

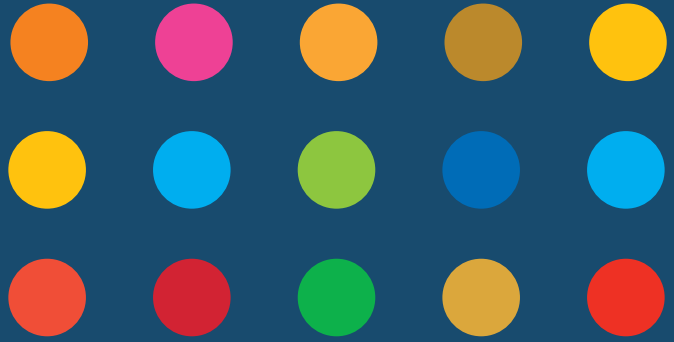
ONE UN REPORT LESOTHO



UNITED NATIONS
LESOTHO



2022



2022 One UN Lesotho Annual Report

© United Nations Lesotho

March 2023, Maseru

Photographs:

- Cover © WFP/Malehloa Letsie
- 1 © FAO/Reitumetse Russell
- 3 © RCO/Thabo Mathaba
- 4 © Amanda Khozi Mukwashi
- 6 top and left © RCO/Thabo Mathaba; right © UNICEF/Niyi Fagbemi
- 10 © WFP/Malehloa Letsie
- 11 © UNICEF/Justice Kalebe
- 14 top left © FAO/David Mwesigwa; bottom left and right © WFP/Malehloa Letsie
- 15 © WFP/Malehloa Letsie
- 18 top © FAO/Reitumetse Russell; bottom UNICEF/Justice Kalebe
- 20 © UNICEF/Justice Kalebe
- 27 © UNFPA/Violet Maraisane
- 28 © UNICEF/Justice Kalebe
- 33 © WFP/Malehloa Letsie
- 37 © UNICEF/Justice Kalebe
- 42 © FAO/Reitumetse Russell
- 43 © UNICEF/Elita Banda
- 47 left © WFP/Malehloa Letsie; right © FAO/Reitumetse Russell
- 48 © Justice Kalebe
- 49 © UNICEF/Justice Kalebe
- 51 © RCO/David Nkhekhe
- 52 © UNICEF/Justice Kalebe
- 55 © FAO/Reitumetse Russell
- 64 © RCO/ David Nkhekhe
- 65 © UNFPA/Violet Maraisane
- 66 © WFP/Malehloa Letsie
- 67 © UNFPA/Violet Maraisane
- 68 © RCO/David Nkhekhe

CONTENTS



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	2
FOREWORD BY THE UNITED NATIONS RESIDENT COORDINATOR	4
THE UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM	7
2022 IN NUMBERS	8
CHAPTER 1: KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY AND REGIONAL CONTEXT	11
CHAPTER 2: UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM SUPPORT TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES THROUGH THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK	15
2.1 Overview of the Lesotho UNDAF	15
2.2 UNDAF priorities, outcomes and output	18
<hr/>	
Pillar 1: Accountable governance, effective institutions, social cohesion and inclusion	19
<hr/>	
Pillar 2: Sustainable human capital development	26
<hr/>	
Pillar 3: Sustainable and inclusive economic growth for poverty reduction	36
<hr/>	
2.3 Support to partnerships and financing the 2030 Agenda	49
2.4 Results of the UN working more and better together: UN coherence, effectiveness and efficiency	51
2.5 Evaluation and lessons learned	58
2.6 Financial overview and resource mobilization	61
CHAPTER 3: UNCT KEY FOCUS FOR NEXT YEAR	66



ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

\$	dollar (in this publication, all dollar amounts are United States dollars)
AIDS	acquired immunodeficiency syndrome
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
GBV	gender-based violence
HIV	human immunodeficiency virus
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITC	International Trade Centre
LGBTQI+	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex
LMPS	Lesotho Mounted Police Service
MoDP	Ministry of Development Planning
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
NSDP II	National Strategic Development Plan II
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PEPFAR	United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
RCO	Resident Coordinator's Office
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goal(s)
SGBV	sexual and gender-based violence
TES	Transforming Education Summit
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNCDF	United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNCT	United Nations Country Team



UNCTAD	United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlement Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization





FOREWORD

BY THE UNITED NATIONS
RESIDENT COORDINATOR

I am pleased to present the 2022 One UN Annual Report on behalf of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Lesotho. It is a report on the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2019–2023. In this penultimate year of the current UNDAF, its evaluation was conducted and then followed by the Common Country Analysis. These will inform the development of the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, expected to come into effect in 2024.

Last year was a challenging year for Lesotho. As the global economy faced increasing inflationary pressures mostly stemming from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic and the ongoing Russia–Ukraine conflict, Lesotho also experienced the effects on the food-price inflation. Macroeconomic instability, fiscal constraints, debt sustainability, high unemployment, chronic food insecurity, violence and far too many people being left behind continued to be key concerns.

The agenda of the National Reforms Authority, built on an inclusive and participatory process that articulates the vision of the Basotho people, also faced some setbacks. However, in October 2022, the United Nations (UN) together with development partners, supported the government through the election process. The world witnessed a peaceful transition of power as the baton was passed to the new government after the national elections, which were largely free and credible and applauded by various national and international stakeholders. The country celebrated the election of its first female deputy prime minister – a historic achievement – and the new government has committed to the continuation of national reforms.

The Government of Lesotho, with support from the UN, successfully delivered its second Voluntary National Review of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This was an inclusive process with consultations including religious groups, women, young people, parliamentarians, civil society and persons with disabilities. The key messages of the review made it clear that although the nation has made strides in poverty reduction, with poverty declining from 56.6 percent in 2002 to 49.7 percent in 2017, poverty in rural and hard-to-reach areas remains a challenge. The disruptions caused by COVID-19 led to a loss of wages for many households, thus reversing gains in poverty reduction.

The learning crisis also worsened due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which exposed the glaring gaps in Lesotho's education system. To address these educational challenges and after extensive consultations with multiple stakeholders, Lesotho made commendable commitments at the Transforming Education Summit in September 2022. The country aims to transform the prevalent classroom-centric approach to include multiple ways of learning by harnessing low- and high-tech solutions that will ensure continuity, inclusion and quality; expanding early childhood education and the number of secondary schools; and establishing a programme of continuing professional development for teachers that is in line with 21st Century knowledge and skills.

Despite significant challenges, considerable results were achieved last year. The UN contributed to Lesotho's recovery from COVID-19. Through UN support, health systems were strengthened with increased vaccination coverage, including for COVID-19, and the national human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) response achieved the 90–90–90 global treatment targets at 90–97–92 for all adults aged 15 years and older. The UN contributed to the strengthened capacity of the Ministry of Health and other health sector partners to plan and coordinate essential health services, which will lead to universal health coverage.

Food insecurity continues to be a chronic challenge in Lesotho and a key obstacle to the country's progress towards ending hunger. Agriculture is a major source of livelihood for about 70 percent of rural households in Lesotho and climate change has proven to be a driver of food insecurity and malnutrition, negatively impacting community livelihoods. Working with the government, the UN has contributed to the transformation of the agriculture sector by strengthening local productive capacities and the quality and quantity of food produced in the country through working with the smallholder farmers and other stakeholders. Lesotho, like other nations, is committed to accelerating and deepening the transformative power of food systems in a manner aligned with the 2030 Agenda.

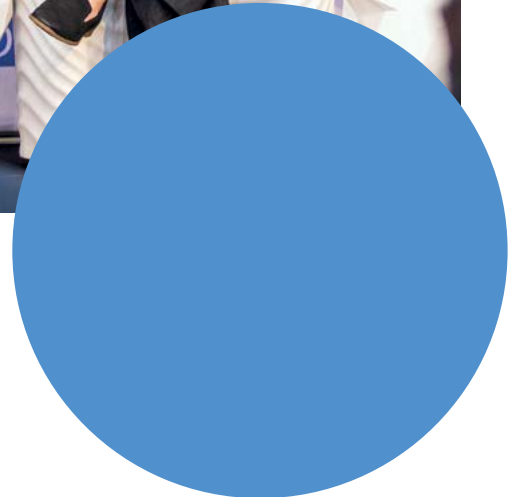
Our engagement throughout the year with various stakeholders across all districts in Lesotho, including vulnerable groups, has been the common thread of all processes. The UN, in the past year, has strengthened coordination and collaboration between stakeholders to jointly address development challenges and opportunities, particularly in the areas of food systems, climate change, education, gender-related challenges and advocacy against gender-based violence. The UN further strengthened coordination through the Development Partners Forum, a space created for knowledge sharing and strategic dialogue on key issues affecting the nation.

Over the past year, I have seen a determination and commitment to achieve peace and the vision of a Lesotho that we all want. The Basotho people have shown that when we come together for a common cause, much can be achieved. Considerable gains have been made, and while significant challenges remain, there is much more we can do together in accompanying Lesotho on its journey to deliver equitable development for all.



Amanda Khozi Mukwashi





THE UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM

The United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in Lesotho is represented by eight resident United Nations (UN) agencies, funds and programmes – the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP) and World Health Organization (WHO) and 18 non-resident agencies – the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Trade Centre (ITC), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (UN Women), United Nations Volunteers, UN World Tourism Organization and World Trade Organization.

UNCT LESOTHO AGENCIES, FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

Resident



Non-resident



2022 IN NUMBERS



HIV: Global treatment targets achieved at **90-97-92** for adults aged 15 years and over

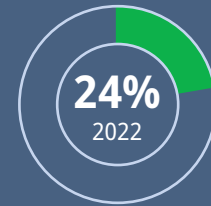
HEALTH

COVID-19: 57.2% of eligible population fully vaccinated; 1,226,702 vaccine doses administered

HPV: 71.9% of girls vaccinated

Health services

Utilization of family planning services:



Increased access to health services for

1,507 persons from **LGBTQI+** community



SOCIAL PROTECTION

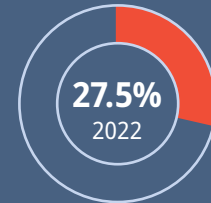
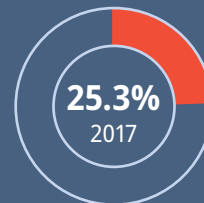
48,000 households with more than 100,000 children received monthly cash grants through the child grant programme



First female deputy prime minister in 2022

WOMEN

National Assembly seats held by women:



14,249 adolescent girls and young women accessed support against GBV

EDUCATION

INCREASED SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

50,000 learners in 2,400 ECD centres

347,252 learners in primary schools

Support for effective teaching and learning

980 secondary school teachers received sexuality-education training

Almost **10,000 children** (including **1,164 children with disabilities**), benefited from educational assistive technology devices



172,000

children (85,500 girls), including **children with disabilities**, received learner packs

ENVIRONMENT

10 village energy centres

improved access to clean energy for **over 500 households** through renewable energy technologies

Over **\$50 million** worth of resources mobilized to support energy, natural resources management and climate change projects



2,800 hectares of degraded rangelands rehabilitated, positively impacting over **60,000 households**

FUNDING MOBILIZED BY ALL AGENCIES \$42,910,000





CHAPTER 1: KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE COUNTRY AND REGIONAL CONTEXT



The Kingdom of Lesotho is a mountainous landlocked country with a landmass of 30,555 square kilometres, set within South Africa. The country has a total population of 2 million people, with males accounting for 48.9 percent and females making up 51 percent of the population. The 15–64-year age group constitutes the majority of the population (31.1 percent) while people aged 65 years and over constitute 3.1 percent. Children aged 0–14 years account for 15.9 percent and those aged 18 years and over make up 37.8 percent of the population (Bureau of Statistics).

Lesotho has been hit simultaneously by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, declining transfers from the Southern African Customs Union and the war in Ukraine. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the impact of sluggish regional performance, climate shocks and longstanding structural issues such as regulation, governance, political stability, financial inclusion and diversification. Foreign investment, including foreign direct investment, declined as a result of the weak external environment and limited opportunities domestically. Lesotho is highly dependent on South Africa, importing over 90 percent of its food from that country, and this is expected to have a direct impact on the population, especially poor and low-income households.

Lesotho's gross domestic product has been on a general declining trend in the last 10 years, largely due to various shocks, such as the global financial crisis, political instability, droughts and the COVID-19 pandemic. From 2017 to 2019, poverty levels stagnated due to the downturn in economic growth. Most recently (2020–2021) the percentage of the population living below the national poverty line has increased to 30.5 percent in 2021 due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The unemployment rate declined from 2014 to 2019, after which it climbed to 24.6 percent in 2021 (Figure 1, page 12).

LESOTHO HAS BEEN HIT SIMULTANEOUSLY BY THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, DECLINING TRANSFERS FROM THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CUSTOMS UNION AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE.



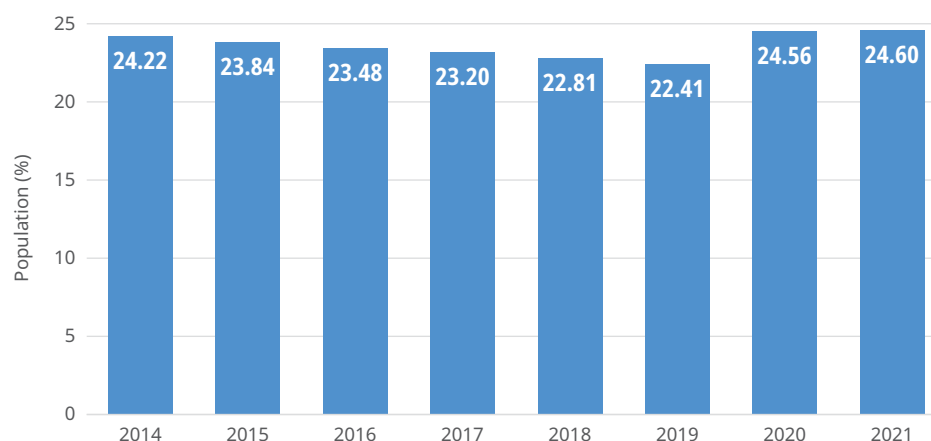


Figure 1: Unemployment rate in Lesotho, 2014–2021

Source: Macrotrends (n.d.). Available at: <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/LSO/lesotho/unemployment-rate>

Youth unemployment is a key challenge confronting the Government of Lesotho. The youth employment rate is estimated at 70.9 percent, while the youth time-related underemployment rate is 5.8 percent. The national youth unemployment rate is 29.1 percent, with the female unemployment rate being higher at 31.1 percent compared to males at 27.1 percent. Lesotho is thus shown to face dual challenges of unemployment and underemployment, especially among the youth.

THERE IS A HIGH INCIDENCE OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION GIVEN THE POROUS BORDER BETWEEN LESOTHO AND SOUTH AFRICA, WHICH HEIGHTENS THE RISK OF TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS.

Although migrant remittances support about 17 percent of Basotho households, the impact of losing skilled labour has a net negative impact on sustainable development. There is a high incidence of irregular migration given the porous border between Lesotho and South Africa, which heightens the risk of trafficking in persons. During the COVID-19 pandemic, about 100,000 labour migrants returned from South Africa and the majority of these experienced stress due to an inability to support themselves and integrate into society. Migrants are not included in social protection programmes, they have significant challenges accessing cross-border health services, and most lack legal identification documents, face stigma and discrimination and lack knowledge of migrant rights.

On the political front the country has been left politically vulnerable as a result of: (i) issues of political governance; (ii) conflict prevention and peacebuilding; (iii) regional relations within the Southern African Development Community and the rest of the African continent; (iv) human rights issues, demonstrated frequently by police brutality; (v) human trafficking to the region and beyond; and (vi) continued vulnerability due to lack of guarantees that come with the unpredictability of the rule of law. According to the Afrobarometer survey conducted in 2022, three quarters of citizens (75 percent) rate both the country's economic condition and their personal living conditions as poor, and 8 in 10 Basotho (81 percent) say the level of corruption in the country increased during the past year.

On 7 October 2022, the Kingdom of Lesotho carried out a largely free, fair and credible election. While facing various challenges in financial capacity and management, the Independent Electoral Commission was able to deliver on its mandate effectively, and the results were largely accepted and applauded by both national and international stakeholders. The electoral process and

outcome have indicated a sense of positive change and greater hope for democracy, peace, development and poverty reduction, which may provide broader political and social capital for the new leadership in the coalition government and huge public expectations.

Gender-based violence (GBV) remains prevalent in Lesotho. Lesotho has the third highest rate of rape globally. Sexual violence renders women more vulnerable to HIV. The Police Child and Gender Protection Unit reports that from January to July 2022, there were 184 sexual offences and 45 assault cases perpetrated against women.¹ Studies show that Lesotho has one of the highest rates of GBV, affecting women, girls and boys. GBV towards women and girls manifests through sexual violence, intimate partner violence, economic violence, psychosocial abuse and child marriages. According to the Lesotho Correctional Service, as of January 2022, 44 percent of inmates in Lesotho prisons were sexual offenders, with some prisons like Mohale's Hoek and Mafeteng reporting that 71 percent and 62 percent of their prisoners, respectively, were sexual offenders. Forty percent of men were reported to have perpetrated violence against women at least once in their lifetime.

