer. Koalitionsregeringen, som kom til i 2012, har haft svært ved at finde fælles fodslag, og i juni anmodede Thabane Kong Letsie om en "prorogation" – dvs. "time out". Og nu syntes konflikten meget forenklet at have udviklet sig til en magtkamp mellem hæren og politiet.



Ugen inden kupforsøget havde vi i RSDA-gruppen indsendt vores ansøgning til CISU om bevilling til en "Joint Finalisation" trip. Anders og jeg havde sat uge 42 af til en færdiggørelsestur i tilfælde af et positivt svar, og den 2. oktober fik vi – inden for en time - to RIGTIG gode nyheder.

1. CISUs bevillingsudvalg havde godkendt vores ansøgning og bevilliget penge til en færdiggørelsestur.
2. Tilskyndet af SADC landene og med den sydafrikanske vicepræsident Cyril Ramaphosa, som mægler, var Lesothos

counsellor, the Government of Lesotho had agreed on reopening Parliament on October 17th

regeringspartier endelig nået til enighed om at genåbne parlamentet den 17. oktober.

Through telephone calls to RSDA and various other sources we were ensured that safetywise it was now recommendable to travel to Lesotho and do a joint finalisation. Our flight tickets were bought on a very short notice, and on October 10th we arrived in Lesotho in the late afternoon. Tired from a long journey we enjoyed the sunset on the veranda of Lancers Inn in the very heart of Maseru. The sounds of Maseru were familiar and we were overwhelmed by the very hospitable and friendly atmosphere that welcomed us. "Business as usual!" – or??

We soon realised that Maseru was quieter than usual during nights. Visiting one of Maseru's (almost empty) restaurants on our second night in town, we were told by the staff that during the latest month, nightlife in Maseru had been reduced to a minimum. This impression was confirmed to us throughout the week we spent in Maseru. People seemed to avoid going out after darkness due to the political instability, and the explanation seemed logic. After repetitive clashes between (again simplified) the army and the police forces, the police seemed to be "out of function" during nighttime. So, after all, the state of security in Lesotho was actually affected by the political situation.

On Saturday, our first day at work at RSDA's office in Maseru, we (also) had the best welcome we could imagine. Suddenly – after a warm and sunny morning, clouds gathered, the temperature fell, and a familiar and loud drumming sound interrupted our meeting. PULA! The fact that it was the first real rain-shower in Maseru for 7 months, almost led to a celebration. The rain lasted throughout the afternoon and was replaced by a heavy hail-storm when we sat evaluating the day at dusk. Now we really felt "at home".

Vi fik via diverse telefonopkald til RSDA og andre kilder bekræftet, at det var sikkerhedsmæssigt forsvarligt at rejse til Lesotho og skrive på vores ansøgning sammen med vores partner RSDA. Billetterne blev købt 1 uge før afrejsen, og den 10. oktober kunne vi – trætte efter den lange rejse - nyde vores første aften på verandaen på Lancers Inn i hjertet af Maseru. Byens lyde var velkendte, og den fantastiske venlighed og gæstfrihed, der mødte os overalt, var overvældende. "Business as usual" - og så alligevel?? Der gik ikke lang tid, før vi fornemmede, at Maseru var mere stille efter mørkets frembrud, end vi husker byen. Da vi lørdag aften spiste middag på en næsten tom restaurant i byen, fik vi bekræftet, at bylivet om aftenen i Maseru havde været reduceret meget den seneste måneds tid. Omsætningen i restaurationsbranchen var tydeligt påvirket af den politiske ustabilitet. En situation, der blev bekræftet af de øvrige steder, vi besøgte i løbet af ugen. En af de logiske forklaringer var, at efter de gentagne småopgør mellem hæren og politiet (igen en meget forenklet gengivelse), der alle var foregået hen over natten, var politiet praktisk talt "out of function" om aftenen/natten. Sikkerheden i landet var med andre ord ringere end normalt efter mørkets frembrud.

Om lørdagen - vores første arbejdsdag hos RSDA - fik vi (også) den bedste velkomst, man kan forestille sig. Pludselig efter en formiddag med højt solskin og vel omkring 25 graders varme, trak skyerne sammen, og en højlydt og velkendt trommen på taget overdøvede vores møde. PULA!! At det var den første rigtige regn i Maseru i 7 måneder, udløste nærmest en lille fest. Regnen fortsatte hen over eftermiddagen, og da vi efter fyraften sad og evaluerede dagen, afløstes regnen af ærtstore hagl. Nu følte vi os for alvor både velkomne og "hjemme".

We spent our day off – Sunday – on preparing the coming workshop and an afternoon trip to Malealea Lodge. On this trip we really had an impression of the farmers' desperate need for water. The fields had been ploughed and were ready for a new season of crops. Only the rain was missing.



Also in the village of Malealea, which is probably one of the most visited tourist destinations in Lesotho (eco-tourism village), we had reports of a stagnation in visitors due to the political instability. Several foreign tourist companies had cancelled their trips to Lesotho this season. Financially, the political situation obviously had a negative impact on many different sectors in the country.



During our week in Lesotho we talked to several friends and acquaintances, who also left us with the impression that "business as usual" might not be a totally precise description of the atmosphere in the country.



Vores day off – søndag - brugte vi på forberedelse af de kommende workshops og en eftermiddagstur til Malealea Lodge. Her fik vi for alvor en fornemmelse af, hvordan bønderne utålmodigt havde ventet på vand. Jorden var pløjet og klar til en ny vækstsæson – kun regnen manglede. Også i landsbyen Malealea, som vel er en af landets mest besøgte turistattraktioner (økoturisme-landsby), kunne man berette om færre besøgende pga. den politiske ustabilitet. Flere udenlandske selskaber havde simpelthen aflyst deres rejser til Lesotho dette efterår. Indtjeningsmæssigt får den aktuelle politiske situation således konsekvenser for mange sektorer.

I løbet af ugen mødtes vi med flere venner og bekendte, som også gav os det generelle indtryk, at "business as usual" måske ikke var helt dækkede for atmosfæren i landet. Den menige basotho følte sig måske ikke decideret utryk ved situationen, da konflikten primært udspillede sig på magthaver- og myndighedsplan, men tilliden til demokratiet havde tydeligvis fået et knæk, og der var ingen, der troede på nemme løsninger.

De 4 resterende arbejdsdage blev lange og frugtbare. Kerneaktiviteterne og omdrejningspunktet for vores besøg var to workshops for RSDAs medlemmer og interessenter. Tidligere har vores besøg oftest indeholdt besøg i de regioner og landsbyer, hvor RSDA har aktiviteter. Denne gang var de involverede parter inviteret til Lehakoe Conference Centre i Maseru. Den første dag

The civil Mosotho might not feel threatened personally, since the conflict primarily seemed to involve rulers and authorities. However, the trust in democracy had definitely deteriorated, and nobody seemed to believe in easy solutions.

Our 4 remaining days of work were efficient and fruitful. The core activities and main focus of our visit were two full day workshops for members and stakeholders of RSDA. Whereas our previous visits have often included trips to the regions and villages where RSDA operate, the venue for these workshops was Lehakoe Conference Centre in Maseru. On the first workshop around 50 smallholder farmers, heads of local farmer groups and representatives for the district farmer groups and umbrella organisations – dairy people among others – participated. The workshop was lead by Tjonane Matla, who is a former farmer and now founder and editor of the only farmers' magazine in Lesotho, SILO.



Tjonane Matla, who is a very committed and inspiring facilitator, opened the workshop with a pep-talk on the importance of farmers "speaking with one voice". He then presented a film, produced by SILO, showing the importance of agriculture in Lesotho throughout history. The background for and the objectives of our present project, which is the 3rd phase of DLN's partnership with RSDA, was presented by director of RSDA, Me Thulo. And finally Anders gave an account of the history and structure of the Danish National

mødte ca. 50 deltagere op.



"Smallholder" landmænd, formænd for de lokale landmandsgrupper og repræsentanter for distrikts-landmandsgrupper og paraplyorganisationer - herunder mejerifolk - fra de forskellige distrikter i Lesotho. LCN var også repræsenteret. Workshoppen blev ledet af Tjonane Matla, som er tidligere landmand og nu grundlægger og udgiver af landets eneste landbrugsmagasin, SILO. Tjonane Matla, som er meget engageret og inspirerende, indledte bl.a. dagen med en pep-talk om vigtigheden af at "stå sammen" som faggruppe, hvorefter han viste en film om Lesothos landbrugs betydning gennem historien.



De foreløbige tanker bag og målsætninger for vores projekt, som er 3. fase i

Board of Agriculture, Landbrug og Fødevarer. Hereafter the participants were divided into groups who defined strengths, weaknesses and challenges within the 4 areas: increased productivity, market linkage, legislation and lobby/advocacy.

The groupwork was rounded up by presentations from each group on flip-charts, and finally each group appointed a representative who was to present their results at the workshop the following day. We were very impressed by the whole setup. The enthusiasm and commitment of the participants was enormous; everybody had an opinion and wanted to share it.

The second workshop was for politicians (representatives from national and local governments), other CSOs and NGO's (Action Aid in Lesotho, Australian Volunteers International, GROW, People for Change, UNICEF, TRC etc.). This workshop was lead by Olivia Gumbo – People for Change advisor, who also works part time for RSDA. The agenda was very similar to the one from the previous workshop. Though, this workshop had a more political approach to the different issues. Again the results of thorough group discussions, which we would make use of during our finalisation of our application, were presented by the end of the day. Another very constructive workshop with 30-35 committed – and networking - participants!



