



UNITED NATIONS  
LESOTHO



# ANNUAL RESULTS REPORT



# 2024





*Annual Results Report 2024*

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# Foreword

## ***KHOTSONG***

2024 was a defining year for the Kingdom of Lesotho as it celebrated 200 years since its founding. It was also the year that marked the beginning of the implementation of the first year of the 2024–2028 United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework for Lesotho.

It is with great humility that I present our annual results report for 2024, a comprehensive narrative of the first year of the Cooperation Framework in this 200th year honouring Lesotho's 'Birth, Reflection, Revival' and rich history. It is my hope that the report captures some of our collective efforts, investments, achievements and lessons learned during 2024, while conveying the often less tangible results from a year spent reflecting on and living according to the values – peace, unity and inclusion – of the founder of the Kingdom of Lesotho, King Moshoeshoe I.

As you will read in the report, the UN invested in establishing the structures and systems necessary for the implementation of the Cooperation Framework. These will provide consolidated mechanisms for planning and accountability through engagement with multiple stakeholders. Our programmes contributed to supporting the government in building a transparent, accountable and inclusive governance system in Lesotho, including contributing to the government's prioritization of digital transformation and youth empowerment.

When the country faced challenges posed by climate change and food insecurity, we responded with urgency to save lives and mitigate against the prolonged risk of food insecurity that impacted hundreds of thousands of households. Working as One UN and with the government, we explored innovative approaches to build resilience and disaster preparedness so that communities can adapt to climate-related challenges.





The UN remained committed to contributing to the well-being and economic development of Basotho through improved health-service delivery, a comprehensive HIV response, a transformed education system and the increased capacity of young people. While maternal and neonatal mortality continued to be of concern, with 566 deaths in every 100,000 live births, and violence against women and girls continued unabated, the UN in Lesotho advocated with government for investment and interventions through private-public partnerships, including with civil society, thereby ensuring a whole society approach to creating a safer world for women and children.

As we move forward, the UN remains steadfast in our commitment to supporting Lesotho's development priorities. The lessons learned from this first year of implementing the Cooperation Framework and the principles of this nation's founding father will guide our efforts to enhance coordination, resource

mobilization and community engagement. We will continue to accompany the government and Basotho to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, advocate for policy updates, promote sustainable livelihoods and foster private sector engagement to ensure that the benefits of development reach all corners of Lesotho – *Ka Lebelo La Ntsoekhe!*

In closing, I wish to extend my gratitude to the Government of Lesotho, development partners, civil society organizations, the private sector and Basotho for trusting the UN in Lesotho to add value to the Kingdom's long journey towards *Khotso Pula le Nala!*

*Re le United Nations rea leboha likhomo!*

**Amanda Khozi Mukwashi**  
United Nations Resident Coordinator, Lesotho



# Abbreviations and acronyms

<b>AfCFTA</b>	African Continental Free Trade Area
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>GBV</b>	gender-based violence
<b>GIZ</b>	German International Cooperation Society
<b>Global Fund</b>	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
<b>IFAD</b>	International Fund for Agricultural Development
<b>IIAG</b>	Ibrahim Index of African Governance
<b>ILO</b>	International Labour Organization
<b>ICT</b>	information and communication technology
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>LoCAL</b>	Local Climate Adaptive Living
<b>NSDP</b>	National Strategic Development Plan
<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>OHCHR</b>	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
<b>PCT</b>	Programme Coherence Team
<b>PEPFAR</b>	United States' President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
<b>PSEA</b>	prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
<b>RCO</b>	Resident Coordinator's Office
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>STEAM</b>	science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNAIDS</b>	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
<b>UNCDF</b>	United Nations Capital Development Fund
<b>UNCG</b>	United Nations Communication Group
<b>UNCT</b>	United Nations Country Team
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNESCO</b>	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNGA</b>	United Nations General Assembly
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>UN Women</b>	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
<b>US\$</b>	United States dollar
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization



# The United Nations Country Team in Lesotho

## UNITED NATIONS LESOTHO AGENCIES, FUNDS AND PROGRAMMES

### Resident



Food and Agriculture Organization  
of the United Nations



IOM  
UN MIGRATION



UNAIDS



unicef  
for every child



World Health  
Organization

### Non-resident



International  
Trade  
Centre



OCHA



United Nations  
Economic Commission  
for Africa



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UN  
environment  
programme

UN HABITAT  
FOR A BETTER URBAN FUTURE



UNODC  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime



UN  
VOLUNTEERS



UNWTO  
World Tourism Organization



WORLD TRADE  
ORGANIZATION





## PARTNERS DRIVING CHANGE WITH THE UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY TEAM

### Government ministries

- Agriculture, Nutrition and Food Security
- Education and Training
- Environment and Forestry
- Finance and Development Planning
- Foreign Affairs and International Relations
- Gender, Youth and Social Development
- Health
- Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation
- Law and Justice
- Labour and Employment
- Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police
- Natural Resources
- Public Service
- Public Works and Transport
- Tourism, Sports, Arts and Culture
- Trade, Industry and Small Business Development

### Private sector organizations and companies

- Association of Lesotho Employers and Business
- Econet Telecom Lesotho
- First National Bank
- Lesotho Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Lesotho Textile Exporters Association
- One Power Solar Light
- Private Sector Foundation
- Standard Lesotho Bank
- Vodacom Lesotho

### Key funding partners

- Adaptation Fund
- British High Commission
- Central Emergency Response Fund
- Chinese Embassy
- European Embassy
- GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance
- German International Cooperation Society (GIZ)
- Global Environment Facility
- Government of Japan
- Government of Sweden
- Government of Switzerland
- Government of the United States of America
- Swedish International Development Agency
- World Bank

### Civil society organizations

- Beautiful Dream Society
- Caritas Lesotho
- Catholic Relief Services
- Democracy Works Foundation
- Help Lesotho
- Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organizations
- Lesotho Federation of Organizations of the Disabled
- Lesotho Federation of Trade Unions
- Lesotho Labour Council
- Lesotho Labour Federation
- Lesotho Trade Union Congress
- Lesotho National Farmers Union
- Lesotho National Wool and Mohair Growers Association
- Rural Self-Help Development Association
- Lesotho Potato Association
- Lesotho Red Cross Society
- Love Justice International
- Migrant Workers Association
- Skillshare International
- Technologies for Economic Development
- World Vision Lesotho



# Development in Lesotho: A snapshot



## POPULATION

**2.1 million** people<sup>1</sup>



## ECONOMY

**2.79%** economic growth<sup>2</sup>

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**6.7%** inflation rate<sup>3</sup>

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**US\$1,1160** gross national  
income per capita<sup>4</sup>

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**24.8%** unemployment of youth  
(aged 15–24 years)<sup>5</sup>

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**54.7%** people living below low-middle  
income poverty line (US\$3.65)<sup>6</sup>

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**44.9** Gini index<sup>7</sup>

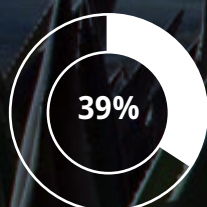




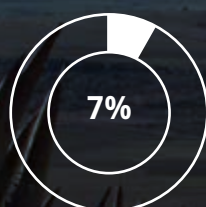
## NUTRITION AND FOOD SECURITY

**22% of the population** (335,000 people) experience highly acute food insecurity<sup>8</sup>

Children under 5 years who are malnourished:<sup>9</sup>



stunted



overweight



wasted



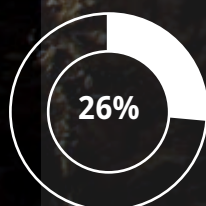
## GENDER INEQUALITY<sup>10</sup>

**Literacy rates:** female: **98%**, male: **89%**

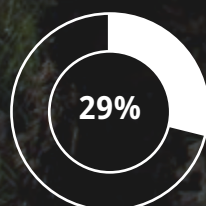
**Employment:** In the last 12 months, **52% of married women** were employed vs **80% of married men**

**Property ownership:** **23%** of men own a home jointly or solely, while **28%** of home ownership is with women

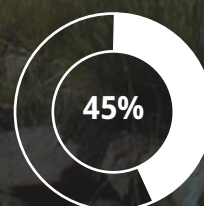
**Violence:** **41% of women** (aged 15–49 years) reported experiencing at least **one form of violence** in the last 12 months



of these women sought help



did not seek help but told someone



neither sought help nor told anyone

**69%**

of women make decisions about their own sexual and reproductive health rights





## MATERNAL AND INFANT MORTALITY<sup>11</sup>

Deaths per 100,000 live births:

MATERNAL  
MORTALITY

**530**

UNDER-FIVE  
MORTALITY

**54**

INFANT  
MORTALITY

**39**

NEONATAL  
MORTALITY

**26**



Antiretroviral  
therapy  
access:  
**241,462**  
(up 156%  
from 2010)

## HIV/AIDS<sup>12</sup>

**271,396 people are living with HIV/AIDS**

AGED 0–4 YEARS

**6,479**

AGED 10–19 YEARS

**9,963**

AGED 15–24 YEARS

**19,627**

**Progress towards 95-95-95 targets:**

Of those living with HIV/AIDS:

**95%**

know their status

**94%**

of those who know their  
status are on treatment

**99%**

of those on treatment  
are virally suppressed



## UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE<sup>13</sup>

Despite progress made, Lesotho's **universal healthcare index remains low at 53** (2021), which is below the global average of 68

1 Bureau of Statistics, 2019

2 International Monetary Fund, 2024

3 Ibid.

4 World Bank, n.d.

5 International Labour Organization, n.d.

6 World Bank Group, n.d.-c

7 World Bank Group, n.d.-b

8 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification, 2025

9 Ministry of Health and ICF, 2024b

10 Ministry of Health and ICF, 2024a

11 Ministry of Health and ICF, 2024b

12 UNAIDS, n.d.

13 World Bank Group, n.d.-a







# Chapter 1:

## Key developments in country and regional context

The localization of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) within the National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP II) has enabled Lesotho to focus on economic growth, social transformation, infrastructure development, good governance and accountability, while addressing gender equality, inclusion, the environment and climate change. The goal is to shift towards a production- and export-driven economy through agriculture, manufacturing, mining and tourism.

Recognizing the need for a skilled and healthy workforce, the government invested in youth, education and health programmes to accelerate demographic change. Energy, water, transport and information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure were prioritized as key enablers of economic transformation. Additionally, efforts to strengthen governance, improve institutional effectiveness and promote citizen participation were central to the 2024 agenda.

To foster an inclusive and just society, various gender equality and social protection programmes were implemented. However, despite these efforts, progress in achieving the SDGs remains slow.

### LESOTHO'S SDG PROGRESS

**SDG index score:** 55.5 in 2024 vs 54.9 in 2023

**Country ranking:** 144 (out of 167 countries assessed) in 2024 vs 143 (out of 166 countries assessed) in 2023

**SDGs on track:** 1 (SDG 13)

**SDGs showing improvement:** 3 (SDGs 5, 15 and 17)

**SDGs at risk of being missed:** 11



Source: Sachs and others, 2024





## ECONOMIC RESILIENCE AND CHALLENGES

In 2024, economic growth in southern Africa was estimated at 1.8 percent and projected to pick up gradually, with rates of 2.2 percent in 2025 and 2.5 percent in 2026 (United Nations, 2025). Gross domestic product growth was projected to reach 2.79 percent in 2024, driven by government spending; 3 percent growth in the private sector; 5 percent expansion in the finance sector; and contributions from key sectors such as agriculture, which contributed less than 5 percent to gross domestic product, partly due to recurring droughts (ibid.). The country's economy exhibits limited diversification, with the industrial and services sectors contributing the largest shares of gross domestic product at 30 percent and 51 percent, respectively. The Lesotho Highlands Water Project contributed a significant amount of approximately 100 million United States dollars (US\$) in water sales to the fiscus (Minister of Finance and Development Planning, 2022, 2023 and 2024). However, significant structural challenges – including high unemployment rates, particularly among

youth, a heavy reliance on external financing and limited diversification in economic activities – remained.