According to the 2022 Afrobarometer survey, 64 percent of Basotho regard GBV as the most important women's rights issue to be addressed by the government and society. A majority of citizens say violence against women is a 'somewhat common' (28 percent) or 'very common' (25 percent) occurrence in Lesotho and about 6 in 10 respondents consider it 'somewhat likely' (29 percent) or 'very likely' (27 percent) that a woman will be criticized or harassed if she reports GBV to the authorities.

Lesotho's topography renders it *vulnerable to natural disasters* (floods and droughts), exacerbated by shifting precipitation patterns that are compelling evidence of climate change. This has serious implications for agroecological conditions, as the growing season is pushed forward and shortened, and agricultural production is limited to one cropping season. More than 70 percent of the population relies on less than 10 percent of arable land and this creates high dependency on food imports. Limited mainstreaming of environmental considerations into cross-sectoral policies, coupled with limited progress on national climate-change policy, prevents the country from following an environmentally sustainable, more resilient path toward development. According to the 2022 Afrobarometer survey, fewer than 4 in 10 Basotho (36 percent) say they have heard of climate change and only a few are satisfied with efforts by the government (7 percent), developed countries (7 percent), business and industry (10 percent) and ordinary citizens (21 percent) to fight climate change.

Food insecurity continues to be a chronic challenge in Lesotho and a key obstacle in the country's development agenda and progress towards SDG 2 on ending hunger. Agriculture (crop farming and livestock production) is a major source of livelihood for about 70 percent of rural households in Lesotho. Agriculture is predominantly subsistence, with farmers cultivating an average of less than half a hectare of land each. According to the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis report, 2022², between January and March 2022 a projected

1 Afrobarometer survey, August 2022. Available at: <https://www.afrobarometer.org>.

2 Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (n.d.). Available at: <http://41.203.191.71/data>.



338,000 people, or 23 percent of the population, faced high food insecurity, with 229,000 people, or 15 percent of the rural population, facing acute food insecurity. This meant that Lesotho was classified under the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) system as being at a crisis level of severity (IPC3) for most of the year. Lesotho registered low crop production in comparison to 2021 and as a result households across all livelihood zones experienced food consumption gaps exacerbated by high food prices, an ailing economy and heavy rains, which destroyed crops. Climate change and these recurring natural shocks have proved to be critical drivers of water scarcity, food insecurity and malnutrition, which negatively impact communities and their livelihoods, compromising national development gains.



CHAPTER 2: UN DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM SUPPORT TO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES THROUGH THE COOPERATION FRAMEWORK



2.1 OVERVIEW OF THE LESOTHO UNDAF

The UNDAF for Lesotho is a medium-term strategic planning document that was produced by the entire UNCT in Lesotho – including non-resident agencies – as a collective UN vision and response to national development priorities during 2019–2023. The UNDAF was prepared in collaboration with the government and other stakeholders and informed by the 2017 Common Country Analysis and innovative initiatives that included foresight, scenario-building, public engagement and other processes. The Government of Lesotho and the UNCT have committed to working through partnerships and under the Delivering as One modality in the best interest of the people of Lesotho.

Table 1: UNDAF pillars and outcomes

Pillars	Outcomes
Pillar 1: Accountable governance, effective institutions, social cohesion and inclusion	Outcome 1: By 2023, government and non-governmental institutions deliver their mandates and uphold good governance, rule of law and human rights, with all people having improved access to justice and participating in social and political decision-making in a peaceful environment
Pillar 2: Sustainable human capital development	Outcome 2: By 2023, all citizens, including women and children, and particularly the poor, most vulnerable and marginalized, benefit from evidence-based, shock- and gender-responsive social protection and social services for the sustainable and equitable realization of their rights
Pillar 3: Sustainable and inclusive economic growth for poverty reduction	Outcome 3.1: By 2023, government and the private sector increase opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, improved food security and decent work, especially for women, youth and people living with disabilities
	Outcome 3.2: By 2023, the people of Lesotho have access to, and use, natural resources in a more sustainable manner and the marginalized and most vulnerable are increasingly resilient



Sustainable Development Goals in Lesotho

One of the ways a country can monitor and report on the implementation of SDGs is through a Voluntary National Review. Lesotho prepared its first such review in 2019 and carried out a second one in 2022. The 2022 review covered five goals: SDG 1 (No poverty); SDG 4 (Quality education); SDG 5 (Gender equality); SDG 15 (Life on land); and SDG 17 (Partnerships).

As a result of the impact of COVID-19, the effects of climate change, political instability, governance issues and inefficiencies in public service delivery and accountability, Lesotho has experienced slowed progress with regards to the achievement of the SDGs. As of 2022, of the 17 SDGs:

- Lesotho was only on track to meet two of the goals (Goal 13: Climate action and Goal 12: Responsible consumption and production);
- There has been moderate improvement on three of the goals (Goal 5: Gender equality, Goal 15: Life on land and Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals);
- There has been no progress on ten of the goals (Goal 1: No poverty, Goal 2: Zero hunger, Goal 3: Good health and well-being, Goal 4: Quality education, Goal 6: Clean water and sanitation, Goal 7: Affordable and clean energy, Goal 8: Decent work and economic growth, Goal 9: Industry, innovation and infrastructure, Goal 10: Reduced inequalities and Goal 11: Sustainable cities and communities); and
- Major challenges remain with one goal (Goal 16: Peace, justice and strong institutions).

The Bureau of Statistics undertook two surveys to understand the impact of COVID-19 across the Basotho population. The survey results indicate that households in Lesotho experienced reductions in employment and income, food security and physical engagement in education and learning activities. The survey shows that 61.8 percent³ of the surveyed households with wage employment experienced either a reduction in income or did not receive any wage income during the lockdown. The research further revealed that 10.8 percent of the households received less or no revenue because the usual place of business was closed.⁴

In addition to the COVID-19 shock, the war in Ukraine has intensified inflationary pressures. In April 2022, inflation in the country was recorded at 7.3 percent,⁵ the highest in recent times. As a result of price increases, the projection is that many households, especially those whose food expenditures constitute a significant part of the household budget, will be impacted more due to the crisis.⁶ The ability of people, particularly the rural poor, to produce, purchase

3 Kingdom of Lesotho (2022). *Voluntary National Review on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals Report*. Available at: <https://hlpf.un.org/sites/default/files/vnrs/2022/VNR%202022%20Lesotho%20Report.pdf>.

4 Ibid.

5 Trading Economics (n.d.). Available at: <https://tradingeconomics.com/lesotho/inflation-cpi#:~:text=Inflation%20Rate%20in%20Lesotho%20averaged,statistics%2C%20economic%20calendar%20and%20news>.

6 Kingdom of Lesotho Bureau of Statistics (2020). *Covid-19 Socio-Economic Impact on Households Survey Phase 2*.

and sell food is declining and threatening food security and development gains already damaged by COVID-19, climate change and other recent shocks. However, while there are these prevailing economic and political challenges, the election of a new government in October 2022 presents opportunities and places the country and its new leadership at a potentially important turning point in various areas, including political stability and peacebuilding. Given the hope that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be met within seven years, the need to accelerate progress towards meeting the SDGs in Lesotho has never been paramount, even as the COVID-19 pandemic has rendered the development challenges faced by Lesotho even more complex.

● OVERALL PERFORMANCE

COUNTRY RANKING

LESOTHO

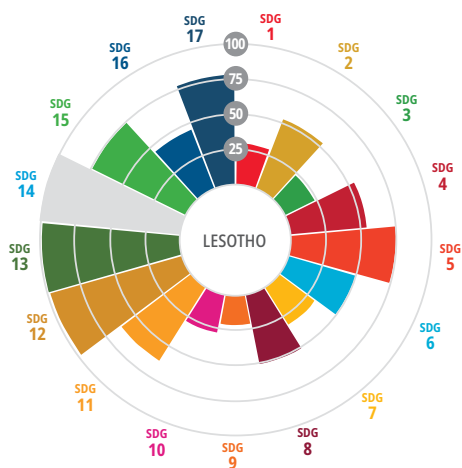
135 / 163

COUNTRY SCORE

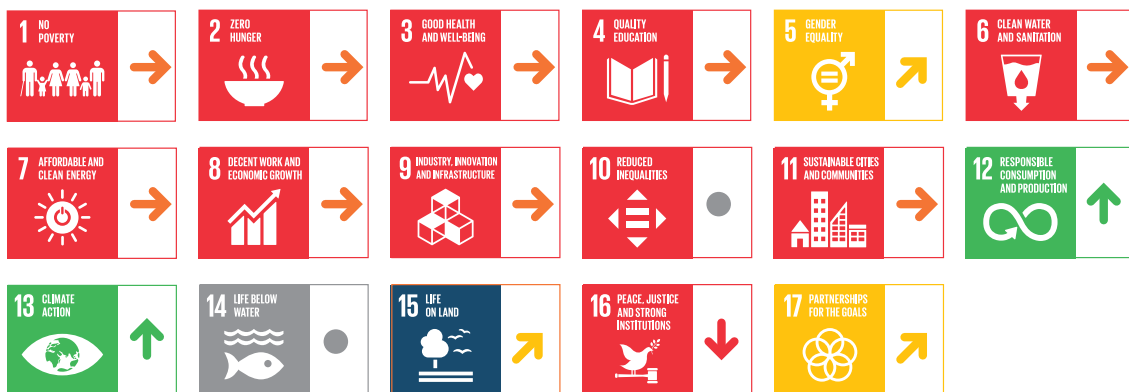


REGIONAL AVERAGE 53.6

AVERAGE PERFORMANCE BY SDG



● SDG DASHBOARDS AND TRENDS



- Major challenges
- Significant challenges
- Challenges remain
- SDG achieved
- Information unavailable
- ↓ Decreasing
- Stagnating
- ↗ Moderately improving
- ↑ On track or maintaining SDG achievement
- Information unavailable

Note: The full title of each SDG is available here: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/topics/sustainabledevelopmentgoals>

Figure 2: Lesotho's SDG performance

Source: Sachs, J. et al. (2022). *Sustainable Development Report 2022: From crisis to sustainable development – the SDGs as roadmap to 2030 and beyond*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Available at: <https://dashboards.sdgindex.org/profiles/lesotho>.



2.2 UNDAF PRIORITIES, OUTCOMES AND OUTPUT



PILLAR 1

ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE, EFFECTIVE INSTITUTIONS, SOCIAL COHESION AND INCLUSION

UN AGENCIES:

ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP, WHO

OUTCOME 1:

By 2023, government and non-governmental institutions deliver their mandates and uphold good governance, rule of law and human rights, with all people having improved access to justice and participating in social and political decision-making processes in a peaceful environment

RELATED SDGS:



KEY OVERALL ACHIEVEMENTS

The UN, through UNDP, UNICEF, OHCHR, WFP, IOM, UNHCR, ILO, UNODC, UNAIDS and UNFPA, together with development partners, has contributed to Lesotho's progress in strengthening governance, rule of law, human rights, access to justice and peace and stability in the country. Lesotho's ranking in the Democracy Index has slightly decreased to 63 in 2021 (baseline in 2017: 56) indicating further need for the improvement.

Over 50 percent of the recommendations and action points from the National Dialogue and reform process were implemented (baseline in 2017: 0 percent) and Lesotho's score on the Migration Governance Index has improved to 82.2 (baseline in 2017: 54.5). Finally, Lesotho conducted a peaceful, credible and transparent election in October 2022 – declared free and fair by the European Union, African Union, Southern African Development Community and United Kingdom observation missions – and peaceful transition of power has proved Lesotho's maturity in democracy for the first time in its history.





OUTPUT 1.1

Increased capacities of governance institutions to enable (i) effective delivery of mandates; (ii) citizen participation; and (iii) reporting to international instruments and commitments (including the protection of the rights of non-citizens)

The UN, spearheaded by the Resident Coordinator, strengthened coordination and collaboration among the stakeholders to jointly address gender-related issues and advocacy on GBV through a high-level gender and GBV forum, which was launched by the Resident Coordinator and Minister of Gender, Youth and Sports.

The UN and World Bank strengthened the capacity of the government to implement gender planning and budgeting within national planning and budgeting systems and cycles. This is expected to establish the standards for systematic allocation and accountability for public spending on gender equality and women empowerment.

The UN continued to support the government in addressing gender inequalities and strengthening women's rights through a gender audit of four key ministries and including integrated prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in the Public Sector Act. This is expected to establish a mechanism for reporting and investigating allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in the public service.

The UN and development partners strengthened the skills and capacity of female political leaders and supported their active role in the political space. Lesotho has its first female deputy prime minister in its history and representation of women slightly increased during the 2022 election with 27.5 percent seats of the National Assembly being held by women, up from 25.3 percent in 2017.

With the UN's support, a human rights research chair was set up in 2022 at the Law Faculty of the National University of Lesotho to conduct human rights research and analysis to inform human rights-based programming.

The UN, through OHCHR and UNDP, continued to support the coordination mechanism among the civil society, parliamentarians, government officials, UN agencies, academia, journalists and private legal practitioners for advocacy on the establishment of the Human Rights Commission. The bill to establish a Human Rights Commission, which is part of the 11th Amendment to the Constitution Bill, known as the Omnibus Bill, is expected to be put before the new parliament for enactment. This will strengthen government's oversight in the implementation of national, international and regional human rights commitments.

The peaceful, credible and transparent electoral process in Lesotho was facilitated through UN support to the Independent Electoral Commission. The UN and development partners continued to support the government in this process. The commission's capacity to deliver a free and credible election was enhanced through technical support and information technology, including digitalization of the voter registration process. The Electoral Tribunal was capacitated and was able to effectively solve electoral disputes in a fair and transparent manner.

THE **BILL TO ESTABLISH
A HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION, WHICH
IS PART OF THE 11TH
AMENDMENT TO THE
CONSTITUTION BILL,
KNOWN AS THE **OMNIBUS
BILL**, IS EXPECTED TO
BE PUT BEFORE THE
NEW PARLIAMENT
FOR ENACTMENT.**

Lesotho has strengthened its migration governance significantly. The migration governance indicator has improved over the past five years through UN support, namely, IOM, UNDP, UNHCR, ILO and UNODC and development partners, notably from the African Union, European Union and United States of America. The National Consultative Committee on Migration was capacitated to lead the process of migration and development policy development, presentation and adoption by Cabinet, and ensured Lesotho's implementation towards the objectives stated under the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Significant improvement was noted on engagement with the diaspora and protection of and assistance to stranded, destitute Basotho migrants, both outside the county and returnees, during and after the COVID-19 pandemic period.

Local government, namely in Qacha's Nek, Quthing, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek and Leribe districts, increased knowledge and skills on how to build social cohesion among the returnees and host communities and played a critical role in socioeconomic reintegration of returnees in their communities of origin.

The UN, through IOM, increased the awareness of members of parliament in how the government can effectively manage migration and ensure protection of vulnerable migrants, victims of trafficking, displaced populations, the stateless and unaccompanied children. An action plan focused on policy advocacy on priorities such as countering trafficking and migrant protection was developed and submitted to parliament.

OUTPUT 1.2

Coordination bodies, oversight, partnerships, structures and systems for implementation of key national frameworks are decentralized, in place and functional at all levels

The capacity of oversight institutions was strengthened through the support of OHCHR. The institutions that benefited from capacity-building include the Office of the Ombudsman, relevant parliament portfolio committees and the Police Complaints Authority, whose oversight capacity to monitor human rights violation by duty-bearers was enhanced, enabling better response to complaints of human rights violations.

With the UN's support, the Directorate of Corruption and Economic Offences conducted an evaluation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (2016–2021). This strategy, with its accompanying action plan and roadmap, was developed to strengthen accountability of the government and fight corruption.

Through the joint support of UNAIDS, WHO, UNICEF and UNFPA, the National AIDS Commission was strengthened to implement the decentralized HIV work plans and the National HIV Strategic Plan effectively.

Supported by the UN, the Christian Council of Lesotho enhanced its capacity to engage in conflict prevention and peacebuilding issues at district level through decentralization of responsibilities, leveraging the support of a locally recruited UN volunteer.

THE **NATIONAL AIDS COMMISSION WAS STRENGTHENED TO IMPLEMENT THE DECENTRALIZED HIV WORK PLANS AND THE NATIONAL HIV STRATEGIC PLAN EFFECTIVELY.**



OUTPUT 1.3

Government and partners are able to generate, access and use evidence to inform policy formulation and decisions relating to the implementation of political, social and economic programmes, including those relating to the SDGs

THROUGH PEER
EXCHANGE AND
BENCHMARKING
VISITS TO BOTSWANA
AND KENYA, SECURITY
AGENCIES WERE
ABLE TO DRAW
LESSONS FROM OTHER
COUNTRIES ON HOW TO
STRENGTHEN A HUMAN
RIGHTS APPROACH
TO THEIR WORK.

Security sector institutions' capacity to respect, promote and protect human rights was strengthened and is expected to result in enhanced respect for human rights by security agencies. The UN supported human rights training of more than 630 personnel from the Lesotho Correctional Service, Lesotho Defence Force, National Security Service and Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS), of whom over 40 percent were women.

