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News from DLN's Executive Committee

A smooth Annual General Meeting held in September

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of DLN was held September 17th 2006 in Horsens with 10 participants.

Report from EC: Chairperson Helga Højsager highlighted some of the statements from the written Annual Report 2005/06. Among others she updated about the home-page issue where the Executive Committee (EC) had found it expensive, but acceptable to pay DKK 16.000,- for the design and establishment. When it was realised that it would also generate a monthly fee for DLN, it was found to be too much. Helga Højsager invited for comments and new proposals on the issue of the homepage.

Working groups: With increasing involvement for Karina Ruby in the DLN EC work, she will not be able to continue her work in the info-group, and also Michael Hansen had informed that he was looking forward to withdraw from the group when a new home-page arrangement was found. Peter Rathmann had promised to continue, and Ulla Abildtrup had accepted to join the work if she was not taking a seat for some body else. Her offer was very much appreciated by the AGM. It was stressed that the group is open for other members who may be prepared to join.

Received proposals: The EC had proposed two changes of the constitution §3 facilitate the procedures for calling the AGM and, and to ensure a better running of financial matters. The proposed paragraphs should read:

- The AGM is called by E-mail or letter with at least three weeks notification, and attached the agenda and the Annual Report. Annual Accounts will be distributed during the AGM.
- The ordinary AGM is held before the end of the month of April.

Changes were approved.

Elections did not give any change in the EC which still reads:

Chairperson: Mrs. Helga Højsager
Treasurer: Mrs. Karen Steffensen
Secretary: Mrs. Karina Ruby
Member: Mr. Karsten Lund

1. substitute: Mr. Anders Hedegaard
2. substitute: Mr. Laurids Green

Mr. Claus Løshenkohl was appointed for the position as internal auditor, and Mr. Claus Bo Jensen accepted the position as alternate. The External Audit Company is Mortensen og Beierholm. The RSDA Watertank Project Group is formed by Mrs. Karina Ruby, Mrs. Karen Steffensen, and Mr. Anders Hedegaard.

A new "tipsmidler" funding Group is consisting of Mr. Claus Løschenkohl
Information group: Peter Rathmann, Ulla Abildtrup, Michael Hansen
However, all working-groups are open for other DLN members who have the interest in the work.

It was agreed that it should be tried to move the AGM to take place different places in the country. It was decided that the next AGM should take place at Seeland in April 2007. Joan and Claus offered to host the venue and thus save DLN expenditures for rent etc. Therefore, the next AGM takes place:

Saturday 21 April 2007 from 10:00 a.m. Venue: Smedegade 5, 3390 Hundested

For more details see full report on our homepage www.lumela.dk

Karina Ruby, DLN secretary

Vision day September the 16th 2006

*In connection with its AGM DLN held a vision day.
This day should give the organisation a common
understanding of where we wish to go.
The following is the Chairperson Helga Højsager's
summary of the day:*

It was a very successful day, well guided and inspired by the consultant from Projektrådgivningen (PR), Troels Hovgaard.

After a brief introduction to the PR, there was a brainstorm on the present status of DLN. This exercise led to these short statements:

- Bad conscience
- Taking over responsibilities that Danish Association for International Cooperation (MS) left.
- Fellowship/ adventure
- Choice of projects seems coincidental
- Need for criteria for choice of partners and projects
- There is a risk of getting to look like a fundraising organisation and a donor at one and the same time.

As a natural consequence, our goals were scrutinised.

- 1) To support in Lesotho, initiatives for improved living conditions and promotion of development in the country.
- 2) To promote contact and exchange between people of Lesotho and Denmark.

With the goals in mind, two groups were organised to give a feedback on the following:

- How would we like to see DLN in five to ten years time?
- Is or ought DLN to be a development organisation?

There was a lot of good suggestions to these questions.

In a common forum it was agreed that DLN has to be a development organisation based on volunteer work, but with the possibility of consulting professionals, if this is necessary and possible.

We will continue to work with our goals, but not only focus on the project part as now.

This leads to focusing on the contact and exchange between people of Lesotho and Denmark and work on a development part and an intercultural part.

Development:

- In general we will try to have two partner organisations
- We will try to run two or three projects

- Our focal areas will be “From soil to table”
- Supporting civic society.

This will result in strategies and activities. Here we will utilise our visits to Lesotho and Hans Peter Dejgaards analysis of civic society in Lesotho. We will contact students from Roskilde University (RUC) or Aalborg University.