Resource generation was driven primarily by tax revenue, which was the backbone of Lesotho's domestic revenue, exhibiting a general upward trajectory. Starting at 7,528.9 million maloti in 2018/19, tax revenue saw fluctuations but ultimately reached 9,741.2 million maloti by 2023/24. The sharp increase from 8,433.6 million maloti in 2022/23 to 9,741.2 million maloti in 2023/24 reflects substantial year-on-year growth, which may be a result of targeted tax policy reforms or economic growth that has broadened the tax base. The overall fiscal balance registered a surplus of 5.2 percent of gross domestic product in 2024, following restrained public expenditure. Despite increased revenue and economic growth, progress on the SDGs remained slow, as a significant portion of domestic revenue is allocated to recurrent expenditure rather than development investment.





CLIMATE IMPACTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION HAVE IMPACTED LAND, WETLANDS AND GRAZING LANDS. THIS IN TURN HAS EXACERBATED FOOD INSECURITY AND RURAL-TO-URBAN MIGRATION, FURTHER STRAINING ALREADY FRAGILE SYSTEMS IN LESOTHO.

### CLIMATE RESILIENCE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

Climate impacts and environmental degradation have impacted land, wetlands and grazing lands. This in turn has exacerbated food insecurity and rural-to-urban migration, further straining already fragile systems in Lesotho. The urgent need for climate adaptation measures, including sustainable water management, climate-resilient agriculture and investments in renewable energy, cannot be overemphasized. This was evident in 2024 with the nation experiencing rising temperatures, erratic rainfall and extreme weather events such as the El Niño-induced drought of 2023/24, which resulted in one third of Lesotho's population being food insecure and the need for additional resources to ensure that people did not die from hunger. The government declared a state of national food emergency and an evidence-based national response plan was developed with a strategy to invest resources in addressing humanitarian needs and medium- and long-term preparedness. The UN, together with partners, supported the government's

National Emergency Response Plan with humanitarian interventions.

### GOVERNANCE AND POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

The political context in the country has remained relatively stable with good progress having been made on national reforms. The 10th Amendment to the Constitution Bill was endorsed by the National Assembly. More than 98 constitutional amendments will drive significant transformation across seven key thematic sectors: justice, parliamentary, constitutional, economic, public service, media and security. Additionally, the amendments will establish and strengthen accountability institutions, including the Human Rights Commission, Anti-Corruption Commission, Public Service Commission and Independent Electoral Commission.

On the governance front, the landscape in 2024 reflected a complex relationship between the state and its citizens. With an Ibrahim Index of African Governance (IIAG) score of 53.9 out





LESOTHO IS ONE OF ONLY TWO COUNTRIES IN THE REGION THAT HAS SIGNED ALL NINE KEY HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES COVERING THE RIGHTS OF ALL GROUPS, LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND.

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of 100, Lesotho ranks 21st out of 54 African nations, indicating a delicate balance between achievements and persistent challenges across governance domains. The security and rule of law category was scored at 52.4 out of 100, ranking Lesotho 21st among African nations. This area experienced the most significant decline over the past decade, with a drop of 8.4 points attributed to issues in public confidence, institutional transparency and law enforcement effectiveness (Mo Ibrahim Foundation, n.d.). These challenges are reflected in low rankings for public perception of security and safety, indicating that citizens increasingly feel uncertain about safety and the effectiveness of law enforcement. In response to one of the highest rates of homicide on the continent (Newsday, 2024; Charumbira, 2021), the government launched a military operation

to confiscate illegal firearms and tackle violence in different parts of the country.

## HUMAN RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL EQUITY

Lesotho is one of only two countries in the region that has signed all nine key human rights treaties covering the rights of all groups, leaving no one behind. Lesotho has, in the past few years, sought to improve the state of human rights for its people through the domestication of treaties, relaxation of reservations on the application of treaties and, most recently, through the establishment of implementation and enforcement mechanisms for human rights. This is evident in the newly established Advisory Committee on the Disability Equity Act, the addressing of the reporting backlog,





and the adoption of the 10th Amendment to the Constitution Bill by the National Assembly. Lesotho has participated in all four cycles of the Universal Periodic Review, a platform of accountability whereby states review each other on their implementation and enforcement of human rights. The country will be reviewed again in April 2025.

Areas of social and economic rights that need highlighting include the construction of large-scale economic projects and gender equality. As one of the biggest dam infrastructure developments in the region, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project will generate revenue for Lesotho and supply water to households and businesses in South Africa. While the economic benefits at the macro level are clear, the social development elements are not. Ensuring that the rights and needs of the affected communities

are met is a challenge the country will have to address.

Lesotho submitted its report on the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This report had been outstanding since 2015. It is worth noting that the country has made strides towards relaxing its reservations on the application of CEDAW in areas such as marriage, inheritance, property rights and the prevention of violence against women and girls. Despite these achievements, gender-based violence (GBV) remained a national challenge in 2024. The proportion of women and girls (aged 15 years and older) subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former partner in the past year declined by 17 percent (Ministry of Health and ICF, 2024a).







## Chapter 2:

# The Cooperation Framework – Supporting national development priorities

The year 2024 was a defining one for Lesotho, marking 200 years since its founding – an historic milestone celebrated under the theme 'Birth, Reflection, Revival'. Bicentennial celebrations, supported by the UN, provided opportunities to honour where the nation has come from, reflect on its journey and embrace a renewed commitment to a prosperous future for Basotho. Significantly, this milestone coincided with the first year of implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2024–2028) – *Ka Lebelo La Ntsoekhe* – a strategic blueprint designed to accelerate Lesotho's progress towards the SDGs.

### 2.1 OVERVIEW OF COOPERATION FRAMEWORK RESULTS IN 2024

The UN in Lesotho, in collaboration with government and development partners, strengthened governance systems, advanced policy reforms and enhanced service delivery to improve the lives of Basotho. Key achievements included the adoption of constitutional amendments, the expansion of digital governance, the strengthening of anti-corruption measures, the improvement of electoral processes and an increase in human rights protections. Food security and climate resilience were bolstered through climate-smart agriculture, drought response initiatives and renewable energy investments. Health, education and social protection systems saw significant improvement, with expanded access to essential services, enhanced gender equality measures and better support for vulnerable groups. Economic development was fostered through youth entrepreneurship, diaspora engagement and private sector investment. Despite resource challenges, the UN's strategic partnerships and innovative financing mechanisms contributed to sustainable progress towards Lesotho's development goals.



FOOD SECURITY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE WERE BOLSTERED THROUGH CLIMATE-SMART AGRICULTURE, DROUGHT RESPONSE INITIATIVES AND RENEWABLE ENERGY INVESTMENTS.





## 2024: The United Nations in Lesotho commemorates 200 years of Basotho



# MARCH

**LAUNCHING THE BICENTENNIAL COMMEMORATIONS AND YOUTH DIALOGUE:** The UN supported the government, via the Ministry of Tourism, Sports, Arts and Culture, in launching the historic 200-year founding of Lesotho celebrations under the theme 'Birth, Reflection, Revival'. His Majesty King Letsie III hosted the first-ever national dialogue with young people, providing them with a platform to reflect on their identity and their role in the economic development of the country and its future.

# APRIL



**STRENGTHENING CHILD PROTECTION AND ENDING VIOLENCE AGAINST CHILDREN:** Dr. Najat Maalla M'jid, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Violence Against Children, made her first visit to Lesotho. This visit coincided with the 43rd Ordinary Session of the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which was hosted in Maseru. Dr. M'jid's mission focused on strengthening child protection systems and advancing national efforts to end violence against children. She engaged directly with children, caregivers and child rights advocates, assessing existing legal frameworks, community-based support structures and government-led interventions.

**ASSESSING THE RIGHTS AND PROTECTION OF PERSONS WITH ALBINISM:** The UN Independent Expert on the Rights of Persons with Albinism conducted an official first visit to Lesotho to assess the challenges, rights and protection concerns faced by persons with albinism. The visit included engagements with government officials, civil society organizations and affected communities to raise awareness and discuss policies that promote inclusion and legal protections for persons with albinism.

# AUGUST



**ADDRESSING FOOD INSECURITY AND AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT:** By mid-2024, as a result of prolonged drought and El Niño-related climate shocks, Lesotho faced a severe food insecurity crisis, with over 699,000 Basotho affected. In response, Prime Minister Samuel Matekane declared a state of food disaster on 12 July 2024. From 4 to 6 August 2024, a high-level UN delegation – led by FAO Director-General, Qu Dongyu; WFP Assistant Executive Director for Programme and Policy Development, Valerie Guarnieri; and IFAD Associate Vice-President for Programme Management, Donald Brown – engaged with national leaders and communities to reinforce strategies for climate-resilient agriculture, food production and nutrition security, and to mobilize agricultural investment.



## SEPTEMBER



### ADVOCATING FOR PEACE AND DIGNITY:

During the 79th United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), the UN accompanied the government in global advocacy efforts. Her Majesty, Queen Masenate Mohato Seeiso, alongside Prince Harry, the Duke of Sussex, used this platform to highlight the urgent need for peace and dignity in homes, schools and public spaces for all children and women. At a UNGA side event, Lesotho reaffirmed its commitment to leveraging global partnerships to drive national transformation and ensure that no one is left behind by (i) investing in education, health and food systems to accelerate change for women and children, (ii) tackling GBV and violence against children and (iii) fostering partnerships for innovation and sustainable action.

### DIGITAL PATHWAYS TO NATIONAL

**PROSPERITY:** During the 79th UNGA, the Government of Lesotho and the Permanent Mission of Singapore to the UN co-hosted a high-level side event on digital pathways. This event highlighted Lesotho's progress in digital transformation and its role in driving inclusive and sustainable economic growth. It identified pathways for mobilizing financial and technical support for the National Digital Transformation Strategy and for fostering global partnerships to strengthen digital infrastructure, governance and capacity-building. The event contributed to the adoption of best practices for inclusive digitalization and reinforced Lesotho's commitment to harnessing technology to improve governance, service delivery and economic resilience.

## OCTOBER



**UN LEADERSHIP REAFFIRMING UN SUPPORT FOR LESOTHO:** From 4 to 6 October 2024, UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed made her first official visit to Lesotho, reaffirming the UN's commitment to supporting the country's development priorities. Representing UN Secretary-General António Guterres, she attended Lesotho's bicentenary celebrations, emphasizing the UN's partnership with the government in advancing sustainable development and good governance, and building resilience. In her address at Setsoto Stadium, Ms. Mohammed reflected on the relevance of King Moshoeshoe I's legacy of peace, diplomacy and inclusion for nation-building and social cohesion. During her stay in Lesotho, she also visited the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, a key infrastructural investment, crucial for economic transformation, job creation and social development. Ms. Mohammed engaged with the College of Chiefs on community development and social challenges, held dialogues with youth in which she commended their efforts in driving economic growth and, together with Her Majesty the Queen, met with survivors of GBV, listening to their experiences and reaffirming the UN's commitment to strengthening protection systems and access to justice and support services for survivors.

## DECEMBER

### REAFFIRMING UN-LESOTHO PARTNERSHIPS FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE AND CLIMATE

**RESILIENCE:** On 12 to 13 December, Lesotho welcomed UN Secretary-General António Guterres on his first official visit, marking a significant moment in the country's bicentennial celebrations. His visit reaffirmed the UN's strong partnership with Lesotho and its commitment to supporting the country's development journey. Addressing a joint sitting of Parliament, Mr. Guterres paid tribute to King Moshoeshoe I's legacy, emphasizing the need for global justice and African representation in decision-making. He called for reforms in the UN Security Council and international financial systems, stressing that Africa must not be forced to choose between economic development and climate action. As a symbol of Lesotho's friendship with the UN, the government named the road in Butha-Buthe that connects South Africa and Lesotho António Guterres Road, after the UN Secretary-General.