Capacity-building of human rights for the National Security Service, Lesotho Correctional Service, Lesotho Defence Force and LMPS was enhanced in 2022 to ensure that human rights are upheld at all levels. Through peer exchange and benchmarking visits to Botswana and Kenya, security agencies were able to draw lessons from other countries on how to strengthen a human rights approach to their work. To ensure sustainability, a human rights training curriculum (including human rights training manuals) was developed and incorporated at all security institution training colleges.

With the support of the UN, particularly WFP and FAO, a geospatial platform for territorial planning was developed to enable the government to better understand the needs of the country through use of spatial data and maps, and eventually be able to allocate resources effectively to achieve the socioeconomic, cultural and environmental development goals. Generation and sharing of spatial data are expected to improve due to this support, which includes provision of information technology equipment to the government.

Technical and financial support was provided to the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee in conducting a vulnerability assessment and Integrated Food Security Phase Classification analysis. The information generated informed various interventions, including crisis response. The Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee dashboard⁷ enabled the government and stakeholders to increase access to information on the food and nutrition security situation. More stakeholders at national and subnational levels – across different sectors and the public at large – are expected to access the dashboard, and this will increase the utilization of information generated. Moreover, the nutrition dashboard is expected to enhance coordination of nutrition activities by the Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office. Both dashboards have been launched and will eventually inform policy and interventions across different sectors.

With the support of the UN (IOM, UNDP, Resident Coordinator's Office (RCO) and UNHCR), the Migration Data Working Group, led by the Bureau of Statistics, strengthened their data literacy and analytical skills. The government has conducted an increasing number of migration-related research projects and the Bureau of Statistics has piloted its first integrated migration data portal⁸ to enhance evidence-based policymaking in migration issues. The Ministry of Home Affairs conducted a study on internal displacement and the Ministry of

⁷ Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (n.d.). Available at: <http://41.203.191.71/data/>.

⁸ Migration Data Portal (n.d.). Available at: <https://www.migrationdataportal.org/overviews/mgi/lesotho-second-profil>.

Tourism, Environment and Culture finalized its research project on the effect of climate change on migration. The Ministry of Labour and Employment conducted a skills gap assessment for labour migration and a list of occupations in demand was developed and validated by the stakeholders. The Diaspora Directorate, in collaboration with the Basotho Diaspora Association, is currently conducting a skills assessment of diaspora members.

The UN, through UNICEF and UNDP, supported the Ministry of Development Planning (MoDP) in launching the Integrated National Finance Framework roadmap, which was adopted by the government. The Integrated National Finance Framework roadmap will enable the implementation of policy and institutional reforms to enable alignment of the budgeting and planning functions for sustainable development.

With the support of UNICEF, the Ministry of Finance developed four budget briefs for 2021/22 (national, health, education and social protection). The briefs provide an analysis of the performance of the budget in the year and the extent to which the budget is aligned to the government's priorities as outlined in the National Strategic Development Plan.

The Ministry of Finance developed a framework for implementation of the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF). An assessment of the MTEF that the government has been developing since 2005 was undertaken to establish the extent to which national budgeting conforms to the principles of MTEF budgeting. An MTEF implementation manual and handbooks, based on the outcome of the assessment, were developed for budget officers, cabinet ministers and parliamentarians. The MTEF budgeting will ensure predictability of ministerial budgets.

The Ministry of Finance, also with the support of UNICEF, developed public expenditure tracking survey guidance tools. The public expenditure tracking survey will assist the ministry to ensure that allocated funds are utilized for the intended purposes and thereby improve service delivery and attainment of the SDGs. The Ministry of Finance's budget officers were capacitated on public expenditure tracking survey methodology.

OUTPUT 1.4

National monitoring and evaluation systems for policy, strategy and programme implementation strengthened to promote sustainable national development

In line with the United Nations General Assembly's resolution on capacity-building for the evaluation of development activities at the country level (A/RES/69/237), the UN (UNICEF, UNDP and the RCO) supported the MoDP in the creation and finalization of the National Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, along with an implementation strategy and evaluation guidelines for the government, which was validated. As a result, the ownership and engagement of ministries, departments and agencies in taking this policy forward was enhanced.

Through UN support, Lesotho's National Vision 2020 was evaluated and recommendations were set out to inform the revised National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP II) which extended the existing NSDP II 2018/19–2022/23 by another five years (2023/24–2027/28).



The Lesotho Voluntary National Review report was prepared through a consultative process and presented at a high-level panel forum in July 2022. Lesotho's Voluntary National Review report focused on SDGs 1, 4, 5, 15 and 17. The UN supported the process to ensure multi-stakeholder engagement (the private sector, civil society organizations, women's groups, children, youth, people living with disabilities, academia and the media) to assess the progress made in achieving the selected SDGs, identify challenges of implementation and make proposals on how they can be addressed for accelerated delivery. Additionally, primary data on youth perception of the goals were collected and analysed using U-Report, and in the absence of recent poverty data, the poverty rate was projected using a projection tool developed by UNICEF to support reporting on SDG 1.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security has a better understanding of monitoring of nutrition programmes due to training on monitoring and evaluation that was supported by the UN. This led to the development of monitoring tools that will enhance programme monitoring and eventually realize nutrition targets.

OUTPUT 1.5

Mechanisms at local and national level are strengthened (i) to facilitate an all-inclusive, open and participatory national reforms process; and (ii) mitigate conflict

The UN (RCO, UNDP, OHCHR and others) and development partners collectively supported the government in holding peaceful national elections and achieving a peaceful transition of power in Lesotho. Female political leaders were capacitated to play active roles in the political space. The first female deputy prime minister in the history of Lesotho was elected and the representation of women increased slightly following the 2022 election.

With the support of the UNDP, community-level peace and security was enhanced at the local level through the pilot Ribaneng Peace Committee initiative. The committee strengthened its skills on conflict mediation and was able to integrate youth as peace agents. Youth peace committees were established in the southern district of Mafeteng and the northern district of Butha-Buthe, with more than 100 youth trained on conflict prevention and increasing engagement in peacebuilding activities. Additionally, the '*Lehokela*' community policing app is being scaled up across select communities to enhance interaction and reporting for community policing.

The reforms process that culminated in the preparation and tabling of the 11th Amendment to the Constitution Bill (Omnibus Bill) was a positive step towards strengthening political stabilization in Lesotho. The bill seeks to transform Lesotho and create political stability, social cohesion, peaceful coexistence, sustained economic growth and strengthened governance, accountability and inclusion. In addition, four draft bills – the Referendum Bill, Human Rights Commission Bill, Independent Electoral Commission Bill and the Directorate of Corruption and Economic Offences Bill were also drafted and submitted for parliamentary approval and royal assent. These reforms demonstrate that national reconciliation, sustainable peace and democratic governance in Lesotho require a well-resourced institutional and legal

framework that safeguards and implements agreed constitutional and other legislative reforms. With the previous failure of government and both houses of parliament to pass the Omnibus Bill, there is hope that the new political dispensation, which came to power after the 7 October election, will promote approval of the Omnibus Bill in parliament.

With the support of the UN, the entities with responsibility for policy coherence and coordination, the judiciary and parliament, were made aware of their capacity gaps through evidence-based research. They now have a concrete capacity development programme and resource mobilization strategy in place. The UN contributed to the increasing commitment and capacity of the judiciary to deliver accessible, swift and quality justice with a staff committed to delivering justice to all in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of Lesotho. This was made possible through an improved case management system, a judiciary strategic plan and defined implementation priorities.

The UN (UNDP, OHCHR and UN Women) supported the government to define minimum conditions for successful security sector reforms. Security sector reform is an ongoing process whereby cross-cutting issues, including gender and human rights; community conflict resolution; government and state security institutions' engagement with society; and citizen participation are integrated. The 2021 results of the Open Budget Survey were disseminated widely to stakeholders in the government, including line ministries and departments, local governments, civil society and academia. The dissemination provided an opportunity to reflect on current practices in public participation, transparency and oversight in Lesotho and discuss the way forward for improvement.

UNICEF capacitated the Ministry of Finance in enhancing public participation in the national budget process. The training of Ministry of Finance key officials was followed by a capacity-building and brainstorming session hosted by the Ministry of Finance and attended by civil society, youth, academia and local government officials. A public participation guide that included international best practices was also developed to support the Ministry of Finance in continuing to ensure channels for participation of diverse groups in the national budget process.

The Ministry of Finance and line ministries were capacitated on the basic principles of programme-based budgeting with the support of UNICEF. A manual was also developed to support the roll-out of programme-based budgeting, including a section on integrating programme-based budgeting into financial management information systems.

Lessons learned

- Ongoing national reforms can provide an opportunity to reframe the narrative of priority challenges and ensure critical inclusion of intersectional issues for more comprehensive remedial action.
- The newly elected government with new strategic thinking is an opportunity to advocate for UN support.

THE **UN** (UNDP, OHCHR AND UN WOMEN) **SUPPORTED THE GOVERNMENT TO DEFINE MINIMUM CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL SECURITY SECTOR REFORMS.**



PILLAR 2

SUSTAINABLE HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT

UN AGENCIES:

FAO, IAEA, ILO, IOM, ITC, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, WFP, WHO, UNESCO

OUTCOME 2:

By 2023, all people, particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from gender-responsive social policies and programmes for the sustainable and equitable realization of their rights

RELATED SDGS:



KEY OVERALL ACHIEVEMENTS

The UN's support under Outcome 2 focused mainly on people-oriented sectors such as health, water, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition, education, social protection and gender equality. Through UN support, health systems were strengthened (for example, increased vaccination coverage for COVID-19) and the national HIV response achieved the 90-90-90 global treatment targets at 90-97-92 for all adults aged 15 years and over.

In education, there was increased school enrolment with attendance stabilized for 50,000 learners in 2,400 early childhood care and development centres and 347,252 learners in primary schools, due in part to the UN-supported school feeding programme.

The UN supported the review of policies and legal frameworks pertaining to social protection and social services, as evidenced by (i) the launch of the National Social Protection Strategy II, together with its implementation and monitoring and evaluation plans, and (ii) the tabling of the Counter Domestic Violence Bill. Strengthening of institutional capacity and systems to improve service delivery was also key to the UN's support.

OUTPUT 2.1

Health sector capacity strengthened to plan and coordinate promotive, preventative and curative health services, including for non-communicable diseases

The UN contributed to strengthened capacity of the Ministry of Health and other health sector partners to plan and coordinate essential health services, contributing to universal health coverage. Through UN support, an essential health service package to ensure comprehensive and integrated service access and coverage was revised and launched.

A mid-term review of the National HIV Strategic Plan (2018–2023) was supported, with findings used to redirect efforts in the HIV response. A national tuberculosis mortality audit to enhance tuberculosis prevention and control and the development of tuberculosis programme policy and guideline reviews were supported. A joint tuberculosis/HIV programme review, led by the Ministry of Health, was supported by the UN. The review covered all 10 districts of the country and the UN actively participated in the planning of the review, sourcing of technical assistance and the field exercise. The review will be used to guide the development of the national HIV and tuberculosis strategic plans.

Work was started on the operationalization and adaptation of the Global HIV Prevention 2025 Roadmap, which charts a way forward for actions to achieve an ambitious set of HIV prevention targets by 2025.

To strengthen health governance and coordination, performance and accountability mechanisms were put in place, with training in transformative leadership for 12 senior health managers.

Multisectoral coordination structures for the HIV response were strengthened through capacity-building of the National AIDS Commission's board and continuous guidance of its management; and revitalization of the national HIV and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) religious forum and district AIDS committees, with five districts now having fully functional committees.

The UN supported the reform of the Global Fund Country Coordinating Mechanisms, with a streamlined Lesotho Country Coordination Mechanism and review of governance documents. Guidelines and tools were also reviewed and updated. These included antimicrobial resistance tools, national health accounts and workload indicators on staffing needs. A total of 46 health teams was capacitated in the application and use of the tools as part of their regular management and coordination functions.

As part of efforts to support the government in promoting the food fortification agenda, national food fortification guidelines were developed. The guidelines aim to operationalize the national food fortification legislation that was officially adopted in 2020 to address the myriad micronutrient deficiencies largely affecting children and women of reproductive age. The guidelines will increase industry and market compliance regarding food fortification standards, increase and strengthen enforcement and increase demand for consumption of fortified foods among Basotho consumers.





Due to the high maternal mortality rate of 544 per 100,000 live births, the UN supported the Ministry of Health to complete a report on maternal deaths for the period 2015–2020. A backlog of maternal death data that had not been assessed for this period was evaluated and included in the report, which has since informed emergency obstetric care management training. The UN contributed to revision of the HIV Testing Guidelines and the Southern African HIV Clinicians' Society Guidelines for Antiretroviral Therapy in Adults, in line with WHO guidelines.

In response to COVID-19, 57.2 percent (900,112 persons) of the eligible population (12 years and over) were fully vaccinated by the end of the year, with the UN providing support in procurement, distribution and administration of 1,226,702 COVID-19 vaccine doses. This has contributed to the curb in COVID-19 infections, with all restrictions finally lifted in August 2022. Lesotho introduced a human papillomavirus vaccine to reduce the burden of cervical cancer and a total of 91,140 (71.9 percent) adolescent girls (aged 9–14 years) from all 10 districts were vaccinated.

OUTPUT 2.2

Health facilities and community structures in all 10 districts have the capacity to deliver integrated quality gender-sensitive reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health; nutrition; HIV; tuberculosis; and water, sanitation and hygiene services.

The UN supported scaling up of postpartum family planning services to an additional two districts, Leribe and Butha-Buthe, to ensure that new mothers receive family planning services for a reduction in unwanted pregnancies. During the reporting period, utilization of family planning services increased from 18 percent in 2018 to 24 percent in 2022 and condom use to prevent sexually transmitted infections (including HIV). The UN also contributed to the strengthening of midwifery regulation, education and services with the development of a competency-based midwifery curriculum aligned to the Lesotho Qualifications Framework Council on Higher Education.

The UN contributed to empowering communities to exert leadership and act, with institutional and coordination capacity-strengthening of civil society organizations working in HIV, and targeted technical assistance to the Global Fund Principal Recipient on community systems strengthening. UN support also focused on removal of multiple and intersecting forms of stigma and discrimination for people living with HIV and other vulnerable population, with strengthened governance and management capacity of the National Network of People Living with HIV and representation in key coordination and governance structures by key and vulnerable populations.

With the aim of 'leaving no one behind' and improving demand for and access to services, the UN increased access to HIV; sexual and reproductive health; and mental health services for 1,507 persons from the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI+) community. Health-care workers were sensitized on LGBTQI+ issues and community health systems were strengthened with training of peer educators in seven districts to link clients to services. This was done through support and technical assistance to organizations led by communities and key populations.

The UN also mobilized additional resources through the Global Fund to support provision of migrant-friendly HIV, tuberculosis, and COVID-19 services. The UN supported the Ministry of Health in delivering migrant-friendly services through improved capacities of health service providers, engagement of gatekeepers and initiating strategic cross-border initiatives with South African counterparts. Through this support, 6,723 sex workers, people from the LGBTQI+ community, migrants and young vulnerable people (2,687 males, 4,019 females, 17 others) were reached with comprehensive information on sexual and reproductive health and HIV and 411 were referred to services. A total of 209 people received comprehensive sexual and reproductive health, HIV, tuberculosis and GBV services.

Lesotho achieved a Tier 2 upgrade on its status in combating human trafficking⁹ through enhanced collaboration on trafficking in persons interventions, with the UN playing a key role. Through the Interactive Media Peer Assistance and Coaching for Teens project, 1,500 adolescents were reached with information on sexual and reproductive health, HIV, sexual and gender-based violence, nutrition and COVID-19, covering 13 secondary schools.

OUTPUT 2.3

Government, civil society and private sector capacity to deliver quality HIV and tuberculosis prevention, treatment, care and support services strengthened

To strengthen the quality of services for people living with HIV, the UN provided technical assistance for community-led monitoring. Such monitoring helps empower communities for improved quality of services and also gives a voice to affected communities. A review of this intervention is ongoing. It is expected to show results soon in terms of improved quality of services for people living with HIV and to inform investments for community-led monitoring. The UN continued its partnership and collaboration with key HIV partners, including the United States President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), contributing to the 2022 country operational plan, including capacitating civil society organizations and communities of people living with HIV for their meaningful engagement in such processes. Capacity-building of the Ministry of Health and other partners was strengthened for improved national estimation and projections of HIV figures, with Ministry of Health estimates used in national planning and targeting.

The UN supported the National AIDS Commission and Ministry of Health in the development of HIV prevention messages with, by and targeting young people to address the diminishing visibility of targeted messaging and in response to high infection rates among young people. Multimedia platforms will be utilized to disseminate the messages to increase awareness, demand and access to services.

Country teams from the Ministry of Health, PEPFAR and implementing partners were capacitated in HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) planning and targeting using a tool called PrEP-it. This will enhance PrEP targeting to ensure this biomedical prevention intervention reaches all people at risk of HIV and those in

TO **STRENGTHEN** THE
QUALITY OF SERVICES
FOR **PEOPLE LIVING WITH**
HIV, THE **UN PROVIDED**
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
FOR **COMMUNITY-LED**
MONITORING.