The two workshops provided us with an abundance of outcome and input for our final

projektsamarbejdet mellem RSDA og DLN, blev præsenteret for forsamlingen af RSDAs direktør, Me Thulo, hvorefter Anders gjorde rede for historien bag og strukturen i vores danske organisation ”Landbrug og Fødevarer” som visionær inspiration. Resten af dagen blev brugt på gruppearbejder, hvor deltagerne i grupper diskuterede styrker, svagheder og udfordringer i forhold til 4 interessefelter: øget produktion, markedsforhold, lovgivning og lobby-/fortalervirksomhed. Deltagerne afsluttede dagen med gruppevis at præsentere deres resultater og konklusioner på flip-overs. Vi var meget imponerede over engagementet. Debatten var heftig, og sidst på dagen var der nærmest konkurrence om at komme til orde. Afslutningsvis valgte forsamlingen en repræsentant fra hver gruppe, som skulle præsentere dagens udbytte på den følgende dags workshop.

Den anden af de to workshops var for politikere (både regerings- og lokalrådsrepræsentanter), andre civilsamfundsorganisationer og NGO'er (Action Aid i Lesotho, Australian Volunteers International, GROW, People for Change, Unicef, TRC, osv.). Denne dag blev ledet af Olivia Gumbo – People for Change advisor, som er tilknyttet RSDA på deltid. Dagsordenen lignede den fra den foregående dag – nu blot med en mere politisk tilgang til de 4 interesseområder. Også her blev resultaterne, som skulle bruges i færdiggørelsen af vores projektformulering og ansøgning, præsenteret af grupper ved dagens afslutning. Endnu en konstruktiv dag med stort engagement – og en del indbyrdes networking – blandt de ca. 30-35 deltagere.

Med resultaterne fra de to workshops var der rigeligt med input og materiale til et par effektive skrive dage på RSDAs kontor. Overordnede mål, delmål, aktiviteter og outputs blev justeret. Og budget og monitorerings- og evalueringsplan udarbejdet. Desuden blev netværksmøder med koordinatoren for Australian Volunteers

days of writing at RSDAs office. Overall objectives, specific objectives, activities and outputs were adjusted. And a plan for budget and monitoring and evaluation was carried out. In addition to that we held (networking) meetings with the coordinator of Australian Volunteers International and Malefetsane Masasa, Director of Planning from MAFS (Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security). While we did our final writing, the staff of RSDA followed the news closely. During our last day at the office, another minister had (suddenly) been fired, and it was confirmed that the reopening of Parliament WOULD be a reality. However, the opening would be less ceremonious than usual, and the number of admitted participants reduced according to the news. When we said goodbye to our partner at the end of the day, everybody seemed to be wondering what the following day would bring.

On October 17th, on our way to the airport in Johannesburg, we heard King Letsie declare the Parliament reopened over the radio. He also encouraged his people to peace, tolerance and cooperation in the process towards the upcoming election in February. KHOTSO!



And you can hardly imagine a more relevant wish for a country and a people who still experience heavy challenges when it comes to

International og Malefetsane Masasa, Director of Planning fra landbrugsministeriet, afviklet. Mens vi sad og skrev, fulgtes nyhederne tæt på diverse netaviser af RSDAs ansatte. På vores sidste dag på kontoret blev endnu en minister (pludselig) afskediget, og det blev bekræftet, at den forestående parlamentsåbning VILLE blive en realitet, men foregå med mindre ”pomp og pragt” end vanligt og med begrænset adgang for ”udefrakommende”. Alle var spændte på, hvordan morgendagen ville forløbe, da vi tog afsked med RSDAs ansatte sidst på dagen den 16. oktober.



På vej mod lufthavnen i Johannesburg den 17. oktober kunne vi over radioen høre Kong Letsie erklære parlamentet genåbnet og tilskynde sit folk til fred, tolerance og samarbejde i processen frem mod valget i februar. KHOTSO!

Og bedre ønsker kan man vel ikke formulere for et land og et folk, der stadig er udfordret voldsomt bl.a. på deres primærproduktion og dermed størstedelen af befolkningens levevilkår. Udfordret af deres klima og ustabile vejrforhold (tørke og klimaforandringer), udfordret af vanskelige produktions- og afsætningsvilkår (manglende politisk opmærksomhed, lovgivning og støtte til landbrugsproduktionen), og nu OGSÅ på det seneste udfordret på den politiske stabilitet, demokratiet og folkets sikkerhed!

De to workshops, vi afviklede sammen med RSDA, afsluttedes traditionen tro med flerstemmig sang af nationalsangen efterfulgt af det obligatoriske: KHOTSO (peace), PULA (rain), NALA (prosperity)! Sjældent har det stået tydeligere for os, hvor vigtige de tre

their primary production and thus the living standard of a majority of the population. Challenged by its climate and unpredictable weather conditions (drought and climate changes), challenged by low productivity and weak market linkages (lack of focus, legislation and support to the agricultural sector by the Government) and now, recently, ALSO challenged on its political stability, democracy and security of its people. The two workshops we facilitated together with RSDA were both – according to tradition – closed by a singing of the national anthem followed by the final KHOTSO (peace), PULA (rain), NALA (prosperity)! It has never been more obvious to us than now how crucial the three concepts are for the small kingdom – and not least, how mutually dependent on each other they are....

News from the Board

By Anne Andersen

During this period everybody has tried to find out what the background was for the political unrest in Lesotho and whether if it was safe for DLN to go to Lesotho. At almost the same time as the last edition of Lumela.dk was published, there was an attempted coup in Maseru, where the military put the police out of action and the Prime Minister fled to South Africa. Before that DLN had scheduled two different trips: one in October where Anders Hedegaard and Signe were to visit Rural Self Help Development Association (RSDA) to finalize an application for a new project and a trip in November to visit Berea Agricultural Group (BAG) to see the water tank covers sponsored by Lauritzen Foundation. A visit to Development of Peace Education (DPE) was planned as well. The report from the project that ended in June had to be finalized together with the financial report. In addition it had to be discussed whether the political unrest in

begreber er for det lille kongedømme, og ikke mindst, hvordan de tre størrelser indbyrdes afhænger af hinanden...



Nyt fra bestyrelsen

Af Anne Andersen

I denne periode har alle forsøgt at følge med i, hvad den politiske uro i Lesotho handlede om, og om det var sikkert for danskere at tage til Lesotho. Næsten samtidigt med, at sidste nummer af Lumela.dk udkom, var der et kupforsøg i Maseru, hvor militæret satte politiet ud af spillet, og som fik premierministeren til at flygte til Sydafrika. Der var før det, planlagt to forskellige rejser. En i oktober, hvor Anders og Signe Hedegaard skulle ned til Rural Selfhelp Development Association (RSDA) for sammen med dem at skrive en ansøgning til et nyt projekt. Læs Signes artikel et andet sted i nyhedsbrevet. Den anden rejse i begyndelsen af november, som handlede om, at besøge Berea Agricultural Group (BAG) for at se de overdækninger af vandtanke, som Lauritzenfonden har sponsoreret, samt for at besøge Development of Peace Education (DPE).

Lesotho would effect the planned activities described in DPE's new project starting in July. Last but not least, the culture/nature tour scheduled for October 2015 had to be tried out. Read more about this later in the newspaper.



Zulu dancing competition

It was reported that the Prime Minister in Lesotho came back protected by the South African police and that solutions were negotiated and the population had remained calm – even the four days where there had been no functional police. It has primarily been a crisis in and around the government and Parliament and the daily life continued as usual. This means that both planned trips were carried out as anticipated – and that the DLN members did not experience any problems in Lesotho. Description of the trips can be read elsewhere in the newspaper as well as the different articles about the political situation in Lesotho.



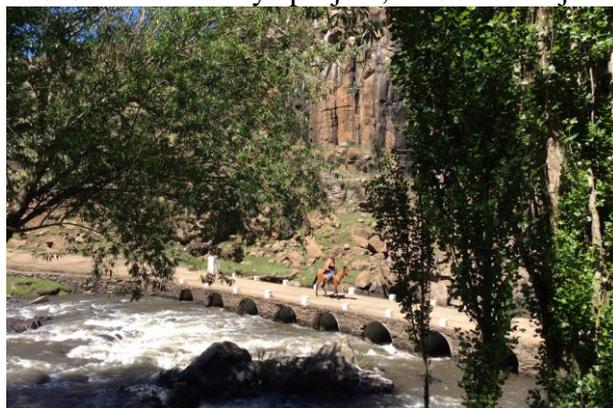
View over Morija

The date of the Annual General Meeting in 2015 is 7th March 2015.



En overdækning er bygget på vandtanken

Her skulle rapporter fra det projekt, der sluttede i juni behandles sammen med den finansielle rapport. Ligeledes skulle der styr på, om det i den kritiske politiske situation i landet var muligt for DPE at udføre de aktiviteter, der er beskrevet i det nye projekt, de startede i juli.



Semonkong

Sidst, men ikke mindst, skulle den kultur/natur tur, som er planlagt til oktober 2015 efterprøves. Læs mere om dette et andet sted i nyhedsbrevet.