## 2.2 ACHIEVING COOPERATION FRAMEWORK PRIORITIES, OUTCOMES AND OUTPUTS

# STRATEGIC PILLAR 1:

Good governance and social equity





## COOPERATION FRAMEWORK OUTCOME 1:

People living in Lesotho are better served by improved governance systems and structures that are inclusive and accountable, with people empowered, engaged and enjoying human rights, peace, justice and security.

## CONTRIBUTING UN AGENCIES

### Resident:

UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, UNFPA, IOM

### Non-resident:

UNCDF, ILO, UNESCO, OHCHR

### Related SDGs:

5, 10, 16, 17



## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

In 2024, the UN in Lesotho, together with partners, worked with Basotho to strengthen good governance systems and institutions, accelerate the implementation of laws and policies that affect people's lives and supported activities to rebuild trust and promote a comprehensive vision of human rights that includes the active and equal participation of women and girls. The UN in Lesotho supported the government through seven outputs, which are detailed in the following section.





## HUMAN INTEREST STORY

### WAITING FOR CHANGE: A MOTHER'S STORY IN MALINGOANENG

*"Ke khale re emetse, letsatsi lena (We have awaited this day forever)"*, sang the villagers of Malingoaneng as the UN Deputy Secretary-General, Lesotho's Minister of Finance and the UN Resident Coordinator arrived. Among them stood 'Mathabo, a 58-year-old mother whose story reflects the deep human impact of the Polihali Dam project.

The Polihali Dam project is a major infrastructure initiative in Lesotho, part of the larger Lesotho Highlands Water Project, a multiphase, binational venture between Lesotho and South Africa. Designed to transfer water from the Lesotho Highlands to water-scarce South Africa, the dam will ultimately provide water for over 5 million people while significantly boosting Lesotho's economic development (Lesotho Highlands Development Authority publications).

Yet for families like 'Mathabo's, the reality has been harsh. Displaced from their ancestral fields and left without clear compensation, they face food insecurity. Promised jobs have not materialized, forcing her daughter and granddaughter into desperate survival measures, while her husband migrated to South Africa for menial work. Three years of applications have yielded no opportunities for 'Mathabo and many other women in her village.

Change, however, is on the horizon. The visit of the UN Deputy Secretary-General and discussions between Lesotho Highlands Water Project personnel and the UN catalysed rethinking the project's approach. The Minister of Finance pledged a more inclusive, rights-based approach, while the UN committed to strengthening public participation and ensuring a human rights lens in the project's implementation. These efforts aim to bridge the gap between large-scale development and the lived realities of affected communities – ensuring that progress does not come at the expense of human dignity.

As UN High Commissioner Volker Türk affirmed, "Our world cannot be based on a model that offers health for some, wealth for some, jobs for some, rights for some." The Deputy Secretary-General's visit marks an opportunity to align Lesotho's development with principles of inclusion, sustainability and social justice, as envisioned in the National Strategic Development Plan II.







## OUTPUT 1.1

### Public sector reforms:

Strengthened capacity of the Government of Lesotho at national and local levels for optimal finance management, improved and professionalized service delivery, improved access to justice and inclusive opportunities for development

#### CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE REFORMS

In 2024, interventions in public sector reform resulted in significant improvements that lay the foundation for political stability and progressive national development. The passing of the 10th Amendment to the Constitution Bill by the National Assembly was a notable step. With support from UN agencies to the National Reforms Transitional Office, the National Reforms Authority organized the bill into 98 segments and chapters for easier legislative processing and parliamentary enactment. The inclusion of the Human Rights Commission in the 10th Amendment – if passed in full – will address previous shortcomings in human rights protection by instituting a permanent body to monitor and prosecute violations.

UN agencies worked closely with partners to strengthen the institutional capacity of the

Independent Electoral Commission, enabling it to conduct local government elections. The commission developed a new voters' roll, which was critical in mitigating election boycott risks and enhancing the overall electoral process.

During the year, support from UN agencies helped Parliament improve its oversight and legislative functions, paving the way for the adoption of a code of conduct to strengthen both public sector governance and service delivery. Public engagement and awareness about the detrimental impact of corruption on socioeconomic and political development in Lesotho were also enhanced.

The deployment of policy advisors has significantly enhanced the capacity of high-impact strategic government ministries, including the Office of the Prime Minister (who is also Minister of Defence and National Security),





the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (who is also Minister of Parliamentary Affairs), the Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation, and the Minister of Finance and Development Planning. The policy advisors have provided expert guidance on policy formulation, institutional strengthening and strategic decision-making, enabling ministries to drive national priorities more effectively, enhance governance structures and implement transformative reforms to foster sustainable development and innovation.

UN collaboration with the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences during the commemoration of the UN's International Anti-Corruption Day helped to extend the directorate's activities beyond the central district of Maseru to the northern and southern regions. Aimed at decentralizing public services, this initiative has resulted in significant public behavioural change, as evidenced by increased media coverage and positive testimonials against corruption.

The UN-facilitated digital capacity-building programmes for members of Parliament helped to increase parliamentary support for the simplified Counter Domestic Violence Act No. 14 of 2022 and the promotion of gender equity. The UN also worked with digital ambassadors to encourage the participation of marginalized women and youth in digital advocacy and community leadership and facilitated parliamentary engagement during the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV initiative.

In 2024, Lesotho's parliamentary leaders embarked on exchange programmes with the parliaments of Liberia, Gambia and Zimbabwe. In addition, the Public Accounts Committee chairperson, a committee member and the committee clerk attended a workshop offering in-depth analysis of the Southern African Development Community Model Law on Public Financial Management, better equipping the Public Accounts Committee to conduct public hearings. As a result of the development programme supported by UN agencies and partners, from 16 to 18 August 2024, the Senate Committee on Ethics, Code of Conduct, Immunities and Privileges was trained on ethical conduct. Additionally, two

long-term development programmes were created to enhance the capacity of the two houses of Parliament, the Senate and the National Assembly.

## INCLUSIVE DIGITALIZATION

To advance inclusive digitalization and governance, the UN in Lesotho supported government in developing key policies on broadband, shared infrastructure, artificial intelligence and data management. In collaboration with the Rwanda Cooperation Initiative, the UN conducted the Rapid Assessment on the E-Governance Thematic Area, providing a roadmap for digital transformation to enhance public service delivery.

In 2024, Lesotho joined the global 50-in-5 campaign to accelerate digital public infrastructure adoption. Components include digital identification documents, payment systems and data exchange platforms. UN agencies also streamlined cabinet operations, automating processes and improving service delivery.

Public access to essential services improved through UN-backed digital platforms, including:

- The Bophelo-Ka-Mosebeletsi app for community health monitoring;
- The redesigned Lehokela app for community policing; and
- The establishment of e-service centres in all 10 districts, reducing travel for business and academic registration.

The e-Services Outlet Model empowered 38 micro, small and medium enterprises to offer 16 e-services, promoting digital inclusion for marginalized groups. Additionally, the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Registry Platform, piloted in June 2024, registered over 700 businesses, advancing formalization and financial inclusion in partnership with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Small Business Development.

## PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM AND ENHANCED SERVICE DELIVERY

In 2024, Lesotho advanced public sector reform by enhancing performance management and



accountability. Sensitization efforts introduced 1,960 public servants from nine districts to a new performance management system, improving service delivery and professionalism. Partnering with the Rwanda Cooperation Initiative, the Deputy Prime Minister and four ministries conducted a high-level study tour to Rwanda, gaining insights into governance, performance management, environmental management, tourism and infrastructure coordination. This exchange strengthened institutional capacity and accountability frameworks, formalized through a memorandum of understanding. Since then, a learning mission has been conducted in Lesotho and two ministerial delegations visited Rwanda, fostering ongoing collaboration.

Governance reforms also improved productivity and efficiency, with transparent, competency-based recruitment of principal secretaries strengthening public service professionalism and continuity in government projects. To enhance leadership, ministers and principal secretaries participated in coaching programmes to develop critical decision-making skills.

Health governance improved with the support of World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with a focus on

structural reforms, efficiency and equity through a primary healthcare approach. Digital health tools enhanced data analysis and service delivery oversight. A WHO-led three-month leadership programme trained 21 senior managers to drive reforms. A detailed health-sector assessment guided targeted improvements, while a validated digital health strategy modernized services.

Efforts to combat human trafficking intensified. Border agencies integrated victim identification and protection into daily operations. Judicial, police and prosecution services strengthened intelligence gathering, prosecution and victim support. UN agencies developed training manuals and trained 43 multisectoral subcommittee members and 37 border officials in handling trafficking cases. Joint inspections led to victim identification and support.

Five district councils (Maseru, Mafeteng, Leribe, Mokhotlong and Thaba Tseka) aligned funding with climate resilience strategies under the Local Climate Adaptive Living (LoCAL) mechanism. With UN support, 122 community members were trained in climate adaptation planning and 10 community councils received US\$30,000 each for climate-smart projects, ensuring compliance with United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) LoCAL standards.







## OUTPUT 1.2

### National statistical system and data:

Strengthened national statistics, evidence generation and data systems for relevant, timely and quality data

Lesotho has significantly improved its labour statistics framework and policy development capacity by implementing global standards, including the 19th and 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians resolutions on employment, work relationships, child labour and migration. The UN supported training for staff from the Bureau of Statistics and Ministry of Labour and Employment, on analysing data from the 2024 Labour Force Survey and labour market trends, while the inclusion of the Washington Group's disability module expanded data collection.

In 2024, Lesotho, as a Southern African Development Community member, contributed to a resolution urging the ratification of ILO Convention No. 151, which promotes freedom of association, dispute resolution and social dialogue in the public sector.

A key 2024 milestone was the revision of the Labour Act to implement Convention No. 151,

expanding collective bargaining rights for public service employees. This led to a roadmap for institutionalizing social dialogue and dispute resolution mechanisms, benefiting over 30,000 public officers. Key government and union representatives, including cabinet members, principal secretaries and 80 human resources officers and trade union representatives were trained on the convention's provisions and best practices.

### DATA MANAGEMENT

The Lesotho Demographic and Health Survey 2024 was completed and disseminated. The survey provided valuable insights for guiding health-sector policies and programmes, enhancing strategic planning and policy development across various sectors in Lesotho. The Bureau of Statistics developed a comprehensive project document for the national census and executed essential pre-census activities, ensuring thorough preparedness for accurate and efficient





data collection for the next census, which is scheduled for 2026. The government implemented an integrated data management system for migration data with the support of the UN in Lesotho. This has streamlined the digitalization of administrative data, enabling

ministries to generate accurate and timely online reports. Additionally, training of statisticians across 10 districts broadened the scope of national migration data collection and analysis, with these variables now integrated into all 2024 survey instruments and the upcoming census.



### OUTPUT 1.3

#### Civic space and participation:

Strengthened citizen participation and dialogue for enhanced state–society accountability

The UN partnered with the Peacebuilding Fund to support the government in civic participation initiatives. The assistance focused on training citizens and civil society organizations in advocacy and local governance, promoting inclusive dialogue and developing conflict resolution mechanisms. The UN system

provided technical support to the local non-governmental organization umbrella body and the Christian Council of Lesotho to develop a project document in support of the Independent Electoral Commission. The project document was submitted to development partners and the project received partial funding.



### OUTPUT 1.4

#### Regional, cross-border and global coordination and partnerships:

Strengthened partnerships for improved migration management and cross-border coordination

Lesotho participated in the Southern African Development Community Technical Committee on Labour Migration meetings in Harare and workshops in Lusaka and Johannesburg, facilitating the country's engagement in the implementation of the Southern African Development Community Labour Migration Action Plan (2020–2025). These events were crucial for exchanging information on labour migration policy development and resulted in the creation of the Fair and Ethical Recruitment Guidelines. Additionally, Lesotho produced vital labour migration data in 2024, enhancing the

country's contributions to the Labour Market Observatory's work, planned for 2025.