⁹ United States Department of State (2022). ‘Trafficking in Persons Report’. Available at: <https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/>.



desperate need. The UN provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Health, National AIDS Commission and country stakeholders to participate in the Global Prevention Coalition meeting, resulting in identification of action points for a country prevention roadmap and game-changing high-level commitments for which advocacy will be undertaken at a high level of government. The UN supported integration of sexual and reproductive health and rights, HIV and GBV within the health sector, Ministry of Police and Ministry of Gender.

The UN supported commemoration of World AIDS Day with His Majesty Letsie III as guest speaker. This continues to ensure that HIV is high on the national HIV agenda. A national HIV prevention symposium aimed at refocusing efforts in HIV prevention in the country was supported by the UN and led by the National AIDS Commission. Key actions and recommendations were drafted, including commitments from senior government officials at ministerial and principal secretary level, and these will form part of key inputs to the next generation of the National HIV Strategic Plan.

OUTPUT 2.4

Education sector capacity to provide quality, inclusive formal and non-formal education for all children, adolescents and youth strengthened

The education sector continued to focus on overcoming the challenges posed by disruption of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and the teachers' strike that had preceded it. The persisting challenges, evident even before the pandemic, are low levels of learning; low coverage of early childhood education; poor transition rates to the post-primary level of education; inequities (gender, disability, location and sociocultural factors); lack of data and evidence; and an overarching challenge of learning and skills mismatch. The COVID-19 pandemic only exacerbated the existing challenges.

Joint technical support by the UN resulted in national commitment at the Transforming Education Summit (TES). The government committed to transforming education and learning, moving away from a classroom-centric method of instruction and towards a quality system that offers learners a variety of learning pathways and incorporates high to low technology solutions, as well as expands quality pre-primary and secondary education, professional development of teachers and education financing at international benchmarks.

UN support resulted in taking forward the much-delayed analysis and preparation of the Education Statistical Report for 2020, which was expected to be available by end of 2022 and the report for 2021, in early 2023. The UN was also instrumental in supporting the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) to finalize a report on the much-needed National Learning Assessment. This report comes after a long gap and will help UN partners to collaborate with the MoET to develop strategies to address persistent poor learning levels.

A joint initiative by UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNESCO and UN Women was launched by the government through the MoET. This initiative will pave the way to address the multiple challenges faced especially by girls such as GBV, early marriage, early pregnancies and HIV, which are barriers to learning and achievement. To ensure full access to quality education, retention and a safe

learning environment for all learners in secondary education and as part of Education Plus, an investment case for secondary education was supported. This will support policy decisions and resource allocation for secondary education and the other components under Education Plus.

The UN facilitated the MoET to establish a partnership with the private sector through the Lesotho Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The private sector is now represented in the Local Education Group and participates in education policy dialogue and resource mobilization. Furthermore, the UN leveraged a matching grant of \$2.5 million from the Global Partnership for Education through their innovative financing instrument by collaborating with the Roger Federer Foundation, who pledged \$2.5 million.

Planning in the education sector has been hampered by a lack of the latest data on children, teachers, schools and other key education indicators. The last report on education statistics by the MoET was published in 2019. However, the onset of the pandemic, lack of resources and the challenge of using the Open Education Management Information System constrained data collection, analysis and publishing of the reports for 2020 and 2021. The UN has provided support to overcome this resource gap, and the 2020 education statistics report was expected to be available by December 2022 and the report for 2021, by early 2023.

UN support to the Examination Council of Lesotho has resulted in the completion of data analysis for a learning assessment study that was carried out in 2021. This study provides valuable insight into the status of learning for Grade 4 and 6 learners in English, Sesotho and mathematics, and will facilitate the design of learner-centred strategies to improve quality and learning in future.

A review and revision of the National School Feeding Policy was initiated with the support of the UN. The updated policy will include improved clarity on the roles of different stakeholders and ensure greater sectoral complementarities. The policy revision will result in better provisioning for children to ensure equitable access, reduce chronic and acute malnutrition and increase food and nutrition security through regular and reliable meals.

UN efforts have continued to support the MoET to make the school curriculum inclusive and build the capacity of teachers on inclusive teaching and learning methods to address the persistent challenge of poor learning levels and quality of education. Furthermore, the UN is also supporting the MoET to learn from the disruption of education caused by the pandemic, and build resilient education systems to avoid a repetition of such disruption.

The UN, in collaboration with the MoET, supported the preparatory work for the development of a comprehensive learning strategy by harnessing low and high technology solutions to complement school learning. This learning strategy and package, once developed, will support children and adolescents in formal and non-formal education through flexible learning alternatives and will mitigate disruption, as was seen during the pandemic. In all, 172,000 children (85,500 girls), including children with disabilities, have received learner packs to support classroom learning.



The UN supported training on comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) of an estimated 980 teachers from all the secondary schools in the country. This will result in quality delivery of CSE to curb inequalities and vulnerabilities of young people that lead to increased new HIV infections, early and unintended pregnancies, child marriage and GBV, affecting both health and educational outcomes. The UN supported the development of a CSE syllabus document for learners with intellectual disabilities, which now benefits 175 children (boys and girls) with severe intellectual disability in four special schools.

Fifty thousand learners in 2,400 early childhood care and development centres throughout the country received school feeding in an effort to stabilize their attendance. Ninety-nine school gardens in early childhood care and development centres in Mokhotlong, Berea, Leribe, Mafeteng, Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, Butha-Butha, Thaba-Tseka and Maseru districts were established, which will result in access to and consumption of a variety of vegetables by young children, many of whom are threatened by malnutrition. Fifteen MoET personnel were trained, resulting in improving the implementation and monitoring of the school feeding programme.

Girls and boys face barriers to learning and participation due to sociocultural factors and issues such as GBV, and harmful practices such as early marriage. Six thousand U-reporters were engaged to reach over 35 community councils and 400 schools (with an estimated 8,000 learners) with key messages about the importance of education and creating a safe environment in schools and communities.

OUTPUT 2.5

Key agency capacities for prevention and mitigation of GBV, violence against children and human trafficking strengthened at all levels

The UN supported the LMPS to strengthen data collection to enhance the quality of data on gender and GBV indicators. This was done by reviewing and upgrading existing data-collection tools. The upgraded tools enable the extraction of GBV data from the database of the LMPS in a more comprehensive manner. The data will be used to inform targeted response interventions for prevention and mitigation of GBV. The UN also supported the LMPS with the procurement of 10,300 sexual offence medical forms to ensure that victims and survivors of sexual violence receive comprehensive assistance, including related health services. The UN supported the development of a concept and are providing technical assistance for implementing a Global Fund grant to the LMPS to strengthen strategic information, build capacities of police officers, develop GBV operational guidelines and provide safe houses with strengthened referral linkages between the LMPS, Ministry of Health and other services.

For mitigation of GBV, the UN strengthened the capacity of various service providers, including health professionals, to provide psychosocial support to victims of GBV and traditional leaders at community level to better manage victims of GBV and for effective referrals. This was done to ensure that victims of GBV receive quality essential services. The UN strengthened male engagement initiatives at national and community level as a strategy to prevent GBV. One

FIFTY THOUSAND
LEARNERS IN **2,400 EARLY**
CHILDHOOD CARE
AND DEVELOPMENT
CENTRES THROUGHOUT
THE COUNTRY **RECEIVED**
SCHOOL FEEDING IN AN
EFFORT TO **STABILIZE**
THEIR ATTENDANCE.

hundred and seventy-eight male traditional leaders were reached in Mokhotlong and Quthing to be capacitated as male champions against GBV.

The UN provided technical and financial assistance to the Ministry of Social Development in the development of a national response plan to prevent violence against children. This multisectoral response plan is expected to create an enabling and protective environment for children and young people. A toll-free child helpline was launched across the country by the Ministry of Social Development with UN support. This will enable reporting of child rights violations and facilitate real-time response and referral from the Ministry of Social Development through their social workers. Social marketing of the Nokaneng digital solution resulted in 14,249 adolescent girls and young women registering and accessing support against GBV. A teacher training manual on child protection was finalized, and training is set to be rolled out in an effort to create a safe and protective environment in schools.

The UN has been contributing to government, institution and community efforts on mitigation of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and HIV, and also contributed to gender transformative interventions. Technical assistance was provided for a symposium of chiefs, traditional and religious leaders to increase awareness and address SGBV and harmful cultural practices, thus expanding male-only forums for engagement on SGBV. The focus is on community leaders, who are stewards of culture.

The UN also provided technical assistance and undertook advocacy, review and engagement of parliamentarians and civil society in the development of the Counter Domestic Violence Bill 2021, which was passed by the national assembly. This significant stride strengthens the legislative framework for GBV.

Through its work with a multisectoral team of partners, including civil society organizations, the UN strengthened government capacities to enhance prevention, protection and partnerships in countertrafficking. The government demonstrated efforts that, overall, were increased, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity, with efforts that included (i) identifying more trafficking victims and increasing investigations and prosecutions; (ii) launching a national action plan and allocation of funding for implementation; (iii) establishing the anti-trafficking unit of the LMPS in four districts; (iv) finalizing and implementing guidelines and standard operating procedures for victim identification and referral to care; and (v) increased anti-trafficking training and awareness-raising efforts for law enforcement. A handbook for diplomats was also finalized.

Almost 22,000 youth and community leaders, 10,311 labour migrants and 66 foreign migrants in seven districts were sensitized on the risks of trafficking in persons. Trafficking information reached 80 percent of communities where it was intended to result in behaviour change with regards to trafficking in persons and it reached 84.5 percent of labour migrants who were sensitized around issues relating to foreign recruitment. As a result, Lesotho was upgraded to Tier 2, which demonstrates increased commitment by government to prevent human trafficking effectively.



OUTPUT 2.6

The Government of Lesotho has an improved gender and shock-responsive, integrated and equitable social protection system

The UN undertook a study to identify gaps in implementing shock-responsive social protection in Lesotho. The evidence generated will inform future programming and better responses. Working jointly with the government, the UN and cooperating partners continued to address the food and nutrition needs of populations impacted by COVID-19 and increasing food prices. A total of 9,430 (52 percent women) food insecure vulnerable households in the districts of Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka, Qacha's Nek and Maseru were assisted through cash and commodity vouchers between January and March 2022 (the lean season). Around 37,000 people benefited from social and behaviour change communication messaging on nutrition aimed at improving knowledge of nutrition, health and hygiene. Distribution points were used as platforms for delivery of social- and behavioural-change messaging through strong engagement of the government nutrition and health sectors. Short message services were also employed for messaging through mobile phones.

The UN provided technical and financial assistance for the drafting, validation and finalization of the National Social Protection Strategy II, together with its implementation and monitoring and evaluation plans. The Cabinet approved the strategy in August 2022 and it was launched in November 2022. In addition, the UN supported the drafting of the first social assistance policy for Lesotho. The policy is a precursor to the development of a legal framework for social assistance in the country. The draft social assistance policy has been validated by key stakeholders and awaits approval by the new Cabinet.

With the technical and financial support of the UN, the Ministry of Social Development has piloted cost-effective methods of updating National Information System for Social Assistance registry data in four districts (Leribe, Mafeteng, Butha-Buthe and Maseru), reaching over 15,000 households. This will ensure up-to-date household data that can be used for targeting social assistance and other humanitarian and development programmes. Furthermore, over 7,000 households on the child grant programme have been transitioned to mobile payments, increasing the efficiency of the programme.

Additionally, the UN continued to support capacity-building of the Ministry of Social Development through the provision of technical support and backstopping, as well as secondment of staff in key positions that has enabled the ministry to reach over 48,000 households with an estimated more than 100,000 children with monthly cash grants through the child grant programme.

OUTPUT 2.7

National capacity for prevention, preparedness, response, mitigation and recovery to emergency and humanitarian needs strengthened at all levels

An urban preparedness project was initiated to map key urban stakeholders to identify the gaps in coordination that affect disaster risk reduction activities in urban areas. Valuable opportunities for collaboration towards improved mainstreaming of disaster risk reduction activities in sectoral plans, policies

THROUGH ITS WORK
WITH A MULTISECTORAL
TEAM OF PARTNERS,
INCLUDING CIVIL SOCIETY
ORGANIZATIONS, THE
UN STRENGTHENED
GOVERNMENT
CAPACITIES TO
ENHANCE PREVENTION,
PROTECTION AND
PARTNERSHIPS IN
COUNTERTRAFFICKING.

and other strategic documents that guide such activities in the country were identified. The exercise has enabled better understanding of urban dynamics, systems, vulnerabilities and needs, as well as the work of each humanitarian actor in disaster preparedness and response and institutional arrangements. The innovation led to the improvement of the urban vulnerability analysis framework to include essential needs analysis and a two-tier targeting process (hotspot identification and elaboration of eligibility criteria for the communities within the hotspots), as well as establishment of the minimum essential basket. There has been more buy-in from urban stakeholder agencies and urban community representatives, and development of the Standard Operating Procedures to guide response.

The UN supported a minimum initial services package (MISP) readiness assessment to assess the readiness of Lesotho to provide sexual and reproductive health and rights and GBV services in emergencies. The results of the assessment have been used to develop an action plan to support strengthening capacity of the country to provide such a package.

OUTPUT 2.8

Community members have improved knowledge on quality, responsive social services and positive practices

In response to the high prevalence of chronic malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies and increasing trends in overweight and obesity, the UN provided technical assistance to the government nutrition sector under government's Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office coordination to upscale the evidence-based nutrition interventions.

The National Advocacy, Social and Behaviour Change Communication Strategy for enhancing national food security and nutrition systems was finalized. The roll-out of the strategy was done through a series of training workshops targeting central and district stakeholders to enhance their capacities to deliver nutrition education.

Collaboration with media resulted in increased coverage of the nutrition programme. Community radio stations were used as platforms to deliver nutrition information to improve the knowledge of communities. Nutrition messages targeting different audiences were finalized and published.

The capacity of the government and other actors was strengthened in multisectoral coordination, planning, evidence-building and implementation of nutrition policies and programmes in the four districts with the highest prevalence of stunting (Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka, Quthing and Butha-Buthe).

Lessons learned

- Strengthen overall coordination among different government sector programmes and partners, including strengthening capacity to develop a multi-stakeholder approach.
- Increase resource allocation and budget for gender- and GBV-related intervention and a gradual decline in overreliance on donor support.



PILLAR 3

SUSTAINABLE AND INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH FOR POVERTY REDUCTION

UN AGENCIES:

FAO, IAEA, IFAD, ILO, IOM, ITC, UNCDF, UNCTAD, UNDP, UNEP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNIDO, UN Women, UNWTO, WFP, WHO

OUTCOME 3.1:

By 2023, government and the private sector increase opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, improved food security and decent jobs

OUTCOME 3.2:

By 2023, the people of Lesotho use natural resources in a more sustainable manner and the marginalized and most vulnerable are increasingly resilient

RELATED SDGS:



OUTCOME 3.1

By 2023, government and the private sector increase opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, improved food security and decent jobs

OUTPUT 3.1

National institutions (public and private) strengthened to formulate and implement inclusive, innovative and evidence-based policy instruments in service sectors (information and communications technology and tourism), agriculture, extractive industry and manufacturing value chains

The UN, through the UNHCR and IOM, has provided livelihood support to enable refugees and returned labour migrants to establish livelihoods and income-generating activities.

The IOM strengthened the capacity of the government to implement reintegration programmes in five districts (Qacha's Nek, Quthing, Mohale's Hoek, Mafeteng and Leribe) in close collaboration with district authorities. One hundred and twenty-nine government officials and 102 local leaders' understanding of reintegration was enhanced. Livelihoods of 200 beneficiaries comprising returned migrants and vulnerable communities in the five districts were improved through skills training that was informed by an assessment that identified the most marketable trades (tailoring, knitting, hairdressing, catering, basketmaking, decoration, welding, electricity, mechanics, carpentry, masonry, brickmaking and manufacturing). Available local vocational training centres, small and medium enterprises and individual trainers in Lesotho have been profiled.

UNHCR has collaborated with Skillshare to build capacities of the refugee community in Lesotho for self-reliance and income-generation to reduce vulnerability and food insecurity. The livelihoods of 22 refugees and asylum seekers (10 males and 12 females) were improved through skills training on tailoring, fashion design, vegetable production for food security and income generation. Skillshare, through their partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, will continue providing ongoing mentorship and will support the implemented projects.

The UN (IOM, UNICEF, UNDP) supported the government (through the Ministry of Labour and Employment and the Council for Higher Education) to co-establish evidence-informed strategies and policy options to address the observed skills mismatch, which results in low employability and integration of the labour force into the job market. The ministry conducted a skills audit to understand market dynamics and improve prospects for labour migration, while the council focused on the training and market mismatches. The studies enable the government to understand the labour market challenges better; propose evidence-informed solutions and mechanisms for managing and negotiating labour conditions and determine strategies for upskilling and reskilling of new labour market entrants.

The UN has enhanced the capacity of the government to coordinate and mainstream trade in development through implementation of a sustainability support programme for trade with the support of UNDP, Enhanced Integrated Framework and the United Nations Office for Project Service. Through this, the





Ministry of Trade and Industry presented Lesotho's tariff offer for the African Continental Free Trade Area, as well as shared information to mobilize the private sector to participate in trade. At least 30 officers have skills to appraise and monitor trade-related programmes and policy. At least 40 farmers have acquired skills to compete better in the market through capacity-building training, monitoring for pest control and facilitation of market linkages to the domestic market provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security. The support also enabled the ministry to host a policy dialogue and map development partners and potential resources for engagement on interventions towards trade and development.

