

News from the DLN

Denmark Lesotho Network has its AGM **Saturday 3rd March 2018 in Aarhus.**

Denmark Lesotho Network holder generalforsamling **lørdag den 3. marts 2018 i Aarhus.** Sæt kryds i kalenderen allerede nu!

To everybody who hosted the tourist group from Denmark Lesotho Network: Thank you very much for your hospitality. It has been such a pleasure to meet all of you.



Wishing all of you a Merry Christmas and a prosperous
New Year

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Membership of DLN

News from the Board, Nov. 2017

By Karina Ruby

There have been plenty of activities in DLN over the last three months, both current projects and new initiatives.

As something new DLN has facilitated contact between a Danish student and an NGO in Lesotho, i.e. our partner Rural Self-help

Nyt fra bestyrelsen, nov. 2017

af Karina Ruby

Der har de sidste 3 mdr. været megen aktivitet i DLN, både i de igangværende projekter og i forhold til nye tiltag.

Som noget nyt har DLN hjulpet med at formidle kontakt mellem en dansk studerende og en NGO i Lesotho, nemlig vores partner

Development Association (RSDA).

Anthropology student Jeppe Hedegaard is now undertaking field work in Lesotho for four months as part of his study. We look forward to learning more about it when he returns to Denmark.

During November 11 persons from Denmark participated in our Culture Travel to Lesotho. This is the fourth travel of this kind organised by DLN, where a group of Danes travelled around Lesotho and visited various places. More about this elsewhere in this newsletter. In September, Nis Skau and Solveig Kappel from the RSDA group went on a financial audit and project visit. Amongst others they visited a large agricultural fair together with RSDA.

Grete Mygind and Helga Halck from the Development Peace Education (DPE) project group also went on a project visit during October. The purpose was partly to evaluate the recently finished project, and partly to assist the starting up of the new project.



Visiting a DPE group in the rural mountains

DPE has started a new three-year project funded by CISU and supported by DLN. The Working Kids project has started! CISU has granted 120.000 for a small initial project. The project group has recruited a student volunteer from International Development Studies at Roskilde University (RUC), Alfred Aberto, who will travel to Lesotho by the end of January to support Lesotho National Council of Women (LNCW).

Rural Self-help Development Association (RSDA). Antropologistuderende Jeppe Hedegaard er nu i 4 måneders praktik i Lesotho som en del af sit studie.



Her er Jeppe på kontoret i Maseru

Det glæder vi os til at høre mere om, når han kommer hjem til Danmark igen.

I november var 11 personer fra Danmark på Kulturrejse til Lesotho. Dette var DLNs 4. rejse af den type, hvor en gruppe af danskere rejste rundt og besøgte forskellige steder i Lesotho. Mere herom senere i dette nyhedsbrev.

Fra RSDA-projektgruppen har Nis Skau og Solveig Kappel været på finansielt tilsyn og projektopfølgning i september. De besøgte bl.a. en stor landbrugsudstilling sammen med RSDA (Rural Selfhelp Development Association).

Fra DPE-projektgruppen har Grete Mygind og Helga Halck været på projektbesøg i oktober. Det var dels evaluering af det afsluttede projekt, dels støtte til DPE i opstartsfasen af et nyt projekt. Development Peace Education (DPE) er startet på et nyt 3-årigt projekt bevilget af CISU med støtte fra DLN.

Working Kids projektet er nu i gang! Der er bevilget 120.000 kr. fra CISU til et mindre projekt. Projektgruppen har fundet en frivillig studerende fra International Development Studies på Roskilde Universitets Center (RUC), Alfred Aberto, som skal rejse til Lesotho i januar og støtte Lesotho National Council of Women (LNCW).

Vores partner Berea Agricultural Group (BAG)

Our partner Berea Agricultural Group (BAG) has started a small pig farming project (five pigs). However the project group has mixed feeling about the choice of product. In a global perspective it would seem that the food situation calls for consumption of vegetables and insects rather than supporting the production of large four-legged animals. The small hiccup, however, is that Basotho love pork because it is tasty. We fully understand that! We eat a lot of pork in Denmark too. Finally. I want you to reserve **March 3rd 2018** in your calendars, when we hold our DLN Annual General Meeting in Århus. More about this after New Year.

