

News from the DLN

Spring in Denmark and a new number of Lumela.dk is ready to be read.
Have a good time together with the newsletter.



Look!

The Board has decided that this year's Annual General Meeting and Vision Day will be held during the **weekend 9th & 10th of April.**

Se her!

I år har bestyrelsen besluttet at holde visionsdag og DLNs generalforsamling hen over **weekenden den 9. og 10. april.**

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Membership of DLN

We will meet at Hotel Villa Gulle in Nyborg on Saturday the 9th for lunch. During the afternoon

Johannes from CISU will facilitate the vision workshop, where we will discuss the future of DLN. Where do we want to go? What do we want to do? How do we ensure that our organisation is strong and coherent?

After dinner we will socialise and enjoy. Perhaps there are members who could contribute with entertainment, music, photos or stories from Lesotho?

We will be accommodated in double rooms, paid by DLN. (Those who want single rooms must cover the extra cost themselves).

Sunday the 10th will start with breakfast, and the AGM will start at 10 including breaks for lunch and afternoon tea.



Viewing the fall

Vi mødes på Hotel Villa Gulle i Nyborg lørdag den 9. april til frokost. Om eftermiddagen vil Johannes fra CISU facilitere visionsworkshoppen, hvor vi vil diskutere fremtiden i DLN. Hvor skal vi hen? Hvad skal vi beskæftige os med? Hvordan sikrer vi os en stærk sammenhængskraft i foreningen?

Efter middagen, er der aftenhygge. Måske nogen vil byde ind med underholdende indslag, musik, billeder, historier fra Lesotho?



En turist fotograferer

Vi overnatter i dobbeltværelser, og DLN betaler. (De, som ønsker enkeltværelser, betaler det ekstra, det koster).

Søndag den 10. april starter vi med morgenmad og kl. 10 starter Generalforsamling. Den slutter med frokost og eftermiddagskaffe.

Rejsegodtgørelse: Vi kan give refusion for rejseudgifter over 300 kr. ud fra 2. klasse i tog eller 1 kr./km i bil. De der ønsker refusion skal udfylde skema ved GF.

**Tilmelding hurtigst muligt til
dln@lumela.dk**

News from the Board

In the beginning of January vice-chair Marie Villumsen was asked to take over as acting chairperson from Anne Andersen, who has

Nyt fra bestyrelsen

I begyndelsen af januar blev næstformand Marie Villumsen bedt om at overtage formandsposten i DLN, da formand Anne

fallen seriously ill and is unable to continue her work as chairperson.

In the autumn of 2015, the Danish Government made a large cut in the long-term international development assistance. CISU therefore advised its member organisations to write to the Minister of Foreign Affairs and to the parties in Parliament, who support the reductions. Accordingly the DLN chairman and the DPE director, Ntate Sofones Shale, each wrote a letter to the Foreign Minister, Kristian Jensen and the spokespersons from the eight supporting parties. Read the letters elsewhere in this Newsletter.

In Lesotho the report concerning the circumstances surrounding the killing of military commander Maaparankoe Mahao in 2015 has been anticipated with some excitement. The report has now come out, and the first thing to happen was that the opposition left the Parliament. The implication is that the political situation in Lesotho remains unstable.



It has been a very dry and warm summer in Lesotho, and the rains only started after Christmas, which is too late. There is a great danger that many will starve in the months to come.

During week 5 Anne-Marie Erikstrup, Anders Hedegård and Nis Skau went on a Project visit to the Rural Selfhelp Development Association

Andersen var blevet alvorligt syg, og ikke kunne fortsætte arbejdet som formand.

Den danske regering har i efteråret 2015 skåret en ordentlig luns af den langsigtede udviklingsbistand. I den forbindelse opfordrede CISU medlemsorganisationerne til at skrive til udenrigsministeren og de politiske udenrigsordførere for de partier, der ville lægge stemmer til nedskæringerne. I den forbindelse skrev DLNs formand og DPEs direktør Ntate Sofonea Shale hver sit brev til udenrigsminister Kristian Jensen og otte ordførere. Brevene kan læses et andet sted i dette nyhedsbrev.