We must develop a DLN profile and have a line of thinking in our choice of partner organisations.

Contact and exchange between people of Lesotho and Denmark

- Travel activities
- Work practise stays in Lesotho

The meeting formed a think tank to produce ideas for instance of organised journeys to Lesotho and how we insure that they live up to the DLN goals (Karina Ruby and John D. Knudsen).

Anders Hedegaard and Karen Steffensen will seek out possible counterparts under their trip to Lesotho in November.

Work practise stays will require that we facilitate contact between Danish students and possible work places in Lesotho.

To realise all we agreed on, we decided to utilise the knowledge of our members better. We will submit an application to the Danish lotto comity to obtain funding for a better web site, to create an open forum.

After the days work, we had supper together. The spirit was high and there was an optimism amongst the participants.

Helga Højsager, DLN- Chairperson

Visionsdagen den 16. september 2006

I forbindelse med sin årlige generalforsamling, holdt DLN en visionsdag, der skulle bringe organisationen til en fælles forståelse af, hvor vi ønsker at bevæge os hen.

Her er formanden Helga Højsagers betragtninger over dagen:

Det blev en rigtig god dag, godt guidet og inspireret af konsulent Troels Hovgaard fra Projektrådgivningen, (PR).

Efter en kort introduktion til PR, havde vi en brainstorm for at sætte tempertatur på organisationen. Efter denne øvelse kom nogle statements på bordet, som:

- Dårlig samvittighed
- Overtage nogle opgaver som Mellemlfolkeligt Samvirke (MS) efterlod
- Fælleskab/ oplevelse
- Tilfældigt hvad vi kaster os over af projekter
- Mangler kriterier for partnere og projekter
- Kan komme til at ligne en fundraising organisation og donor samtidig

Som en naturlig konsekvens blev vore målsætninger sat under lup:

- 1) At støtte initiativer i Lesotho, som fremmer arbejdet med at udvikle og forbedre levevilkårene i landet.
- 2) At fremme kontakten mellem folk i Lesotho og Danmark.

Med målsætningerne som afsæt blev vi opdelt i 2 grupper og bedt om at komme med en tilbagemelding om:

- Hvor vi gerne ville se DLN om 5-10 år?
- Er eller skal DLN være en udviklingsorganisation?

- Det kom der mange gode bud på .

I et fælles forum blev der enighed om at DLN skal være en udviklingsorganisation baseret på frivilligt arbejde, men med mulighed for professional hjælp, hvor det er nødvendigt og muligt.

Vi vil fortsat arbejde ud fra vores målsætning, men ikke kun som nu på projekt delen.

Hvilket betyder at vi må sætte mere fokus på det mellemfolkelige, og arbejde udfra en udviklingsdel og en mellemfolkelig del.

Udvikling

- Overordnet vil vi tilstræbe at have 2 partnere
- 2- 3 igangsatte projekter.
- Focus område ”fra jord til bord”
- Støtte civilsamfundet

Det vil afføde en strategi og aktiviteter. Her vil vi benytte os af besøgene i Lesotho og Hans Peter Dejgaards analyse af civilsamfundet. Vi vil tage kontakt til studerende på f.eks. RUC eller Ålborg. Vi skal udvikle en profil for DLN og lægge en linie for valg af partnere.

Mellemfolkelige

- Rejseaktivitet
- Praktikophold

Der blev på mødet nedsat en tænketank, til at fremkomme med ideer til rejsers indhold, og hvordan vi sikrer, at de foregår indenfor DLN's målsætninger (Karina Ruby og John D. Knudsen).

Anders Hedegaard og Karen Steffensen vil ligeledes opsøge potentielle samarbejdspartnere under deres besøg til Lesotho i november.

Praktikophold vil omfatte formidling af kontakt mellem studerende i Danmark og mulige praktiksteder i Lesotho.

For at dette kan blive til virkelighed, vil vi fremover trække mere på medlemmernes viden. Vi har søgt tipsmidlerne om økonomisk støtte til at udvikle hjemmesiden, så der kan blive et åbent forum.

Efter dagens arbejde spiste vi sammen og stemningen var opløftet, der var en god optimisme blandt deltagerne.

