This Agreement is made by and between the All Basotho Convention (ABC/Kobo-Tata), Alliance of Democrats (AD), Basotho National Party (BNP), Reformed Congress of Lesotho (RCL)
This document is the agreement of the coalition of parties commanding a majority in the National Assembly and thereby entitled to form a Coalition Government pursuant to s87(2) of the Constitution of Lesotho. It sets out the agreement for the operation of the Coalition Government for the duration of the tenth (10th) parliament.

1. **PREAMBLE**

1.1 For most of its 50 years of independence, Lesotho has been dominated by political instability, weak institutions and polarization of society on political grounds. Consequently, its economy has remained fragile and dependent on factors Lesotho has little control of. Weak democratic culture has contributed to the lack of strong institutions as well as social and economic policies to build a strong shared economy needed to support all its people. In the absence of strong institutions and public policies, poverty, hunger, inequality, ignorance and ill-health have persisted and have left many Basotho vulnerable to daily challenges of life.

1.2 Efforts to promote or build strong, disciplined, inclusive national institutions to facilitate consensus and compromise around national policy development and implementation, protection of human rights and the rule of law; and the promotion of welfare of all citizens within a unified nation have not succeeded. These weaknesses taken along with a weak economy have promoted self-serving political behaviour where partisan and personal interests override national interest. As a result of the intersection between these challenges, Lesotho is now facing an existential crisis which if not addressed urgently by its leaders could stoke civil conflict.

1.3 Trust and confidence are a critical ingredient for running an effective government. The previous government of Lesotho has lost trust of a large section of the Basotho people and of its international partners. Lesotho has chosen a dangerous political and economic trajectory, which if not quickly reversed will lead to conflict and economic collapse. There is urgent need to restore trust and confidence amongst the Basotho in their own government and amongst international partners and investors.

1.4 Based on the foregoing challenges and imperatives, the Parties to this agreement commit to form a coalition government led jointly by All Basotho Convention (ABC), Alliance of Democrats (AD), Basotho National Party (BNP) and Reformed Congress of Lesotho (RCL), with the possible participation of other political parties represented in Parliament.
2. CORE COALITION GOVERNMENT OBJECTIVES

The Coalition Government commits to the following objectives:

2.1 To rescue Lesotho from the current downward spiral into lawlessness, conflict, political instability, economic stagnation and degradation of democracy;

2.2 To work for lasting peace and stability of the nation;

2.3 To lead the nation on a path of reconciliation and unity;

2.4 To undertake constitutional, political, security and administrative reforms under an independent and inclusive reform process;

2.5 To deepen democracy by strengthening democratic institutions including citizen participation;

2.6 To reintroduce the culture of respect for human rights and civil liberties as enshrined in the constitution;

2.7 To espouse good governance in line with international best practices with emphasis on accountability, and

2.8 To undertake sustainable transformation of the economy of Lesotho through a deliberate focus on the private sector and announcement of confidence building measures.

To accomplish these objectives, the parties to this agreement agree to put in place a fully authorised implementation monitoring and evaluation infrastructure to monitor the implementation of these objectives.
3. PRIORITY POLICY PROGRAMME

The Coalition Government agrees on the following priority work programme:

3.1 To restore trust, the Coalition Government undertakes to implement the following confidence building measures:

a) to promptly implement all outstanding decisions emanating from the intervention by SADC in Lesotho;

b) the Coalition Government undertakes to limit the abuse of public office. In this respect, the Government will within 90 days of this agreement coming into effect:

   i. strengthen investigative and judicial offices and promptly implement a revamped policy of declaration of assets and interests;

   ii. promulgate a public procurement code of conduct for politically exposed persons including ministers and senior officers;

   iii. review and pass new procurement legislation.

c) to implement all reform proposals outlined by both SOMILES and the Commonwealth (New Zealand Reforms) that do not require constitutional amendments and lengthy legislative process.

3.2 Undertake economic reform. Within 90 days of coming into effect of this agreement, to produce an economic reform blueprint to halt the stagnation in the economy through restoring political and macroeconomic stability, as well as stimulating consumer, investor and development partner confidence in the economy.