I Lesotho har rapporten omkring omstændighederne ved drabet af militær kommandør Maaparankoe Mahao i juni 2015 været set frem til med spænding. Den er nu kommet, og det første, der skete var, at oppositionen forlod Parlamentet. Det betyder, at den politiske situation i Lesotho stadig er meget usikker.

Det har været en meget tør og varm sommer i Lesotho, og regnen er først kommet efter jul – og for sent. Der er stor fare for, at mange kommer til at sulte i den kommende tid.



I uge 5 var Anne-Marie Erikstrup, Anders Hedegård og Nis Skau på Projektbesøg i Rural Selfhelp Development Association (RSDA). Generelt kan det siges, at projektet går godt. Læs om det et andet sted i nyhedsbrevet. RSDA har i år 25-års jubilæum og er ved at

(RSDA). Read about this elsewhere in this newsletter. RSDS is celebrating its 25 anniversary this year and is currently planning how to celebrate it. It will be interesting to follow what they decide.

It has been a long haul for Carsten Brønden and the project group to get the Working Kids project idea started. Carsten therefore decided to go to Lesotho himself in February to meet with potential partners. Positive contacts were established and the idea was well received. However a lot of follow up work is still needed. Read more about the outcomes in the next issue of the Newsletter.



Children who should have been to school

The Development of Peace Education (DPE) is planning a visit from Lesotho in June. The idea is to show Danish municipalities, association and how CISU are working. A one day visit to the Danish Parliament may also be organised. The work of the DPE is seriously affected by the unstable political situation in Lesotho, and new strategies and activity plans have been made considering that the scenario is different from when the project was formulated. However the project aim of strengthening popular democratic participation remains unchanged.

In the Berea Agriculture Group (BAG) a new pig project is underway. Funding for 10 pigs will be sought at the 'Kulturstyrelsen' (Dept. for Culture). And considering that the current

planlægge, hvordan det skal fejres. Det bliver spændende at følge med i, hvad der skal ske.

Projekt Working Kids har været et langt sejt træk for Carsten Brønden og hans projektgruppe. Carsten har valgt at rejse til Lesotho for selv at opsøge kontakter. Ideen blev vel modtaget og der blev etableret god kontakt til potentielle partnere, men der forstås stadig en masse opfølgingsarbejde. Læs om Carstens oplevelser i næste nummer af Nyhedsbrevet.

Projektgruppen, der arbejder med Development of Peace Education (DPE) planlægger et besøg fra Lesotho i juni. Ideen er at vise, hvordan danske kommuner, foreninger og CISU fungerer, og at der evt. bliver en dag i Folketinget. Arbejdet i DPE er meget præget af den ustabile politiske situation i Lesotho, hvor der er lavet nye strategier og aktivitetsplaner, som tager højde for, at der er en anden situation nu, end der var, da projektet blev skrevet. Projektet arbejder stadig mod det samme mål om demokratisk deltagelse af befolkningen i Lesotho.



Tørke i bjergene

I Berea Agriculture Group (BAG) er der et griseprojekt i støbeskeen. Der søges penge til 10 grise og foder til dem, da tørkeproblemet i år betyder, at der ikke formodes, at der kan dyrkes nok afgrøder til at opfostre grisene. Der søges penge til projektet hos Kulturstyrelsen.

drought probably means that growing sufficient crops to raise the pigs will be impossible we will also apply for funds for fodder.

The Board is looking forward to the vision day and the AGM and hope that many will turn up and share their ideas on how DLN should develop over the coming five years.

Bestyrelsen ser frem til, at mange vil møde op til visionsdag og generalforsamling og give deres ideer til, hvor DLN skal bevæge sig hen i de næste fem år.

Monitoring visit in Lesotho 2016

By: Anne-Marie Erikstrup

In February 2016 I travelled to Lesotho with Signe and Anders Hedegaard. They lived in Maseru from 2001 until 2004. Signe spent her winter holiday in and around Maseru revisiting old friends, seeing the sights and enjoying being away from the cold Danish winter in exchange for blazing sunshine and warm weather.