Meldingerne fra Lesotho var, at premiereministeren kom tilbage beskyttet af politi fra Sydafrika, at der blev forhandlet løsninger, og at befolkningen havde forholdt sig i ro – også de fire dage, hvor der ikke havde været noget funktionelt politi. Det var fortrinsvis en krise i og omkring regeringen og parlamentet. Det daglige liv gik videre som sædvanlig. Det betød, at begge de planlagte rejser blev til noget – og der var ingen problemer for os med at være i Lesotho. Der er beskrivelser af rejserne et andet sted i

It is held again this year in Aarhus.

With these words we wish all readers of Lumela.dk a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Fruitful New Year.

nyhedsbrevet, ligesom der er mange artikler om situationen i Lesotho under nyt fra Lesotho. Datoen for generalforsamlingen i 2015 er 7. marts. Den holdes igen i år i Århus. Sæt kryds i kalenderen allerede nu.

Med disse ord ønskes alle læsere af Lumela.dk en rigtig god jul og et godt og frugtbart nytår.

Project Visit to DPE – November 2014.

By Bodil Mathiasen

Lisbet Kristensen and Bodil Mathiasen from Denmark Lesotho Network (DLN) paid a visit to Development of Peace Education (DPE) for two days in November. The purpose was to shortly evaluate project phase II “Public Participation in budgetary processes” and to find out if the planned activities in phase III “Public Participation in Governance and Development” would be able to take place under the current instable political situation in Lesotho.



The DPE team briefed us on the political situation, told us that Parliament had reopened, and that there will be a snap election set for 15.02. 2015. DPE has played a major role in debates with politicians and civil society. Several Peoples Tribunals (a role play on how different laws will influence daily life in the communities) have taken place in the past couple of months. DPE even invited ministers to very remote communities (by helicopter). The 7th Community Parliament (CP) took place

Projektbesøg i DPE - November 2014.

Af: Bodil Mathiasen

Lisbet Kristensen og Bodil Mathiasen fra Denmark Lesotho Network (DLN) besøgte Development for Peace Education (DPE) to dage i november. Formålet for projektet var at evaluere projektets 2. fase ”Offentlig deltagelse i budgetprocedurer” og at finde ud af, om de planlagte aktiviteter i 3. fase vil kunne finde sted under den nuværende ustabile politiske situation i Lesotho.

DPE orienterede os om den politiske situation. De fortalte os blandt andet, at Parlamentet var blevet genåbnet, og at der ville være et fremskyndet valg den 15. februar 2015. DPE har spillet en stor rolle i forskellige debatter med politikere og civilsamfundsaktører. Der har også fundet flere Peoples Tribunals sted de seneste par måneder (et rollespil om, hvordan forskellige love vil påvirke dagligdagen i lokalsamfundet).



DPE har inviteret ministre (i helikopter) til fjerntliggende samfund. Det 7. Community

6th, 7th and 8th of October. It was very well attended – around 300 members from Communities and 8 out of 10 invited ministers and several officials. CP was a partnership project with Action Aid and Transformation Resource Centre (TRC). CP has been documented in a video /photo session that is about to be released.



Because of the long period of unrest in Parliament and political instability DPE's work on influencing National Budget has been difficult.

When King Letsie opened Parliament 17th October he scolded the ministers of being selfish and implored them to include Civil Society in policy making.



DPE now faces some very busy months ahead (there will be no Christmas)☹. DPE was to submit a proposal to the Independent electoral committee (IEC) the very same day of our visit on voter education/monitoring voter's list etc. Besides, DPE has been approached by Open Society in Southern Africa (OSISA) to submit a proposal for Election Program. A

Parlament (CP) fandt sted 6., 7. og 8. oktober. Det var meget velbesøgt – omkring 300 medlemmer fra lokalsamfundene, og 8 ud af 10 inviterede ministre, samt flere embedsmænd deltog. CP er et partnerskabsprojekt i samarbejde med Action Aid og Transformation Ressource Centre (TRC). CP er blevet dokumenteret i en video/foto session, der snart vil blive offentliggjort.

På grund af den lange periode med uro i Parlamentet og politisk ustabilitet har DPE's arbejde med at påvirke finansloven været vanskeligt.

Da kong Letsie åbnede Parlamentet, skældte han ministrene ud for at være egoistiske og bønfalet dem om at inddrage civilsamfundet i den politiske beslutningsproces.

DPE ser frem til nogle meget travle måneder – (der vil ikke være tid til jul i år)☹. Samme dag som vi besøgte DPE, arbejdede de på en ansøgning til den uafhængige valgkommission (IEC) omkring vælgeruddannelse og overvågning af valglister mm, som også blev færdig og sendt samme dag.

Derudover er DPE blevet kontaktet af Open Society in Southern Africa (OSISA) for at fremsende en ansøgning angående valgprogrammet. En repræsentant fra OSISA havde besøgt Lesotho og DPE havde banet vejen for at de kunne møde vigtige politiske personer/civilsamfundsaktører. Vi kunne erfare at hele DPE var meget involveret i at forberede de to ansøgninger.

Siden 1. oktober har DPE fået en ny National Animator. Hun er en kvinde med solid erfaring fra NGO arbejde i Lesotho. Alt i alt oplevede vi, at arbejdsmiljøet i DPE var meget levende, og at personalet og koordinatoren var klar til at imødekomme de næste måneder med stor energi, og at gøre hvad DPE er bedst til! De sidste måneder har DPE spillet en stor rolle i medierne og er vokset til at blive en velkendt NGO i rampelyset. MO-Africa avis/radiostation har givet DPE en masse eksponering. Der blev diskuteret og besluttet, at nogle af de planlagte aktiviteter i projektets

representative from OSISA had paid a visit to Lesotho and DPE had paved his way to meet important political figures/Civil Society agents. We found the whole DPE staff being involved in preparing the two proposals.

Since 1st of October a new National Animator has started working at DPE. She is a lady with solid experience from NGO work in Lesotho. On the whole we found the atmosphere at DPE very vibrant and the staff and coordinator ready to face the coming months with energy and doing what DPE is so good at! During the last months DPE has played a major role in the media and have grown to be a well-known NGO in the limelight. MO-Africa newspaper/radio station gives DPE a lot of exposure.



It was discussed and decided that some of the planned activities in our project phase III will have to be turned into activities related to elections. There is very short time to prepare the voters so all efforts should be put into voter education, monitoring the process and work for a free and fair election!

A journey is born

Written by Anne Andersen

In the beginning of November a group of people from DLN went to Lesotho to arrange a new culture/nature trip. It has now been tried out and we have found interesting things to see and do.

3. fase kan omsættes til aktiviteter, der er relateret til valget. Der er meget kort tid til at forberede vælgerne, så alle bestræbelserne bør koncentreres om at uddanne vælgerne, overvåge processen og at arbejde hen imod et frit og retfærdigt valg!



Snak i korridoren

En rejse er født

Af Anne Andersen

I begyndelsen af november var vi en gruppe fra DLN i Lesotho for at skabe en ny kultur/naturerejse. Den er nu prøvet igennem, og der er fundet spændende ting at se og gøre. Turen er planlagt til at løbe af stablen fra den 3.

The trip has been planned to take place from 3. October – 17. October (week 41 and 42) in 2015. And you still have opportunity to come! Read more about it in the newspaper.



Exams on Morija Girls High school

People in Lesotho are very nice and even though we interrupted a school exam, we were warmly welcomed. We suddenly got the idea, that we would visit the only remaining Catholic girl's boarding school in Lesotho. The director left his desk and gave us a tour – also to some of the girls who were examined. They sat behind their laptops. The girls who were not in school also came to us and said "cool". 15 years ago they would have said "lehoa" (which means white person). We were promised we could return next year in October. When I lived in Lesotho many years ago, I had a student from the Technical School where I lived, to wash my car so he could earn a little extra pocket money. Suddenly while we were at a lodge talking about the possibility to come next year, a man approached us and he knew many things about me. I could not recognize him. Guess who he was! Yes it was my car washer, who was now a grown man. He had made a career out of being a guide for researchers, archaeologists and tourists - and he still have horses that you can rent. He had continued the same path he had started when he was a boy. It was very nice to meet him again.

til 17. oktober – altså i uge 41 og 42, 2015. Du kan komme med! Læs mere om dette et andet sted i nyhedsbrevet.

Folk i Lesotho er venlige og selv, når vi bryder ind midt i en skoles eksamen, bliver vi taget vel imod. Vi fik den pludselige indskydelse, at vi ville besøge den eneste tilbageværende katolske pigekostskole i Lesotho. Forstanderen rejste sig fra skrivebordet og gav os en rundvisning – også ind til nogle piger, der var til eksamen. De sad fordybet bag hver sin bærbare computer. De piger, der havde fri, kom imod os og sagde: "Cool". For 15 år siden ville de have sagt: "Lehoa" (hvide) Vi fik lov at vende tilbage til oktober næste år.

