



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE RIGHT
HONONOURABLE, THE PRIME MINISTER,
DR. MOEKETSI MAJORO ON THE
OCCASION MARKING THE LAUNCH OF
THE NATIONAL DIASPORA POLICY**

27 MAY, 2021

AVANI LESOTHO

[Salutations]

It is an honour for me to officiate the official launch of the National Diaspora Policy.

At the very onset, I wish to acknowledge the role played by the International Organisation for Migration, and the Basotho diaspora through the interim diaspora representatives in the development of this policy. This launch is a clear recognition and appreciation of the critical role that Basotho diaspora can play in the development of our country.

In recent years, the role of the diaspora has transcended merely sending remittances, to investing in businesses and philanthropic development projects, and sharing of specialised skills and tourism promotion.

Amongst these contributions, with reference to Lesotho, remittances have been pivotal and, played a cardinal role in building our economy, at one point accounting for 25.8% of the GDP, thus putting Lesotho on the top ten remittances recipient countries in the world, according to the World Bank data. From 44% of GDP in 2006 to an estimated 21.2% of GDP in 2018, remittances have had a significant impact on Lesotho's economy.

Even though it stands at around 14.7 % of the GDP today, Lesotho remain one of the top countries which are dependent on this source of foreign earning.

Apart from remittances, other potential areas where diaspora can contribute meaningfully include investment opportunities. I am aware that the Ministry of Trade & Industry through the Lesotho National Development Corporation has developed the National Diaspora Strategy which should be harmonised with this policy to generate maximum benefits for this country.

Skills transfer is also another important area where diaspora can significantly contribute through imparting knowledge to others and assisting the country with their acquired skills where necessary.

Although Lesotho's diaspora has enormously contributed significantly to Lesotho's wellbeing, the full potential of the diaspora has not been exploited due to inaccurate database of citizens abroad, lack of coordination, inadequate institutional capacity and clear engagement policy between Government and the Diaspora community. **This policy is a first step in addressing these obstacles.**

This policy will augment other related policies namely: Labour Migration Policy under the Ministry of Labour and Employment as well as the Migration and Development Policy under the Ministry of Home Affairs which is still at the draft

stage, as well as the National Strategic Framework which is intended to combat human trafficking.

It is also in tandem with the United Nations - Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (CGM) which was adopted in 2018 in Morocco as well as the African Union Migration Policy Framework for Africa which encourages Member States to facilitate the full participation of *Diaspora in national development initiatives by establishing frameworks and institutional structures necessary to reach, mobilise and engage resources and networks of Diaspora in all sectors of socio-economic activity.*

In order to achieve the envisaged goals of this Policy, the Government will establish an institutional framework known as *Diaspora Directorate* under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & International Relations to serve as the coordination mechanism, as well as setting the pace and the character on how the Government should interact and engage with the diaspora.

Programme Director

Allow me again to summarise the fundamental aspects of this policy. The vision of this National Diaspora Policy is to ensure that **the diaspora is viewed as an integral part to the development of the country** by enhancing the effectiveness

of its contribution to the development of Lesotho. This means that the diaspora should feel recognised by government.

The Policy further seeks to empower both the successful and vulnerable members of the diaspora and provide **a Directorate that can facilitate a committed engagement of the diaspora to the development of the country** through their knowledge, capital and skills. Central to this will be to ensure accountability of the Government of Lesotho to deliver the mission.

Again, the Policy envisages the up scaling of the diaspora outreach forums; the hosting of the inaugural Diaspora Civic Forum in Lesotho; and the creation of the inaugural Lesotho Diaspora Research Prize. The Diaspora Civic Forum will be a showcase event in Lesotho to be held annually where Lesotho stakeholders can shape direct consultations with the diaspora in line with their interest area (e.g. tourism, social development, investment, and so forth).

Moreover, the Policy encourages the creation of a Basotho Diaspora Association; the creation of the Lesotho Diaspora Support Programme; and the Lesotho Leads Network as outlined in the LNDC strategy for investment purposes.

As Government, we are committed to make it easier for the diaspora to invest and do business in Lesotho, participate in tourism, undertake developmental projects, promote Basotho culture and share specialized skills.

Motsamaisi oa Mosebetsi oa kajeno,

E ka ba phoso e kholo ha nka phethela puo ena eaka ke sa le hopotsa hore Lesotho le leetong le leholo la bohlokoahali la Tlhopho Bocha e akaretsang. Lesotho le lecha le arabelang liqholotso tsohle tsa rona, ke Lesotho leo bohle ke lumelang hantle hore re ea le labalabela, ke Lesotho leo re le batlang “**The Lesotho We Want**”. Ke nke monyetla ho leboha Basotho bao ba habo rona ba phelang ka ntle ho Naha hore ebe ba ile ba tseba ho kenya letsoho litabeng tse na tsa Tlhopho-Bocha.

As I conclude, I would like to register our gratitude to our development partners in particular IOM for its tremendous efforts and support in all matters related to migration. I further wish to make a call to all stakeholders to work hand in glove towards making this noble project a definite success for Lesotho. I thank all Government Ministries and Agencies, Private Sector and the Diaspora who were involved in organising and participating at this occasion. **It is now my singular honour and privilege to declare this National Diaspora Policy launched!**

Kaofela re Chabana sa Khomo! Khotso Pula Nala!