Workshop with farmer leaders

Meanwhile Anders and I were there to carry out a week-long monitoring visit with our partner in Lesotho: Rural Self-Help Development Association (RSDA).

In April 2015 we kick-started a new 3 year long project with RSDA: Improving living conditions and position of the Lesotho smallholder farmers in society through lobbying, advocacy and capacity building.

The vision of the project is to mirror the very influential farmers councils in Denmark. Farmers in Denmark have been speaking with 1 voice for 100 years, whereby they have a high degree of influence with the government and the policies in the area of agriculture and trade.

The aim of the project is to make small-hold farmers in Lesotho organised and able to speak with 1 voice, so that by lobbying and advocacy they too can be able to influence the policies in the area of agriculture and trade in Lesotho.

This was the first monitoring visit in the new project, but the history of RSDA and DLN goes all the way back to beginning of DLN, and this is the third joint project.

So the staff at RSDA are old hands at putting together programs for such visits, and they did not disappoint this time round with a programme that included meetings with the staff, the board, the farmers, stakeholders (for example Action Aid and Lesotho National Farmers Union) and field visits to the districts of Berea, Leribe and Mafeteng.

Before we arrived, we had heard of the drought that Lesotho has experienced in recent months. Therefore we were pleasantly surprised to see a green view of Lesotho when driving around the countryside.

But when we were out with the RSDA staff they could tell us that what at first appeared as just the beautiful view of green grass fields everywhere with the backdrop of magnificent mountains was in fact a view of uncultivated fields. At this time of year they should have been filled with maize and other crops.

The first rainfalls had arrived just a couple of weeks before our visit. But the rain should have started in November. No one could remember the last time that the rain had been this delayed.



By now it is too late in the season for the farmers to sow the summer seeds that they bought months ago. It is only winter crops that can be sowed at this time of the year and cultivated in time before the autumn and winter starts. But seeing as the farmers spent their money on summer seeds that haven't yielded them an income, many cannot afford to buy seeds for winter crops. So a large part of the population is in risk of needing help for food. It also

means that food prices are going up making them very expensive.

Meeting with RSDA board members

And it isn't just the weather that provides challenges for Lesotho. The political situation has been unstable for many months by now, and this, unfortunately, continues as well.

We were there in the week leading up to the release of the SADC Commission report about the circumstances surrounding the death of brigadier Maaparankoe Mahao in June 2015. This was much talked about and debated by all in Lesotho. It is especially the uncertainty of the repercussions of the report and whether the government will choose to comply with the recommendations or not.

After we had left, the report was released, and the opposition walked out of parliament.



Berea Business Council

But despite the challenges given to them - be it because of the drought, political instability or other - the will to overcome the obstacles is apparent among the population.



In Berea we got to meet with the Berea Business Council and about 40 of their members from the agricultural division. Both Anders and I were impressed with the motivation they show for their work, and their will to fight for more influence and better living conditions through lobbying and advocacy by speaking together with 1 voice.

Also among the RSDA staff and the board of RSDA we witnessed a strong will to succeed with the aim of our joint project: making the farmers able to speak with 1 voice.

Our monitoring visit showed us that the current project is well underway, and both RSDA and the farmers have a strong believe in the importance of making the small-hold farmers better able to join forces and influence the agricultural policies.

When we started working together with RSDA, we

*The tomatoes should have been more advanced
in their process of ripening.*

worked with local farmers groups in three districts. Since then umbrella organisations have been formed in those three districts. And by now we are working on district level in five districts.

There may still be a way ahead before we achieve the overall vision of the project – especially with the current challenges facing Lesotho – but seeing the daily efforts made by both RSDA and the farmers involved, it is apparent that the will to succeed is still very much there.

Letter from the South

By Sofonea Shale
Director of Development of Peace Education
(DPE)
Lesotho.

To the Danish Government.