Unfamiliar and seems well-known

By: Christel Amundsen

There is a small boy standing in a dark corner of the classroom. The room is dim and the teacher has not yet seen him. He is the smallest of the group of children and simply bewildered. Cannot figure out the dance steps or songs and unable to understand collective instructions of which there are many. The other kids have just run out and are lining up for a game they are going to show to the group of European travellers. I felt a lump in my throat and wanted to put him in my pocket. Knowing all too well the feeling of being wrong and clumsy.



At the construction workshop

er startet op med et lille griseprojekt (5 grise). Projektgruppen er dog lidt ambivalent i forhold til emnet. Set gennem de store briller, hvor den globale fødevarer-situation mere kalder på øget indtag af grøntsager og insekter, burde vi måske ikke støtte et projekt med kødproduktion fra store firbenede dyr. Der er bare lige det, at Basotho elsker svinekød, fordi det smager godt. Det forstår vi jo godt. Vi spiser selv meget svinekød her i Danmark. Til sidst vil jeg opfordre jer til at sætte kryds i kalenderen d. **3. marts 2018**, hvor DLN afholder generalforsamling i Århus. Mere herom i det nye år.

Fremmedartet og dog så velkendt

Af Christel Amundsen

Der står en lille dreng i et mørkt hjørne af børnehaven. Rummet er dunkelt, og han er ikke blevet opdaget endnu af læreren. Han er den mindste i børnegruppen, og simpelthen rundt på gulvet. Kan ikke finde ud af dansetrin og sange eller tage imod kollektive beskeder, og dem er der en del af.



Børnene i børnehaven danser for gæsterne

De andre børn er lige løbet udenfor for at tage opstilling til en leg, de skal vise den store gruppe af europæiske rejsende. Jeg får en klump i halsen og får lyst til at putte ham i lommen. Kender kun alt for godt følelsen af at være forkert på den og klodset.

Recognising is a great part of my travel experience in Lesotho. It is unfamiliar and seems well-known at the same, scenery as well as people. Thinking back now, one week after return, it is the kids in the kindergarten and the after-school centre, the young people at the technical school and the women of the DLN democracy project and the weavers that I remember best.



Visit to the democracy project.

This is where the future lies. But the memory also leaves me with a feeling of powerlessness. What can I do? When hunger catastrophes strike you can donate money. But here we are faced with people like ourselves, but their everyday lives are not like ours. No recognition here. They just seem to lack so much. And yet the women create the most beautiful dresses and the finest of arts & craft, pictorial weavings, splendid soft mohair shales and colourful baskets.



Scenery from the landscape we passed by

There were 11 of us who visited for two weeks

Genkendelighed er en stor del af min rejseoplevelse i Lesotho. Det er fremmedartet og virker dog så velkendt, lige fra landskabet til menneskene. Når jeg nu, en uge efter hjemkomsten, tænker tilbage, er det børnene i børnehaven og fritidshjemmet, de unge på teknisk skole og kvinderne i DLNs demokratiseringsprojekt og på væverierne, jeg husker allerbedst. Det er der, fremtiden ligger, men erindringen skaber også en følelse af afmagt i mig, for hvad er det lige, jeg kan gøre? Ved en sultkatastrofe kan man give penge, her er vi blevet konfronteret med mennesker som os selv, men deres hverdag er ikke ligesom vores, ingen genkendelse der. De mangler bare så meget. Og så skaber kvinderne alligevel de smukkeste kjoler og det fineste kunsthåndværk, billedvævninger, skønne bløde mohairsjaler og farverige kurve.



En væverske i gang i TY

Vi var 11 personer af sted i 14 dage i

in the beginning of November 2017 and it has been one of the most fantastic travels that I have ever undertaken. We were welcomed in people's private homes and were treated with homebrewed beer and snacks. Saw dinosaur footprints and bushman paintings.