Helga Højsager, DLN-formand

Second monitoring visit to Lesotho coming up in November

During the last two weeks of November the two DLN committee members Karen Steffensen and Anders Hedegaard will visit Lesotho to monitor the water tank project with RSDA. During their stay in Lesotho they are planning to make several field trips to villages with DLN supported water tanks. Through meetings with the farmers they will monitor the effect of the water tanks and the workshops held so far. They will also initiate discussions with RSDA about possibilities of a new project in the future.

News from members

No news from members this time.

Dear member. You are very welcome to participate with an article, an opinion or just any comment on the work of DLN. Just send it on e-mail to someone in the information group:

Karina Ruby: karinaruby@bigfoot.com
Peter Rathmann: petula.rathmann@mail.dk

News from Lesotho

Lesotho marks 50 yrs of freedom

The Upper House of Parliament passed the National Flag Bill, 2006 without any objection during their debate on Wednesday. This means that the new flag will be hoisted on Tuesday midnight as Planned, replacing the current one which was flown under the Military regime in 1986.

The Principal Chief of Matsieng Chief Masupha Seeiso expressed concern over the frequent changing of the national flags, saying something has to be done to stop that tendency. The Principal Chief of Kueneng, Mapoteng and Bela Bela chieftainess 'Mantoetse Lesaoana stated that the Government had no intention of changing the flag to suit its interests, as the new flag has three colours of the opposition Basotho National Party (BNP) and only two of the ruling Lesotho Congress Democracy (LCD).

The Principal Chief of Tajane, Ponts'eng and Ramoetsane, Chief Tlali Mohale also expressed satisfaction with the colours in the new flag saying they promote peace, pray for rain and discourage Basotho from begging for food but to produce their own.

The Minister of Justice, Human Rights and Rehabilitation, Law and Constitutional Affairs Mr. Refiloe Masemene said it will be easy to identify the new flag with Basotho because of the hat on it. The flag is estimated to cost close to M84 000 to change it. LENA Sept 2006

MPs cross the floor to join new party

- A new chapter in the political history of Lesotho has been made when around seventeen members of the ruling Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) crossed the floor to join the new political party All Basotho Convention (ABC) in the National Assembly on Friday. The new party was formed by the former Minister of Communications, Science and Technology, Mr. Motsoahae Thabane after resigning as cabinet minister on Monday this week.

Mr. Thabane resigned from the ruling LCD last Monday and announced the formation of a new political party at Victoria Hotel on the same day, citing poor service delivery and difference in tackling public issues as the reason. (LENA) Oct 13 2006

ALLOWANCES SHOULD BE TAXED SAYS MP

The leader of Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP) Mr. Moeketse Malebo says Members of Parliament (MPs) should be taxed on the allowances which they get.

He said the allowances should be taxed, saying that the only person who is exempted from tax is the head of country.

Furthermore, he said Lesotho as a poor country should not be paying huge allowances to MPs, especially since they are not taxed.

The Basotho National Party (BNP) MP, Mr. Lekhooana Jonathan seconded the motion and the debate is still continuing. LENA Sept 2006

GRANTS FOR HIV AND TB PROGRAMMES SIGNED

Two grants were signed between the government of Lesotho and the Global Fund for HIV and Tuberculosis (TB) programmes at the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning in Maseru on Thursday. The Minister of Finance Dr. Timothy Thahane said the grants are additional to M70 million for HIV/AIDS and M12 million for TB programmes which the government received in January 2004. He stated that the funds were used for educating youth on HIV/AIDS prevention, counseling, testing, care and treatment as well as care and support of people affected and infected by the scourge of the pandemic and providing TB treatment in hospitals.

SOURCE: LENA Oct 13 2006

Eureka! Huge diamond is found in Lesotho

The Letseng Diamond Mine in Lesotho, just recently purchased by Gem Diamonds, has recovered a 603 carat white diamond, rating it the 15th largest diamond ever found.

It has been named the Lesotho Promise.

Letseng is famous for its large 100 plus carat stones and in 1967 a 601 carat diamond, the previous largest, was recovered at the mine. The stone has been rated D, the top colour for diamonds. It will go on sale today through a private tender in Antwerp, with the winning bidder to be announced on Monday.