With UN (UNDP, UNICEF, IOM) support, the government has adopted strategies to identify and strengthen sources for development financing, including the private sector and diaspora. The Ministry of Finance, working with the UNDP, has developed an SDG investor map, a market intelligence tool for SDG-aligned investment opportunities to help mobilize private investment and partnerships. This considers capabilities and readiness to participate in development of the Lesotho private sector, and proposes facilitating mobilization of the private sector contribution beyond 20 percent of gross domestic product. The map also provides evidence-informed prioritization of development sectors and emerging investment opportunities to drive development impact and transformation.

With the technical and financial support of the UNDP and UNEP, the UN has enabled the government to explore and test policy and strategic, innovative solutions and partnerships to enhance sustainable use of plastics for environmental sustainability and livelihood development. The Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture drafted a policy and legal framework to regulate the use and disposal of single-use plastics in Lesotho and oriented community councils to introduce strategies for maintaining a clean environment and manage waste using the 5-Rs principles (refuse, reduce, reuse, repurpose and recycle) for

plastic lifecycle management. The ministry also has better capacity to manage and coordinate waste management information through working with local and district community councils using the waste information management systems established by the intervention. Interventions saved the environment from plastic waste worth over 1 million maloti due to campaigns for 'plastic-free days'.

Through support of the UN, key institutional structures to enable the government to coordinate and engage with the diaspora were established. The Diaspora Directorate in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Basotho Diaspora Association have established formal channels for outreach and engagement of the diaspora to participate in development, including through remittances, diaspora investment finance, skills transfer and tourism. The support enabled the development of platforms such as the i-diaspora and regional diaspora engagement website as tools to enhance partnership among members of the diaspora in Southern African Development Community countries and to facilitate information exchange.

As a result of UN support (IOM and UNDP), the government has a number of options for the development of remittance service between South Africa and Lesotho, as well as for engagement of the diaspora in trade that has development benefits, including livelihood development, access to finance, trade and development financing. Facilitating a safe transmission mechanism for remittances will improve and transform livelihoods for at least 20 percent of Basotho households who are dependent on remittances, bolster financial inclusion and improved national income. The IOM-supported study on policy analysis towards promotion of diaspora investment and trade in Lesotho has improved awareness of the obstacles and opportunities for promoting diaspora investment and trade as an alternative development financing source.

OUTPUT 3.2

Gender-responsive and evidence-based policies, strategies and programmes are in place and implemented to generate decent employment and promote a green economy, particularly for rural and urban youth, migrants, vulnerable women and men and people living with disabilities

Through UN support, the government has developed the inclusive Open and Distance Learning Policy to meet the needs of learners from a wide variety of contexts, including those whose circumstances do not allow them to attend conventional schooling. This draft policy provides for development of a variety of education delivery systems that maximize the cost-effective utilization of educational resources, incorporating information and communications technology and multimedia approaches.

Almost 10,000 children, including 1,164 children with disabilities, are benefiting from educational assistive technology devices which are used to support effective teaching and learning, especially of children with disabilities, in schools. The provision of assistive devices was accompanied by capacity-building of 333 teachers on how to use the devices to ensure effective learning of children with disabilities in schools.

INTERVENTIONS **SAVED**
THE **ENVIRONMENT** FROM
PLASTIC WASTE WORTH
OVER 1 MILLION MALOTI
DUE TO **CAMPAIGNS** FOR
'PLASTIC-FREE DAYS'.



As part of the COVID-19 socioeconomic response, the livelihoods of a total of 264 vulnerable individuals (66 males and 168 females) were improved through skills training on cosmetics, tailoring and fashion design. Post-training evaluations have confirmed that the livelihoods and incomes of an estimated 27 percent of the beneficiaries who received start-up kits were increased following the training and support provided. The final evaluation found that 53 percent of interviewed returnees were already self-employed and others were already employed, signalling some preliminary critical impacts of the project. Through the UN (UNDP, FAO, WFP, UNCTAD), Lesotho will explore and test innovations and develop policy instruments and data capacities to strengthen food systems in response to the impending food crisis due to the Russia–Ukraine war. The UN has secured funding to pilot initiatives for food productivity, generating new knowledge and data analytics to enable evidence-based policymaking.

OUTPUT 3.3

Knowledge and capacity of communities, smallholder farmers and service providers improved to diversify livelihoods and production systems for increased incomes and food and nutrition security, particularly for poor and vulnerable households

As part of the COVID-19 socioeconomic response, five migration-affected communities received community development project support and as a result, improved their livelihoods through income generation while social cohesion between returnees and host communities was promoted. The projects were (i) bakery production by Tosing United Bakery Cooperative (Tosing, Quthing), (ii) beekeeping by Mochaochele Siloe Beekeeping Farmers' Cooperative (Siloe, Mohale's Hoek), (iii) layers' project by Shine and Share Farmers Association (Ha Leshoele, Leribe); (iv) layers' project by Qhoalinyane Poultry Cooperative (Qhoalinyane, Qacha's Nek) and (v) vegetable production by Mphatlalatsane Farmers' Cooperative (Sekameng, Mafeteng). All cooperatives received technical and cooperative management and business training by the Ministry of Small Business Development, Cooperatives and Marketing and Ministry of Local Government, registered their cooperatives and started to generate incomes through the projects.

The UN has contributed to creating more knowledge and information among the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security and national stakeholders to strengthen national productive capacities and food production, curb food deficits and promote self-sufficiency in the production of cereals, meat and vegetables. As a result of the WFP-supported study on post-harvest losses, the ministry and partners are better aware of the causes and rate of post-harvest losses at farm and retail levels, which lead directly to the severe reduction of food quality and quantity in Lesotho. The recommendations from this study will be utilized in the joint UNDP, WFP and FAO initiative for strengthening food systems in Lesotho to pilot post-harvest innovative solutions and capacity-building for smallholder farmers through the UNDP Accelerator Lab.

Through initiatives led by FAO and WFP, the UN has strengthened the local productive capacities and quality and quantities of food produced in the country through working with smallholder farmers and farmer associations, private sector and the government, thereby contributing to the transformation of the agriculture sector.

FAO has distributed agricultural inputs and equipment that include seeds and seedlings for potatoes and vegetables, shade nets and irrigation equipment, benefiting a total of 22,000 households across the 10 districts of Lesotho, including vulnerable households. This contributed to improved and diversified household-level food production and nutrition. A combined total of 37,500 tonnes of root and leafy vegetables was produced.

The potatoes, seeds and fertilizers were distributed through the Potato Lesotho Association in the districts of Mokhotlong, Thaba-Tseka, Quthing, Mohale's Hoek, Mafeteng, Maseru and Leribe. This boosted the production of potato with yields increasing from 12 metric tonnes/ha to nearly 17 metric tonnes/ha.

Working with Skillshare Lesotho, the UN has facilitated integration and livelihood support of 25 refugee and asylum-seeker households in Lesotho by providing an assortment of farm inputs, including early-maturing vegetables, seeds and equipment. The farm tools will boost the existing garden toolkit for maintaining backyard and vegetable garden production, enhancing refugee and asylum-seeker food and nutrition security, particularly for those residing in and outside of the Mohalalitoe Reception Centre.

The WFP supported more than 600 smallholder farmers in Lithakaling in Mohale's Hoek with solar tunnels to preserve foods and small livestock such as chickens, pigs and rabbits as part of start-up inputs to commercialize agriculture, increase income and attain food and nutrition security.

The UN (IOM) supported five community councils (Leribe, Quthing, Qacha's Nek, Mohale's Hoek and Mafeteng), reaching 1,000 beneficiaries with income-generating community development projects and seed capital. The projects included beekeeping, poultry production, bakeries and vegetable production. The objective was to improve beneficiaries' livelihoods by maximizing income-generating opportunities and improving living conditions while addressing returnees' immediate needs to restore their livelihoods. The projects were carefully selected based on assessment of local market needs, and used a gender-mainstreamed approach to understand the specific vulnerabilities associated with migrants.

The UN facilitated market linkages for smallholder farmers to sell pulses and vegetables to national management agents responsible for school feeding. The agents procured 8,871 metric tonnes of pulses from 37 smallholder farmers. This was done to support local food purchases from smallholder farmer groups in the districts of Mohale's Hoek and Quthing as part of encouraging access to existing local markets to promote increased nutritious food production. The market linkage platforms are intended to bring buyers and sellers (including the smallholder farmers) together and facilitate market access for small- and medium-scale farmers. Markets accessed include the national school feeding programme through homegrown school feeding; hospitality dealers; food packers; and government entities like prisons, security forces and other viable markets. The aim is to increase food production and contribute towards improved livelihoods and strengthening of resilience against economic shocks.

The UN facilitated linkages between 140 retailers with Lesotho Flour Mills and bean packers to enable them to procure maize meal and pulses from

**FAO HAS DISTRIBUTED
AGRICULTURAL INPUTS
AND EQUIPMENT
BENEFITING A TOTAL OF
22,000 HOUSEHOLDS
ACROSS THE 10 DISTRICTS
OF LESOTHO.**





source markets at reduced prices to support crisis-response programme implementation in the districts of Maseru, Mokhotlong and Thaba-Tseka, where IPC results reported a need for support. It was reported that 22 percent of the contracted retailers offered lower prices on essential foods than non-contracted shops because of the established linkages. Food prices increased during the time of COVID-19 and the situation was worsened by the Russia-Ukraine war. The established relationship with community-based retailers resulted in 230 businesses being engaged to provide food assistance to vulnerable communities in the above-mentioned districts. Over 50 percent of retailers thus engaged were further assisted through collaboration with the ministries of Small Business Development, Cooperatives and Marketing and Trade and Industry to acquire trading licences, open business bank accounts and register with the revenue authority to facilitate payment of taxes that are needed to contribute to government revenue collection.

FOOD PRICES INCREASED
DURING THE **TIME**
OF **COVID-19** AND
THE **SITUATION** WAS
WORSENERD BY THE
RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR.

The government, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security's Department of Marketing, benefited from a post-harvest loss study sponsored by the WFP in the last three quarters of the year. The study assessed the rate of harvest and post-harvest losses at farm and retail levels. The study recommended measures and trainings to reduce food losses and improve smallholder farmers' livelihoods. The objective was to achieve Food Systems Summit outcomes through commercialization of agriculture as one of the country's priorities to curb food deficits, promote self-sufficiency in the production of cereals, meat and vegetables and reduce the country's dependence on South Africa to supply its internal market.

Lessons learned

- Strengthen collaboration within agencies for greater synergies through joint learning events and programmatic visits.
- Facilitate platforms for sharing information within the outcome results group to harness synergies and individual agency capacities and facilitate development of collaborative engagement and partnerships in implementation of similar programmes to maximize the impact of UN interventions.
- Map agency initiatives related to promoting inclusive economic growth, to streamline the outcome results group's work plan, reduce redundancies and overlaps with the other outcome results groups.

OUTCOME 3.2

By 2023, the people of Lesotho use natural resources in a more sustainable manner and the marginalized and most vulnerable are increasingly resilient

Key achievements include:

- Over \$50 million worth of resources mobilized in support of energy, natural resources management and climate-change projects.
- Over 2,800 hectares of land put under sustainable land management and climate-resilient practices, including removal of invader species, rehabilitation of gullies and other degraded land, reseeding of degraded rangelands and establishment of in situ conservation of soil and water.



- Increased uptake of climate-smart production technologies resulting in increased production and consumption of a wide variety of vegetables.
- Improved access to markets for smallholder farmers.
- Improved access to clean energy, acceleration of rural electrification and associated reduction in the excessive use of biomass for household energy requirements.

OUTPUT 4.1

Gender-responsive and inclusive policies, regulatory frameworks and financial mechanisms strengthened and implemented to improve access and promote utilization of sustainable energy technologies

In response to the plight of rural communities that struggle to meet energy demands for sustaining their livelihoods and are unlikely to be connected to the main energy grid due to slow rural electrification processes, the UN has made notable progress in improving access to and promoting the use of sustainable and renewable energy technologies. Following the technical support that assisted in developing the regulatory framework for mini-grids and the catalytic investment of \$300,000, private investment to a tune of \$10 million has been secured to support the establishment of 10 village energy centres and associated mini-grids.

These energy centres have improved access to clean energy for over 500 households through renewable energy technologies such as energy-saving stoves and solar-powered lights. Mini-grids, on the other hand, are meant to generate electricity for use by households, businesses and public institutions. To date, five mini-grids are operational, serving two health centres (clinics), two schools and one police station. While there are recorded testimonies from communities that utilize the services of these public institutions, there is no doubt their capacity to deliver service has improved substantially. These off-grid technologies and solutions are critical for speeding up rural electrification



and improving energy security, which are crucial for improving the livelihoods and well-being of rural communities while also safeguarding the environment and natural resource base from excessive use of biomass for household energy requirements.

OUTPUT 4.2

The capacity of farmers, communities and institutions at national, district and local levels strengthened to design, implement and monitor climate-smart and sustainable natural resources management initiatives

**CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT
FOR GOVERNMENT
INSTITUTIONS,
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
STRUCTURES AND
COMMUNITIES ON
GOVERNANCE OF
NATURAL RESOURCES
IS KEY TO MAKING THESE
RESULTS POSSIBLE.**

The UN, through the collective efforts of FAO, IFAD, UNDP and WFP, has been instrumental in helping rural communities to conserve the environment and restore the productivity of the natural resource base, leading to improved ecosystem services that are critical for the well-being of vulnerable rural populations. Improved management of rangelands and protection of wetlands have increased productivity of extensively kept livestock and improved access to water for both domestic and agricultural use. The construction or erection of water-harvesting structures in the form of roof water tanks, earth dams, sand dams and animal drinking points has not only made water more accessible for domestic and agricultural use, but has also helped in addressing gender issues associated with the collection and use of water. These initiatives have tremendously reduced the disproportionate burden of collecting water from long distances by women and girls, which often exposes them to GBV. These customarily disadvantaged members of society can now use their saved time for more productive activities as they are progressively freed from time poverty.

Capacity development for government institutions, local government structures and communities on governance of natural resources is key to making these results possible. Emphasis was placed on managing rangelands, rehabilitating degraded lands, protecting wetlands and safeguarding the environment and associated ecosystem services. Key community structures like traditional leadership and grazing associations were the focus of training and engagement for reclaiming gullies and other degraded lands, removing invader species on the rangelands, developing grazing management plans, establishing in situ soil and water conservation measures and constructing diversion furrows and silt traps. Collectively, the UN and partners have managed to rehabilitate 2,800 hectares of degraded rangelands, touching the lives of over 60,000 households.

Monitoring of progress on natural resources management in general and land management in particular have been boosted through the development of the land cover atlas and database. This database has the baseline information that is critical for tracking changes in land cover and providing a strong basis for evidence-based policy and programme decision-making.

The UN has also been instrumental in responding to livelihood-threatening climate-change-related emergencies and other emerging issues like COVID-19 and the impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on the food and fuel crisis. Given the growing impact of climate change and COVID-19, a shift to a green economy has been widely recognized as a key growth strategy to recover and build resilient communities.

The UN supported the government to conduct a study to determine interlinkages of climate change, environmental degradation and migration in Lesotho and propose adaptation and migrants' reintegration strategies. Findings of the study have informed development of a new project that will develop a gender-sensitive migration environment and climate-change strategy and build capacity to create green jobs for migrants and vulnerable communities. Migrants and vulnerable communities that were part of the study have become acutely aware of their long-term needs and are open to climate-change adaptation schemes that will enhance their resilience.

The UN has also provided support through humanitarian and developmental projects. It focused on improving access to productivity-enhancing inputs and climate-smart production technologies, including protected agriculture (greenhouses and shade nets), irrigated homestead vegetable production, fodder production and rearing of small livestock. This support helped in stimulating the green economy and improving household food and nutrition security through increased production and consumption of diverse horticulture products. Production of fodder was particularly useful for improving livestock productivity, while reducing grazing pressure on heavily stocked rangelands. Beyond fodder production, further assistance was provided to small stock (sheep and goats) farmers to access animal feeds (lucerne, yellow maize and sheep pellets) at highly subsidized prices. This support reached about 12,800 farmers and provided an important buffer against the COVID-19-induced rise in input costs. In the area of vegetable production, over 22,000 households were supported to engage in either small-scale homestead vegetable production for household consumption or medium-scale commercial horticulture production using climate-smart agricultural production technologies. Other support provided by the UN included improving farmers' capacity to access markets. Key actions implemented to ensure better access to markets include capacity-building on good agriculture practices, which is critical for ensuring that agricultural products meet the local and international market requirements; and establishing an enabling environment (legal frameworks and platforms for engagement between producers and buyers), which is necessary for contract farming to succeed.