Da jeg boede i Lesotho for mange år siden, havde jeg en elev fra den tekniske skole, som jeg boede på, til at vaske min bil, så han kunne tjene lidt lommepenge. Pludselig, mens vi står på en lodge og forhører os om mulighederne næste år, kommer en mand hen til mig og ved en masse om mig. Jeg kunne ikke kende ham. Gæt, hvem han var! Ja, det var min bilvaskedreng, der nu var blevet en voksen mand. Han havde skabt sig en levevej ved at være guide både for forskere, arkæologer og turister – og han har stadig heste, som man kan leje. Han havde fortsat med det, han allerede som stor dreng havde startet. Hvor var det dejligt at møde ham igen.



Der er blevet bygget en ny vej tværs gennem Lesotho. Det har været svært hjemmefra at finde ud af, om den var bygget færdig, men det var den. Det er en fin tosporet asfaltvej, der snor sig gennem det skønneste landskab, og



Kefue my former car washer

There have been constructed a new road across Lesotho. It has been difficult from home to find out if it has been completed, but we could see that it was. It is a nice two-lane asphalt road that winds through the beautiful landscape, which is also the driest part of Lesotho. Around Maseru and the Southern part it has rained so much that it has flooded the fields – I have never seen so much rain in Lesotho before. "Before the rain came, it was so dry that farmers could not plow - now it's too wet" was a statement that we heard. In these times of new refugees coming to Denmark and a new refugee law, it was very interesting to meet a former refugee couple who have lived in Denmark for 14 years under apartheid, and have returned to South Africa as ANC went from being regarded as a terrorist organization to become a government party with Nelson Mandela as president.

som også er det tørreste. Omkring Maseru og sydpå var der kommet så meget vand, at det lå som oversvømmelser på markerne – så meget regnvand har jeg aldrig før set i Lesotho. "Før regnen kom, var det så tørt, at landmændene ikke kunne pløje – nu er det for vådt" var en udtalelse, vi hørte.



Inde i landet, var det hverken for vådt eller for tørt

I disse tider med tilstrømning af nye flygtninge og ny flygtningelov i Danmark, var det meget interessant at møde et tidligere flygtningepar, der boede i Danmark i 14 år under apartheid, og som er vendt tilbage til Sydafrika, da ANC gik fra at blive betragtet som en terrororganisation til at blive et regeringsparti med Nelson Mandela som præsident.



Udsigt fra Beach Hotel i Durban, hvor vi skal bo

Correction: In the article **Pitso in summer landscape.....** it was mentioned that 'Me' Makokoli was former training officer/programme officer of MS Lesotho. She was training officer/assistant programme officer of MS Lesotho.

News from Lesotho:

From Lesotho Times

Thabane, 'Maseribane' anger Ramaphosa



November 20, 2014 Lestimes Local News, News 6 comments

Premier and his coalition government partner miss crucial meeting with SA deputy president this week after attending conference in Johannesburg

Keiso Mohloli

SOUTH African Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa left Maseru “very frustrated” this week after Prime Minister Thomas Thabane and his coalition government partner, Thesele ‘Maseribane, failed to turn-up for a planned meeting scheduled for Lesotho Sun Hotel on Tuesday afternoon, the *Lesotho Times* has learnt.

According to an authoritative source privy to the issue, Mr Ramaphosa — who was appointed two months ago by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to facilitate Lesotho’s return to political stability — was supposed to meet Dr Thabane and Chief ‘Maseribane to discuss issues the two leaders allegedly raised when they visited Zimbabwean president and current SADC Chairman, Robert Mugabe, in Harare last week.

Dr Thabane and Chief ‘Maseribane, whose All Basotho Convention (ABC) and Basotho National Party (BNP) respectively, formed a coalition government with the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) led by Deputy Prime Minister Mothetjoa Metsing after the 26 May 2012 election had produced a hung parliament, allegedly pleaded with the Zimbabwe leader to give SADC’s mediation in Lesotho “a regional face” and not allow South Africa to play a leading role in the facilitation.

Although the SADC mission comprises observers from different countries such as Zimbabwe, Botswana and Namibia, South Africa provides the bulk of the staff and equipment due to its proximity to Lesotho, but Dr Thabane and Chief ‘Maseribane are said to be unhappy with the situation and the way Mr Ramaphosa’s facilitation has been going of late.

According to the source, the two partners had voiced their concerns to Mr Mugabe as they allegedly felt Mr Ramaphosa’s mediation appeared to be supporting Mr Metsing but were apparently told the South African was the ideal candidate for the job.

“When Mr Ramaphosa came to Lesotho on Tuesday, he wanted to find out what Thabane and ‘Maseribane were really not happy about concerning his mediation, and why they had not raised the issue in their previous meetings with him,” the source said.

“But the two men did not turn up as they were in Johannesburg attending some conference although they knew about Mr Ramaphosa’s visit, and how crucial it was for Lesotho’s return to normalcy.

“Mr Ramaphosa waited for them at Lesotho Sun to no avail, and eventually left around 6pm. He only met Thabane and ‘Maseribane at Moshoeshe I International Airport when he was on his way back home to South Africa and these gentlemen were arriving from their conference in Johannesburg.

“There was only time for formal greetings and Mr Ramaphosa left, saying he would return to Lesotho at a later date to discuss their grievances and also how the Maseru Facilitation Declaration and Maseru Security Accord (MSA), signed on 2 October 2014 and 23 October 2014, were shaping up. “What was even more annoying for Mr Ramaphosa was that he ended up changing his programme of the people he had to meet on Tuesday, as he waited in vain for Thabane and ‘Maseribane to pitch-up.”

The source continued: “Mr Ramaphosa later only met Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli and Lieutenant General Maaparankoe Mahao to discuss the Maseru Security Accord, but could not see Police Commissioner Khothatso Tšooana because of a mix-up of the schedule.

“But it was agreed in the meeting that Lt Gen Kamoli would go to Uganda and Lt Gen Mahao Ethiopia for their leave of absence in line with the Maseru Security Accord, while the issue of Commissioner Tšooana was to be communicated through the phone.

“You know under the MSA, Lt Gen Kamoli, Lt Gen Mahao, and Commissioner Tšooana are supposed to go to an African or Commonwealth country on indefinite leave to allow the restoration of cordial relations between the army and police before Lesotho holds snap elections in February 2015.

“These elections are the result of the Maseru Facilitation Declaration, so Mr Ramaphosa really wanted to make sure he meets with Thabane and ‘Maseribane to discuss these agreements and make sure they are on track. This is why he was frustrated when he could not meet the two leaders.

“You will also realise that Mr Metsing was not part of Mr Ramaphosa’s agenda because he has not complained about his facilitation.”

Contacted for comment yesterday, Dr Thabane said it was not true that Mr Ramaphosa was furious when he could not meet him and Chief ‘Maseribane.

“I met with Mr Ramaphosa at Moshoeshe I International Airport just before he departed for South Africa. I explained to him why we had delayed coming back from Johannesburg and he accepted my apologies. We were still on good terms when he left and he did not tell me that he was angry as you are suggesting,” Dr Thabane said.

Dr Thabane further said he and Mr Ramaphosa were leaders in their respective countries and always relate to each other with respect as demanded by protocol.

“How we relate with Mr Ramaphosa is none of anybody’s business but our own. We are colleagues and how we deal with our issues does not concern other parties,” Dr Thabane said.

“If a third party is involved, then we will have a problem because we will end up having these allegations that he was angry while he was not.”

Meanwhile, there was no immediate response from Mr Ramaphosa's spokesperson, Ronnie Mamoepa, whose mobile phone rang unanswered.

- See more at: <http://lestimes.com/thabane-maseribane-anger-ramaphosa/#sthash.Ai6pGKKH.dpuf>

From News24

Lesotho calls for expulsion of 2 SADC commanders

2014-11-19 14:15



Maseru - Lesotho has demanded the expulsion of two senior officers from a SADC police mission, accusing them of sabotaging the security of Prime Minister [Tom Thabane](#) and other top officials.

In a confidential letter to the Southern African Development Community and its lead negotiator [Cyril Ramaphosa](#) on Monday, the government expressed "certain reservations" about a South African Lieutenant Colonel and Brigadier.

"Once we request that they be immediately released from their services, it's effectively saying they are expected to be," Government Secretary Moahloli Mphaka told AFP Wednesday.

"I believe quick action will be taken," he added.

The southern African bloc deployed more than 100 police to protect Thabane and other government officials following an attempted coup on August 30, which forced the prime minister to briefly flee to neighbouring South Africa.

Specific allegations

"The handling of this issue could be a recipe for disaster," Mphaka said. "This is not meant to harm the integrity of those officers, but to protect the integrity of the SADC observer-mission."

Mphaka refused to give details of the specific allegations against the two officers, but another senior government official said the two commanders were accused of conspiring with Thabane's rivals to "sabotage the mission".

"SADC itself is doing an excellent job here, but we don't want it to be frustrated by undue influences," the official told AFP.

A third top-ranking official, Thesele Maseribane, a leader in the government's tripartite coalition, told AFP he believes his movements are being leaked by SADC to elements of the Lesotho Defence Forces.

"The issue of security is an ongoing process," he said.

SADC Head of Mission in Lesotho Fannie Phakola confirmed his office had received the letter, but declined to comment on how SADC would respond - or if the two commanders would be sent home.

Ronnie Mamoepa, a spokesperson for Ramaphosa, also declined comment on the issue.

"Communication between the facilitator and the Government of Lesotho is confidential and cannot be conducted through the medium of the press," he said.

One of the two accused South African commanders was spotted at SADC headquarters in Maseru on Wednesday morning, in uniform. But he refused comment and quickly drove off.