Bushmans paintings

Spent hours together in the bus with our good and lovely driver, Ntate Lefa, while the magnificent mountain views passed by, and the burned fields of umbra, red, maroon, and black were turned by men with oxen-pulled ploughs. The most exotic and wildest of wildlife that I saw was an ibis and lizards.

But the people have made an everlasting impact on me: Men on horseback wrapped in blankets wearing wellingtons, women in hats and colourful dresses and children in school uniforms.



Heard boy on his way home

People ask me, 'was it a nice holiday', and the answer is no. It was everything else. It was exhausting, eventful, cool, educational,

begyndelsen af november 2017, og det har været en af de mest fantastiske rejser, jeg har været på. Vi blev budt velkommen i folks private hjem, fik hjemmebrygget øl og godbidder. Så dinosaurusfodspor og bushmans paintings. Har tilbragt timer sammen i bussen med vores gode og kærlige chauffør, Ntate Lefa, mens det storslåede bjerglandskab gled forbi, og markerne i de brændte farver: umbra, rødt, brunt og sort blev pløjet af mænd med plove og forspand af okser. De vildeste dyr, jeg har set, har været en ibisstork og firben. Men menneskene har præget sig for evigt hos mig: Mænd, indhyllet i tæpper og med gummistøvler på hesteryg, kvinderne med hatte og kjoler i det farverige stof, og børnene i skoleuniformer.



Demonstration af tæpper i Semonkong

Folk spørger mig, om det har været "en dejlig ferie", og så svarer jeg nej. Den har været alt mulig andet: anstrengende, begivenhedsrig,

reflective, fantastic, happy, wonderful, and insightful and a lot more.

However more than anything, I think it has been an incredible eye-opener. It felt so good to see our Danish overindulgences smack dab in the face.

Project Visit RSDA, September 2017

By: Solveig Kappel and Nis K. Skau

After having successfully completed harvest at our own farm in southern Jutland we couldn't do the autumn sowing due to the heavy late summer rains. So we had plenty of time to make a Rural Self-help Development Association (RSDA) project visit from September 14th to 24th.

The farmers in Lesotho had the opposite problem. After a relatively good harvest in February- March drought had set in and the usual sowing of wheat during August was therefore not possible. However if rain should start during September - October it would still be possible to sow maize. We have now learned from RSDA that maize has been sowed in time in the highland, whereas there are problems in the lowlands towards the west, where farmers have only started ploughing now, as the soil has been much too hard. Deadline for sowing of maize and sorghum is November 15th, and beans December 15th. September was dry. The peach trees were blossoming beautifully, but everything else looked quite burned. Despite early spring the weather was relatively hot, and despite the drought we enjoyed the many hours of sunshine, of which we had not had too many during the Danish summer.

Apparently we could feel quite confident about the food situation. We often saw kids on the roads travelling on donkeys or with wheelbarrows carrying bags of maize for the

cool, dannelsesfuld, eftertænksom, fantastisk, glædelig, herlig, indsigtfuld og alt muligt andet. Frem for alt synes jeg, det er utroligt så øjenåbnende, den har været. Det var så godt at få vores danske forkælelse smasket lige i synet.

Projektbesøg RSDA september 2017

Af Solveig Kappel og Nis K. Skau

Efter vi havde fået høsten godt i hus på vores eget landbrug i Sønderjylland, og ikke kunne fuldføre vores efterårssåning her i sensommeren på grund af alt for megen regn, var der god tid til at aflægge Rural Self-help Development Association (RSDA) et projektbesøg fra den 14. til 24. september. Bønderne i Lesotho havde det modsatte problem, efter en forholdsvis god høst i februar og marts, havde der været tørke siden, og det var umuligt at foretage den normale såning af hvede i august. Hvis der kom regn i løbet af september og oktober kunne det stadig nås at så majs. Fra RSDA forlyder det nu, at der i højlandet er sået majs i rette tid. Det kniber mere i lavlandet mod vest, hvor bønderne først nu kan begynde at plove, da jorden har været alt for hård. Deadline for såning af majs og sorghum er 15. november og bønner 15. december.