Capacities of key government institutions were developed to establish a pest and disease surveillance system to further safeguard the livelihoods of agriculturally dependent households. Transboundary pests and diseases of concern have been mapped out and monitored through the established surveillance system. This should enable authorities to act promptly should an outbreak of such diseases or pests occur. Lesotho has maintained its historic freedom from foot and mouth disease and peste des petits ruminants (plague of small livestock) thanks to the presence of its surveillance system, which enables veterinary services to report regularly to the World Organisation for Animal Health (previously known as the Office International des Epizooties). This is key to maintaining and improving Lesotho's trade in animals and animal products. The animal diseases that continue to plague the country include anthrax and rabies. Anthrax could lead to the ban of Lesotho's livestock products (wool and mohair) on international markets if control measures are deemed to be inadequate but to date, Lesotho continues to trade in wool and mohair despite frequent outbreaks of anthrax. This is largely due to the support

**THIS YEAR ALONE,
OVER 200,000
ANIMALS WERE
VACCINATED AGAINST
ANTHRAX, BLACK
LEG AND RABIES.**



rendered by the UN in mounting vaccination campaigns. This year alone, over 200,000 animals were vaccinated against anthrax, black leg and rabies.

OUTPUT 4.3

National, district and community level early warning systems strengthened to safeguard human security, build resilience and support preparedness and response

- Progress is being made in developing capacity for early warning in key government institutions that deal with emergencies and disaster response and preparedness. Through the support of the UN, key stakeholders in early warning, including Lesotho Meteorological Services and the Disaster Management Authority, were supported technically and financially to undertake historic vulnerability analysis for drought. As a result of this support, the Disaster Management Authority was able to draft three (severe, medium and low) drought measure thresholds based on triggers generated by Lesotho Meteorological Services forecasting. This is an important policy decision-making tool that will enable authorities to take appropriate measures in line with the scale and depth of drought, as determined through the established thresholds.
- Further technical capacity development was provided in the form of training on enhanced data and tools for generating seasonal forecasts. As a result of this training, Lesotho Meteorological Services has increased the number of forecasters from one to four and can now forecast rainfall at considerably lower geographic (district and council) scale, which is more useful and user friendly for localized decision-making.
- Efforts are being made to bring seasonal forecasting closer to the people that need it most. District climate outlook forums have been established as a platform for sharing and disseminating seasonal forecast information. These will, over time, enable farming communities to make informed decisions on what, where and when to plant, based on projected rainfall.

Lessons learned

- While COVID-19 and the Russia-Ukraine war have caught us off guard they have also given us a lifelong lesson. They have taught us that long agri-food value chains that transcend country and continent boundaries and are largely supported through huge import bills are not sustainable and too prone to external disruptions. They have taught us to strive for greater food self-sufficiency, which demands investments in agri-food systems and good stewardship of the land and the larger natural resource base. The design of programmes in 2022 and beyond should be informed by this lesson.
- Lesotho has access to climate finance modalities like the Green Climate Fund, Global Environment Facility and Adaptation Fund. To date, the country has not taken full advantage of these funding modalities, and projects funded under them are few and far between. The UN has a collective need to support the respective line ministries and departments in designing projects and programmes that can tap resources from these funding modalities. One of the challenges for securing funding from these modalities is the absence of co-financing from government and technical partners (UN agencies). Such challenges could be overcome easily if the UN

**LESOTHO
METEOROLOGICAL
SERVICES HAS INCREASED
THE NUMBER OF
FORECASTERS FROM ONE
TO FOUR AND CAN NOW
FORECAST RAINFALL
AT CONSIDERABLY
LOWER GEOGRAPHIC
(DISTRICT AND COUNCIL)
SCALE, WHICH IS MORE
USEFUL AND USER
FRIENDLY FOR LOCALIZED
DECISION-MAKING.**



and other development partners can collaborate in designing and financing complementary projects.

- For a long time, policy documents and diagnostic studies have suggested that Lesotho will not see major improvements in agricultural productivity until and unless it invests in irrigation development and sustainable natural resources management. However, very few development partners have had programmes of support in these areas except for funding sourced through the Global Environment Facility and IFAD. There is a need for increased investments in these areas. This situation is changing for the better. Several development partners are increasing their footprint in natural resources management. For instance, the European Union has a sizeable multi-year programme on integrated catchment management, while IFAD has recently launched a project on restoration of landscapes and livelihoods. In addition, the United States government, through their Millennium Challenge Corporation, have confirmed investment funding for irrigated horticulture that will come on stream in 2024. The country, with the support of the UN, should take advantage of these developments to help design and implement inclusive and impactful programmes.





KEY OVERALL CHALLENGES

- *The impact of 2022 being an election year:* Many public officials were focused on the national elections in 2022 and political campaigns have negatively impacted programme traction to a certain extent. In the aftermath of the national election, with personnel changes at various levels and the merger of some ministries, further implementation delays were experienced as government partners became more inward looking to adjust to changes.
- *Limited coordination of efforts and value creation among UN agencies:* While there are potential complementarities between the UN agencies in this pillar, there has been limited collaboration and coordination of similar interventions.
- *Legal impediments and interlocutory applications:* These resulted in nullification of the process of declaring a state of emergency, the subsequent recall of parliament and the delay of the enactment of the 11th Amendment to the Constitution Act 2022 by the Constitutional Court, which was upheld by the Court of Appeal. This has stalled the processing of bills, regulations, strategies and policies.
- *Insufficient funding for emergency response and resilience interventions:* This resulted from multiple shocks that increased the needs and high competition for funding with countries which traditionally were not listed for donor contributions. Joint funding proposals were written, though the needs remained high.
- *Weak government coordination and commitment:* Government coordination and commitment was needed to oversee the delivery of various programmes, and weakness in this area led to delays in the delivery of interventions. Regular meetings were held with high-level government staff to sensitize them on the importance of programme delivery. Frequent changes in key government positions resulted in adjustments in decision-making and hindered continuity of programme implementation. For instance, in the last three years it was not uncommon for a ministry to have three successive principal secretaries within twelve months. Such changes often destabilize decision-making processes, resulting in key decisions not being made in time, thus slowing project implementation and disrupting critical paths.
- *Government ownership and leadership:* The vast majority of UN programmes are implemented through government structures. Many of them have project personnel who are hosted by government. However, leadership and technical oversight by government is often lacking. Accountability for results often rests with project personnel with little technical or managerial support or oversight from the host ministry. In the case of a rogue project management unit, such projects are often 'captured' by the unit without any demand for accountability from authorities in the host ministry. In cases where project management units are functional, they are often frustrated by lack of cooperation from lead technical departments. These challenges are mitigated by strong oversight functions from joint UN and government project steering committees. The strength of such committees is often the result of the quality of appointments and their commitment to serve.

2.3 SUPPORT TO PARTNERSHIPS AND FINANCING THE 2030 AGENDA

Modernization of Lesotho's public financial management

As a result of UN support through the Joint Programme on Economic and Financial Management Integration for the Achievement of the SDGs, the government has strengthened development financing with the launch of the Integrated National Finance Framework and the development finance assessment report¹⁰. The latter provides a holistic approach to development financing and helps navigate an increasingly complex financing landscape. The modernization of Lesotho's public financial management has been ongoing since 2012 with the implementation of the Comprehensive Reform Action Plan 2012/13 –2017/18. Central to the country's public financial management reforms is the MTEF. The MTEF strengthens the transparency of the budget process and contributes to better prioritization and allocation of resources and sustainability of the budget. With the support of the Joint SDG Fund, the UN is supporting the Ministry of Finance and other relevant ministries in the implementation of the MTEF. To ramp up implementation, an assessment on the challenges for implementation of the MTEF has been done. An MTEF steering group will be established by the end of 2022 to coordinate the roll-out of the MTEF, consisting of stakeholders from ministries; international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and African Development Bank; UN agencies; and other development partners. The MTEF will be implemented from the 2023/24 budget in four pilot ministries, the Ministry of Social Development; Ministry of Health; MoET; and Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation.

The UN has successfully created a platform for dialogue between the government and the diaspora; and reopened honest dialogue and commitment to the MTEF.

Building and sustaining partnerships for concerted efforts

Development partners

In 2022, the UN resuscitated the development partners coordination forum, chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator with membership from bilateral and multilateral organizations. The strengthening of development partner relationships through this forum has facilitated deeper discussions on issues affecting Lesotho and resulted in joint solutions and more support to the government by development partners. The forum has facilitated the strategic engagement of the UN with development partners on the key issues of GBV, governance, human rights, youth empowerment, food security and resilience. This has resulted in increased trust, with development partners seeking to partner with the UN for support in meaningful engagement with the government. High-level government officials have participated in the forum, notably the Prime Minister, Dr. Moeketsi Majoro, who met with the forum to share his views on the political landscape and call for support on implementation of the national reforms for enhanced peace and stability.

¹⁰ Kingdom of Lesotho, United Nations Development Programme and Integrated National Financing Frameworks (n.d.). *Lesotho Development Finance Assessment 2021*. Maseru: UNDP.



THE PRIVATE SECTOR IS AN
IMPORTANT STRATEGIC
PARTNER WITH THE
UN IN IMPLEMENTING
THE UNITED NATIONS
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
COOPERATION
FRAMEWORK AND
2030 AGENDA FOR
SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT.

The UN, under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, supported the government in resuscitating the national-level coordination forum on gender and anti-GBV, with the Minister of Gender and Resident Coordinator as chairs, for a joint approach to tackle the GBV crisis. The high-level forum brought together stakeholders from the government, civil society, private sector, church, security sector and international development community. The forum recognized that the GBV crisis requires a societal approach to stop what has become a painful reality of life and a major threat to achieving the SDGs. Joint resource mobilization will now be possible and GBV has been brought back to the front of the development agenda with a joint proposal under development. The coordinating role of the forum extends to partnerships with the private sector. A good example is the partnership with Vodacom to support survivors of GBV through provision of safe shelter.

Additionally, the UN Resident Coordinator undertook a mission and had bilateral meetings with development partners who are based in South Africa but operate in Lesotho. The mission was aimed at increasing awareness on emerging development issues affecting Lesotho and discussing possible opportunities for partnership.

Stakeholder forum: Accountability to key stakeholders

As the UN is accountable to its key stakeholders who represent the people it serves, UN Lesotho hosted a stakeholder forum to share and review the UNDAF achievements and challenges and to gain insight into the key opportunities and possible areas of collaboration with the different stakeholders. The forum had more than 100 participants drawn from government, civil society, churches, the private sector and youth. The UN invited this diverse group of people to ensure that every voice is heard and that it matters, and to understand where the country is, what is working, what is not and what needs to be done going forward.

One key result from the forum is the new partnerships with private sector companies such as Vodacom (a mobile communications company) and First National Bank, who have expressed interest in partnering with the UN on climate change, youth economic empowerment and GBV. The stakeholders requested regular stakeholder forums for systematic and productive engagement for addressing the SDGs; deeper outreach; and enhanced community engagement to raise awareness and educate communities on SDGs. It was recommended that the UN should establish robust partnerships with rural communities and expand its work with the private sector and civil society.

Private sector partnership

The private sector is an important strategic partner with the UN in implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The partnership between the UN and the private sector in Lesotho has been negligible over the years. Nonetheless, UN agencies have had engagements with the private sector, even if they were at a limited scale. There are opportunities to explore these engagements in support of the national development priorities that are anchored on pursuit of economic and institutional transformation for private-sector-led job creation and inclusive economic growth. To ignite private sector contributions in sustainable development, the UNCT, in partnership with the Lesotho Chamber of Commerce and Industry, hosted a breakfast meeting for chief executive officers, managing

directors and heads of corporate social responsibility departments to engage in private sector contributions to sustainable development. UN agencies are also developing joint proposals with several private sector companies.



Media

The media is a key catalytic player in advancing the SDGs and challenging societal norms that condone gender inequalities and violence against women. As such, the UN communications group partnered with the Lesotho chapter of the Media Institute of Southern Africa to capacitate media practitioners on responsible, quality and frequent media reporting on GBV. Insensitive and unethical media reporting of GBV has direct ramifications on how society understands the phenomenon and several violations in reporting have been observed in Lesotho.

The capacity-building initiative was convened through a collaborative approach, with over 60 participants from government, media, law enforcement and the health sector. The group took stock of the barriers to responsible reporting and gathering of information and explored solutions on issues affecting survivors, such as their safety and human rights, including their rights to dignity, confidentiality, protection from retribution or harm and access to justice.

The development of the Cooperation Framework in 2023 will build on these strategic partnerships and will be an opportunity for further deepening of the partnership and development cooperation with key stakeholders.

2.4 RESULTS OF THE UN WORKING MORE AND BETTER TOGETHER: UN COHERENCE, EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

2.4.1 The race to 2030: The 2022 Voluntary National Review

As part of the follow-up and review mechanism for the SDGs, member states are encouraged to conduct voluntary, regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and subnational levels to share experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned. The UN was honoured and humbled when the government requested support for the 2022 Voluntary National Review process.

Through the RCO, an inter-agency technical team of experts for five SDGs (1, 4, 5, 15 and 17) was set up to support the government through the MoDP's Department of Monitoring and Evaluation. The RCO mobilized funds from the agencies to support the process.

With the leadership of the MoDP and with the support of the Resident Coordinator, a joint UN–government team was established to take the assignment forward, from roadmap development to consultations and report writing. Intentional efforts were made in mobilization of key stakeholders from government, UN, civil society organizations, private sector and representatives of vulnerable groups during the consultations. To ensure the smooth running of the review process, the RCO facilitated weekly meetings with relevant stakeholders, led by the MoDP, to monitor progress.





The review process was consultative and aimed at ensuring inclusivity, drawing participation from various stakeholders. The stakeholders consulted included the national government, private sector, civil society organizations, youth, academia, parliament (the national assembly and senate), UN agencies, religious institutions, persons with disabilities and marginalized groups, such as herd boys. The review process was spearheaded by the MoDP with technical and financial support from UN agencies. A series of workshops was organized, drawing participation from all stakeholders to collect qualitative information on good practices and success stories.

The review process was also used to create awareness on the SDGs among the different stakeholders and strengthen coordination and collaborative engagement among partners. The review has helped identify challenges in the implementation of the SDGs. It also helped strengthen dialogues and partnerships with multiple stakeholders, as well as being useful for peer learning.

“We must integrate the SDGs in the development work we do on a daily basis; this will assist us in maintaining the 2030 Agenda as a key priority for Lesotho”, remarked the Prime Minister, Dr. Moeketsi Majoro, at the launch of the Voluntary National Review process.

The UN Resident Coordinator, Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, said: “In the process of interrogating the SDGs, we need to be truthful in what we have done and what still needs to be done. Let us make sure that as many of the Basotho people as possible are involved; no one must be left behind.”

2.4.2 The Transforming Education Summit

**INCLUSION AND LEAVE-
NO-ONE-BEHIND
PRINCIPLES WERE
FOSTERED BY TAKING
INTO CONSIDERATION
ALL MARGINALIZED
AND EXCLUDED GROUPS,
DECENTRALIZING
THE PROCESS, USING
INCLUSIVE METHODS
OF CONSULTATION AND
EMPLOYING ALL THE
OFFICIAL LANGUAGES.**

Ahead of the TES, the RCO brought together expertise from UN agencies to support the MoET. An inter-agency UN task team was constituted and coordinated by the RCO to ensure effective coordination, efficiency and effectiveness by UN Lesotho in support of the MoET in the transforming education process. The team, comprising UNICEF, UNFPA, UNAIDS and UNESCO, showed the effectiveness of working together in support of a common cause, as each had different areas of expertise. As UNESCO is a non-resident agency with only one national programme officer, the joint effort with UNICEF and the other agencies was a key factor in the success of the TES.

National ownership of the process was ensured, with the MoET leading the process through a joint government-UN national task team. The UN supported the government in developing the tools for the consultations and the methodology of the consultations.

Inclusion and leave-no-one-behind principles were fostered by taking into consideration all marginalized and excluded groups, decentralizing the process, using inclusive methods of consultation and employing all the official languages. Disadvantaged, marginalized and excluded groups, including orphaned and vulnerable children, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ communities and non-formal education service providers representing groups such as herd boys, teenage mothers, domestic workers, street children and sex workers were consulted. The emphasis on young people as agents of change was made

possible by the significant representation of diverse children, adolescents and young adults through various organizational structures, including forums, associations and networks. National consultations and dialogues on the TES were undertaken at national, subnational (district, community and school levels), in urban and rural regions, across the lowlands and mountains and in all 10 administrative districts of the country, conducted in both English and Sesotho (the local language).

High-level advocacy of the findings of the consultations was ensured with a high-level stakeholder meeting that was led by the MoET and held with the participation of government officials, the private sector, civil society, representatives of key populations and marginalized groups, development partners and the UN. The findings were shared and validated with the adoption of the National Statement of Commitment on Transforming Education.

For continuity and sustainability, the TES was linked with Education Plus. Therefore, the 2022 Common Country Analysis Report goes beyond the TES and is a key input into the Common Country Analysis that was completed in 2022, and which will inform the Cooperation Framework for the next five years. The consultations would have benefited from more time for in-depth engagement with the various stakeholders and affected groups (both formal and informal). The UN will continue to engage with the government, linking Education Plus and Transforming Education outcomes.