'Leave of absence'

SADC has been battling to resolve a deadly dispute between Lesotho's rival politicians and between their allies in the military and police.

Friday marks the end of the 21-day deadline for renegade general Tlali Kamoli to hand over full authority to his deputy and leave Lesotho for an indefinite "leave of absence."

Kamoli is accused of leading the 30 August putsch, which saw the military attack several police installations and Thabane's residence, killing one police officer.

But it remains unclear which country would take him in. Most African states have reportedly refused.

Last week, Maseribane also accused government adversaries of hiring foreign "mercenaries" and plotting to kill him and the prime minister.

Lesotho Assistant Police Commissioner Sello Mosili said his force is still investigating that claim.

"It's our belief that they're still planning these assassinations," he said.

Lesotho hunts 'assassins'

2014-11-11 05:15

Maseru - Lesotho police are investigating allegations that foreign "mercenaries" plan to kill Prime Minister Tom Thabane in a bid to further destabilise this crisis-hit nation still reeling from an attempted coup.

Senior police and government officials told AFP on Monday that government offices had been evacuated and the prime minister and King Letsie III cancelled public engagements on Sunday amid intelligence suggesting a plot.

Assistant Police Commissioner Sello Mosili said a team of perhaps 14 Nigerian and Ghanaian soldiers-for-hire reportedly entered Lesotho through the rugged, mountainous southeastern border area.

It is believed they have a stash of weapons.

"That's information that we've heard from local people in the mountains," Mosili said adding. "It's still under investigation."

Thesele Maseribane, a government minister and the third leader of the ruling tripartite coalition, said his armed South African guards evacuated him from his office on Friday, ahead of intelligence that mercenaries were on their way to kill him.

"It's not about security for me or for the prime minister, but about the security of the nation,"

Maseribane told AFP Monday. "Are my people secured? My answer is, no."

The assertion of mercenaries in this mountain enclave, which is encircled by South Africa, is just the latest chapter since a 30 August putsch that saw Lesotho Defence Force soldiers raid Thabane's official residence, forcing him to flee into South Africa.

The renegade military commander who reportedly led the assault, Lieutenant General Tlali Kamoli, has refused to surrender and is at the centre of crisis-mediation efforts led by the region's Southern African Development Community.

On 17 October, the SADC mediator, South African Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, convinced Kamoli to sign an accord that called for him to take an indefinite "leave of absence" from Lesotho, handing over control to his deputy commander.

His deadline to leave Lesotho is this coming Saturday.

Also targeting elections

Yet last week, a top Lesotho defence official accused Kamoli of several breaches - including allegedly telling troops that he's still in command, and will be back soon.

Maseribane said the mercenaries were not only targeting certain politicians but seeking to undermine elections planned for February 2015 - which the SADC had moved up more than two years as one political remedy to Lesotho's crisis.

Maseribane, who says he's now under even heavier South African police protection, pointed the blame at certain opposition politicians, accused of corruption, who ruled for 14 years before Lesotho's landmark 2012 elections saw a peaceful handover of power.

"They don't think they can win the coming elections," says Maseribane, "so they want to destabilise the whole country, creating no-go areas during the elections."

Sunday Express:

New Zealand report a good launchpad

By [thabo](#) On 21 Oct, 2014 At 09:58 AM |

By Sofonea Shale

WHEN leaders of political parties in Parliament endorsed the Southern African Development Community (SADC) brokered early-election route, many Basotho asked whether an early poll is the solution.

Before the tabling of this question, civil society had, in its political analysis, realised that what the two belligerent groups in the Lesotho's body politic believe which was then a change of guard on the one hand and the dissolution of parliament on the other, would not deliver Lesotho out of its quagmire. Though neither of these two options went through, the agreed early election, for all intents and purposes, resembles the former options. Though the original question remains, what is even more important is identifying what reforms Lesotho needs to implement.

First and foremost, the challenge in Lesotho is not necessarily lack of clarity on who Basotho want to lead them. If that was the question, elections would be a perfect solution to the problem. However, the problem is the operationalisation of the coalition government in a society whose political attitude and culture are otherwise highly traditional and patriarchal. Following the New Zealand trip where the Lesotho delegation went to learn about coalition governance that has run for almost 20 years but with world renowned political as well as government stability, a report was released.

This report contains a number of issues comparing the New Zealand system with Lesotho and thus identifying key areas in Lesotho's political system that may have to be revisited. Because the early election comes in four months and the focus now is on electoral preparations before dissolution, certain minimum reform requirements can be made if this election is to add value to the long journey of resolving the challenges ahead of Basotho.

The New Zealand report recommends the depoliticisation of the civil service. This issue is very important, not only for ensuring fairness but also, to ensure that Lesotho can progress. The report also talks about the need for the codification of steps to be followed after elections and before installation of a new government.

Those who have sharp memories will remember that there was once a time when former Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili was nearly sworn in as premier before taking an oath as a Member of Parliament.

This is just one illustration of why it would, indeed, be necessary to define such a procedure.

The New Zealand report indicates that, in the south Pacific island, coalescing parties engage in debate and discussion over policy issues with a give and take process formally facilitated. In doing so, parties identify issues which would be necessary and could as well be a hindrance in government if unclarified. The report emphasises the mechanisms for the formation and sustainability of successful coalitions.

What is even more relevant to the Lesotho situation are the sections relating to floor crossing and the vote of no confidence. The New Zealand report has been criticised for a number of reasons including that it does not really say anything that has not been said before.

While this may not be refuted, what makes this report distinct is that it has not only impressed the government of Lesotho resulting in its adoption. This means that it could be the means by which reform can be instituted. Now that only a month is left before dissolution what should be the way?

It would be prudent for the government to establish a team made up of people with different skills and backgrounds to lead a rapid reform process that would make submissions to Parliament.

This team should be able to read the New Zealand report and even consult other relevant countries like Germany, solicit citizens' input and then propose the reforms. Since it may not be possible to make all the reforms before elections, the task of the team would also be to list all the necessary reforms and then categorise them into short-terms, which would mean before elections, medium-term which would be immediately after elections and long-term which would be in the term of the next parliament. This team should be able to solicit consensus among politicians particularly the short, medium and long-term processes.

If Basotho fail on this one, they would have missed a chance to ensure this coming election results in lasting peace and stability.

Since our political leaders are so much embroiled in the melee they have roped this nation into, it would be incumbent upon Basotho to rise up and redefine Lesotho as a sovereign nation.

This means that Basotho, within their political parties, trade unions, business groups, faith-based formations, civic groups and as individuals should be ready to make their voices heard. It would also be important for Basotho to make sure that institutions like the election management body are protected and provided with necessary resources and other support to deliver free and fair elections.

What Basotho can also do is to call upon leaders to commit themselves to accepting the results of the early elections they have opted for.

- See more at: <http://sundayexpress.co.ls/new-zealand-report-a-good-launchpad/#sthash.gpGQJfvJ.dpuf>

King makes clarion call to political leaders

By [thabo](#) On 19 Oct, 2014 At 09:08 AM |

...Let us put the interests of the people before our own, says His Majesty

Bongiwe Zihlangu

HIS Majesty King Letsie III has expressed grave concern over Lesotho's prevailing political turmoil and urged political leaders not to be selfish to "attain lasting peace and stability for the country".

Addressing the First Meeting of the Second Session of the 8th Parliament with a Speech from the Throne on Friday, the King made the clarion call to a legislature filled to the brim with Members of Parliament (MPs), Senators, government officials, as well as South African dignitaries, among them Deputy President and Southern African Development Community (SADC) Facilitator Cyril Ramaphosa, that he had, over the years, realised Lesotho's political troubles were a result of "selfish leaders who put their own interests before those of the nation".

"Even now as we speak, it is clear that the problem lies with Lesotho's political leadership and not my people," said His Majesty, who was flanked by Mr Ramaphosa and the Queen, on his right and left, respectively.

"Let us put the interests of the people before our own, and instill, in our supporters, the spirit of unity, regardless of our political differences because we are one people."

The King added that since 1970, every election in Lesotho, with the exception of the 2012 poll, had resulted in conflict and deep-seated differences between political leaders, berating them for "refusing to engage one another in dialogue".

"This is caused by selfishness and the refusal to engage in dialogue where there are differences that impact negatively on pillars of democracy," King Letsie III said.

Furthermore, the King noted, these political differences, when not managed by political leaders "tend to spread to our security agencies".

"These differences also tend to affect the agencies of security such as the police and the military," the King said.

"I therefore urge that where there are differences, you must sit down and talk, as our efforts to improve democracy begin with having committed leaders in all sectors of society."

He added: "We need leaders who are selfless, put the public's interests first and are patriotic; our history proves we need progressive leadership in all sectors."

The King also said he was appealing to the leaders so that when they are going about their business in parliament "it's with the aim of improving the lives of Basotho".

Leaders of Lesotho's coalition government comprising Prime Minister Thomas Thabane's All Basotho Convention (ABC), Deputy Prime Minister Mothetjoa Metsing's Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and Sports Minister Thesele Maseribane's Basotho National Party (BNP), fell-out in June this year with the LCD announcing it had decided to enter into a new coalition agreement with the main opposition Democratic Congress (DC), when Thabane instituted the prorogation of parliament, which he had planned to open in February 2015.