The UN organized a workshop in Maseru to discuss key conventions that impact migrant workers. The workshop was attended by a broad range of stakeholders, including government ministries and workers' and employers' organizations. During the workshop, gap analyses were conducted to inform the ratification decision-making process, assessing the alignment of domestic laws with international standards and preparing for potential future ratifications.



In 2024, the foundation for improved migration management between Lesotho and South Africa was laid. Following the inauguration of a binational commission in September 2023, in 2024 the International Organization for Migration (IOM) engaged in facilitating cross-border collaboration between Lesotho and South Africa to strengthen migrant protection and facilitate ease of movement. This culminated

in a recommendation to develop a pan-African model for migration to address current cross-border movement challenges. Resources were mobilized to undertake research that will inform the development of this model, which will include recommendations for the provision of identity documents for undocumented border communities – an aspect that aligns with SDG 16 and the Global Compact on Migration objectives.



## OUTPUT 1.5 Human rights:

Enhanced capacity of state and non-state actors to ensure rule of law, gender equality and access to justice, especially for marginalized and vulnerable groups, in line with relevant international human rights obligations

As part of Human Rights 75, Lesotho made three pledges: to establish a national human rights institution, to submit reports and to invite and accept visits by special human rights agencies. The country submitted the following reports: the Universal Periodic Review, and to CEDAW, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Lesotho hosted the Independent Expert on the Rights of Persons with Albinism, who visited rural parts of Lesotho to track the enjoyment of rights by persons with albinism.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), working with the Human Rights Unit in Lesotho's Ministry of Law and Justice, supported the process of incorporating the provisions necessary to amend the law to establish a national human rights institution. Once passed, the 10th Amendment to the Constitution Bill will also ensure inclusivity of all minority groups through the law by broadening the number of official languages used by the state and in schools. UN agencies worked with Parliament and its various portfolio committees on the protection of children's, women's

and other vulnerable groups' rights through proposed amendments, including, notably, the decriminalization of HIV laws.

While there have been tensions about the limitation of civic space through, among other issues, the proposed Cyber Security Bill, civil society organizations in Lesotho have submitted two shadow reports alongside state reports, and along with OHCHR held a national stakeholders' consultation on the establishment of a national human rights institution. The consultation brought together, among others, members of civil society, the judiciary, Parliament, the Ombudsman of the Government of Lesotho and the Lesotho Law Society and created a forum of engagement for all stakeholders in oversight roles to interrogate areas of overlap and possible conflict, and how they will work with the national human rights institution, once it has been established.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) hosted a sensitization workshop for a range of key stakeholders, including cabinet ministers, principal secretaries, human resources officers and social partners such as employers'

associations and workers' trade unions. The workshop focused on implementing the Labour Relations (Public Service) Convention, 1978 (No. 151), which advocates for fair labour practices and safeguards public service employees' rights. The convention's main provisions include freedom of association, collective bargaining, protection against anti-union discrimination, dispute resolution mechanisms and the protection of civil liberties.

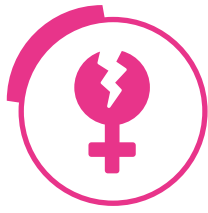
Following Lesotho's ratification of the ILO C190 Convention on Violence and Harassment, 2019 (No. 190) in March 2023, in 2024 ILO, as part of its 'Supporting Safe and Inclusive Work Environments in Lesotho' project (an occupational safety and health project), conducted a capacity-building workshop for the Ministry of Labour and Employment's Inspectorate Division. This week-long event concentrated on the newly consolidated Labour Act No. 3 of 2024 and the Occupational Safety and Health Act No. 4 of 2024, which establish comprehensive frameworks for labour relations and safety management

systems, respectively. The workshop, which included team-building activities and expert-led discussions, enhanced the enforcement capabilities of 34 labour and occupational safety and health inspectors and emphasized the importance of workplace safety and compliance.

In another significant initiative in 2024, ILO facilitated a three-day workshop to aid the National Social Security Task Team in refining the National Social Security Draft Bill. This workshop aimed to align the bill with international labour standards and recent legislative advancements, incorporating stakeholder feedback to address existing gaps. Participation by key entities, including the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, Office of Parliamentary Counsel and Lesotho Labour Council, ensured that the draft bill was enhanced by new sections and amendments, reflecting the ILO's commitment to developing robust legislative frameworks to promote safe, equitable and inclusive work environments in Lesotho.







## OUTPUT 1.6

### Violence – sexual and GBV, violence against children and other forms of violence and harmful practices:

Strengthened multisectoral prevention and response systems to eliminate GBV and harmful social norms and practices, including child marriage, violence against children and trafficking in persons

Significant strides have been made to advance prevention and response mechanisms. These efforts include capacity-building, legislative support and infrastructure development. Thirty-six members of Parliament, including women, received training to enhance their ability to engage with existing laws, link gender equality for better advocacy, practice gender-responsive budgeting and fulfil their oversight roles.

#### MULTISECTORAL APPROACH TO ADDRESSING GBV

In collaboration with UN agencies, a significant initiative is being undertaken to establish a multipurpose centre for survivors of GBV.

As part of advancing the National Occupational Safety and Health Policy and promoting safer, more equitable workplaces, a process was facilitated to revise the Occupational Safety and Health Implementation Plan. The updated plan will guide the Ministry of Labour and Employment in enforcing workplace safety standards while addressing GBV.

In 2024, the ILO organized training on GBV to enhance the understanding of management and key Ministry of Labour and Employment officials. Workshops focused on integrating GBV considerations into occupational safety and health and inspection practices, improving skills for monitoring and enforcing compliance with GBV provisions in the Labour and Occupational Safety and Health acts. The long outstanding CEDAW report was submitted, enabling a stocktaking of the enjoyment of human rights by Lesotho's citizens. The benefits of this

achievement were dualistic: while developing the report, OHCHR support for the National Mechanism for Reporting, Implementation and Follow-Up also improved the mechanism's reporting ability. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), with the support of OHCHR and the Resident Coordinator's Office, led the gender and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) group in the development and submission of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) CEDAW report. Such reports are key to the assessment and determination of the state of enjoyment of rights of women in Lesotho.

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the South African Development Community Parliamentary Forum, OHCHR, UNICEF and the National Aids Commission are working together with the parliamentary social cluster on the revision of the Children's Protection and Welfare Act to include provisions to protect children from child marriage.

The launch of the 16 Days of Activism Against GBV event was a pivotal moment in the fight against GBV in Lesotho. Attended by government ministers, the diplomatic corps and key stakeholders, the event served as a powerful platform for raising awareness and strengthening advocacy efforts. It highlighted critical data on GBV in Lesotho, including an analysis of its economic impact, underscoring the urgent need for a multisectoral approach to prevention and response.

The UN continues to provide support to the public service on PSEA, with the aim of strengthening the legal and policy framework of the public service.



## OUTPUT 1.7

### SDG financing:

Progress towards an integrated national financing framework by the Government of Lesotho, together with improved technical and fiscal capacity dedicated to finance and localization of the SDGs, with citizen participation

The technical and fiscal capacity of the government to undertake performance management and other institutional reforms was strengthened in 2024. These reforms have strengthened the financing and localization of the SDGs, increased active citizen participation and accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of the SDGs. The reforms will be critical for the mobilization of both domestic and external resources and public and private resources.

The UN in Lesotho is supporting implementation of the Integrated National Financing Framework, which is a tool created to help governments, in

collaboration with their development partners, better understand the national development finance landscape and coordinate efforts to mobilize and align a wide range of financing sources (public and private, domestic and international, etc.) to sustainable development priorities, using the full potential of all financial and non-financial resources. In 2024, the government received support in initiating the Tax for SDGs programme and was able to address illicit financial flows through tax audits that focused on transfer pricing. The SDGs Taxation Framework was established to strengthen the alignment of fiscal and tax policies. Lesotho received support in developing





recommendations for the mobilization and management of tax revenue with a focus on SDGs 3, 5, 13, 16 and 17, and the government's alignment of tax policies to SDG spending improved through the implementation of the framework. Key initiatives in 2024 to support the government included an evaluation of the country's success in utilizing the tax system to achieve the SDGs, using the framework. The draft evaluation report proposes several follow-up actions and recommendations, which are expected to be finalized and implemented in 2025.

The government's transparency and accountability improved in 2024, as evidenced by an Open Budget Survey Index score of 35 out of 100, compared to 22 in 2021. The government now regularly publishes the citizens' budget and the national audit report, as well as quarterly debt management reports. UNICEF's technical and financial support to the Finance and Development Planning has contributed to improvements in open budget practices that should result in improved efficiency and effectiveness in public spending. During the year, pre-budget consultations were successfully held in all 10 districts of Lesotho, with support from UNICEF.

Working with IOM, UNICEF established a Youth Power Hub, an innovative online platform to strengthen youth engagement in governance and budgeting, and produced a training package to improve corporate governance and programming capacity in 27 grassroots and youth-led civil society organizations. Through these consultations, the government received useful feedback on spending priorities for the next fiscal year and recommendations on areas that require strengthening to improve adequacy, efficiency and effectiveness in spending.

The SDG Investor Map was launched by the Minister of Finance and Development Planning in August 2024. UNDP supported the government with conducting a private sector assessment which established a foundational overview of local private sector actors and their current capabilities to contribute to national development objectives.

Other Integrated National Financing Framework implementation measures in 2024 included support to the national tax authority to undertake both the Tax Inspectors Without Borders programme, focusing on transfer pricing in the mining, financial services and



telecommunications sectors, and tax crime investigation and capacity-building for Revenue Services Lesotho and the Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences.

### THE NATIONAL PROSPECTIVE AND PLANNING FRAMEWORK DEVELOPMENT: EXTENDED NSDP II 2023/24–2027/28 AND NATIONAL LONG-TERM VISION DEVELOPMENT

UNDP supported and provided technical assistance to the extended NSDP II 2023/24–2027/28, which focuses on the country's development challenges, with the main objectives of promoting economic transformation and creating enabling policies for achievement of the SDGs. In 2024, the NSDP II strategic framework was validated after extensive consultations with all the stakeholders (sectoral ministries, civil society organizations, the private sector and development partners) on its four key priorities areas and cross-cutting themes.

The government began developing Vision Lesotho 2050 with a concept note that details the rollout of the following processes: (i) an official national launch chaired by His Majesty, (ii) retrospective studies on the country's

main development challenges, (iii) nationwide consultations in 10 districts, (iv) scenario development and (v) vision development.

Vision Lesotho 2050 and NSDP II 2023/24–2027/28 are crucial for mobilizing resources to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs.

### THE 2024 NATIONAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT

In August 2024, the government, in partnership with the National University of Lesotho, developed and launched the 2024 National Human Development Report with the theme 'Harnessing Technology and Innovations to Accelerate Human Development in Lesotho'. The report highlights the transformative role of technology in fostering inclusive growth, improving access to services and expanding opportunities.

Additionally, the Global Human Development Report, *Breaking the Gridlock: Reimagining Cooperation in a Polarized World* was launched and disseminated at country level. This human development approach aims to stimulate debate and advocacy across environmental, economic and social dimensions.





# STRATEGIC PILLAR 2:

Equitable food systems, environmental  
sustainability and climate resilience





## COOPERATION FRAMEWORK OUTCOME 2:

All people living in Lesotho enjoy improved food and nutrition security, with transformed national food systems, and benefit from natural resources and green growth that is risk-informed and climate-resilient

## CONTRIBUTING UN AGENCIES

### Resident:

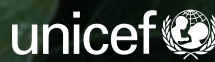
FAO, WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM, UNDP

### Non-resident:

UNHCR, IFAD

### Related SDGs:

1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17







## HUMAN INTEREST STORY

### FROM CHAUFFEUR TO FARMER: HOW NKOPANE THOHLAKA TURNED A HOME GARDEN INTO A THRIVING BUSINESS

When 54-year-old Nkopane Thoahlaka left his job as a chauffeur in Tsikoane, Leribe, he had one goal – to grow food for his household of six. In just two years, what began as a simple home garden for subsistence quickly transformed into a thriving small-scale farming business.