The foreign development aid is doing unbelievable change in terms of not only opening societies in South but making democracy work and change people's lives. Through National Community Parliament that we support through the funds we get from Danish government has seen the national budget responding to their needs after people spoke directly to Ministers following the stage created by DPE and the empowerment for people to speak for themselves. Through this assistance we are able to support initiatives that support people build their own democracy, and hopefully the institutions to help them enhance democracy would be a living testimony of our assistance. The evaluation on what people say about community parliament is wonderful, people comment DPE for creating a platform for them to speak for their electrification needs and the Minister of Water has just visited one village he was made aware of by Community parliament. These are just examples of fruits of our support.

Brev fra syd

Af Sofonea Shale
Direktør for Development of Peace Education
(DPE)
Lesotho

Til den danske regering

Den internationale udviklingshjælp bidrager til utrolige forandringer, ikke kun ved at åbne samfundene i syd, men også ved at få demokratiet til at virke og forandre folks liv. Gennem National Community Parliament, (parlamentslignende møder i lokalområderne, hvor den lokale befolkning beslutter, hvad de vil have videre til regeringen), som vi støtter i kraft af de midler, vi modtager fra den danske regering, har vi set, at det også bliver reflekteret i det nationale budget, fordi folk er begyndt at henvende sig direkte til ministrene. Et resultat af den 'scene', som er skabt af DPE og styrkelsen af folks evne til at tale deres egen sag. Denne internationale hjælp gør os i stand til at støtte initiativer, som hjælper folk med at opbygge deres eget demokrati. Og forhåbentlig vil disse institutioner til forstærkning af demokratiet stå som levende beviser på nytten af vor assistance. Evalueringen af Community Parliament og folks udsagn er vidunderlig; Folk roser DPE for at have skabt en platform, hvor de kan fremføre deres behov for elektrificering, og

The diminishing of Danish fund will make the initiatives that are efforts to build local democracy and link people with government in the intention of institutionalising the participatory ways will stop. This work is too important to stop. Danish government should be able to continue supporting local process more so that other funders do so under the terms that themselves are disempowering.

Letter to the Foreign Minister

Dear Kristian Jensen

I am writing to you as chairman of Denmark Lesotho Network www.lumela.dk as I have become aware through the media that the government to make substantial cuts in the long term plans development assistance. This is very concerning, and I want to protest vehemently against such reductions. We are a small organisation that supports two projects in Lesotho by means of funds applied for and granted from Civil Society in Development (CISU). These two projects help educate the population to organise themselves and work for a better civil society. A significant reduction will destroy the current process – the development that has been brought about through the efforts of Denmark Lesotho Network.

With reductions in the development aid the people of Lesotho will be without information about their rights. It will lead to increased inequality in the country, more poverty, hunger and crime. As Danes that is not good enough.

Denmark Lesotho Network has about 100

ministeren for vand har netop besøgt en landsby, som han var blevet gjort opmærksom på via Community Parliament. Dette er bare et par eksempler på frugterne af vor støtte. Reduktionen i den danske støtte kan betyde et stop for initiativer, som bestræber sig på at opbygge lokalt demokrati og institutionalisere de aktive måder, hvorpå folk kan kontakte regeringen. Dette arbejde er for vigtigt til at stoppe. Den danske regering burde være i stand til at fortsætte støtten til disse lokale processer, således, at andre donorer også vil gøre det.

Brev til udenrigsministeren

Kære Kristian Jensen

Jeg skriver til dig som formand for Denmark Lesotho Network www.lumela.dk, fordi jeg har erfaret i medierne, at regeringen nu vil skære dybt i den langsigtede udviklingsbistand. Det er meget bekymrende, og jeg vil på det kraftigste protestere imod en sådan nedskæring.

