



**OPENING REMARKS BY THE HONOURABLE
MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING
HON. TLOHELANG AUMANE**

**THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGs)
VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW (VNRs) REPORT
2019**

NATIONAL VALIDATION CONFERENCE,

06 – 07 JUNE 2019.

MANHABISENG CONVENTION CENTRE

Programme Director,

Allow me pay my respects to:

His Majesty King Letsie III

The Right Honourable the Prime Minister

Honourable President of Senate

Honourable Speaker of the National Assembly

President of the Court of Appeal

Her Ladyship the Chief Justice

The Honourable Ministers and Deputy Ministers

Honourable Judges of the High Court

Excellencies Heads of Diplomatic Missions and International
Organizations

Senior Government Officials

Heads of Parastatals, Private sector, Civil Society Organizations and the
Media

Distinguished guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Greetings Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to extend to you all a very warm welcome on this two-day National Conference for the validation of the Sustainable Development Goals – Voluntary National Review Report of 2019.

The main objective of the Conference is to review and validate the Draft Lesotho VNRs Report 2019 which has been prepared through a widely consultative and inclusive process. Specifically the conference will provide opportunity and platform for objective and critical review of the Draft Report on Lesotho's progress towards the implementation of the SDGs; build consensus on good practices, lessons learned and challenges; and build consensus on what support Lesotho/stakeholders need to fast track the achievement of SDGs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the 2030 Agenda was adopted, governments, businesses, and citizen organizations have moved to embrace the SDGs and have used the goals as the centerpiece of their development plans. The Kingdom of Lesotho is committed to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that was adopted in 2015. The 2030 agenda is operationalised through the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP), with all other international agendas that Lesotho has committed to.

The first NSDP implementation horizon came to an end in the year 2016/17 which afforded the country an opportunity of integrating the SDGs in the development of NSDP II. The country therefore prioritized the SDGs in alignment with the NSDP II four Key Priority Areas, namely; Promoting inclusive and sustainable economic development through private sector-led job creation; Improving the country's productivity and innovation capacity by strengthening human capital; Building enabling infrastructure; and Strengthening governance and accountability systems.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is important to note that, in order to foster well coordinated efforts for planning and implementation of, and monitoring and reporting on the country's development agenda synchronizing the national and international development frameworks, the Ministry has developed the National Sustainable Development Coordination Structure. For the purposes of this VNR process, I would like to highlight that within the structure, there is a Cabinet Subcommittee which is chaired by the Hon Minister of Development Planning. For the 2019 SDG Voluntary National Review, a specific Cabinet Subcommittee has been formed based on the SDGs that are being reviewed and it is composed of the following Hon Ministers:

1. Deputy Prime Minister's Office
2. Hon Minister of Development Planning – Chair

3. Hon Minister of Education and Training
4. Hon Minister of Labour and Employment
5. Hon Minister of Energy and Meteorology
6. Hon Minister of Finance
7. Hon Minister of Justice and Correctional Services
8. Hon Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations
9. Hon Minister in the Prime Minister's Office
10. Hon Minister of Environment, Tourism and Culture
11. Hon Minister of Health
12. Hon Minister of Communications, Science and Technology
13. Hon Minister of Local Government
14. Hon Minister of Gender and Youth, Sports and Recreation
15. Hon Minister of Public Works and Transport
16. Hon Minister of Trade and Industry
17. Hon Minister of Small Business Development, Cooperatives and Marketing

I am sure they are all here as they have special contributions to make for the current VNR.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lesotho is among the countries that have volunteered to undertake the Voluntary National Review (VNR) for the SDGs this year under the theme, *'Empowering people and ensuring inclusiveness and equality'* focusing on the following SDGs

1. SDG 4 – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all;
2. SDG 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work;
3. SDG 10 – Reduce inequalities within and among countries;
4. SDG 13 – Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts ;
5. SDG 16 – Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels;
6. SDG 17 – Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development, (which is reviewed each year).

Through the support of the United Nations and the European Union, the Ministry of Development Planning has engaged the services of the National University of Lesotho to prepare and develop reports on each of the six (6) goals under review. There is also the international consultant who is on board to work with the Ministry and the UN to oversee the whole process, provide quality assurance and produce the consolidated main report.

So far, ladies and gentlemen, the Ministry of Development Planning has held a multi-stakeholder sensitization workshop whose main purpose was to introduce stakeholders to the review process and agree on the way-forward. Following this, a number of stakeholders consultative workshops have been held including those that were specific for NGOs/CSOs, the private sector and youth and children's organizations. The NGOs/CSOs constituency includes other various types of organizations such as the women' groups, people with disabilities organizations. Individual follow ups on each of the goals have been done and are still ongoing.

A meeting was also held for Hon Members of the Cabinet Subcommittee (for the 2019 VNRs) and other key stakeholders from the relevant sectors whose main objective of the meeting was to update the Subcommittee on the VNRs preparation process.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before I conclude my welcome remarks, I find it very crucial to put before you the remaining activities (next steps) as we continue with the VNR process.

ACTIVITY	TIMELINE
Presentation and approval of the Final Report by Cabinet	12 June 2019
Submission of the Final Report to the United Nations Headquarters	14 June 2019
Preparation of the presentation and audiovisuals to be delivered at the HLPF (July 2019)	15 – 18 June
Validation and finalization of the presentation	19 – 20 June 2019
Submission of presentation and audiovisuals to the UN Headquarters together with the details of the Head of Delegation who will be presenting the Report	21 June 2019
Drafting of the Government Official Statement for the HLPF	24 – 26 June 2019
Validation and finalization of the Statement	27 – 28 June 2019
Endorsement of the Statement	02 July 2019

Thank you once again ladies and gentlemen.

KHOTSO! PULA! NALA!