“I grow enough crops to feed my family and sell to my community,” Thoahlaka says. “The income I earn supports household expenses and supplements my wife’s teaching salary to cover other family needs.”

Thoahlaka now produces a variety of vegetables, including cabbage, beetroot, green peppers, spinach and carrots. His green pepper harvest was so abundant last year that he secured a supply deal with Shoprite supermarkets, a major milestone for his growing agribusiness.

Farming has become more than just a source of livelihood – it has become a passion. “Tending to my crops is therapeutic; it has become a hobby I enjoy,” he says.



© FAO/Mathabana Kotelo

Thoahlaka is among 10,000 smallholder farmers across Lesotho benefiting from the Food and Agriculture Organization’s (FAO’s) Contingency Emergency Response Component project, funded by the World Bank. In response to severe flash floods in 2022, the project provided vulnerable farming households with home gardening kits, including shade nets and six crop seed varieties such as spinach, beetroot, carrots and onions.

With the seeds, equipment and training on best farming practices, Thoahlaka has significantly boosted his production. Now, he dreams of expanding his farm to supply major grocery stores regularly, while continuing to serve his community.

“The support I received has helped improve my yield. With ongoing input and training, I hope to scale up my production, reach more markets and contribute to food security in my community.”

Thoahlaka’s journey – from chauffeur to successful farmer – demonstrates the power of resilience, opportunity and agricultural support programmes in transforming lives and livelihoods.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN NUMBERS



**26,400 farming households** were supported with access to quality agricultural inputs, leading to enhanced food security, improved agricultural productivity and increased resilience to climate shocks for smallholder farmers.



**201,000 livestock** were protected from zoonotic diseases through nationwide vaccinations, ensuring that agricultural productivity remains high, especially in rural areas, where livestock is a primary source of income for many farmers.



**13,000 families** in 5 priority districts received food assistance valued at **700 maloti per household per month**, directly alleviating hunger and further strengthening community resilience during periods of food insecurity.



**52,000 vulnerable individuals** received three-month comprehensive support packages as part of anticipatory actions for drought, helping to build resilience, safeguard livelihoods and reduce reliance on negative coping mechanisms.



**27,561 children** were reached through infant and young children feeding initiatives, leading to improved nutritional outcomes for children and promoting healthy growth and development.



**20,340 households** were supported with cash transfers and drought-resistant seeds during the El Niño-related drought, helping to mitigate the drought impact by enabling households to maintain food security and sustain agricultural activities.



**US\$3.3 million** was mobilized through the Global Environment Facility for biodiversity conservation and sustainable resource use, contributing to strengthening capacity for long-term environmental management.



**US\$4.3 million** was mobilized through the European Union-funded partnership for private sector investment in renewable energy, assisting in accelerating the transition to renewable energy through providing clean, affordable energy solutions for households and businesses.



**5,000 households** were electrified through mini-grids, home solar systems and improved cooking stoves, improving quality of life by providing reliable power for lighting, heating and cooking.



The UN has focused on equitable food systems, environmental sustainability and climate action to support sustainable development in Lesotho and contribute to the country's achievement of the SDGs. For decades, environmental degradation and the negative impact of climate change have affected the food system in Lesotho, resulting in reduced access to diverse and quality food, food insecurity and an increase in malnutrition. To address this, UN agencies are collaborating with relevant stakeholders in Lesotho, including government ministries and departments, to ensure that the food system is effectively sustained to achieve zero hunger, while protecting the environment and building the resilience of affected populations to climatic shocks.

Cooperation Framework Outcome 2 is supported by four key outputs – agricultural production and productivity, nutrition, natural resources management and climate resilience – to strengthen government systems and capacity at community and household levels to deal with food insecurity challenges. UN agencies collaborated with national actors to strengthen the capacity of the most affected populations to cope with the negative impacts of climate change at household and community levels, while building their resilience to climatic shocks. Strengthening government systems and national actors remains crucial for the UN agencies in Lesotho. This effort aims to improve national systems and to promote climate-smart technologies, integrated natural resources management and climate change adaptation and resilience. The goal is to achieve an effective, equitable and environmentally sustainable food system and facilitate climate action.



## OUTPUT 2.1

### Agricultural production and productivity:

Improved agricultural production and productivity with advanced climate-resilient agricultural technology, digital innovation, advisory services and an enabling policy environment for private sector agribusiness development

In 2024, the UN supported a more effective food system in Lesotho by increasing access to diverse food groups, enhancing smallholder farmers' productivity and strengthening government capacity for customized agricultural extension services. Smallholder farmers received beekeeping equipment, shade nets and fruit trees to promote nature-based livelihood diversification. Collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, Nutrition and Food Security improved extension services by integrating climate-smart agriculture and introducing improved seeds. Over 600 extension workers were trained, benefiting

26,400 farming households with access to quality seeds, fertilizers and livestock vaccines, boosting food security. Climate change and El Niño-induced droughts worsened food insecurity, prompting initiatives to shield vulnerable populations.

To enhance agribusiness, the UN introduced policy and investment decision support tools, unlocking private sector involvement. Investment cases in aquaculture, apiculture, poultry, pig farming and potatoes were presented in Rome (October 2024), attracting interest from private firms and international financiers.

Twenty forcibly displaced persons in Maseru benefited from small-scale agricultural interventions, including backyard gardens, organic fertilizer training and food preservation techniques, improving soil fertility, income and nutrition. Climate-smart farming techniques were also promoted, with over 54 shade nets (10 with drip irrigation) provided and four boreholes drilled for smallholder farmers.

To support market access, market-linkage meetings connected smallholder farmers with

buyers, while training on post-harvest loss reduction improved quality standards. The Lesotho Horticulture Farmers Association received fruit sorting equipment to enhance packaging and market compliance.

Animal health initiatives included vaccinating 201,000 livestock against anthrax, blue tongue, black leg and rabies, benefiting 26,000 households and preventing anthrax outbreaks that could have led to trade bans on Lesotho's wool and mohair exports.



## OUTPUT 2.2 Nutrition:

Increased access to nutrition and adoption of evidence-based nutritional-sensitive practices by communities, especially the most vulnerable

In 2024, nutrition interventions and nature-based livelihoods significantly improved food security and resilience for Basotho and forcibly displaced persons. The UN, in collaboration with the government, Red Cross, World Vision and civil society, expanded advocacy, strengthened food fortification and supported 1,000 nutrition clubs engaging 41,000 participants, effectively challenging sociocultural norms that exacerbate malnutrition. Diversified vegetable production benefited 11,000 households through the provision of drought-resistant seeds, shade nets and irrigation kits, enhancing access to nutrient-rich foods. Targeted feeding programmes reached 27,561 children, improving dietary diversity, while community nutrition initiatives supported 3,371 HIV-exposed children.

To mitigate the impact of the El Niño-induced drought, the UN, Red Cross and World Vision implemented anticipatory actions, providing 52,000 vulnerable individuals with food aid, monthly cash transfers and agricultural inputs to safeguard livelihoods. In response to the declared food insecurity emergency, US\$2 million was mobilized to assist 82,000 individuals, with a six-month intervention reaching 20,340 households. Digitalized cash transfers ensured efficiency, dignity and improved food consumption scores, reducing reliance on negative coping strategies. A cost-benefit analysis confirmed that for every dollar invested in early interventions, Lesotho gained US\$1.28 in economic and humanitarian value. These efforts prioritized gender equality, disability inclusion and social protection, ensuring equitable access to resources and long-term food security.





## OUTPUT 2.3

### Natural resource management:

Strengthened institutional and community capacity for sustainable management and equitable access to natural resources and clean energy

In 2024, the UN promoted sustainable utilization and conservation of natural resources to reduce the excessive rate of environmental degradation in Lesotho. Technical and institutional capacity was developed to track land cover changes as a key indicator of the health of Lesotho's natural resource base. The Environmental Data Reference Group, comprising representatives from different ministries, has a proven ability to update web-based land cover data and maps to boost the capacity of the government. The reference group facilitated the tracking of land cover changes from 2017, the baseline year, to 2023, allowing decision-makers and programme managers to design and implement initiatives that help halt further land degradation while also monitoring the impact and effectiveness of their interventions.

In support of the revised NSDP II, the UN invested in the construction of sand dams

with solar-powered pumps to provide water for irrigation. This is in line with the use of clean energy and environmentally friendly technologies to promote the conservation of natural resources at national and community level. Other projects include building terraced gardens to combat erosion, installing systems to manage stormwater by easing rooftops and sidewalks with retaining walls and constructing contour bunds and ditches to collect rainwater and prevent soil loss. Additionally, large solar cookers were provided to schools to demonstrate the value of clean energy in nutrition-sensitive school feeding programmes. Communities have benefited from the training they received on using energy-saving devices such as clay ovens to reduce the amount of wood fuel needed to cook and heat homes. Traditional nutritious meals can now be cooked using less energy.



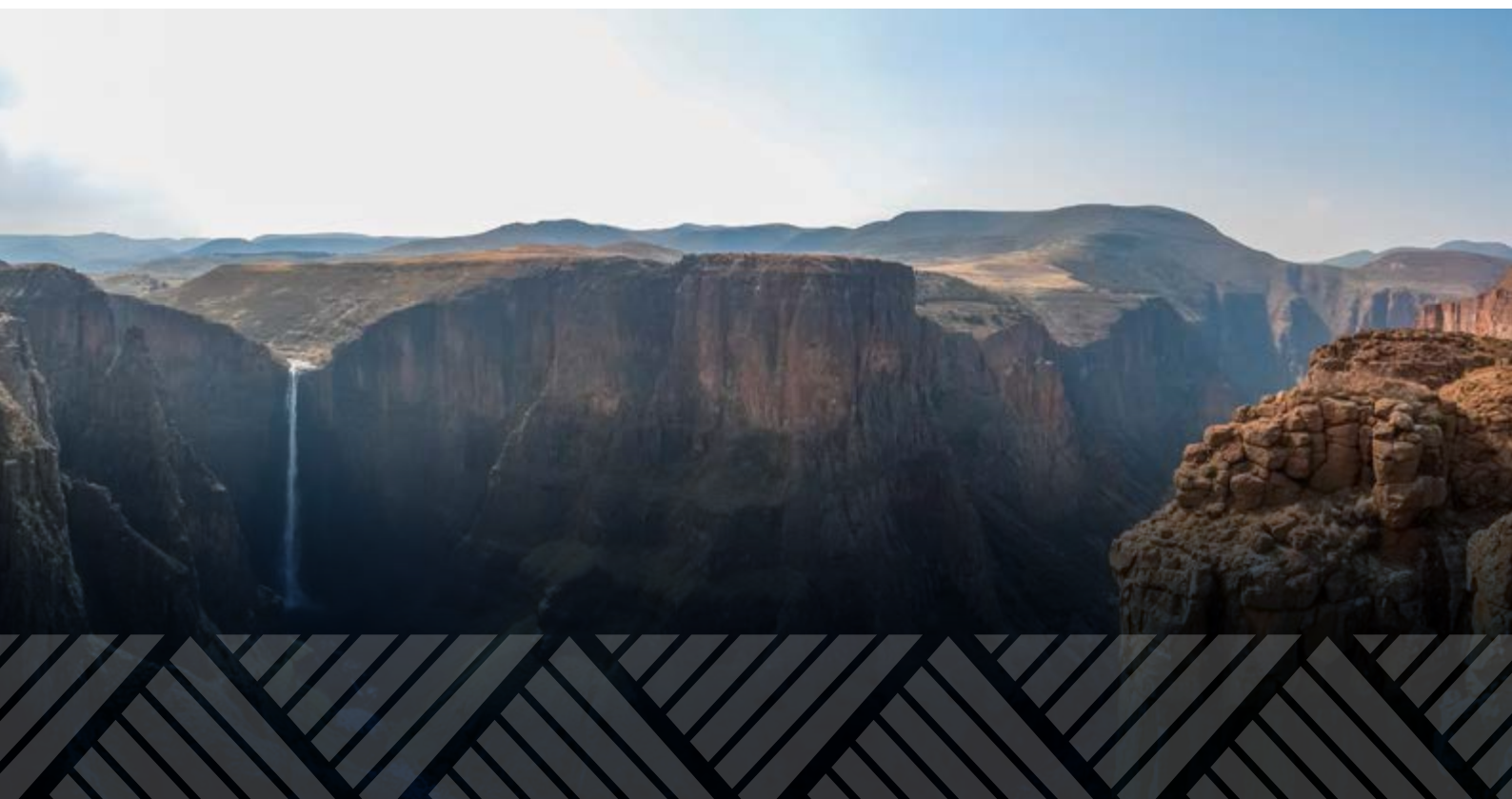
US\$3.3 MILLION WAS MOBILIZED THROUGH THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY TO SUPPORT BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION EFFORTS, PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE UTILIZATION AND CONSERVATION OF LESOTHO'S MEDICINAL PLANTS AND DEVELOP A NATIONAL BIODIVERSITY FINANCE PLAN.