Ferskentræer blomstrer lyserødt

Det var tørt i september, fersken træerne blomstrede smukt, men alt andet så noget svedent ud. Trods tidligt forår, var det

local mills in order to have the maize ground for papa.



Mill in the village of Liphofung

On day one we visited one of RSDA's new members i Leribe District, namely a cooperative near Maputseo. The business is owned and run jointly by 19 local farmers who hope to benefit from economies of scale by applying modern cultivation systems that are not possible for individual small-holders. The cooperative had established water supply from a 60 metres deep drill and also power supply. This has enabled them to start a greenhouse for cultivation of vegetables, tomatoes and cuttings for open land planting. They also had a henhouse with 600 egg-layers and a daily production of 500 eggs. Practical work is carried out by the owners themselves in three groups, i.e. one for the greenhouse, one for field work and one for egg production.



Proud members of the cooperative and their egg production.

The hens were kept in locally produced 'three-

forholdsvist varmt, og trods tørken nød vi de mange solskinstimer, som vi ikke havde meget af i den danske sommer.

Tilsyneladende kunne vi være fortrøstningsfulde med fødevaresituationen. Langs vejene så vi ofte børn på vej på æsel eller med trillebør og sække af majs til det lokale "møller" for at få majsene gjort klar til papa.



Mølleriet hos Action Lesotho, Maputseo

På dag 1 besøgte vi et af RSDA's nye medlemmer i Leribe Distrikt. Et møde hos et kooperativ nær Maputseo. Bedriften ejes og drives sammen af 19 lokale farmere, der med fælles drift ønsker at opnå stordriftsfordele med mulighed for mere moderne driftsform end enkeltvis på små-brugene. Kooperativet havde fået etableret en 60 meter dyb vandboring og elektricitet til bedriften, så det har været muligt at etablere et væksthuse til dyrkning af grøntsager, tomater og stiklinger til friland samt en stald til 600 høns med daglig produktion af ca. 500 æg. Det praktiske arbejde udføres af ejerne i 3 grupper, væksthuset, markbruget og ægproduktionen.

Hønsene gik i lokalt producerede bure i 3 etager. Umiddelbart gør man sig tanker om den "politiske korrekthed" om burhøns i Danmark. Umiddelbart så burene ud til at følge intentionen i EU-loven fra 2014. Hønsene havde okay plads og havde hel fjerdragt. De var ikke næbtrimmede og æggene var rene.

storey' cages. Instinctively one starts to think of the 'political correctness' of caged hens in Denmark. It would seem that these cages appeared to comply with the intention of the EU bill from 2014. Space was OK and the hens had full plumage. They had not had their beaks 'trimmed' and the eggs were clean. The excrements were used as fertilizer in the greenhouse. It was easily separated from the eggs and led away, thereby reducing the risk of salmonella contamination. Feedstuff efficiency was well managed at 1.9 kg of fodder for 16 eggs (app. 1 kg). Fodder consumption would have been higher for free-range hens, so climate adjustment was considered.



Due to the drought only limited crops were founding the fields of the cooperative. However in the greenhouse where water was available the cabbage-cuttings were ready for planting in the open fields.

On day two we participated in Expo 2017, which could be said to correspond to the annual meeting of Danish farmer associations where the purpose is to set the framework for farming and gain political influence. The conference was staged at Maseru's largest congress building venue 19-21 September 2017.

The title of Expo 2017 was "What type of Agricultural Graduate does Africa need?" The event was hosted by 'Silo', and independent magazine for farmers. Expo opened with auctioning of sheep, which is a favourable field of production since the market for wool is



Rene æg klar til skolemad eller det lokale marked

Hønsemøget blev nemt ledt væk og adskilt fra æggene. Derved minimeres risiko for salmonella. Hønsemøget blev brugt i drivhuset. Der var god styring på fodereffektiviteten, som er 1,9 kg foder til 16 æg (ca. 1 kg). Foderforbruget ville være noget højere, hvis hønsene var fritgående, så der er tænkt på klimatilpasning.

