

UNDAF JOINT STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING 28 MARCH 2022

WELCOME REMARKS BY

Honourable Minister of Development Planning, Mr. Selibe Mochoboroane

A VERY GOOD MORNING to you ladies and gentlemen.

Please allow me to pay my respects to:

HIS MAJESTY KING LETSIE III,

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE PRIME MINISTER,

THE HONOURABLE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE,

HONOURABLE SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY,

HIS LORDSHIP THE CHIEF JUSTICE,

HONOURABLE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER,

HONOURABLE MINISTERS OF HIS MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT,

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF TWO HOUSES OF PARLIAMENT,

EXCELLENCIES MEMBERS OF THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND
INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

GOVERNMENT SECRETARY, PRINCIPAL SECRETARIES, AND
SENIOR GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS,

HEADS OF PARASTATALS, PRIVATE SECTOR, CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANISATIONS AND MEDIA HOUSES

DISTINGUISHED LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

ALL PROTOCOL OBSERVED

- ❖ Ladies and Gentlemen it is my pleasure to welcome you to our third UNDAF JSC meeting and thank you for honoring the invitation to this important meeting. The COVID-19 pandemic had previously made it impossible to physically come together in big numbers, as you may recall that the previous meeting was held virtually. Allow me, ladies and gentlemen, to start by thanking the technical team for their work and commitment to this initiative, and for making it possible for all of us to be here today. Let's give them a round of applause. Let me also extend a special warm welcome to my Co-Chair, Ms. Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, UN Representative Coordinator (UNRC).

- ❖ Ladies and Gentlemen, the Government of Lesotho and the United Nations signed the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF 2019 – 2023) in August 2018, which also established this Joint Steering Committee to oversee implementation of UNDAF.

- ❖ Today marks the third (3rd) consecutive year of the Government/UN Joint Steering Committee meeting chaired jointly by the Minister of Development Planning and the UNRC. The consistency with which the United Nations in collaboration with the Ministry of Development Planning have always organized UN/Government Joint Steering Committee meeting up to this far is a true reflection of commitment to the principles of accountability and transparency by both parties.

- ❖ The Joint Steering Committee meetings are an important platform where the United Nations accounts for the commitment it made to the Government and the people of Lesotho. I also would like to emphasise that your consistency in reporting is exemplary to our development trajectory.

- ❖ I hope and wish that in the near future the Government will adopt the same practice and create a similar platform on which it annually reports to the citizens its performance on the National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP).

- ❖ May I also congratulate the UN system through the leadership of RC, Her Excellency 'Me Amanda Khozi Mukwashi for organizing a successful and very productive UN Stakeholder Engagement Forum last week. It was quite pleasing to note that the Forum brought together government institutions; development partners; civil society organizations and private sector companies to deliberate on the performance of UN in supporting the Government of Lesotho in its efforts to improve the living conditions of Basotho.

- ❖ Ladies and Gentlemen, as you may be cognisant that UNDAF is aligned to three (3) of the four (4) pillars of the Lesotho National Development Plan (2019 -2023), leaving aside Infrastructure Development because at the time UN did not have comparative advantage. We are aware that the United Nations is preparing for the evaluation of the current UNDAF and later preparing for the new cooperation framework. We strongly propose that the 4th pillar of NSDP II: infrastructure development be given a serious consideration for the upcoming framework due to its criticality in setting a benign environment that will ensure a realisation of the other pillars..

- ❖ Now that the country is moving towards digital transformation, connectivity infrastructure becomes crucial to cover those geographical areas that are underserved. Seventy percent (70%) of our population lives in the mountainous rural areas where connectivity is still low. The COVID19 pandemic has proved to us that digital transformation is the way to go for effective and shock-responsive social protection; financial inclusion; continuity of productive business even during pandemics and more importantly for achievement of inclusive economic development. However, investment in infrastructural services such as networking and electricity will be important enablers for digital transformation.

- ❖ I also appreciate that the Government should find ways to make data and electricity more accessible and affordable to the majority of our people, especially those on bottom of our economic pyramid, of course without paralyzing private sector's incentive to invest in those areas.

- ❖ I would like to conclude by expressing great gratitude to the United Nations system in Lesotho, and other development partners for the support extended to the Kingdom of Lesotho in 2021. As the 2021 UNDAF, One UN Report will show today, UN has supported the Government in many areas but I would like to express the special thanks for the support rendered to the National Reforms Process. The UN and other development partners stood and walked with the Government from the beginning up to where we are today when we have Omnibus Bill. The country will be conducting the national Assembly elections later this year, we would implore the UN through its respective agencies and collectively to extend technical and financial support to the process.

- ❖ At this Juncture I would to wish we will have productive and fruitful deliberations.

- ❖ Thank you for your attention