To increase the number of households with access to clean energy from 48 percent to 52 percent, the UN secured funding worth US\$4.3 million through a European Union-funded partnership, which will provide financial incentives in the form of results-based grant subsidies to the private sector to promote private investment in renewable energy. The grants will support access to clean energy through the electrification of households and public facilities via privately-owned mini-grids. Other off-grid technologies, such as solar home systems and improved cooking stoves, will also provide access to cooking energy and electricity.

With a view to strengthening community capacity for sustainable management of natural resources, the UN mobilized grants worth US\$150,000 through the Great Green Wall initiative. These were provided to local communities involved in environmental conservation activities and nature-based livelihoods. The funds facilitated both financial and technical support for capacity-building, which included training government technical teams (17 district technical experts), local authorities (newly elected Tosing Council members) and communities in the development of the integrated water management plans. Additionally, US\$3.3 million was mobilized

through the Global Environment Facility to support biodiversity conservation efforts, promote sustainable utilization and conservation of Lesotho's medicinal plants and develop a national biodiversity finance plan. This support promoted an integrated approach to environment conservation, combining both ecological protection and local economic development.

As part of diversified livelihood options and strengthening of capacity, government officers were trained in the manufacturing of energy-saving devices for cooking. Communities were also trained in alternative environmentally friendly livelihood options, including orchard management, apiculture, integrated pest management and fire management in rangelands. They were also equipped with the skills and tools needed to carry out various rehabilitation activities, such as rangeland reseeding, brush control, gully rehabilitation and the construction of diversion furrows and stone lines on degraded rangelands. Over 2,000 people benefited from these UN-supported nature-based interventions and approximately 2,361 hectares of rangeland was restored and put under sustainable management, increasing the extent of rangelands and water sources that are under sustainable management.







## OUTPUT 2.4

### Resilience and climate change:

Strengthened institutional and community capacities for disaster preparedness, anticipatory action and response with climate change mitigation measures

UN agencies supported the government to successfully disseminate climate-related services and early warning messages to approximately 750,000 individuals, 55 percent of whom were women. By employing diverse communication channels such as text messages, public gatherings, billboard campaigns, radio and television programmes and school competitions, the initiative significantly enhanced community awareness and preparedness. As a result, vulnerable groups, including women, men, girls and boys, gained the knowledge needed to make informed decisions and adapt effectively to climate-related challenges.

Targeted sensitization of herders delivered impactful outcomes by equipping them with

critical skills in rangeland management, promoting sustainable land-use practice and contributing to the long-term resilience of livelihoods and ecosystems. Additionally, 30 private sector stakeholders and financial institution representatives were trained in climate change financing, thereby enhancing entities' skills in applying climate change financing instruments and further enabling the UN to secure opportunities for strategic partnerships in mobilizing climate finance.

Community-based participatory planning processes were undertaken in selected villages to empower communities to make decisions on the type of interventions that build resilience to climatic shocks. The communities identified





the need for soil and water conservation structures to improve food production and productivity during extended dry periods, thereby increasing their adaptive ability in the face of climatic shocks. Following this process, which has been commended and adopted by other stakeholders during the design of climate-related projects, materials and equipment for constructing water harvesting structures and water tanks were distributed to some communities to support climate-informed action.

Financial and technical support was provided to the Ministry of Environment and Forestry to develop the Migration, Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan. The strategy was developed in close collaboration with the National Climate Change Committee. The involvement of the committee in the development of the strategy enhanced the committee's capacity to mainstream human mobility in climate change adaptation responses. The objective of the strategy is to build the resilience of communities with high migration rates, promote climate-adaptive agricultural practices and diversify livelihoods through community-based green jobs.

To assist Lesotho in fulfilling its commitments under the Paris Agreement, the UN supported the finalization of Lesotho's second Nationally Determined Contribution. This document outlines Lesotho's efforts to address climate change and contribute towards global climate goals. In addition, UN agencies assisted government officials in attending the 2024 UN Climate Change Conference, where the government participated in ongoing negotiations on climate change adaptation and mitigation and resilience-building efforts. This also created an opportunity for the government to interact with potential donors regarding the provision of disaster and climate-risk financing needed to build the nation's resilience to climatic shocks at all levels.

The employment of environmental and social safeguards was promoted during the implementation of projects and subprojects to ensure that any potential negative impacts were mitigated. In addition, environmental and social considerations were addressed during the implementation of development and climate-resilience projects to enhance both environmental and social sustainability.



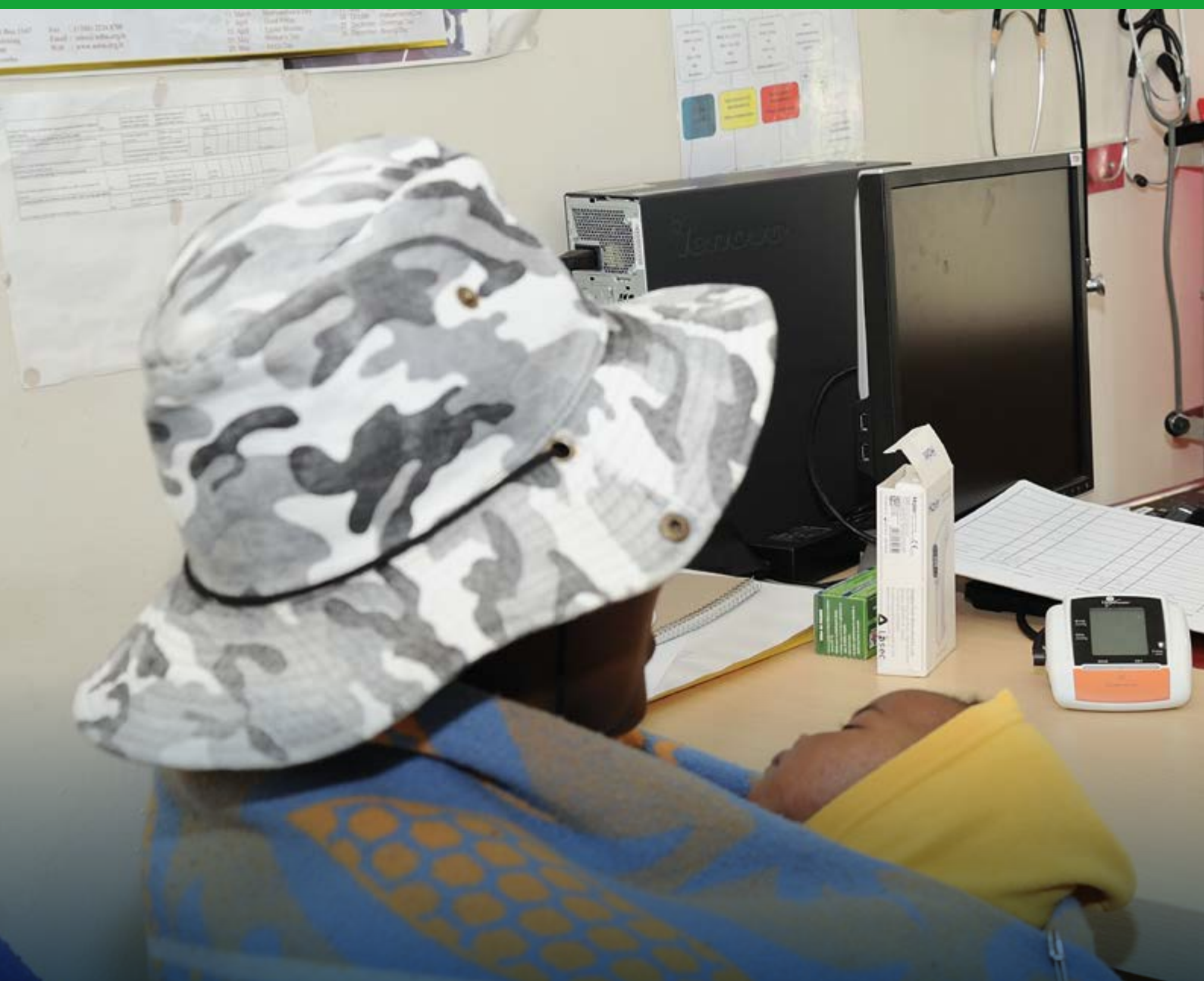
COMMUNITY-BASED PARTICIPATORY PLANNING PROCESSES WERE UNDERTAKEN IN SELECTED VILLAGES TO EMPOWER COMMUNITIES TO MAKE DECISIONS ON THE TYPE OF INTERVENTIONS THAT BUILD RESILIENCE TO CLIMATIC SHOCKS.





# STRATEGIC PILLAR 3:

People's well-being and economic development



## COOPERATION FRAMEWORK OUTCOME 3:

People living in Lesotho, especially the most vulnerable, have equitable and sustainable access to social services, increased decent employment in an enabling business environment, and benefit from transformative economic development

## CONTRIBUTING UN AGENCIES

### Resident:

UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNFPA, WHO, IOM, UNDP, WFP

### Non-resident:

UNESCO, ILO, UN WOMEN

### Related SDGs:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 17



UNAIDS



World Health Organization



Empowered lives



World Food Programme







## HUMAN INTEREST STORY

### UNLOCKING HIDDEN POTENTIAL: HOW THE UN IS DRIVING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN LESOTHO



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On 6 December 2024, during the UN and Lesotho National Federation of Organizations of the Disabled commemoration of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, something extraordinary took place. What was once an overlooked staple – the humble potato – was transformed into a symbol of innovation, economic empowerment and inclusive development.

At the UN-supported Potato Festival, persons with disabilities showcased a range of potato-based products, including snacks, soft porridge, meat sauces, lip balms, skin and hand lotions, and even medicinal products. This exhibition demonstrated not only the nutritional and economic potential of potatoes but also the entrepreneurial ingenuity of persons with disabilities, who are often sidelined in economic discussions.

What made this initiative particularly transformative was its shift in narrative. For too long, persons with disabilities in Lesotho have primarily been recognized for advocating for policy changes and access to public services, while their potential as business innovators remained overlooked. This event shattered that perception, proving that they are capable entrepreneurs, job creators and key contributors to the economy.

“This initiative is more than just an exhibition; it is a testament to the untapped potential of persons with disabilities in Lesotho. The UN is committed to ensuring that disability inclusion goes beyond policy discussions to real economic empowerment and sustainable livelihoods,” said Thabiso Masenyetse, the UN Disability Inclusion Officer.