På dag 2 deltog vi i Expo 2017, som er Lesotho's svar på årsmøde i de danske landboforeninger, hvor man ønsker at sætte rammen om landbrugets situation og vinde politisk gehør. Konferencen blev afholdt i Maseru's største kongresbygning fra 19.-21. September 2017.

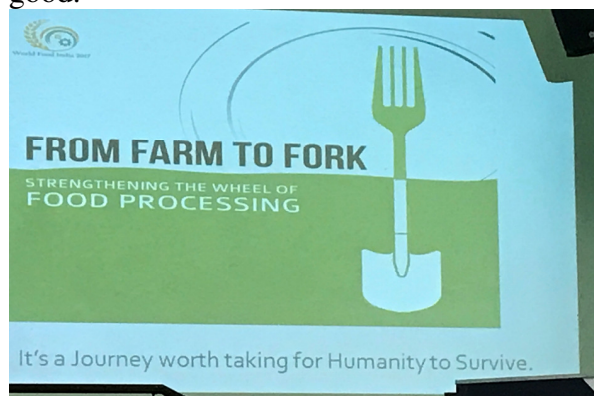
Overskriften for Expo 2017 var "What type of Agricultural Graduate does Africa need?" Vært var "Silo", et uafhængigt fagblad for landmænd.



En vædder klar til aktion.

Expo åbnede med husdyrauktion over får, som er en attraktiv produktionsgren, da der er et

good.



Slide from EXPO

Expo 2017 included speakers from Lesotho University of Agriculture, from Wits Business School in Jo'burg, Fresh Market in Durban, representatives from banks and insurance companies, and not least our own Mampho Thulo from RSDA.

As would appear from pics 6 and 7 the right things were said, and there is only one way to go, and that is forward!

At the gala dinner on the first evening a prize of 10.000 Maluti was awarded to a young farmer, Phatela Thamae – Sani Wine. Together with his father he has stated a quite sizeable wine production near Roma. We visited him on the final day of our travel. Phatela had planted the first vine back in 2008 and now had six hectares of vine and fruit trees.



A view of the youngest wine

In addition to vine, Phatela also had pear, apple and peach that he could sell from February to April. His market was street vendors in

godt marked for afsætning af ilden.

På årsmødet var der oplægsholdere fra Lesotho Landbrugsuniversitet, Wits Business School i Johannesburg. Fresh market i Durban, folk fra bankvæsen og forsikringsselskaber samt vores egen Mampho Thulo fra RSDA.

Som det ses på billede 6 og 7 blev de rigtige ting sagt, og der er kun en vej, og det er fremad.



Slide from EXPO

Til festmiddagen den første aften blev der uddelt en award på 10.000 Maluti til en yngre landmand, som var Phatela Thamae – Sani Wine. Phatela havde sammen med sin far fået startet en større vinproduktion nær Roma. Vi besøgte ham den sidste dag på vores besøg. Phatela havde plantet de første vinranker i 2008 og havde nu 6 hektar med vin og frugttræer.



Der var stadig vand i tankene hos Phatela. Han havde endnu ikke fået etableret en vandboring

Phatela havde udover vinranker også pærer, æbler og ferskner, hvorfra han solgte frugt i

Maseru. He also had quite a production of cuttings from both vines and fruit trees, the vision being that all Basotho should have their own fruit trees in their gardens.



A cabable man showing his wine barrels

After an exciting week filled with impressions we returned to our normal everyday life in Denmark. Our project with RSDA finishes by the end of June 2018, but we are working on an application for a new three-year project. The purpose would be to extend the RSDA membership to the five districts where RSDA does not have members as of now.