Vi er en lille organisation, der med midler fra CISU, Civilsamfund i Udvikling hjælper to projekter i Lesotho med penge, søgt gennem CISU. Disse to projekter er med til at uddanne befolkningen i Lesotho til at kunne organisere sig og arbejde for et bedre civilsamfund. En voldsom beskæring vil ødelægge den proces, der er i gang – den udvikling, der er kommet i stand ved Denmark Lesotho Networks indsats. Befolkningen i Lesotho vil med beskæringerne af udviklingsmidlerne fremadrettet stå uden oplysning om deres rettigheder. Det vil føre til øget ulighed i landet, og det vil øge fattigdommen, sulten og kriminaliteten. Det kan vi ikke som danskere være bekendt. Denmark Lesotho Network har ca. 100 medlemmer i Danmark og ca. 20 aktive

members and approximately 20 active volunteers. Nobody is paid for the considerable work carried out in relation to applying for funds and ensuring that the projects are well implemented at such a long distance. We have no office facilities but work from our own homes on our own computers, we drive in our own cars without compensation, so nearly all the funds are spent towards our aim and purpose of supporting in Lesotho itself. With a cut of up to 50% it will be impossible to continue the tasks for which we have made contracts, and our partners in Lesotho will be let down. Denmark really gets a lot of development for the funds administered by CISU and the small organisations that carry out a lot of voluntary work with great enthusiasm. It is therefore very worrying indeed and I want to strongly object to these reductions.

Yours sincerely
Anne Andersen
Chairman Denmark Lesotho Network

frivillige. Ingen får løn for det store arbejde, der ligger i at søge midler og få projekterne til at køre godt så langt væk. Vi har ingen kontorfaciliteter, men arbejder fra vores egne hjem på vores egne computere og kører i vores egne biler uden kompensation, så det er de allerfleste af midlerne, der går til formålet at støtte i selve Lesotho. Med de op til 50 % nedskæringer, vil det blive umuligt at videreføre de opgaver, vi har lavet kontrakter på, og dermed svigter vi vores samarbejdspartnere i Lesotho. Danmark får rigtigt meget udvikling for de midler, der administreres gennem CISU og de mindre organisationer, der udfører meget gratis arbejde med stor entusiasme. Derfor er det særdeles bekymrende, og jeg vil på det kraftigste protestere imod disse nedskæringer.

Med venlig hilsen
Anne Andersen
Formand for Denmark Lesotho Network

News from Lesotho:

From Sunday Express:



Metsing off to Mozambique and Botswana

POSTED BY SUNDAY EXPRESS ON
FEBRUARY 23, 2016

Lekhetho Ntsukunyane
Deputy Prime Minister Mothetjoa
Metsing leaves for Mozambique
today to meet with President Filipe
Nyusi in his capacity as chairperson
of the SADC Organ on Politics,

Defence and Security Cooperation.

The *Sunday Express* could not immediately establish the agenda of the meeting, which is scheduled for Maputo this afternoon.

After engaging Mr Nyusi, the deputy premier is expected to fly to Gaborone for another meeting tomorrow with SADC chairperson and Botswana President Ian Khama.

It was also not immediately clear what the two leaders are going to discuss in the Gaborone meeting.

The Prime Minister's spokesperson, Motumi Ralejoe, could not be drawn to give details of the meetings, which he said were "routine" SADC gatherings.

Mr Metsing, he added, would be standing in for Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili in the two meetings.

Dr Mosisili left the country on Friday for a weeklong holiday in India and Mr Metsing would be Acting Prime Minister in his absence.

Asked whether the meetings would discuss Justice Mpaphi Phumaphi's report into Lesotho's security situation, which Dr Mosisili tabled in Parliament on 8 February, Mr Ralejoe said: "Like I said, these are routine meetings where anything can be discussed. The report is not the agenda but that does not prevent the leaders from discussing it."

A SADC Double Troika communiqué issued last month in Gaborone urged the Lesotho government to implement the recommendations of the report, compiled following an investigation by a 10-member Commission of Inquiry led by Justice Phumaphi of Botswana.

However, Dr Mosisili told parliament when he tabled the report that its recommendations were not binding. Dr Mosisili emphasized that government would only implement those recommendations it considered implementable—an announcement analysts suggested could set Lesotho on a collision course with the regional body, which established the Phumaphi commission at the prime minister's request.