Through direct UN support, including the provision of production materials and essential equipment, these entrepreneurs were able to refine their skills, scale their businesses and enhance the marketability of their products. The initiative not only boosted their economic independence but also demonstrated the broader business opportunities within Lesotho’s agricultural value chain, reinforcing the importance of diversified and sustainable economic development.

By bringing hidden talents to light, the UN in Lesotho has taken a significant step towards inclusive growth, ensuring that no one is left behind. This initiative serves as a powerful reminder that economic transformation in Lesotho must be built on unlocking the potential of all its people, particularly the most vulnerable, and creating an enabling business environment where everyone can thrive.

## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS IN NUMBERS



**8.9 million male condoms and 51,000 female condoms** were distributed, helping to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancies.\*



**423,000 learners** were educated on HIV prevention, unintended pregnancies and sexual and reproductive health and rights, helping to build a foundation for long-term public health improvement; reduce incidences of unintended pregnancies, HIV infections and sexually transmitted infections; increase use of safe-sex behaviours; and empower young people with knowledge to make informed decisions about their health.



**100,000+ people** were reached by HIV and GBV prevention programmes in drought-prone districts, providing vital information, resources and support for preventing HIV, reducing the incidence of GBV and improving overall community health.



**5,400 schoolgirls** received sanitary towels, improving menstrual health, reducing barriers to school attendance during menstruation, preventing absenteeism and promoting gender equality in education.



**1,944 youth** applied for Lesotho's STEAM\*\* initiative, tripling participation, signalling a growing interest among young people.



**200 youth innovators** gained business development skills through boot camps, equipping them with crucial business development skills, including idea generation, business planning and entrepreneurship.



**23.7% of Lesotho's gross domestic product** was derived from diaspora remittances in 2023, contributing to household income, improved access to healthcare and education and investment in small businesses, which further economic stability, poverty reduction and community development.

\*Improved access to contraceptive tools contributes to healthier sexual and reproductive health outcomes, especially among young people and vulnerable populations, thus promoting family planning and reproductive rights.

\*\*Science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics.



### KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

During 2024, through its joint UN–Government Programme for Health, the UN invested in several initiatives to strengthen the country’s healthcare system. The UN also trained senior health personnel, provided strategic support for policy reforms and assisted the government

in developing the Action Plan for Ending Preventable Maternal and Neonatal Mortalities (2024–2030), as well as integrating governance reforms, digital health solutions and evidence-based service delivery in one of the country’s critical sectors. With the aim of ensuring effective community-driven health service



DURING 2024, THROUGH ITS JOINT UN–GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME FOR HEALTH, THE UN INVESTED IN SEVERAL INITIATIVES TO STRENGTHEN THE COUNTRY’S HEALTHCARE SYSTEM.

delivery, the UN also supported the government with its development of the National Community Health Policy (2024/25–2034/35). In conjunction with the National Health Strategy (2024/25–2029/30), the effective implementation of this policy over the next decade is expected to result in communities throughout Lesotho receiving improved health services. These interventions,

together with the expansion of integrated service delivery and the ongoing process to develop the country's Digital Health Policy and Strategy (2025–2030), will contribute immensely to improved national health outcomes and advance Lesotho towards universal health coverage and achieving the SDG health targets for the country.

## ACHIEVEMENTS: PROGRESS TOWARDS UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE



**21 senior health managers** were trained on improving governance, decision-making and accountability.



**250 healthcare workers** were trained on improved service quality.



**4,801 village health workers** were trained, strengthening community health service delivery.



A georeferenced community health worker master list system was scaled to **10 districts**, tracking **7,774 village health workers** for real-time service monitoring.



**Emergency obstetric and neonatal care services** were expanded in hospitals, with mobile health units reaching underserved areas.



**Maternal and perinatal death surveillance and response** covered **70% of reported cases**, strengthening accountability.



**1 learning hub and 7 simulation centres** were established to train midwives and doctors, improving maternal and newborn care.



**Integrated service delivery models** were expanded to **8 additional districts**, covering **70% of the population** and ensuring equitable access to essential services.





## OUTPUT 3.1

### HIV response:

Strengthened national capacities for an equitable and sustainable HIV response, targeting key and priority populations

The UN, alongside partners like the United States' President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Global Fund, has significantly advanced the fight against HIV and tuberculosis. Achievements include scaling up prevention, education initiatives and integrated healthcare and mobilizing substantial resources. Cultural and social programmes targeted harmful norms, and the government demonstrated leadership in sustaining these efforts through high-level planning and resource prioritization. The integration of point-of-care testing, pre-exposure prophylaxis rollout and community empowerment has significantly

enhanced health outcomes. Government leadership and partnerships with global donors have sustained these efforts, with long-term strategies in place for an equitable and sustainable HIV response. Additionally, initiatives targeting cultural norms and gender equality have bolstered HIV and GBV prevention efforts.

Through a collaborative effort involving UNICEF, World Food Programme (WFP), UNFPA, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and

## ACHIEVEMENTS: HIV AND TUBERCULOSIS RESPONSE AND HEALTH-SYSTEM STRENGTHENING



**Point-of-care HIV and tuberculosis testing** was introduced, including CD4 count and urine lipoarabinomannan tests, enhancing early diagnosis and treatment.



**Advanced HIV disease** was integrated into primary healthcare, improving patient management.



Progress was made towards **eliminating vertical transmission** of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B.



Cultural Organization (UNESCO), WHO and the UNAIDS Secretariat, services integrating HIV, sexual and reproductive health and rights, tuberculosis, non-communicable diseases and mental health have been scaled up. Health systems have been strengthened and financial resources mobilized to improve health outcomes for key populations and the most vulnerable, particularly adolescents, women and individuals living with HIV. Building on progress achieved in previous years, investments were made in programmes aimed at expanding access to pre-exposure prophylaxis and distributing HIV prevention tools. Resources were mobilized from partners such as the Global Fund and PEPFAR, enhancing health outcomes and contributing to the development of sustainable and equitable HIV response capacities in Lesotho.

UN Women, UNAIDS, UNFPA, IOM, UNESCO and Save the Children supported country efforts to address harmful norms that exacerbate GBV and HIV risks. UN Women, through the HeForShe initiative, collaborated with the Christian Council

of Lesotho to engage religious and traditional leaders in transformative dialogues. This effort culminated in the adoption of the Religious and Traditional Leaders Declaration at the Southern Africa Religious and Traditional Leaders meeting. The declaration commits leaders to promoting norms that reduce vulnerabilities to GBV and HIV while supporting sexual and reproductive health and rights in their communities.

UNCT support was instrumental in enabling the government to secure US\$71 million in grant funding from the Global Fund, with US\$1.3 million of this dedicated to HIV prevention in adolescent girls and young women.

Lesotho has advanced HIV and tuberculosis sustainability planning, with the Deputy Prime Minister heading a dedicated cabinet subcommittee. Key milestones include the launch of the HIV and Tuberculosis Road Map by His Majesty King Letsie III and active engagement of the national Parliament. Table 1 provides a breakdown of results of the HIV/AIDS response.



**5,400 schoolgirls** received sanitary towels, improving menstrual health and school attendance.



**132 men from 10 districts** were trained to challenge harmful gender norms and promote positive behaviour change.



**53 law enforcement officers, prosecutors and government officials** were trained to implement the Counter Domestic Violence Act No. 14 of 2022.



**100,000+ people in drought-prone districts** were reached by GBV and HIV prevention programmes, integrating food security and social protection support.



Table 1: Key metrics of Lesotho's HIV/AIDS response

Key area	Result achieved
People accessing long-acting injectable cabotegravir for pre-exposure prophylaxis	60,000+
Male condoms distributed	8.9 million
Female condoms distributed	51,000
Tubes of lubricant distributed	123,000
People from key populations receiving integrated services	12,000+
Young people educated on HIV and GBV	15,000
Learners educated on sexual and reproductive health and rights	423,000
Funding secured (Global Fund)	US\$71 million
Funding secured (PEPFAR)	US\$67 million

Source: UNAIDS, n.d.





## OUTPUT 3.2

### Social protection:

Increased government capacity and mechanisms at national and subnational levels to deliver inclusive, gender-sensitive, shock-responsive and sustainable social protection

Through a partnership between UNICEF and the European Union, Lesotho's Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development was able to deliver social assistance more efficiently to vulnerable Basotho. The partnership's support facilitated the processes leading to the approval

of the draft Social Assistance Policy, the initiation of upgrades to the National Information System for Social Assistance and the Management Information System for Social Assistance and enhancements in data management and systems design.

## ACHIEVEMENTS: SOCIAL PROTECTION



**18,000+ beneficiaries** of the Child Grants Programme received payments through mobile platforms.



**1,320 children** benefited from education on infant and young child feeding and hygiene practices provided by **22 nutrition clubs** in Thaba-Tseka and Mophale's Hoek districts, an initiative of the Ministry of Agriculture, Nutrition and Food Security and World Vision partnership.



**2,947 people** from **9 communities**, including **265 children under 5 years**, benefited from improved access to safe drinking water resulting from the **rehabilitation of 9 water systems** in Thaba-Tseka and Qacha's Nek districts.



**52,496 pre-primary school children** (25,736 boys and 26,764 girls) in **10 districts** were provided with nutritious meals.



**US\$2 million** was mobilized by the UN through the Central Emergency Response Fund for emergency **food relief** for **82,000 vulnerable individuals** in 5 priority districts; to date, **12,744 people** in Qacha's Nek district have received critical food assistance with ongoing food distribution to all targeted beneficiaries.





## OUTPUT 3.3

### Transformed education:

Increased government capacity at national and subnational levels to transform education systems and mechanisms to deliver gender-responsive quality education and 21st-century skills to meet market needs and promote innovation and entrepreneurship

## ACHIEVEMENTS: TRANSFORMED EDUCATION



**204 out-of-school youth in 5 districts** acquired critical life skills through UNICEF-supported life skills camps, enhancing their ability to navigate socioeconomic challenges.



**290 peer educators from 10 districts** were trained as part of the Selemela Initiative (a youth-led educational and empowerment programme equipping young people – especially out-of-school youth – with critical life skills, peer education and leadership training), strengthening peer-led learning initiatives.\*



**7,000+ learners** were trained on GBV prevention, leading to increased reporting, wider adoption of positive discipline and reduced bullying.



**3,900 secondary school learners** in Thaba-Tseka, Qacha's Nek and Leribe districts will benefit from strengthened linkages between schools and health facilities to improve access to sexual and reproductive health services and reduce absenteeism and dropout rates.\*\*

\* The Selemela Initiative is led by the Selemela Learning Network, a youth-focused non-governmental organization, and supported by UNICEF. It is hoped that by strengthening peer networks and providing essential life skills, mentorship and community support, Selemela will play a crucial role in bridging the education gap for out-of-school youth and enhancing youth resilience and employability in Lesotho.

\*\* This initiative is a partnership between UNESCO and the ministries of education and health.

Support for education transformation in Lesotho was provided by UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA and UNAIDS. It was aimed at equipping youth with market-ready skills, boosting entrepreneurship and increasing school retention and completion rates to position Lesotho's education system as a driver of economic transformation and innovation. Interventions were focused on expanding learning opportunities, strengthening out-of-school education and ensuring school retention. The UN invested in training for peer educators and the revision of out-of-school learning packages and supported the government in developing the Prevention and Management of Learner Pregnancy Policy, marking an important step towards

permanently addressing early and unintended pregnancies among learners. Implementation of this policy will ensure that pregnant learners have the right to remain in school during their pregnancy and can return after childbirth. The government was also supported to develop referral tools to strengthen linkages between schools and health facilities and other social services for improved uptake of services and reporting. UN investment in these initiatives will go a long way to creating safe and non-discriminatory environments in schools, facilitating access to adolescent-friendly sexual and reproductive health services and supporting the re-entry to school of girls who become pregnant.