Project Visit to DPE

By: Helga Halck Højsager

DPE was about to start phase four of the project, which focuses on establishing information libraries in a number of rural areas. The original plan was that we participate in the start-up. It 'didn't turn out that way. However we had a very interesting experience in terms of participating in the Community Parliament (CP), which is one of the cornerstones of DPE's citizen education. The CP is held every year in connection with the Government's preparation of the Finance Bill. The citizens are made aware of their possibilities of exerting influence by taking part in a role play, which is in fact also a 'realty game' in that they meet ministers and/or high ranking government officials. CPs are organised as true copies of the parliament. It consists of

perioden februar til april. Markedet var streetsælger i Maseru. Phatela havde også en større produktion af stiklinger både fra vin og frugttræer, visionen er, at samtlige basothoer skal have frugttræer i deres haver. Efter en spændende uge og med mange indtryk tog vi tilbage til hverdagen i Danmark. Vores projektperiode med RSDA slutter pr. 30/6 2018. Vi arbejder på en projektansøgning for en ny 3-årig periode, med det formål, at RSDA får medlemmer i de 5 resterende distrikter, hvor RSDA ikke har medlemmer i dag.



Pløjetid

Projektbesøg hos DPE

Af Helga Halck Højsager

DPE stod til at skulle starte på fase 4 projektet, som har fokus på oprettelse af informations biblioteker i flere områder ude på landet. Planen var oprindelig, at vi skulle være med til opstarten. Sådan blev det ikke.



Derimod fik vi en meget interessant oplevelse, at være med til Community Parliament (CP),

Members (MPs), in this case representatives from the public and their mayors from local areas in various districts, two secretaries (employees of DPE) a Chairman, Speaker of the House (also an employee of DPE).

It all took place in a large hall that was organised to resemble an amphitheatre: A stage with the secretaries placed in the front, and on an elevated podium behind, the Chairman, who managed the entire process.



The CP was opened by a procession, where a person carried in a chief's ceremonial stick, followed by the Chairman and the two secretaries. The chief's stick is placed on a table in front of the secretaries. Participants greet the Chairman with small bows of heads and the Parliament is now in session.



A two-day programme was planned with time allocated for each of the ministers. At the opening the first ministers had already taken their seats, ready to receive the questions that had been formulated at the citizen meetings held in the villages in various districts. The

som er en af hjørnestenene i DPE's borgeruddannelse. CP afholdes hvert år i forbindelse med regeringens udarbejdelse af finansloven.



Befolkningen bliver bevidstgjort om deres mulighed for at få indflydelse på regeringens beslutninger, ved at deltage i et rollespil, som også er et "realitetsspil", forstået på den måde, at de i processen møder ministre og/eller højtstående embedsmænd. CP er, med dets organisering, en tro kopi af parlamentet. Det består af medlemmer af parlamentet (MP), her er MP borgerrepræsentanter og deres borgmester fra lokalområder i de forskellige distrikter, 2 sekretærer (2 ansatte fra DPE) og en formand, speaker of the House (1 ansat fra DPE).



Det hele foregik i en stor hal, hvor opsætningen kunne sammenlignes med et amfiteater, med en scene, hvor sekretærerne var placeret foran, og på en forhøjning, bagved, sidder formanden, som styrede hele processen. CP åbnes med en procession, hvor en person bar en høvdingestok ind, efterfulgt af formanden og de 2 sekretærer,

questions had been forwarded to the ministers one week in advance.

Everything was implemented over the two days with 300 participants from DPE's target audiences. Ministers and officials came well – prepared and listened to the wishes and questions raised by the MPs. The upcoming Finance Bill will show how big influence the CP has actually had.



As spectators to the CP we experienced great enthusiasm, satisfaction and excitement from citizens, who had the opportunity to make direct contact to ministers, and the ministers appreciated their enthusiasm. Both DLN and DPE have long wished that DLN could experience a CP. However until now there have been many hindrances, mainly due to political instability and the many components that needed to be coordinated. Nevertheless, for this year's CP it was possible to make it coincide with our visit, so we made it our top priority.



og alle i hallen rejste sig.



Høvdingestokken lægges på bordet foran sekretærerne. Der hilses med et let buk fra deltagerne mod formanden og herefter er parlamentet åbnet. Der var lagt et program for de 2 dage, hvor der var afsat tid til de enkelte ministre. Ved åbningen havde de første ministre indtaget deres pladser, og klar til at modtage de spørgsmål, som var blevet formuleret, ved afholdelse af borgermøder rundt i distrikternes landsbyer. Spørgsmålene var 1 uge forinden blevet præsenteret for ministrene.