The *Sunday Express*' repeated efforts to get a comment from Mr Metsing were fruitless last night. On the other hand, the leader of the opposition in parliament, Thomas Thabane, yesterday said he was surprised that Dr Mosisili had gone on leave "at this critical time for Lesotho."

"This needs some serious analysis. It is quite surprising that the whole Prime Minister can decide to go on holiday in India at this critical time for Lesotho," Dr Thabane said from Ficksburg in South Africa where he has been living since he fled Lesotho in May last year after claiming some members of the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF) were out to kill him.

"He has just tabled the SADC report which comes with crucial recommendations and he decides to leave the situation as it is with his junior (Mr Metsing). He should be the one attending these meetings not his junior."

Among some of the key recommendations of the Phumaphi report is the dismissal of LDF commander Lieutenant-General Tlali Kamoli and security reforms.

Mother, newborn twins swept away by raging river

POSTED BY SUNDAY EXPRESS ON FEBRUARY 23, 2016

... as woman's sister also drowns in one of the worst tragedies to strike Thabana-Morena

Pascalinah Kabi

A MOTHER and her three-day old twin sons, as well as her sister, drowned in Moketa River on Wednesday night in one of the worst tragedies to hit Thabana-Morena in Mafeteng district.

The first-time mother had given birth by caesarean section at Tšepong Hospital and was on her way home to Ha-Panta village in Thabana-Morena in the company of her sister when they were swept away by the raging river.

The mother's body was recovered on Friday evening at the confluence of Qhoqhoane and Makhaleng rivers, and the search for the three other bodies continued yesterday.

Ha Panta councilor, Maisaka Fuufu, yesterday told the Sunday Express that the entire village had been left devastated by the tragic incident.

"A boy from the neighbouring Ha-Lengolo village was walking along Moketa river bank at around 10 on Thursday morning when he noticed a blanket which had a safety pin on, an indication that the owner had not removed it. The boy suspected the owner could have drowned and he immediately raised the alarm. One of the villagers identified the blanket, and said she had lent it to the two females the previous night. She said the women were on their way from Mafeteng town, and had refused to spend the night in Ha-Lengolo because of the traditional belief that nursing mothers and newborn babies must never spend a night away from home," Ms Fuufu said.

"The Ha-Lengolo chief immediately wrote a letter to his Ha-Panta counterpart, informing him of the discovery and a search party was assembled.

"We started the search on Thursday and recovered the woman's body yesterday evening. The search for the other three bodies resumed this morning, but we are all devastated by this tragedy." Councilor Fuufu said the family of the deceased was just "numb".

"On Thursday, I went to the family to offer my condolences and the sisters' mother was just numb. She never uttered a word but you would tell she was in shock; she was in pain," Ms Fuufu said. What made the situation even worse was the family's son, who was a student at Lerotholi Polytechnic, died during the school's infamous initiation, in 2014, Ms Fuufu added.

"This family has been dealt yet another blow. It has not even recovered from the untimely death of their son who drowned in 2014 during an initiation ceremony for first-year Fokothi learners. So you can understand what the family is going through, because they have now lost three children in a space of two years," Ms Fuufu said.



According to Ms Fuufu, the sister who had been sent by the family to collect her sibling in Mafeteng town had a seven-month old baby. She had left the baby at home when she went to collect her sister and her two sons and hoped to return home the same day.

"One can never describe the pain this family is going through," Ms Fuufu said.

She also lamented government's failure to build a footbridge across Moketa River

which she said could have saved the lost innocent lives. She also said the local community faces many hardships each time the river is in flood.

"Initially we were told that road construction that was going on in this area was going to include the building of footbridges across Moketa, but we were surprised to hear later on that the contractor had completed his 40-kilometre road-works before arriving in Moketa," said Ms Fuufu.

"We sent some council members to the contractor to seek answers, but what they told us did not make sense. We really don't understand why such a life-saving project was abandoned and we hope these latest deaths will push those in power to do something about our plight."

Ms Fuufu said Makhoaba Primary School students were constantly losing their property to the river while being swept away and fighting for their lives.

"Makhoaba is located right in the middle of Ha-Panta and Majakaneng villages and that is the only nearby school for our children," she said.