Then on 30 August, the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) attacked major police stations in the capital Maseru, in what military spokesperson Major Ntlele Ntoi later said was an operation to seize weapons, which were allegedly going to be given to elements of the ABC to attack people who would have been attending a protest March of the LCD on 1 September.

But Dr Thabane and Chief Maseribane, having fled the country for South Africa on the night of the military raid, later took turns to attack Mr Metsing, alleging the attack on the police stations, was a *coup d'état* which the LCD leader had engineered.

Since then, SADC had been facilitating talks between the warring factions, culminating in the Maseru Facilitation Declaration, whereby leaders across the political spectrum committed to opening parliament solely "for the allocation of a budget for elections slated for February 2013 and preparations for the poll".

In his address, the King further reminded political leaders that post the 1998 political riots which brought Lesotho to the brink, he had told them that the country could resolve its political woes "without external intervention".

"I said, at the time, that the onus was on us to put our house in order, instead of expecting others to do it for us," Hi Majesty said.

"What is stopping us from resolving our political problems before our country is plunged into confusion and instability?"

According to His Majesty, the current political situation required political leaders to stop for a while and reflect on the journey travelled since 1966 when Lesotho gained independence from Britain and ask "what was our aim when we fought for independence?"

"We are only a few years away from our 50th anniversary as an independent country. We need to ask ourselves what it is that we aimed for when we fought for our independence. This commitment should mean that national interests come before any individual's."

The King further said 4 October, which is Lesotho's Independence Day, should be a day of introspection and establishing if the country has built pillars of democracy such as living peacefully and in unity, legislation that is for the good of all, as well as economic transformation.

"We abide by a constitution in which these pillars are enshrined and where they are used without favour and bias; they instill people's confidence in government," the King said.

"But are these pillars still being utilised?"

His Majesty further cautioned that it was every Mosotho's obligation, regardless of status and social standing "to abide by the constitution".

"It is the source of all the country's laws and we should all submit ourselves under the constitution, regardless of status, otherwise the attainment of democracy will have been in vain."

On the Maseru Facilitation Declaration, the King said gratitude should be conveyed to Mr Ramaphosa, for working tirelessly to bridge differences between Lesotho's political groupings and organisations "which were at loggerheads".

"On behalf of us all, I would like to direct our compliments and respects to the Deputy President of the Republic of South Africa, His Excellency Cyril Ramaphosa, who is with us today," the King said.

"We are deeply indebted to you for your efforts in smoothing the way for peaceful engagement of all parties and stakeholders."

The King again implored MPs and all leaders to “religiously observe, without fail, the conclusions and benchmarks clearly enunciated in the agreement”.

“I sincerely hope that we will all have the presence of mind to abide by this agreement, as failure to do so is likely to derail all efforts towards attaining peace and stability in our country.

“This agreement, even with its flaws and shortcomings, should be regarded by all of us as a genuine opportunity, which enables us to start the process of creating a stronger and more democratic political framework for our nation’s future. Let’s not waste it!”

Notably, immediately after the King had delivered his speech and left the chambers, DC and LCD MPs broke into dance and started singing songs berating Premier Thabane for proroguing parliament.

In one of the songs, the MPs asked: “Thabane what were you doing to a swarm of bees?” while another song was more of a prayer; “Our cries have finally reached heaven”.

LCD heavyweights who joined in the song were Water Affairs Minister Tšeliso Mokhosi, dismissed Communications Minister Selibe Mochoboroane, Local Government Deputy Minister Apesi Ratšele and Education Deputy Minister Liteboho Kompfi, while DC leader Pakalitha Mosisili and his deputy, who is also official leader of the opposition in parliament, Monyane Moleleki, looked on seemingly amused.

- See more at: <http://sundayexpress.co.ls/king-makes-clarion-call-to-political-leaders/#sthash.dYwQkYY6.dpuf>

Mosisili hails parley opening

By [thabo](#) On 19 Oct, 2014 At 09:46 AM | Categorized As [Local](#), [News](#) |
As DC, LCD legislators mark occasion with song and dance

Billy Ntaote

Democratic Congress (DC) and Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) legislators marked Friday’s reopening of parliament with song and dance, with former Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili describing the occasion as a “victory for the people”.

Prime Minister Thomas Thabane suspended the legislature for nine months on 10 June this year to avoid being booted out of power through a no-confidence vote, and only lifted the prorogation following protracted mediation by the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

South African Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, who was appointed by SADC last month to facilitate peace talks between the country’s feuding politicians resulting in the Maseru Facilitation Declaration, was among the several dignitaries and observers who attended Friday’s ceremony.

Under the Maseru Facilitation Declaration signed on 2 October 2014 by representatives of all the country’s political parties, parliament was to open on 17 October and be dissolved early December, with general elections following in February 2015.

According to terms of the Declaration, parliament would focus on the poll budget and other election-related matters until its dissolution, after which parties would concentrate on preparing for the vote, which is coming two years ahead of schedule due to the collapse of the coalition government because of sharp differences among its leadership.

In an interview with the *Sunday Express* soon after King Letsie III had declared the parliament open, former premier and DC leader, Dr Mosisili said the day called for celebration as there can never be democracy in any country without parliamentarians playing their oversight role.

“What transpired today marked a huge development in our democracy as the people’s voices can now be heard after being silenced since June.

“Victory lies with the people as parliament expresses the voices of the people in a democracy.

“As a result of this reopening, we are very happy as the DC; democratic rule is not complete without a functional parliament.

“We should remember that even ministers are born out of parliament, which is why suspending it results in the crippling of democratic rule. So we are really excited that parliament has been reconvened and we thank (SA) Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa for facilitating the process,” Dr Mosisili said.

Asked if all the stakeholders would honour the Maseru Facilitation Declaration to the letter—that legislators should not attempt to remove the premier again through a vote-of-no-confidence, which prompted his prorogation of parliament—Dr Mosisili said: “In that Declaration, we committed ourselves to working according to three main pillars, which are the constitution of Lesotho, the laws of

Lesotho and democratic principles. We are truly committed to working according to that Declaration as the parliament of Lesotho.”

Dr Mosisili—whose peaceful handover of power in June 2012 to the coalition government comprising the LCD, Dr Thabane’s All Basotho Convention (ABC) and Basotho National Party (BNP) after his three-month-old DC had failed to win an outright majority to remain in government, won him immense respect at home and abroad—also told the *Sunday Express* that he had always known the government would not last its five-year term.

“If people can remember, I had always advised our party members to be prepared for elections. It was clear to me, from the onset, that we would not get to 2017 with this shaky, coalition government that only had a simple majority of 61 seats in parliament.

“That is why after the elections in 2012, I was repeatedly saying let’s be prepared for elections. So from May 2012, my party has been preparing for elections,” said Dr Mosisili, who was Lesotho premier for 15 years.

On his part, the Maseru Constituency Member of Parliament (MP), Apesi Ratšele of the LCD, also told the *Sunday Express* that his party was committed to what was agreed upon in the Maseru Facilitation Declaration.

“We are happy that parliament has been reopened and we are now headed for elections. We are going to honour the agreement our leaders signed and there will be no attempt to unseat the Prime Minister through a vote-of-no-confidence whatsoever, which was one of the undertakings of the Declaration.

“We are in here to prepare for the elections in February next year and make amendments that are needed for the smooth-running of the poll,” said Mr Ratšele, who is also the Deputy Minister of Local Government, Chieftainship and Parliamentary Affairs.

- See more at: <http://sundayexpress.co.ls/mosisili-hails-parley-opening/#sthash.ibpxpxVX.dpuf>

Lesotho times

Unpacking Declaration’s effect on Constitution

October 16, 2014 Lestimes Opinion



By Sofonea Shale

THE signing of the Maseru Facilitation Declaration (MFD) by the leadership of parties holding the power configuration in Parliament has not only made it public that the political leadership in Lesotho willingly and freely accepted the Southern African Development Community (SADC) early election prescription for the former’s chronic political disease misdiagnosed as acute but also raised the question on the supremacy of the constitution. Some people argue that MFD does not have constitutional legitimacy to take Lesotho to the early elections but the constitution does.

Others believe SADC, as an intergovernmental organisation, has a louder voice on national matters than the laws of a sovereign member state. Though these viewpoints are important, this article is more interested in the intentions behind the said positions.

The SADC Treaty indicates in Article 3 that it is an international organisation which shall have legal capacity as is necessary to operate for the furtherance of its functions. Section 1 of the Lesotho constitution, on the other hand, provides that Lesotho shall be a sovereign and democratic Kingdom.

In fact the SADC Treaty in Article 4(a) confirms that the organisation shall be guided by, among other principles, the respect for the sovereignty of every member state.

However, stands SADC accused of going overboard and misdirecting itself through the MFD in declaring that elections shall be held towards the end of February 2015. By so doing, SADC undermined section 83 (2) of the Lesotho Constitution which provides that Parliament shall continue for five years. In terms of the MFD, parliament shall be dissolved in December in preparation for elections.

This contradicts the Lesotho constitution which provides for the tenure of parliament and the conditions under which it can change. By providing that the business of Parliament shall, between 17 October 2014 and its dissolution, be limited to the election-related reforms and budget, the MFD is seen as unconstitutionally limiting the powers of Parliament.