Alt forløb over 2 dage, med 300 deltagere fra DPE's målgrupper. Begge dage foregik med meget stor seriøsitet og disciplin fra alle deltagere. Ministrene og embedsfolkene var vel forberedte, og lyttede til de ønsker og spørgsmål MP fremlagde. Den kommende finanslov vil vise, hvor stor indflydelse CP, har haft. Som tilskuer til CP, opleves en stor entusiasme, tilfredshed og begejstring fra borgerne, som havde mulighed for, at få direkte kontakt til ministrene og borgerne blev taget til indtægt for deres engagement. Længe har både DLN og DPE haft et ønske om at DLN kunne opleve et CP. Det har dog, indtil nu, været forbundet med forhindringer, mest grundet den ustabile politiske situation og omfattende forberedelser, med mange komponenter der skal koordineres. Da dette års CP var muligt at koordinere med vores besøg, fik det højeste prioritet.

News from Lesotho:

From Lesotho Times:

Lesotho: Economy Set to Grow Three Percent

24. November 2017

By Bereng Mpaki

LESOTHO is expected to register three percent economic growth in the current fiscal year.

But the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has warned that the government needs to aggressively control spending and address the fragile political situation in the country.

The warnings are part of the IMF findings which were released this week after an IMF staff team, led by Christine Dieterich, visited Maseru from 2 to 15 November 2017 for consultations with the government and other local stakeholders.

The IMF staff team met with Finance Minister, Moeketsi Majoro, Central Bank of Lesotho Governor, Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane, captains of industry as well as trade union representatives.

In a statement this week, the IMF noted that although the economy was expected to grow by three percent this fiscal year on the back of improved performances in the mining and agricultural sectors, government needed to take urgent measures to restore fiscal sustainability and reduce pressure on international reserves.

"Economic growth is expected to exceed 3 percent this fiscal year, shielded against the SACU revenue shock by the government's decision to run large fiscal deficits," the IMF said in its statement, adding, "The mining sector and the recovery of agriculture after two years of drought are expected to be major contributors to growth".

OPINION: #Zimbabwe - Echoes of Lesotho invasion

Opinion / 16 November 2017,

Sechaba Nkosi

JOHANNESBURG - Nineteen years ago I wrote a very sad story about the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) preparing to invade Lesotho.

I had been stuck in the country for months covering the bitter fallout between the elected government of then Prime Minister Pakalitha Mosisili on the one hand, and the opposition parties, and the army on the other.

As I had been in Lesotho for some time, I made friends and became acutely aware of how complicated the Basotho politics were. Some of the friends would later become key sources of information on the situation beyond the laid-back capital of Maseru.

So when I wrote about the invasion, I did so on the strength of impeccable sources and observations of army movements between the border town of Ficksburg and the tiny mountain kingdom.

Within 72 hours of the story, SANDF tanks rolled into Maseru, albeit with some comic intelligence that sent our soldiers to Maseru Sun (now what right-minded person would chose a hotel to launch a some nefarious actions against a government?) instead of the palace where the rebels were holed up.

The word intervention quickly replaced invasion. Needless to say, what followed whatever the whole operation was called resulted in death and destruction that Lesotho is still yet to recover from.

I was reminded of Lesotho yesterday when I saw the Zimbabwe Defence Force (ZDF) tanks rolling on the streets of Harare in an apparent show of force meant to rid the government of “criminals” and “counter revolutionaries” who had made themselves comfortable on the senile 93-year old President Robert Mugabe.

This is the same army that assisted Mugabe to steal election after election since 2000. It chuckled and looked the other way as Zimbabwe’s feared police thugs bashed the skulls of opposition activists in full view of international cameras. Ask former Prime Minister and Movement for Democratic Change leader Morgan Tsvangirai if you do not believe me.

It also publicly declared that it would never salute anyone but a Zanu-PF president. Small wonder then that most people are sceptical about the sudden change of heart from them.

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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