A Ha-Panta villager, 'Malerato Matli, on Friday described the incident as "the most shocking deaths we have experienced in this village because we have never lost four family members at the same time".

Ms Matli continued: "The woman had come to her maternal home here in Ha-Panta for traditional nursing-mother assistance (*ho behoa setsoetse*) because the young girl was married to a family from Malumeng.

"There is a very long distance between the last public transport stop in Majakaneng and Ha-Panta. I am sure it took them longer given that the new nursing mother might have been in pain as we know that a C-Section is very painful."

Another villager, 'Matholang, said: "The new mother was recently married and these were her first children. She was still very young and we are all shocked by what happened. They must have died one of the most painful deaths one can ever imagine.

"I just wish they had never attempted to cross this river; they are not the first ones to be taken by this river. I know it is a terrible thing to say, but they won't be the last for as long as there is no footbridge across this river."

Maralleng councilor, Rakoti Macheli, also said the deaths had left the rest of the community apprehensive and terrified to cross the river.

"We are shocked. The whole village and surrounding areas are in mourning. This family is unlucky and it is beyond our understanding how this happened. The four are the latest members of this family to have drowned," Mr Macheli said.

The councilor called on government urgently construct footbridges across Moketa River to save innocent souls.

"No one can dispute the fact that we desperately need water but every time it rains heavily, the whole of Thabana-Morena becomes fearful. We are scared for our children who cross the river twice a day to and from school, and we fear for our livestock, which is swept away.

"We recently lost two young boys aged 10 and 12 in the same river; the boys were on their way from school. Unless we get the footbridges that we were promised, we will continue to lose lives and hopefully, the authorities are going to do something about the bridges as a matter of urgency."

From Facebook 19th February 2016,

Semonkong





From: news24

Lesotho farmlands dry up as drought worsens

2016-02-03 10:28



Maseru - The government of Lesotho has declared a national emergency as drought continues to hit farming communities.

The World Food Programme (WFP) said hundreds of thousands of people will need food aid in the coming year.

In the Leribe district of the country, Mapuleng Khalala, a farmer, packs away her empty corn bag as her crops fail to produce food for her family.

"It is going to be very difficult to live in this situation, because I live on farming, so I don't know what I am going to feed my children," she told Al Jazeera.

The WFP said the drought will hit 80 percent of Lesotho's rural population the hardest.

Most people in rural areas are dependent on subsistence farming, and a severe shortage of portable water is making the situation worse.

Already, more than half of the country's population survives on less than a dollar a day.

"The worst-case scenario - if we do not react now, we will have people without their assets, their cows, their sheep," Mary Njoroge, a WFP official, told Al Jazeera.

"They are selling whatever asset they have. It means they will fall into deeper poverty where it will be more difficult."

The government has pledged \$10m for drought relief. But it needs three times that amount.

Across the mountains, farmers like Mapuleng said any rain now would be too late. And as winter approaches, communities worry about the road ahead.

From Lesotho Times:

Who should elect prime minister: citizens or MPs?



Posted by :Lestimes Posted date : **January 21, 2016**

Sofonea Shale

The contemplated constitutional review shall remain an elitist process that insulates politicians from public control unless citizens rise and actively participate in debate and dialogue to shape their constitution. One of many questions that Basotho may need to interrogate is *who should elect Prime Minister: the citizens or Members of Parliament (MPs)?*