The mine, officially re-opened by the late Brett Kebble in 2004, has since seen a change of control from JCI and Matodzi Resources (MTZ) to the unlisted Gem Diamonds for 879 million rand. The largest diamond ever found was the Cullinan diamond found in South Africa just over a century ago. It came in at 3,107 carats. Sunday Times Oct 4

VOLUNTEERS WILL CARRY CAMPAIGN

The key to the success or failure of Know Your Status lies with the volunteers, who will do the testing. So far 720 have been recruited, a long way from the target figure of 3,500. "We're covered for the critical areas, so we'll see how far that takes us. If we can't train 3,500 volunteers, we'll make do with less," said Lebona.

"We're still putting the infrastructure in place," said the health department's media officer, Lenka Sello. "We're going slowly to give government the chance to scale up treatment. Except for places in the mountains that have no roads, there should be no place that people have to travel more than two kilometres to get ARVs [antiretroviral drugs]."

According to Lebona, 14,000 people are receiving ARV treatment through the government programme, but the WHO estimates that around 58,000 people need to begin treatment. Lebona estimates that around 100,000 people have been tested in the past two years.

Lesotho: OVC Situation Needs Urgent Action

UN Integrated Regional Information Networks October 11, 2006

Johannesburg: Lesotho's Department of Social Welfare says more must be done to address the

needs of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC). Only 857 of about 22,000 HIV-positive children are accessing treatment at 57 sites in Lesotho. Private institutions registered with the government had 414 beds, but the government did not provide any orphanages or shelters.

In an effort to register and track the movement of both OVC and their foster caregivers, UNICEF has been working closely with the Department of Social Welfare to develop an electronic database of all OVC in the country.

Male-ruled Lesotho hosts many women role models

AFROL, 18 October - Lesotho is far from reaching its target of 50 percent women in decision-making positions. Still, the Kingdom has a long list of women in politics, the judiciary and the police force that have defied traditional attitudes and made it to the top. Gender activists hold these pioneers should become role models for women. There are currently sixteen elected women out of one-hundred and twenty members of the National Assembly, five women ministers, and three ministerial principal secretaries.

In politics, Ntlhoi Motsamai, speaker of the Lesotho national assembly and former chairperson of the SADC parliamentary forum, is undoubtedly one such crucial role model. Worldwide only about 10 percent of presiding officers of Parliament are women. She is the youngest speaker in Africa, elected to parliament in 1995, selected to be speaker in 1999 and re-elected in 2002.

Also in the judiciary, women role models are found. Previously Justice on the High Court of Lesotho, Justice Kellelo Justina Masafo-Guni is seen as one such role model. She is one of the only two women judges out of eleven elected by the African Union Executive Council of Ministers to the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights in Khartoum, Sudan on 21 January 2006. Two women out of eleven however cannot be seen as fair gender representation.

Malejaka Evelyn Letooane was appointed Lesotho's first woman Commissioner of Police on 1 January 2005. Ms Letooane joined the Lesotho Mounted Police Service in 1977, winning the prize as the best recruit of her year, rising through the ranks until this appointment.

For the first time in history, a woman police officer also heads Lesotho's police service. However, of the senior officers, those who get coloured portraits in the annual report's front piece, only 4 out of 22 are women.

Modest economic growth in Lesotho

[afrol News](#), **13 October** - Following a difficult year of stagnation, Lesotho is set to experience an estimated economic growth of 2.5 percent in the 2006-07 fiscal year. This is translated to real growth per capita, as the Kingdom's population currently is detracting due to the AIDS pandemic. According to the latest International Monetary Fund (IMF) report on Lesotho, GDP growth in the 2005-06 fiscal year was only estimated at 1.3 percent. In most African countries, such a low GDP growth rate would actually mean more poverty, as the population is growing at an even faster rate (typically between 2.0 and 3.5 percent). In Lesotho, however these numbers are translated into real per capita growth, as the population currently is shrinking at an annual rate of 0.45 percent due to the high HIV/AIDS prevalence rate that is has caused a very high mortality rate.

Lesotho intensifies efforts to help rape survivors

The Lesotho government is to improve medical care provided to sexual violence survivors after rape cases reported in the first three months of this year climbed to almost the total number for 2005. According to Motselisi Mosotho, a member of the Child and Gender Protection Unit (CGPU), 484 rape cases were registered by the police in the small land-locked kingdom between January and March this year, compared to 501 cases in the whole of 2005. In Lesotho's patriarchal society, violence against women is characterised by shame and stigma, and regarded as a family affair. Proper care and management of rape survivors could help reduce the burden of work placed on organisations, who often lacked the resources to deal with the abused, said Mavis Mochochoko of Ministries of Insured Salvation, a children and women's rights group based in the capital, Maseru.