The UN communications group convened a TES watch party, which was attended by 70 young people from across the country to watch the summit as it livestreamed from the UN General Assembly in New York. During the watch party, young people had an opportunity to reflect on the discussions in the summit and many expressed appreciation that the perspectives of other young people were like theirs. “Young people need to be included in decision-making spaces, we need to be at the table when issues about us are discussed,” said Ayesha Kulile, an 18-year-old National University of Lesotho student.

Post-TES commitment – country progress

The government, through the MoET, has made remarkable progress in advancing the TES agenda, following TES follow-up guidance and support from the UN. Advocacy with key stakeholders at all levels, including with high-level political figures, continues. The MoET has revived the joint government–UN national TES task team to lead in advancing the TES agenda, and this has resulted in the identification of key priority areas.

As emphasized by the Prime Minister of Lesotho, Dr Moeketsi Majoro, in his Commitment introductory remarks, the absorption of youth in the workforce is a challenge resulting from skills mismatch.

The UN is currently supporting operationalization of the newly revised Curriculum Policy, which moves the education focus to skills development through three alternative pathways: vocational, technical and academic streams.

The UN is supporting the revival of the continuous professional development programme for pre- and in-service teachers which includes skills for teaching in the 21st Century. Technical support is further provided for accreditation

“THE EDUCATION RISK OF THE PRESENT CRISIS MIGHT TURN INTO A GENERATIONAL CATASTROPHE, ESPECIALLY FOR THE VULNERABLE AND MARGINALIZED GROUPS.”

**MINISTER OF
EDUCATION, MS.
MAMOOKHO PHIRI**



“FOCUS ON LEARNING AND ACCESS TO QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION. ENHANCE TEACHERS’ CAPACITY FOR LIFELONG LEARNING; ENSURE ADEQUATE FUNDING.”

CHIEF EDUCATION OFFICER FOR PRIMARY EDUCATION, MS. THUTO NTSEKHE-MOKHEHLE

standards, which have expanded the scope of higher education, including teacher training institutions.

A comprehensive learning strategy harnessing low- and high-tech solutions is being developed in collaboration with the MoET. This has the potential to transform classroom-centric teaching and learning to expand to multiple options for learners and will ensure learning continuity in all contexts.

The UN continues to advocate for the expansion of early childhood education, including resource mobilization. The UN was instrumental in securing a potential \$2.5 million through the innovative financing instrument of Global Partnership for Education in collaboration with the Roger Federer Foundation.

TES country consultations revealed that data continues to be an impediment to informed, targeted and effective programming in the country. The Commitment also stressed the importance of strengthened strategic information management in the education sector. The UN is providing support towards effective data collection, analysis and reporting through the Open Education Management Information System.

2.4.3 Transforming food systems

Transforming food systems has been recognized as central in efforts to achieve all 17 SDGs by 2030. Lesotho, like other nations, is committed to accelerate and deepen the transformative power of food systems in a manner aligned with the 2030 Agenda. The focus is increasingly centred on feeding growing populations in ways that (i) contribute to people’s nutrition, health and well-being; (ii) restore and protect nature; (iii) are climate-neutral; (iv) are adapted to local circumstances; and (v) provide decent jobs and inclusive economies. The UN has jointly supported the government in the follow-up to commitments from the Food Systems Summit and as outlined in the national framework for food systems. With the leadership of government, the UN, through the inter-agency team coordinated by the RCO, has supported strengthening of national food systems, resulting in the formulation of a national agricultural policy. A national irrigation policy has been developed and plans to rehabilitate the old irrigation schemes are under way. A ‘one country, one priority crop’ model has been prepared and will be launched for adoption where seed potato production is a priority, focusing on the highlands of the country. Development of value addition and processing of wool and mohair is under way and the Ministry of Agriculture’s Department of Agricultural Research is earmarked in partnership with the Government of Angola as a centre of excellence on horticultural production under the Southern African Development Community regional project.

The national response does not yet cover all thematic areas related to food systems, such as climate-change impact, utilization, consumption and food loss (waste) and food security amidst the looming food crisis. Coordination and harmonization of the multisectoral approach to planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of food-systems-related programmes needs further strengthening. Compounding this, the country is also highly vulnerable to climate-related shocks such as drought and ecosystem degradation stemming



from unsustainable land management practices, which further impede crop quality and yields.

Taking cognizance of the challenges stipulated above, it becomes inevitable that a strategic approach should be undertaken for Lesotho food system transformation, which requires inclusive multi-stakeholder collaboration. This will be prioritized in 2023 by the UN.

2.4.4 Coordinating UN, civil society and government efforts to address Lesotho's human rights treaty reporting backlog

With Lesotho's impressive record of ratification of international and regional human rights treaties, the issue that needed to be addressed was the reporting backlog. Through its convening function, the RCO, leveraging the senior human rights adviser of OHCHR who is embedded in the RCO, has made strides towards ensuring that citizens enjoy the provisions of the several human rights treaties that Lesotho is party to through regular and periodic reporting. By not reporting regularly, Lesotho misses the opportunity to showcase measures that have been taken to promote and protect the enjoyment of human rights by citizens. Treaty bodies promote a two-way interaction with the 2030 Agenda. The significant amount of information relating to the implementation of treaties gathered through the reporting process is closely related to the implementation of the SDGs, and therefore provides a ready-made source of data to help track progress on SDG implementation.

With UN support, the government realized that a more comprehensive, sustainable and efficient approach to reporting and follow-up is needed, given the demands not only of treaty bodies but also of the Human Rights



Council's Universal Periodic Review, visits by special procedure mandate-holders and engagement with regional human rights mechanisms. As a result, the government set up a national mechanism for reporting and follow-up. This government structure is responsible for coordinating engagement with all human rights mechanisms, including reporting and implementation of recommendations.

Through the RCO's coordination and convening role, the interministerial mechanism for reporting and follow-up has been capacitated and a draft report under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women has been prepared and is pending Cabinet clearance to be submitted. A task team to collect data for reporting under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities has been trained and government will use the information collected to report on the rights of persons with disabilities.

To strengthen civil society participation in advocacy for human rights reporting and follow-up, the UN in Lesotho has trained civil society on shadow reporting. Shadow reporting is an important tool for civil society to strengthen national human rights systems.

TO **STRENGTHEN CIVIL SOCIETY PARTICIPATION** IN ADVOCACY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS REPORTING AND FOLLOW-UP, THE UN IN LESOTHO HAS **TRAINED CIVIL SOCIETY ON SHADOW REPORTING.**

2.4.5 Leaving no one behind: Improving inclusion of persons with disabilities in development processes

In pursuit of the principle of 'leaving no one behind' and implementation of the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy and informed by the results of the study on the impact of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities, the RCO coordinated disability-inclusive initiatives aimed at improving the living conditions of persons with disabilities by ensuring that they participate in development processes and enjoy benefits that accrue from such processes on an equal basis with their non-disabled counterparts.

The government enacted the Persons with Disabilities Equity Act, 2021. This is the most important milestone since the country ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2008. The Persons with Disabilities Equity Act is intended to make a substantial difference to the living conditions of persons with disabilities in Lesotho. It promotes the participation of persons with disabilities in development processes and equal access to national services, including access to the disability grant.

Notable results include the following:

- The inclusion of persons with disabilities as representatives in important decision-making structures such as the National Reforms Authority and Lesotho National COVID-19 Secretariat to ensure disability inclusion. The prime minister further appointed a person with a disability to advise his office on disability inclusion.
- The RCO mobilized seed funding from the United Nations Partnership on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities to implement the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy. The funding is being used to improve the physical accessibility of UN House and information and communications technology facilities, as well as accessibility of UN recruitment procedures

to enhance participation of persons with disabilities. The office hired a UN volunteer with a disability to coordinate the disability inclusion project and conduct a UN system disability accessibility assessment. This will provide key recommendations to make the systems, office space and programmes disability inclusive. The volunteer works with the UNCT disability focal point to help the entire UN system to mainstream disability inclusion in UN work. The expected results are that UN House will have a universal design to accommodate persons with disabilities and more persons with disabilities will apply for jobs in the UN system. The priority for 2023 is to mobilize resources for implementation of the recommendations from the report. Continuous updates and monitoring are taking place.

2.4.6 Greening the Blue initiative

In pursuit of adopting a green agenda in line with Smart UN Facilities and the SDGs, UN Lesotho is transitioning towards green energy. Energy efficiency in buildings plays an important role in the mitigation of climate change and has numerous financial and social benefits. Globally, buildings account for about 40 percent of annual energy consumption and 30 percent of all energy-related greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, energy efficiency can make a meaningful impact on environmental sustainability.

UN Lesotho has taken important steps towards making UN House a sustainable building by employing measures to reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Grid consumption was reduced by more than 40 percent by changing lights to LEDs, installing motion sensors, reconfiguring the power supply system, replacing the existing air-conditioning system with an energy efficient system and installing a solar system.

The initial solar photovoltaic (PV) system installed through the UNDP Moonshot project has a total capacity of 35 kilowatt peak (kWp). The system will provide a stable energy supply for the Lesotho Country Office by covering around 28 percent of its energy demand and providing electricity supply of up to 54,669 kilowatt hours (kWh), and is expected to save 28.5 tonnes of CO₂ emissions yearly at a cost reduction of \$6,000 per year.

Following in the footsteps of UNDP, the UNCT has approved an additional 55 kWp solar PV system, which will generate a total of approximately 102,051 kWh of energy and save approximately 58.6 tonnes of CO₂ emissions yearly, covering an additional 32.8 percent of energy consumption and resulting in a cost reduction of \$8,816 per year.

By demonstrating the financial, environmental and social benefits, the project will incentivize others towards green energies.

THE INITIAL SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM WILL PROVIDE A STABLE ENERGY SUPPLY FOR THE LESOTHO COUNTRY OFFICE BY COVERING AROUND 28 PERCENT OF ITS ENERGY DEMAND AND PROVIDING ELECTRICITY SUPPLY OF UP TO 54,669 KILOWATT HOURS (KWH).



2.4.7 Briefing the new government

After the elections of 7 October 2022 and appointment of the new prime minister and government, the RCO coordinated the development of a briefing note by the UNCT for the new 2022 Government of Lesotho. The aim was to share the key development challenges with proposed measures towards development that the new government could take. In addition, the aim was to share with the government information on key priority areas that the UN has been working on and that would require action in the first 100 days of the new administration.

Eight priority areas have been identified based on the emerging issues of the NSDP II, UNDAF 2019–2023, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the findings of the Lesotho Vulnerable Assessment Committee, as well as on socioeconomic indicators.

At the 2022 UNCT retreat, this briefing was presented to government to share the key findings from the draft 2022 Common Country Analysis and engage with high-level government officials, including the Minister of Finance and Development Planning and Minister of Foreign Affairs, and key development partners.

2.5 EVALUATION AND LESSONS LEARNED

The UNCT, in collaboration with the government, commissioned an evaluation of the UNDAF 2019–2023 in August 2022. This was an independent and participatory evaluation to contribute to transparency, accountability and learning on UN cooperation with the government. The UNDAF evaluation was undertaken in accordance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework evaluation norms and standards; the OECD/DAC evaluation principles; and United Nations Evaluation Group guidelines for integration of human rights and gender into evaluations. The evaluation applied a mixed methods strategy using a theory-based evaluation design to assess the extent to which UN support to Lesotho achieved its outputs and contributed to national outcomes as outlined in the UNDAF results framework; and considering the UNDAF key assumptions. The evaluation adopted a participatory approach where different stakeholders were involved in different stages of the evaluation process, and it also adopted a gender and human rights responsive approach in which fair gender distribution was considered in stakeholder mapping. A subquestion on gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights integration across all outcomes and questions on gender and human rights were included in data-collection tools to elicit information on gender equality, women's empowerment and human rights.

A combination of focus group discussions and key informant interviews was used to solicit data from the participants in selected districts who had been identified in consultation with the evaluation management team. The purpose of collecting data from district-level stakeholders was to gain insights on how different UN agencies supported national priorities at the district and local levels.

Key findings

- Although there was no specific gender analysis done, UNDAF was informed by the gender analysis incorporated in the Common Country Assessment. This analysis was not rigorous enough for promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment.
- The UNDAF has played a reduced role in strengthening the UN system positioning and partnerships.
- The UNDAF has not adequately promoted complementarity, harmonization and coordination with government, private sector and civil society organizations, but individual UN agencies continue to engage with their respective partners.
- The reporting on UNDAF results did not occur, leading to the UN lacking data to inform decision-making and weakening accountability.
- The evaluation could not quantify the performance of UNDAF and whether expected change at outcome level occurred due to the lack of data for most of the outcome and output indicators.
- UNDAF has facilitated synergies and collaboration among UN agencies in joint planning and reporting on their programmes but less so in implementation for programmes supported at both national and district levels. Programmatic synergies between non-resident and resident agencies are also limited.
- Inter-agency coordination mechanisms, consistent monitoring and reporting and deliberate inter-agency efforts to support government in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment are lacking.
- Data on the human rights marker are not analysed and the approach for operationalizing integration and coordination of human rights issues across UNDAF outcomes is lacking.
- The UN approached environment sustainability from a sectoral perspective. There is limited integration of environmental sustainability as a cross-cutting theme.
- With regard to resource mobilization, operationalization of the strategy focused on traditional tools (joint proposals) and there is no evidence that other tools outlined in the strategy were implemented.
- The Operations Management Team, which leads internal UN coordination, is under-resourced and members have inadequate skills and appreciation of Operations Management Team roles.
- The RCO has contributed to improvement of internal coordination among UN agencies, but this has not gone far enough to realize joint programming; resource mobilization; improved coordination to ensure that cross-cutting issues are integrated across the outcome results groups; and improved coordination with non-resident agencies.
- The Joint Steering Committee, as a key platform for UN-government coordination of UNDAF, has not been functioning optimally. This is partly due to low awareness about the UNDAF at the highest level of government, frequent leadership changes and the long absence of a Resident Coordinator in Lesotho.

UNDAF HAS FACILITATED SYNERGIES AND COLLABORATION AMONG UN AGENCIES IN JOINT PLANNING AND REPORTING ON THEIR PROGRAMMES BUT LESS SO IN IMPLEMENTATION FOR PROGRAMMES SUPPORTED AT BOTH NATIONAL AND DISTRICT LEVELS.



THE **DESIGN** OF THE
UNDAF WAS **RESPONSIVE**
TO THE **NEEDS** AND
PRIORITIES OF **LESOTHO**
AS **ARTICULATED** IN
THE **NSDP II**, BUT IT
WAS **NOT ADEQUATELY**
RESPONSIVE TO **GENDER**
DIMENSIONS AND THE
NEEDS OF **MARGINALIZED**
AND **EXCLUDED**
COMMUNITIES.

Lessons learned

- The design of the UNDAF was responsive to the needs and priorities of Lesotho as articulated in the NSDP II, but it was not adequately responsive to gender dimensions and the needs of marginalized and excluded communities.
- Individual UN agencies complement and harmonize their programmes with government sector plans and other development partners' support, but UNDAF coordination structures played a lesser role in harmonizing UN collective response with government and even less so with civil society organizations and the private sector.
- Neither the UN nor the government has adequately operationalized results-based management practices, largely due to gaps in data completeness and quality. A large percentage (77 percent) of the UNDAF outcome indicators lacked data.
- Gender equality, women's empowerment, human rights and environmental sustainability have been integrated into UNDAF to varying degrees but monitoring and coordination of these cross-cutting themes is lacking.
- UNDAF coordination structures are, to a large extent, fit for purpose and have functioned well with meetings held regularly and the outcome results groups executing their mandates. The RCO is facilitating these structures and overall UNDAF coordination adequately. However, there are limited synergies among UN agency programmes at implementation level, gaps in coordination of non-resident agencies, and limited joint programme and joint resource mobilization.
- The UNDAF was supported by a common budgetary framework and a resource mobilization and partnership strategy, but besides humanitarian emergency response, most resource mobilization efforts have not been successful.
- Sustainability of UNDAF results depends on the assumption that government ownership, institutional capacity and accountability are enhanced and financing improved. These assumptions can be realized if there is overall political will.