In this way, Parliament is effectively dissolved by SADC with the blessing of the political leadership in direct contradiction with the provisions of the Lesotho Constitution. The significantly bigger part of these facts and arguments raised is true.

The net effect of the MFD is the creation of a new political and constitutional reality that may be helpful to take Lesotho out of. The underlying belief is that the MFD serves to avoid the exercise of parliamentary powers in removing Prime Minister Thomas Thabane as contained in part three of the Lesotho Constitution. Perhaps this interesting debate can be further provoked to expose the intention behind this otherwise patriotic-sentimental submission. In this line of thinking, it is expected that a motion of no-confidence would be moved in parliament as soon as it opens. This declaration is a political agreement whose implementation shall subject itself to the constitution, it is not necessarily against the constitution.

First and foremost, this argument is mooted by the people whose leadership has appended their signatures to MFD which came as a result of political dialogue. It may not be that they want to undermine or even embarrass their leadership but achieve certain goals which the current early-election project does not accommodate.

By proposing a motion of no-confidence, Members of Parliament would be seeking the freedom that has been curtailed by MFD to remove the premier. The motion of no-confidence would need endorsement of the chair of the business committee who is the leader of the house and whose party seems, for all intents and purposes, better off with early elections which come not as a result of dissolution following motion of no confidence but one which is collectively agreed.

Will the motion that will change this direction even pass the stage of business committee? If successful, the motion would not only have disrupted the road map in the MFD but also shorten the life of parliament and dashed all the remaining hope for the reforms.

If the prime minister loses on this motion, he will be left with two constitutional options; to resign or advise the King to dissolve Parliament.

Dr Thabane would most certainly use the second option in which case Parliament will be dissolved immediately and leaving three months for elections and no longer four months as contemplated by the MFD.

Followed to its logical conclusion, it is clear that the change of guard in a manner that Lesotho can for go elections with a different premier may not be possible. Here it is a dicey situation because opposition parties with the support have an opportunity to use their parliamentary majority to constitutionally change the prime minister but equally constitutional is the option of the deposed premier to take the dissolution route. Reading this situation, political opportunism that may be used will be effectively counteracted. Using parliament and its original and constitutional powers to undermine or frustrate MFD would not deliver the expected results.

If parliamentarians want to undo MFD, it may not be through an antagonistic and confrontational manner but through a well thought out strategic approach. First and foremost, it may need to be a reassurance to the seating prime minister that Parliament will only concentrate on reforms and not the change of guard.

The second most important issue would be an effort to repair the Dr Thabane and Deputy Prime Minister Mothetjoa Metsing's working relations to a minimum threshold that they could handle governance as a collective. Then the first among the reforms would be to ensure that Parliament is enabled to practically remove the premier and then other reforms that are need for the effective coalition governance. This approach would not only systematically render the MFD ineffective and reinstate MPs their legitimately expected full five year term, but also give Basotho a chance to look at the reforms holistically and broadly.

So, the argument is not only whether it is the constitution of Lesotho or MFD that is supreme but also about the intentions behind different viewpoints. Trying to use parliamentary processes to torpedo MFD may not bring the

desired fruits. However, there is an alternative but it would seem that it is too costly as it demands not only trade-offs but some effort too.

- See more at: <http://lestimes.com/unpacking-declarations-effect-on-constitution/#sthash.UPaoxqk.dpuf>

SO IT WILL BE ELECTIONS?

By Sofonea Shale

The Maseru SADC Facilitation Declaration through which leaders of eight political parties representing power configurations in parliament publicise their decision to opt for early and immediate elections has been received with mixed perceptions. Some people particularly who have all along argued that elections is not a solution only see challenges in this decision while others hope that starting over again may be better than locking horns in a standoff that this Kingdom has experienced in the past few months. This and its sister column in the sister newspaper is known to be among those who strongly argued that elections is not what Lesotho needs but reforms. Its dimension for engagement shall therefore be on whether this decision has potential to help or is a total misfit and if it can help what are the requirements?

The critical question that citizens and voters may want clarity on is what could have actually facilitated such a seemingly smooth common understanding among political parties which even in the early hours of the signing day were still vehemently expressing divergent ideas on the same issue. Added to this question is whether the SADC Facilitator has expeditiously exported the South African spell which led that country into what was later known and appreciated globally as a miracle transition. Since it is normally not easy for politicians to make known their honest view particularly to the public, the only logical way to understand them is to look at their actions and apply some theorisation that enables explanation of their intentions and actions. The hardened position of those who wanted parliament to open so that MPs change guard was by default leading to dissolution of parliament. Since the constitution provides that after losing vote of confidence in parliament Prime Minister shall in three days either resign or advise King to dissolve parliament, it virtually makes it impossible for parliament to practically change Prime Minister though the constitution aspires that possibility. The King may refuse to dissolve parliament if he thinks Lesotho can still be governed without dissolution and such dissolution is not in the best interest of the nation but he can only do so if he is so advised by the Council of State. If one looks at the composition of Council of State, it may be very difficult almost close to impossible to see the Council advising the King against the sitting Prime minister particularly on the critical matter like unseating him or her. Though this has been said in different ways by this column and civil society among others, it only made sense when it was said by the SADC Facilitator. Coming to terms with this reality politicians found it better to do it amicably through signed declaration instead of passing motion of no confidence and getting dissolution as a reaction. This is brilliant to the extent that politicians chose consensus over confrontation because that tones down high emotions that party supporters would attach to the events leading to the elections. Done in this way, is better than what could have happened if change of guard was done through motion of no confidence in parliament.

But would this decision help Basotho? May be it would be helpful to define for our purposes politics as an art to manage risks, opportunities and explore possibilities. This would then lead us into recognising that for parties not only coalition leaders to have come to party marks the beginning of new chapter. Elections would certainly create a new party leaders' interest in the voters and this would give voters opportunity to speak with politicians with some kind of authority that they normally miss during governance. In other words elections would breathe freshness in the political content that parties engage in. Elections though harried can be turned into opportunity, but how?

Unless effort is made to make best of the situation this elections would entrench the existing problems. The declaration provides that when parliament resumes on the 17th October it shall concentrate on allocation of budget for elections and consider other election related matters before it is dissolved in December. Before dissolution Parliament should embark on deliberations on the following reform issues: transitional arrangements after elections and before formation of the new government; forming and sustaining successful coalition government; motion of no confidence and floor crossing; strengthening parliament and its procedures and do other permissible constitutional reforms to accommodate full Mixed Member Proportional potentiality. The challenges that have led to the collapse of the ABC led coalition have been defined as a conflict among coalition leaders and the intricacies of the operationalisation of coalition government in the constitutional architecture that has not yet matured to the requirements of the MMP electoral system. In this regard government should establish as a matter of urgency a team that would consider the immediate reforms and recommend such to parliament for legislative processes. This team should be able to use voices of Basotho to make these reforms. It would be unfortunate if Basotho go for elections, come back with coalition and face similar challenges. Politicians should also commit under SADC guidance that immediately after elections they will continue with reforms. In order to make sure that elections is run well and in a manner that all actors are positively engaged throughout the process, IEC should be adequately resourced, CSOs well-funded to embark on civic and electoral education, media well prepared to facilitate campaigns within the confines of the code of conduct, politicians refrain from inflammatory and antagonistic utterances.

Civil society: Cornerstone builders rejected

By [thabo](#) On 29 Sep, 2014 At 09:37 AM | Categorized As [Columns](#) | With [0 Comments](#)

By Sofonea Shale

WHEN Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) leader, Deputy Prime Minister Mothetjoa Metsing, LCD went public about the discontent within the coalition government and indicated that his party has found the Democratic Congress as an alternative partner to coalesce with, many believed the current regime had run its course. When the then SADC Chair of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation and President of Namibia Hifikepunye Pohamba came in, it was evident the coalition government had reached a point where unfacilitated discussions could no longer be fruitful. Civil society and heads of churches, among others, suggested a third party. As the situation escalated amidst accords reached in Windhoek, Victoria Falls, Pretoria first and second, and Maseru, civil society worked tirelessly to seek audience with the trio with little success. Though some people find it convenient to label civil society as weak, irrelevant, biased and generally unhelpful, this column chooses to address a different set of questions which seek clarity on why the situation has deteriorated and civil society does not seem to have made a meaningful contribution early enough to have spared the Kingdom from being crowned a main actor in the international stage of political clowns.

In the post-Ketumile Masire political dialogue in Lesotho later popularly referred to the Heads of Churches Mediation/Dialogue, the role of the three coalition leaders, albeit from different sides, was very critical. Deputy Prime Minister was in government while Prime Minister and Morena Thesele 'Maseribane were in the opposition. When government reluctantly participated in the non-state actor led dialogue and with some threats to the sustenance of the same process, it was Deputy Prime Minister that civil society would target to help government remain loyal to the talks as the main actor. Before this initiative, Deputy Prime Minister, Hon Dr Phooko in the Prime Minister's Office and Hon Minister of Transport Tšele Chakela had seen the role civil society played in easing the confrontation between the government and the taxi operators in a process that led the two parties to agree on Bishop Paul Khoarai

to mediate. A significant level of trust has therefore been created and it was possible in many instances to unlock some bottlenecks of the process.