3.3 Reform and depoliticise the Lesotho Public Service. The Coalition Government will immediately embark on a reform programme to transform the public service into a professional, independent, accountable and effective service. The Public Service Commission will be reformed and strengthened to ensure that appointments to the public service are transparent and based on merit. All accountability mechanisms for the public service will be enhanced and there will be greater scrutiny by parliament of the public service and its commissions.
3.4 Reform the Parliament to guarantee its independence and focus on its mandate of legislation, resource allocation and oversight. Parliament and its procedures will be reformed to make it fit for a Mixed Member Proportional environment and to enable it to independently undertake both legislative and oversight responsibilities and for encouraging greater participation of citizens in the business of parliament. The reform of Parliament should aim to secure its independence from the Executive. A Parliamentary Reform Committee will be established to examine all aspects of the parliamentary process, administration, and access for the public, including sitting schedules. Citizens will have the opportunity to make submissions to this committee. Parliament should lead its reform process, building on the New Zealand reform proposals.

3.5 Review and amend the Constitution of Lesotho as appropriate. The Coalition Government will establish mechanisms to review Lesotho’s Constitution to respond to identified weaknesses and to foster peace, stability, national reconciliation and good governance. The review process will include an examination of the protection of the principle of separation of powers and the safeguards necessary in statutory appointments for the Judiciary, the Independent Electoral Commission, the Ombudsman, security agencies, the Police and Government Secretary and Principal Secretaries, and all other statutory bodies and positions.

3.6 Entrench independence of the Judiciary. The Coalition Government believes that the judicial system must operate effectively and dispense justice in an independent, impartial and timely manner. The Coalition Government will review the judicial system to ensure it is consistent with international best practices, that its independence is guaranteed at all times and that it is properly resourced.

3.7 Undertake Security Sector Reform. Lesotho’s post-independence governance is replete with politicisation of the security agencies and their constant interference in democratic rule. The Coalition Government shall undertake security sector reform to ensure that security services are professional, non-partisan, and are subject to civilian control and appropriate oversight at all times. Measures will be taken to insulate all security agencies from politicization, including by introducing checks and balances against executive abuse.

3.8 The 2014 Decentralisation Policy. The Coalition Government undertakes to review and implement the 2014 Decentralisation Policy and undertake local government elections under the new policy.
It is recognised that it will be necessary to expedite certain reforms to limit abuse of office. In this respect, certain reform measures will be expedited to provide safeguards to the agreement and cultivate confidence in this agreement and the Coalition Government.

4. **GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

4.1 The Parties agree to always engage and collaborate in good faith and avoid surprises;

4.2 Parties agree that the allocation of Ministerial positions, Deputy Ministerial positions, Senior Government officials and Statutory positions, State Owned Entities, Heads of Foreign Missions, Senators, and District Administrators shall be made proportionally in line with the seats held within the National Assembly by each party. However, parties further agree to make considerations within each other where necessary to accommodate the needs of all parties;

4.3 While operating in a coalition, the Parties recognise the need for sustaining their individual identities;

4.4 The parties agree to have a caucus of the four leaders of parties on a regular basis. Any of the leaders of political parties shall be entitled to request the leader of the Coalition of political parties to convene the caucus as and when the need arises.

4.5 The Parties recognise that in some circumstances, it will be possible to disagree on some issues. In those circumstances, each Party will be free to express alternate views publicly and in Parliament.

5. **CABINET**

There shall be a Cabinet of up to 34 ministers and deputies. The Coalition Government considers the size of this cabinet to be too large for effectiveness and cost and could lead to fragmentation of government programs. The Parties agree to review ministries and their responsibilities and thereafter re-align them as necessary before the beginning of the next fiscal year. Consideration will be given to having a smaller government in future, following the review.

5.1 The Parties agree to diligently serve and to share power as set out immediately below.
5.2 The Prime Minister shall come from All Basotho Convention.

5.3 The Deputy Prime Minister shall come from Alliance of Democrats.

5.4 Cabinet portfolios will be allocated by the Prime Minister in consultation with the Coalition Partners.

5.5 The Prime Minister shall appoint 17 (seventeen) ministers from the ranks of ABC, 6 (six) ministers from the ranks of AD, 2 (two) ministers from the ranks of BNP, and 1 (one) minister from the ranks of RCL.

5.6 The Prime Minister shall appoint up to 8 (eight) deputy ministers to be distributed across ministries in his discretion from the ranks of ABC (2), AD (3), BNP (2) and RCL (1).