According to CGPU's Ms Mosotho, gender rights campaigns have encouraged people to report abuse, and "the sensitisation of the people [by] the unit to raise awareness of their rights and the responsibility of reporting rape" has

contributed to the jump in the number of rape cases this year.

"Before these campaigns, rape was viewed as a family issue that, even when a family member raped another, the matter was dealt at the family level," Ms Mosotho commented. "However, people now understand that ... fathers cannot father their [own grand]children, as was the case before." *IRIN*

Sani Pass to be Tarred

Sani Pass is to be tarred in a series of stages planned to be completed by 2009. In mid-July, a sod-turning ceremony marking the beginning of the project was attended by the Lesotho Transport Minister, Popane Lebesa, and the South African Environmental Affairs Minister, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, at the Sani Top Chalets on the Lesotho border at the summit of Sani Pass, 2874m above sea level. The tarred road, however, will not reach Sani Top for some time. The project is planned in three phases. In the first, tarring will take place on the 14 km stretch between the Himeville turnoff and the former Good Hope Store. Phase Two will continue the tarring to the present South African Border Post at the foot of the steepest section of the pass. Finally Phase Three will provide a tarred surface up the sixteen hairpin bends (some of which may be eliminated or modified) of the steepest 8 km of the pass to the summit at Sani Top, the site of the present Lesotho Border Post.

The Sani Pass, the only road connection between KwaZulu-Natal and Lesotho, has long been legendary as a test for motor vehicles. It is not for nothing that Nissan South Africa called its luxury 4x4 vehicle the Nissan Sani. The pass first came into use in the 1890s after Chief Rafolatsane Letsie, a son of Paramount Chief Letsie, was placed in what became the Mokhotlong District to administer an area first settled by Batlokoa and later by other Basotho in the 1880s. The name Sani is in fact a shortening and Zulu influenced form of Rafolatsane's name, because the pass first came into use in the late 1890s as an easier way to get goods to Rafolatsane's place than the long trek from the Lowlands. Mokhotlong, founded as a police post in 1905 (it forgot to celebrate its centenary last year!), was long famed for its remoteness, although an aircraft first managed to land there in 1940, and a regular twice weekly postal air service was inaugurated on 2 June 1950. The aircraft had one spare seat, which could be booked through the Maseru postmaster. Meanwhile, the first ascent of Sani Pass had been achieved by a jeep in May 1948, and a year later a jeep service from Sani Top to Mokhotlong was undertaken regularly, although goods were still taken up the main steep Sani Pass by donkey. Mokhotlong Mountain Transport, based in Himeville, was founded in 1955 and was able to provide a through service using ex-army lorries which had to reverse several times to get round the steep bends of the pass. There is to this day a ban on two-wheel drive vehicles ascending the pass, but this may soon be a thing of the past, with saloon cars able to climb by a road which, however engineered, will never be less than spectacular.

Ski Resort Opens at Mahlasela

On Saturday 12 August there was an official opening for the Afri Ski Leisure Kingdom, situated at around 3000m on the road from Butha-Buthe to Mokhotlong, some 14 km beyond Oxbow. The Minister of Tourism, Lebohang Ntšinyi, well padded against the cold for the occasion, cut a ribbon at the ski resort in the presence of the South African owner, Wessel Bosman. The resort already has accommodation and a ski-lift, and at dry times can make its own snow. The owner looked forward to 10 years time when the resort would expand to accommodate 2 million visitors a year. The Minister had her own dream, and that was that Basotho could be sent to the Winter Olympics.

Good Advice to all Readers of Lumela.dk

If you would like to read more in-depth going news stories from Lesotho, we highly recommend the website of former MS-partner Transformation Resource Center:

www.trc.org.ls

where you will find a summary of recent events provided by Professor David Ambrose from the National University of Lesotho.

This summary is excellent stuff for hard core connoisseurs.

Lumela

What is Denmark Lesotho Network?

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

Membership of DLN

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

For membership contact cashier Karen Steffensen, tel.: +45 97578252, e-mail: karen.steffensen@mail.dk

DLN's address is: Denmark Lesotho Network, C/O Helga Højsager, Asylgade 16, DK-5000 Odense C, Denmark

Homepage: www.lumela.dk

KHOTSO – PULA – NALA