The current Prime Minister who was a leader of Opposition not granted the status of Official Leader of Opposition was very strong on the commitment of government to talks. If he did not turn up in two meetings in a row, a civil society delegation would be sent to give him audience on his reluctance to attend. Hon Thesele took BNP leadership at that time and he was not a light weight at all in the talks, in fact when he joined the dialogue as the leader, he gave the process that had matured a new form of energy, interaction and engagement. As mediation team wanted to ensure that process does not rollback and all keep tight to the finish line, Hon Thesele became a kingmaker in the last days of that mediation. It is true that no seats allocation was redone as the opposition wanted but the contentious issues including the allocation mechanism as defined in the law were revisited to the satisfaction of both government and opposition. Just before 2012 General Elections, it was civil society again which on the basis of its projection of possibility of hung parliament and lack of clarity on the constitutional guidelines on the steps towards formation of government, coalition in particular convened a consensus building seminar on constitution. Besides, it was this sector which ensured public awareness and went full force to ensure that potential different constitutional interpretations do not confuse the otherwise sensitive post-election situation. This is why even today civil society is accused for having midwived the birth of coalition government. This humble profile of civil society demonstrates that the sector may know and understand these processes but would never act from a position of imposition rather awareness creation, persuasion and advisory. None in the trio can say does not understand the role, the approach and the potential Lesotho civil society has in addressing conflicts. Politicians like anyone in conflict believe that they would resolve conflicts by coercing other party into their position. Little do they remember that violence begets violence, coercion invites resistance and that negotiation is cheaper than force.

Civil society has been engaged in their behind curtains work and here is the summary of such. In its shuttle between Commissioner of Police and the Army Commander, Civil society was facilitating a process where the two leaders would find reason to withdraw from public addresses that appeared to be seeking public sympathy on the otherwise sensitive security matters but the situation ran faster than the civil society pace. Civil society had a pre SADC Summit seminar which culminated in the delegation sent to SADC Summit at Victoria Falls in Zimbabwe to lobby the Troika to be considerate of the situation in Lesotho from civil society and be advised that success of its mediation depends on the extent of its collaboration with local processes. Though some feeble minds tried to demonise civil society mission into a naïve political gimmick, civil society remained firm on progressive ways of better handling Lesotho situation. In the Post SADC Summit internal interactions and efforts to get audience from the trio, civil society sought to provide direction in consideration of the different options that different political parties have. In this light civil society held a Multi-stakeholder conference on the current political situation where the trio was expected to provide briefs which could go a long way in enabling Basotho chart their own future with no success.

When the doors seemed to be locked for civil society as the situation deteriorates, the hard question to answer is, why? It is not like any of these leaders do not know the role that Lesotho civil society can play. In fact at the SADC-Council of NGOs Peace Summer School in Harare Zimbabwe where the experience of Lesotho civil society was presented as a case study, civil society fraternity in the region agreed to build a team of regional civil society mediators to be a counterpart to SADC and Lesotho case shall be a model. Though honoured externally, it would seem that civil society at home is viewed as more of an inconvenience than help at least by leaders not people. Whether it has been by default or design Lesotho civil society has been left out in the list of stakeholders that SADC Facilitator Ntate Cyril Ramaphosa was set to meet. Thanks to the advice of some honest stakeholders, Facilitator finally met civil society. In his brief discussion with civil society, Ramaphosa was amazed at the effort he said was put in the civil society statement pointing to the future and how the current situation could be addressed. Looking at the consistency on the issues civil society raised to the SADC Summit and the

current position paper, the South African Deputy President marvelled at the skill within the sector and admitted that what he was told about Lesotho civil society being unique was indeed observable. Ramaphosa believes that civil society articulation on what Lesotho may need in the short, medium and long term presents something that can be easily engaged to facilitate robust discussion among parties in dialogue. Looking at the Lesotho civil society profile in conflict/mediation, its appreciation in the civil society fraternity regionally and the impression of the SADC Facilitator on the one hand and the struggle for audience with trio on the other, one can only ask, **is Lesotho civil society, a cornerstone that builders have rejected?**

- See more at: <http://sundayexpress.co.ls/civil-society-cornerstone-builders-rejected/#sthash.aHCrUtm7.dpuf>

From: Lesotho Times

US Embassy awards grants to seven schools

September 26, 2014 Lestimes Local News, News



Mohalenyane Phakela

THE United States Embassy in Lesotho, through its US Ambassador's Special Self-Help Fund, awarded seven local schools with grants worth \$55 000 (M613 000) at the American embassy in Maseru yesterday.

The US Embassy awards grants once a year to projects that it says demonstrate "local initiative, high-impact and self-sustainability". It funds such projects as the construction of classrooms, installation of pit latrines, provision of school furniture, construction of boreholes and supply of solar heating and power.

This year, seven schools benefited from the grant. Bokang Secondary School got a grant of M52 000 to purchase school library furniture, Butha Buthe Camp Primary School M78 000 to construct ventilated pit latrines, Letšaba Primary School M110 000 to construct two classrooms, Linakaneng Primary School M56 000 to construct two classrooms, Matlaong Primary School M120 000 to construct two classrooms, Motete Secondary School M81 500 to also construct two classrooms while Orange River Hoek Secondary School will get M500 for their school furniture.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, US Embassy Maseru Chargé d'Affaires, Elizabeth Pelletreau described the grants as a "unique opportunity to celebrate a strong partnership between the people of America and Lesotho as our partners".

“We are committed to help improve the learning conditions of Basotho and we will be sending over \$50 000 (about M554 000),” Ms Pelletreau said.

“It is through projects of this nature that we are trying to bring the education system closer to different communities as most people in remote areas travel long distances to get to schools or do not even have the opportunity to get there. There is no greater way to support the future than through education.”

According to Ms Pelletreau, the Special Self-Help Fund was launched in Africa in 1954 to assist in the construction of classrooms, water systems and their other basic needs. She also urged the community to be engaged in the projects as they are the ones in the vicinity of the areas needing attention.

Speaking on behalf of the recipients, Butha-Buthe Camp Primary School’s Principal Hlompho Mpati expressed gratitude for the initiative.

“We thank the US Embassy for this great gesture they have shown,” Mr Mpati said.

“Our schools have been struggling for many years to meet the demands of the students. The grants will make a positive impact on our schools which will soon be evident for the US ambassador and her team to see every time they visit.”

In her remarks, Minister of Education and Training, Makabelo Mososthoane, urged the grantees to use the funds for what they are intended for.

“I hope these funds you will be awarded will be used for what you initially promised the US Embassy to do and not any needs that may arise along the way,” said Ms Mososthoane.

“You should consider yourselves very lucky as it is not every school that gets blessings of this nature which will improve your schools. They will not only benefit the school but the communities within your vicinity.”

“I learned through a television programme I watched yesterday that we still have students being taught under trees here in Lesotho and the US Embassy has lifted a burden off my shoulders, I am really grateful for their initiative,” she said.

- See more at: <http://lestimes.com/us-embassy-awards-grants-seven-schools/#sthash.HXUMMKt3.dpuf>

From: Lesotho – Mail & Guardian 'White gold' leaves a dark stain in Lesotho

05 Sep 2014 00:00 [Sean Christie](#)

For some in the mountain kingdom, water is a curse that has washed away any chance of a good life.

It is often said that legions of American children, 70 years into the age of the supermarket, are shocked to learn that the milk in their cereal comes from cows, not high-density polyethylene bottles. Similarly, teachers on the South African highveld often joke that their pupils, when asked where Johannesburg’s water comes from, confidently answer: “Taps”. One would hope that the teachers themselves know that the water originates hundreds of kilometres away, in a series of vast dams in the mountain kingdom of Lesotho.

But how many South Africans know much more about the Lesotho Highlands Water Project than the fact that it supplies what has come to be known as white gold?

- [Read: Lesotho still balanced on knife edge](#)

Signed into life in 1986, the three major purposes of the multibillion-dollar, multidam water project, writes Yvonne Mort-Braun in the paper *Doing Development*, are “to transfer water from the rural highlands of Lesotho to the industrial centre of South Africa (Gauteng), to provide Lesotho with hydroelectric energy, and to ensure the environmental sustainability of the project areas and the restoration of the living standards of project-affected people”.

Two of the dams built to date – Katse and Mohale – caused the resettlement of thousands of Basotho. Were their living standards “restored”? The body of research on the social impacts of the project suggests, by and large, that they were not. In his book *Unsustainable South Africa*, for example, Patrick Bond quotes from Highlands Water Project relocatee Masimelelo Tau’s testimony before the 1999 World Commission on Dams.

“When we research at our [new] destination, we found that there is no water until now. We have a great problem of water at the new village. We get water from the river by wheelbarrows.”

Unhappy ‘relocatees’

In two books published by the Transformation Resource Centre, *The Irony of White Gold* (2004) and *On the Wrong Side of Development* (2006), the testimonies of dozens of deeply unhappy “relocatees” are recorded. Both books conclude in similar vein:

“... years after the completion of resettlement, the poverty of the communities affected by the [water project] has worsened ... Death rates are higher [and] the communities have been dying from HIV/Aids in especially high numbers.”

Such criticisms, records Mort-Braun, forced the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) to overhaul its compensation and resettlement policies before development began on Mohale, the third dam site.



The construction of dams as part of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project has forced many villagers to relocate, often to their detriment. (Johann Hattingh)

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 98677185, cell: +45 23880099, e-mail: karen.steffensen@mail.dk

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