5.7 Where the need to reshuffle Cabinet, or dismiss a minister arises for whatever reason, there shall be prior consultations between the Prime Minister and the relevant Coalition Partner.

5.8 The Prime Minister shall be responsible for all performance and disciplinary issues for all Cabinet Ministers.

5.9 Cabinet will meet regularly and is the only place where formal decisions are made on all critical issues and those that are prescribed constitutionally.

5.10 All members of Cabinet are bound by the principle of collective cabinet responsibility. Once Cabinet decision is made, no Cabinet Minister can stand aside from it unless Cabinet gives approval for a Minister to take a different position.

5.11 Consultation is presumed to precede every important decision by the Prime Minister. However, consultation shall not mean agreement on each of the decisions.

5.12 The Prime Minister shall always exercise his constitutional powers in the interests of preserving the stability of the Coalition Government and shall consult members of the Coalition Government.
6. APPOINTMENT OF OTHER SENIOR OFFICIALS

6.1 In relation to appointments of government secretary, principal secretaries, ambassadors and high commissioners, heads of state-owned entities, the Parties will in future and within the context of the reform of the public service revisit this definition of political appointments with a view to depoliticising and anchoring professionalism in the public service.

6.2 Appointment of Government Secretary, Principal Secretaries and, Ambassadors and High Commissioners will be made by the Prime Minister in consultation with Leaders of the parties to this agreement.

6.3 The Prime Minister and Cabinet shall review hiring practices at the senior levels of state-owned entities and will take corrective action where and when necessary, taking into account fit-for-purpose assessments of the various boards of directors.

6.4 The Coalition Parties agree to expedite implementation of measures to prevent abuse of office by any Party in the coalition government. Within the provisions of the law, the Coalition Government shall endeavour to ensure transparency in the appointment of all senior officials, including but not limited to all security agencies, Independent Electoral Office, the Office of the Auditor General, Director of Public Prosecutions, Attorney General, Ombudsman, Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences, etc.

6.5 In carrying out or reviewing appointments, the Prime Minister and Cabinet will take into account the urgent need to depoliticise the public service and re-introduce the culture of professionalism.

7. MEDIATION

7.1 The Coalition Government, the Prime Minister and the Leaders of the Parties to this agreement commit to working in good faith and always to seek to cultivate the spirit of consensus and cordial relations between all the parties in the coalition government.

7.2 The Parties agree to establish a mechanism to monitor the implementation of this agreement. The mechanism shall consist of one (1) member from each Party to the agreement and shall be co-chaired by such members. In
case of dispute, the matters in dispute will be referred to an independent mediation mechanism as set out below.

7.3 The Parties agree to set up an independent mediation mechanism to the Agreement to help resolve disputes between the Parties. Members to the mechanism shall normally be persons of eminent status, wise and capable of independent oversight over the agreement.

7.4 The Parties agree to invite SADC and other international partners to serve as mediators of last resort to this agreement. In the circumstances that all local remedies fail to resolve a dispute, SADC or other regional and international partners shall be requested to mediate.

8. CONFIDENCE AND SUPPLY AND PROCEDURAL MOTIONS

8.1 All participating parties agree that they will support the government on procedural motions in the House and in Portfolio Committees, and to be bound by the provisions in the Cabinet 'manual' on the conduct, public duty and personal interests of Ministers.

9. REVIEW OF THIS AGREEMENT

9.1 The Parties to this agreement may amend any provision by agreement. Where this occurs, an amended copy of the agreement will be forwarded to all parties affected by it and to those that have an interest in the changes.

9.2 Parties to this agreement may enter into bilateral agreements on issues covered under article five (5) and six (6) above. Such agreements must form annexes to the main agreement. There have been negotiated bilateral agreements between the coalition partners which shall form part of the annexes to the main agreement.

10. STATUS OF THE COALITION AGREEMENT

10.1 This Agreement is the key instrument of the Coalition Government that is formed in accordance with section 87(2) of the Constitution of Lesotho. This Agreement will be published immediately upon signature.
11. SIGNATORIES


11.1 PARTIES TO THE AGREEMENT

All Basotho Convention (ABC)

Date

31/08/17

Alliance of Democrats (AD)

Date

31/08/17

Basotho National Party (BNP)

Date

31/08/17

Reformed Congress of Lesotho (RCL)

Date

31/08/17