Upon independence, Lesotho inherited the Westminster model of government whose key features include an executive derived from the legislature. This means that government legitimacy depends on sustained support in parliament. In light of the reality that governance systems are not prehistory but social constructs and that nothing holds Basotho to things tried, tested and found durable for other nations if not locally helpful, the constitution of Lesotho should be thoroughly engaged. In terms of the 1966 constitution, the Prime Minister came from the National Assembly but contrary to the current situation non-parliamentarian Ministers were allowed. Basotho made this change on their own, so what is it that they cannot change to suit their case this time around? The 1993 constitution indicates in Section 87(2) that the Prime Minister shall be a member of the National Assembly who commands the majority in the House. Pursued to comprehension and its logical conclusion, this provision basically says he or she who is supported in parliament regardless of how the citizens and the actual electors think, can be a Prime Minister. This equally means that the Prime Minister who may be popular among citizens is likely to be removed so long as MPs do not think he or she is suitable for the job. Because the Motion of No Confidence as contemplated in Section 87(5) (a) of the constitution and operationalised in Standing Order number 111 does not have to be based on any reason, MPs can decide to remove the Prime Minister even for the reasons that people who voted for them cannot support. The Section 87(2) of the constitution is not only the most misunderstood section of the constitution but one that has been mutilated since 1993 particularly due to absence of enabling legislation that operationalises it. Since 1993 no Member of National Assembly has been appointed by the King as the Prime Minister on the basis of tested majority support in the House. Though it is equally true that no Prime Minister could legitimately sit without majority support in the House, to have a Prime Minister by implication while there is an affirmative constitutional provision demonstrates poor interpretation and appreciation of governance architecture. There is a confirmed observation that the majority of Basotho do not know how the Prime Minister is elected.

When people cast their vote at the polling centre in the constituency, exactly what are they doing? Section 57(1) (c) (i) of the Constitution indicates that in composing the National Assembly, there shall be 80 (eighty) Members to be elected in respect of each of the constituencies contemplated by Section 67(1) and operationalised through National Assembly Electoral Act 2011, in particular Section 80 providing that voting in general elections shall be conducted in every constituency. In this way, when casting a vote, people vote for representatives of their constituencies and these will determine who becomes the Prime Minister on behalf of the voting population. Is it proper in a democracy for citizens to entrust MPs with such a huge responsibility? Further does this legal provision reflect the will of the people? Do people want MPs to elect and remove the Prime Minister on their behalf or is just what the law provides?

In general it is believed that Basotho do not necessarily vote for MPs as preferred individuals to represent their constituencies but vote for leaders of political parties under which such candidates contest. In Lesotho, several good candidates have not made it against their political parties in constituencies. In the event that a popular local politician loses favour with central executive of his or her political party and therefore right to represent the party at the constituency, it is normally hard to be voted if one contests as independent candidate for parliamentary elections. People like the late Thabo Mokotso were able to beat political parties in contest in constituencies and the most recent experience was the one in which Bofihla Nkuebe beat the ruling Basuto Congress Party in the Qeme by-election in 1994 but the rest find it hard. This may perhaps be explanation why even bad candidates would be elected against otherwise better. Why could this be, could it

be because the independent candidate is likely to remain ordinary Member of Parliament while voting for a party candidate gives guarantee that upon winning a party leader becomes Prime Minister. However in local government many independent candidates have beaten their political parties. In 2005 60 per cent of seats were won by independent candidates while in 2011 it was 13 per cent.

If Basotho decide that Prime Minister be elected directly and not by proxy, MPs will no longer have excessive right to decide on the head of executive. Those MPs who put undue pressure on the Prime Minister to give them ministerial positions otherwise they would join those who seek to remove him will no longer have effect. This also means that MPs will no longer have right to pass vote of no confidence on the Prime Minister but they could only impeach. If Basotho decide to vote for Prime Minister directly they would be entrusting the executive mandate to one person who shall be solely responsible for executive. In the current arrangement the head of executive organ of state does not have popular mandate in the true sense of the word. In other words the right of citizens to put and remove head of government is delegated to the MPs who in many occasions do not remain loyal to their voters. If people elect Prime Minister directly will that not correlate with the intention of people when they go out to vote? Do people go out to vote for parliament or for executive? Looking at the content of party manifestoes and indeed what constituency candidates also promise, it is basically the stuff for executive not parliament. MPs become popular or unpopular in their constituencies not for being active in committees and holding government to account but on how many development projects government has or not implemented in the constituency. In the current situation, many parliamentarians define their duty as being loyal to the Prime Minister and as long as they do that, they see their political future guaranteed, but what about the duties of parliament? In fact why should MPs have to determine the Prime Minister that citizens would not have?

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.

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