2.6 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

2.6.1 Financial overview

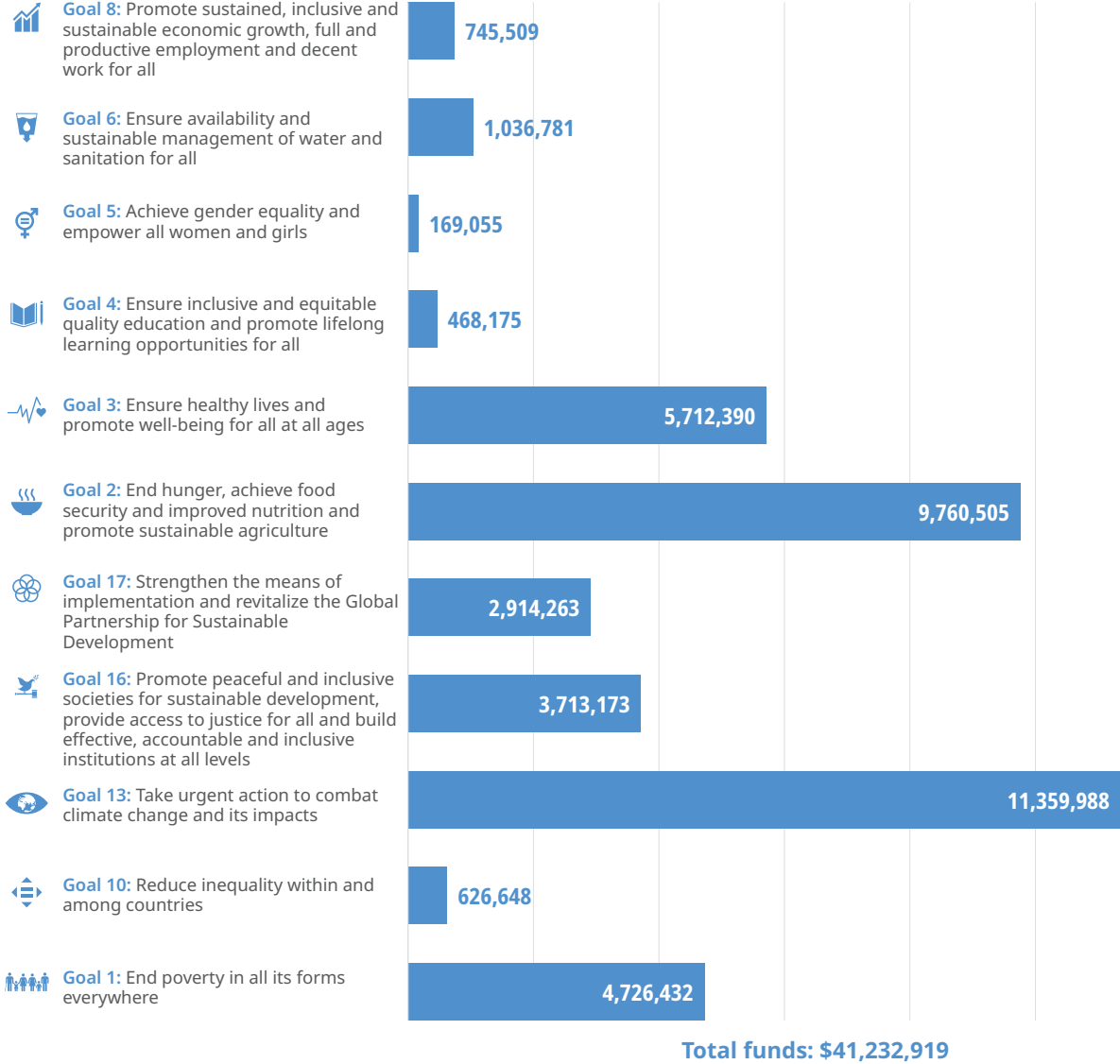


Figure 3: Total funds received by SDG in 2022, US\$

Source: Lesotho Ministry of Development Planning (n.d). *Portfolio Performance Report 2022*.



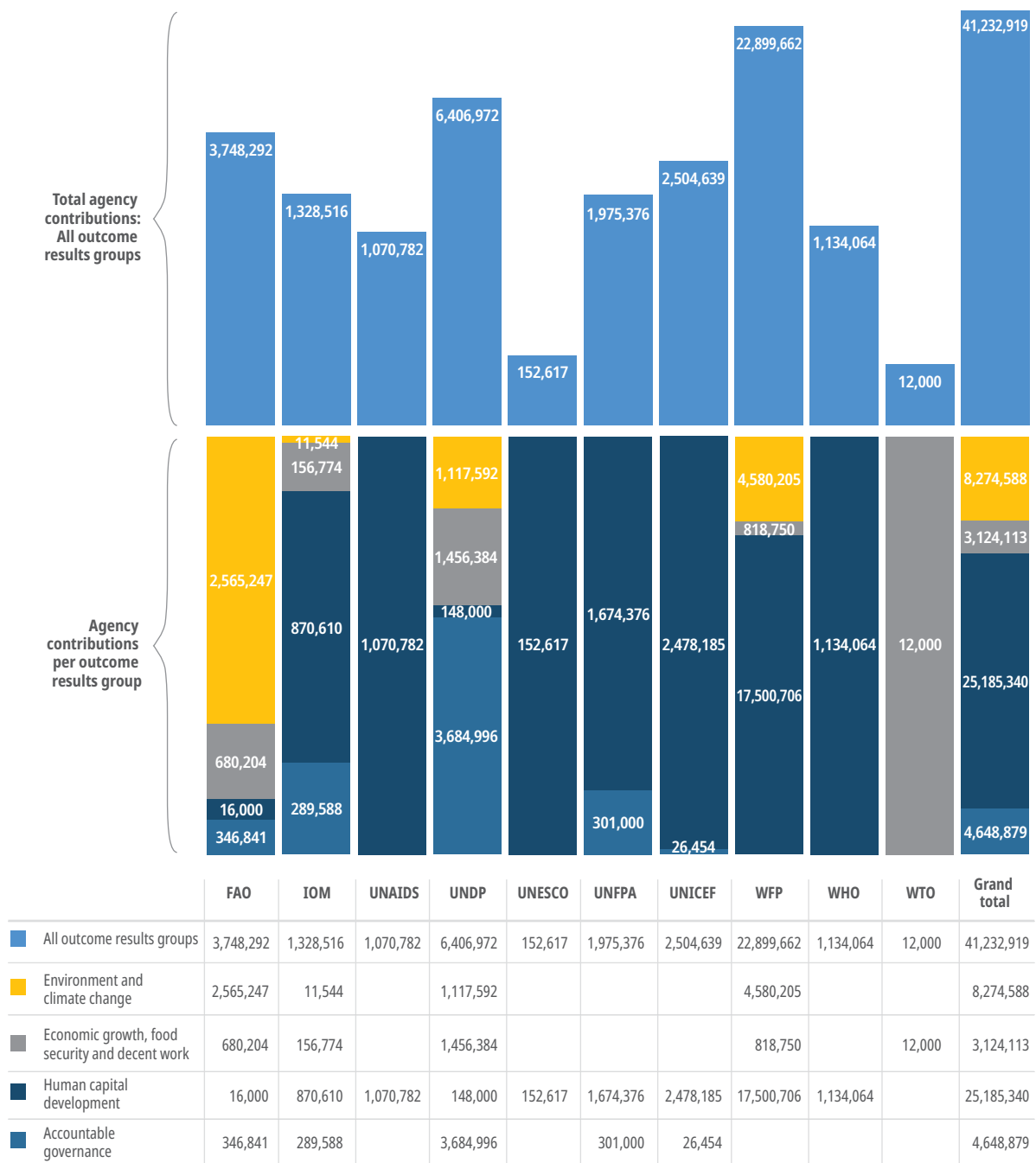


Figure 4: Agency contributions by outcome results group, 2022

Source: Lesotho Ministry of Development Planning (n.d). *Portfolio Performance Report 2022*.

2.6.2 Resource mobilization

In 2022, the UNCT undertook joint resource mobilization for the key challenges affecting the country, including food insecurity, GBV and youth employment. Table 2 on page 63 depicts the joint programmes implemented in 2022.

Table 2: Inter-agency joint programmes in 2022

Joint programme title	Project description	Participating agencies	Budget (\$)	Status
Joint Programme on Economic and Financial Management Integration for the Achievement of the SDGs	Support the government to establish a functional and sustainable integrated planning and Public Finance Management ecosystem that contributes to the accelerated achievement of the SDG targets and NSDP II and to achieve private sector-led economic growth and employment creation by facilitating a conducive policy environment, strengthening PFM processes and providing platforms for dialogue-generating evidence for private–public collaboration.	UNICEF, IOM and UNDP	1,000,000	Ongoing, ending March 2023
Joint SDG Fund (development emergency modality)	Support government with the design and implementation of integrated interventions to build resilient, efficient and inclusive food systems that contribute to increased food production. The interventions will contribute to Lesotho having sustainable and inclusive domestic food production and supply chains that enable participation of smallholder farmers and medium, small and micro enterprises in domestic and regional markets, mitigate the high cost of food and mobilize private sector investment.	FAO, UNCTAD, UNDP and WFP	300,000	Ongoing, ending April 2023
Disability Inclusion Seed Fund	Support systematic implementation of United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy across programmes and operations, including measures related to COVID-19 recovery in approximately 15 countries. The initiative builds on the successful first phase targeted roll-out of the fund’s scorecard in 10 countries during 2020–2021. Actions undertaken through this initiative will also complement the roll-out of the Business Operations Strategy 2.0, particularly the Bureau of Statistics’ disability-inclusive common services. The initiative also seeks to build greater engagement and collaboration between the UNCT and organizations of persons with disabilities and coherence with complementary country-level initiatives, such as system-wide strategies on gender and youth.	RCO and Operations Management Team	70,000	Ongoing, ending April 2023
Start-up funds for the establishment of the Lesotho Food Systems Lab to strengthen capacity of smallholder farmers for resilient and sustainable food systems	Contribute to SDG 2 that aims at ending hunger, achieving food security and improving nutrition and promoting sustainable agriculture. The project also addresses four other SDGs, namely SDG 1 (end poverty in all its forms everywhere); SDG 3 (healthy lives and promotion of well-being for all at all ages); SDG 5 (gender equality and empower all women and girls); and SDG 15 (protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss). The project aims to leverage the power of nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive interventions to achieve all 17 SDGs.	FAO and WFP	35,000	Ongoing, ending February 2024



Joint programme title	Project description	Participating agencies	Budget (\$)	Status
Alleviating poverty through expansion of deciduous fruit production in Lesotho	<p>The objective of this project is to provide support for scaling commercial deciduous fruit farming in Lesotho, building on the experience of the current pilot farms and addressing gaps in the value chain in access to suitable land, infrastructure, extension services, skills, finance and markets while promoting climate-smart agricultural practices.</p> <p>The possible areas of support (a key component of this application) include a technical assistance and training programme that can be rolled out to competitively selected groups of eligible farmers (with viable plot sizes and other criteria, prioritizing women and youth). These farmers could be provided with training and technical expertise to develop and implement business plans that meet the requirements of commercial financing partners, such as Postbank, which could be a potential partner for the implementation of this activity.</p>	UNDP, FAO and WFP	950,000	Ongoing, ending December 2024





Based on the UNDAF Common Budgetary Framework and the Joint UNCT Partnerships and Resource Mobilization Strategy, funding for UNDAF has come from multiple sources, including multilateral institutions, bilateral missions, international non-governmental organizations and foundations. Joint funding has mostly come from the resources mobilized by the UN Headquarters through the UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund. According to the Development Cooperation Report 2021/22, between April 2021 and March 2022, the UN mobilized \$42,910,000 (Figure 5).¹¹ This is an increase of \$2,610,000, from \$40,300,000 in 2020/21). Accumulative resources mobilized for UNDAF sit at \$198,980,000 against the \$256,486,259 required for the full cycle of UNDAF.

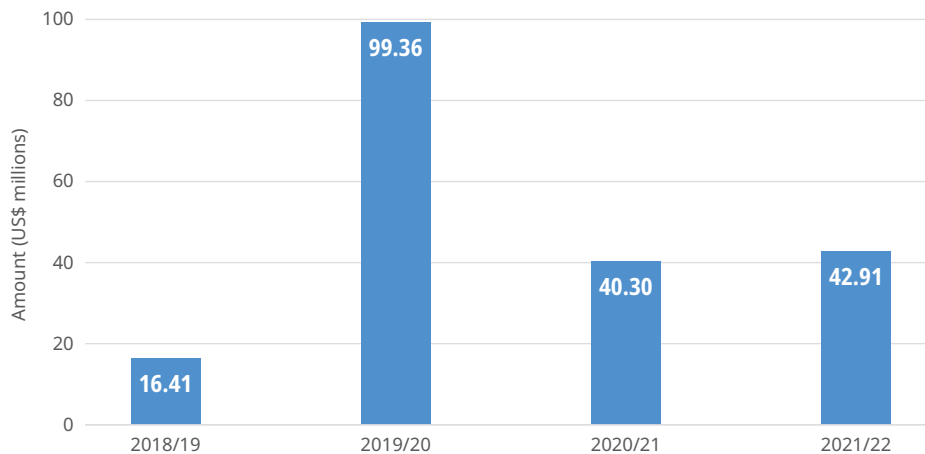


Figure 5: Funding mobilized for UNDAF, 2018/19–2021/22

Lesotho Ministry of Development Planning (n.d). *Portfolio Performance Report 2022*.

The UN has leveraged very little private funding at the country level. However, it is making inroads into that space. As a result of UN engagement with the private sector on how the latter could contribute meaningfully to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a few UN agencies have formed partnerships with private companies in retail, communications, banking, etc. The private sector is expressing great interest in moving away from once-off philanthropic charity engagements with society to contributing meaningfully to sustainable development through social corporate responsibility with emphasis on the need to create value that is shared by companies and society.

In the event of declining financial flows to developing countries from the Official Development Assistance and other sources, it will be necessary for all partners in Lesotho, including donors, government and private sector companies to establish a country-level pooled funding mechanism to promote efficiency, share risk and experience real development impact.

¹¹ Lesotho Ministry of Development Planning (n.d). *Portfolio Performance Report 2022*.





CHAPTER 3: UNCT KEY FOCUS FOR NEXT YEAR

The existing five-year UNDAF expires in 2023. Therefore, the UNCT in Lesotho, comprising both resident and non-resident agencies, in consultation with the Government of Lesotho, has launched and will focus on the process to develop the new United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Lesotho.

The following are the key strategic programmatic priorities per UNDAF outcome area.

OUTCOME 1

By 2023, government and non-governmental institutions deliver their mandates and uphold good governance, rule of law and human rights, with all people having improved access to justice and participating in social and political decision-making processes in a peaceful environment

- *Security sector reforms:* Focus on the human-rights-based approach, migration and displacement, intelligence-led immigration, GBV, border management, intelligence training, community security and security sector oversight.
- *Elections:* Develop a strategic plan for elections (skills audit, voter registration and digital disaster recovery).
- *Reform:* Enact the Omnibus Bill and establish a post-National Reforms Authority structure.
- *Public sector:* Restructure the public sector to maximize the efficiency of the new ministerial structure.
- *Ministry of Gender:* Scale the gender audit to other ministries and undertake gender budgeting in pilot ministries.
- *Modernize the national statistical system:* Improve statistics from administrative and non-traditional sources.
- *Public Financial Management:* MTEF and national accounting on a quarterly basis.
- *Accountability:* Focus on asset management and recovery, national anti-corruption strategy, youth and integrity awareness-raising.

OUTCOME 2

By 2023, all people, particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from gender-responsive social policies and programmes for the sustainable and equitable realization of their rights

- Support resource mobilization through technical assistance to the country's funding application to the Global Fund to maximize investments to focus on high-impact interventions that will help achieve HIV and tuberculosis targets.
- Support standardization of the outreach service delivery package based on the updated essential health service package.
- Enhance stakeholder capacities on inspection of fortified foods and train diverse stakeholders on food fortification guidelines.
- Use the multi-drug resistant tuberculosis results to build capacity for improved quality of care for women during pregnancy and childbirth and after delivery.
- Scale up long-term family planning methods, including self-care methods, to prevent unintended pregnancies and abortions.
- Support implementation of the prime minister's commitment on the transformation of education across all levels.
- Support initiatives to roll out the Counter Domestic Violence Act and harmonize widows' rights laws with different service providers.
- Continue technical assistance to the government's nutrition sector under the coordination of the Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office to upscale evidence-based nutrition interventions.

OUTCOME 3.1

By 2023, government and private sector increase opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, improved food security and decent jobs

- Support the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to develop an agricultural local purchase policy and strategy to reduce barriers to access of formal market outlets and integrate farmers into food value chains sustainably.
- Support the government, through the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, to undertake market assessment and value chain analysis for drought-resistant crops, high-value trees, medicinal herbs and indigenous vegetables and shrubs.
- Support the Ministry of Trade and Industry to build the capacities of the local private sector and stakeholders to enhance preparedness for African Continental Free Trade Area accession.
- Advance digital learning and skills for adolescent boys and girls.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for learning continuity and resilient education.





- Support the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security to pilot an aggregator model on selected agriculture commodities, working with the private sector (WFP, FAO and UNDP).
- Implement post-harvest loss study recommendations and promote planting of drought-resistant crops, high-value trees, medicinal herbs and indigenous vegetables and shrubs as part of nutrition-sensitive food production and livelihood improvement for food-insecure and vulnerable groups.

OUTCOME 3.2

By 2023, the people of Lesotho use natural resources in a more sustainable manner and the marginalized and most vulnerable are increasingly resilient

- Support completion of remaining five mini-grids and reticulation of villages to facilitate electrification of households.
- Promote production and use of energy, including electricity generated from mini-grids, to ensure that access to energy drives the local economy and improves associated livelihoods.
- Mobilize resources to replicate and scale up provision of clean energy to rural communities.
- Develop institutional capacities at national, district and local levels for governance of natural resources.
- Support stakeholders in selected areas to develop and implement land management plans.
- Support communities in project areas to protect wetlands, construct water harvesting structures and restore the productivity of rangelands.
- Promote climate-smart agriculture and natural resources management.
- Develop technical and operational capacities for surveillance of plant pests and animal diseases.
- Develop capacities for early warning systems and make early warning information more accessible and usable to farming communities and other local-level actors.