## OUTPUT 3.4

### Private sector development:

Enhanced multi-stakeholder capacity and improved business environment for a resilient, productive, competitive and innovative private sector, including micro, small and medium enterprises

#### EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH STEAM AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

STEAM drives innovation, economic growth and sustainable development by equipping individuals with the skills needed to solve real-world challenges. In developing economies, STEAM is particularly important for fostering local innovation, bridging skills gaps and supporting industries such as manufacturing, digital technology and environmental sustainability. Through Lesotho's membership of Youth Connekt Africa, 20 youths accessed regional networks and business opportunities, significantly enhancing their entrepreneurial prospects. These efforts have positioned young innovators in Lesotho as key drivers of economic transformation, ensuring equitable access to opportunities for all, particularly marginalized groups.

Lesotho's STEAM initiative attracted interest from over 1,900 young Basotho. From this group, 200 youth innovators were selected to participate in a boot camp offering opportunities to develop ideas through problem-solving, prototyping and pitching, improve technical and entrepreneurial skills and receive mentorship from industry experts, transforming their innovations into marketable products or services. Of the boot camp participants, 30 top innovators (16 women and 14 men), including two persons with disabilities, received grants to advance their projects and benefit from mentorship by industry experts, helping to transform their innovations.

The government, with support from UNDP, launched the SDG Investor Map, a mechanism for mobilizing SDG-aligned private sector investment.



UNDP supported women-led micro, small and medium enterprises through Her Empire, an initiative that capacitates women-led organizations for improved business sustainability and job creation. The 2024 cohort had 34 participants who were trained on topics such as recordkeeping, marketing, stock control systems and forecasting, after which they received mentorship and coaching for a year to ensure effective implementation of the training content.

Local women-led micro, small and medium enterprises were supported to participate in the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) Business forum held in Rwanda in 2024. This forum provides opportunities for networking with industry leaders, exploring new market opportunities in the African region and gaining insight into innovative trade solutions that enhance operational efficiency. Two women-led businesses, drawn from the Her Empire II cohort to facilitate implementation of Her AfCFTA and the AfCFTA Protocol on Women and Youth, were given an opportunity to discuss the challenges micro, small and medium enterprises should address and the opportunities they can tap into to enhance their businesses and generate employment. The selected business owners were able to identify potential markets and are registered

with Sokokuu Africa, an African Electronic Trade Group that enables them to leverage the pan-African digital marketplace to access AfCFTA markets. Through engagement at the AfCFTA Business Forum, a proposal was developed to foster collaboration between businesses in Rwanda, Ghana and Lesotho.

### STRENGTHENING DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Recognizing the economic power of the diaspora, the government, with support from IOM and UNDP, advanced policies to leverage diaspora remittances and investments, which contributed 23.7 percent of gross domestic product in 2023. To facilitate structured engagement, the Diaspora Directorate in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations developed a Diaspora Communication Strategy and an Online Diaspora Platform. This platform, managed by the Basotho Diaspora Association, has strengthened collaboration between the diaspora and the government, allowing members to share investment opportunities and mobilize resources. By enabling diaspora-led fundraising and joint investments, the initiative has enhanced financial inclusion and unlocked new avenues for economic growth, ensuring that the diaspora's role in national development is maximized.





## 2.3 UN WORKING BETTER TOGETHER: COHERENCE, EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY

### Enhancing efficiency and sustainability: Operating as one

The UN Operations Management Team, chaired by the UNICEF Representative, advanced efficiency, sustainability and inclusivity across five technical working groups: human resources, common premises, ICT, procurement and finance. The team reviewed the Business Operation Strategy, developed a 2024 workplan and oversaw its implementation with UNCT guidance.

### Communicating together for impact

In 2024, the United Nations Communications Group (UNCG) in Lesotho played a pivotal role in amplifying the 'Birth, Reflection, Revival' theme of the country's bicentennial celebrations, fostering national pride and youth engagement through dialogues hosted by His Majesty King Letsie III. By strategically supporting initiatives under this theme, the UNCG helped communicate impactful messages that encouraged young people to reconnect with Lesotho's history, heritage and values. Throughout the year, the UNCG also supported monthly thematic events focused on key development priorities such as food security, education, democracy, water, tourism and culture, aligning these efforts with the Cooperation Framework's *Ka Lebelo La Ntsoekhe*. By leveraging television, social media and print media, the group effectively increased public awareness of Lesotho's development progress.

A significant milestone was the production of a coffee table book, celebrating the UN-Government of Lesotho partnership and highlighting historical milestones and development achievements. Additionally, quarterly newsletters documented and showcased the tangible results of UN programmes, reinforcing their impact on Basotho communities. The UNCG also leveraged key international observances, including UN Day, International Women's Day, 16 Days of Activism Against GBV and the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, as platforms to

drive advocacy and public discourse on critical development issues.

The UNCG further strengthened Lesotho's global visibility by coordinating high-profile visits, including that of UN Secretary-General António Guterres, senior UN officials and international dignitaries. These visits, widely covered by regional and global media, underscored the UN's commitment to advancing Lesotho's development agenda. The UNCG's efforts were particularly instrumental in increasing Lesotho's international presence during the 79th UN General Assembly, where an event hosted by Her Majesty, Queen Masenate Mohato Seeiso and Prince Harry, Duke of Sussex attracted key dignitaries and gained widespread media coverage from outlets such as *Hello!*, *People* and *Town and Country* magazines and *New York Post*.

Through strategic communications, resource mobilization and high-level engagement, the UNCG effectively showcased Lesotho's challenges and opportunities, strengthened international partnerships and reinforced the UN's commitment to supporting a sustainable and inclusive future for all Basotho.

### UN Secretary-General's strategy on disability inclusion

**Sensitization and strategic planning:** In February 2024, the Resident Coordinator's Office, through the Disability Inclusion Officer, conducted a sensitization session for the Programme Coherence Team (PCT) on the importance of integrating disability inclusion into its work. This led to the incorporation of key recommendations into the PCT's two-year plan for 2024 and 2025. Later in the year, the PCT made significant progress by endorsing the disability inclusion marker, a key criterion for quality assurance in joint programming. This initiative was presented to and approved by the UNCT in September.

**Commitment to disability inclusion:** The Joint Steering Committee endorsed disability inclusion as a fundamental aspect of programme design, implementation and reporting. As a result:

- three collaborative programmes – the Data Initiative, Youth Power Hub and Climate Resilience Project – were successfully tested



## KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



**Human resources:** Completed a **salary survey**, introduced **monthly local payroll processing**, developed an **integrated induction package** and mandated **training on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse**. Ongoing initiatives include **financial literacy training** and improved **recruitment processes**.



**ICT:** Enhanced sustainability through **proper disposal of equipment**, **solar panel installation** and **reduced printing**. Improvements in **internet connectivity**, **digital signature systems** and **boardroom accessibility for people with disabilities** remain ongoing.



**Procurement:** Optimized **external services** (advertising, call/data contracts, freight forwarding) and **internal services** (printing, security, cleaning) while advancing **energy monitoring and sustainability efforts**. Pending actions include **catering services** and **conference facility improvements**.



**Common premises:** Managed **asset safety**, **fire safety**, **waste collection** and **generator service agreements**. Ongoing efforts focus on **catering**, **environmental sustainability** and **disability inclusion**, with pending work on **bathroom proposals**, **maintenance** and **printing services**.



**Finance and cash transfers:** Leveraged the **UN Partners Portal** to enhance collaboration and **partner management processes**. The next phase will **explore automation** to improve efficiency, streamline processes and establish **audit trails for transactions** across agencies.



- and enhanced to align with disability-inclusion principles.
- the Resident Coordinator championed disability inclusion in Resident Coordinator’s Office (RCO) and UNCT meetings, ensuring that disability rights remained a standing agenda item weekly in RCO meetings, monthly in Operations Management Team sessions and quarterly in UNCT gatherings.

Disability rights initiatives have been integrated across all RCO portfolios, facilitating better access to interagency structures, such as the Outcome Result Groups, Programme Coherence Team and UNCT. This increase in disability-related efforts led to direct action, such as the Disability Inclusion Officer lobbying for improved physical accessibility at WFP facilities.

The following initiatives have been put in place to advance disability inclusion within the Cooperation Framework to strengthen coordination across UN agencies:

- allocation of dedicated slots for disability-related discussions at UNCT meetings
- provision of regular updates and requests for action

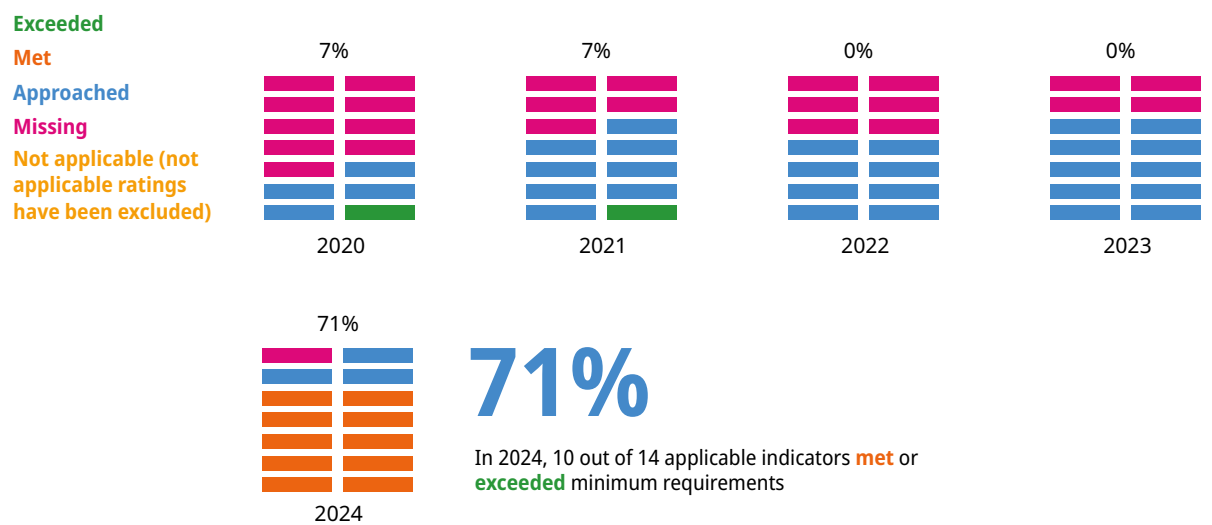
- fostering of a stronger sense of ownership of disability inclusion among UNCT members.

In line with the UN Disability Inclusion Strategy and through the Resident Coordinator’s leadership, this proactive approach has empowered the UN to address disability inclusion on both internal and external fronts, reinforcing its commitment to ensuring that no one is left behind.

*Capacity-building and awareness initiatives:* The training and sensitization of UN staff and security personnel has yielded significant results for disability inclusivity:

- Operations Management Team Working Group training led to a shift in attitudes towards disability, resulting in the integration of disability-related activities into Business Operations Strategy plans.
- Human Resources Working Group initiatives included a wellness week that highlighted awareness of diseases that may lead to disabilities, resulting in increased staff prioritization of eye healthcare.
- Security personnel training at UN premises fostered more inclusive behaviour. Visitors with disabilities reported positive experiences, such as officers introducing

Figure 1: Progress on disability inclusion scorecard, percentage of indicators by status, 2020–2024



Source: UN Sustainable Development Group ((UNINFO), 2025

themselves and offering personalized assistance.

*Raising awareness through UN-led initiatives:*

Various awareness-raising strategies and activities helped to further disability inclusion:

- Operations Management Team monthly updates improved interagency collaboration on disability inclusion.
- UNDP targeted individuals with disabilities in their STEAM project, leading to the recruitment of two candidates with disabilities.
- WFP implemented a physical accessibility plan.
- UNAIDS and UNDP recruited UN volunteers with disabilities to support disability inclusion programmes.

*Strengthening UN-Government partnerships on disability inclusion:*

The UN strengthened its partnership with the government, engaging in key national disability inclusion efforts.

- Public statements of solidarity were presented at major events, including at the inauguration of the Disability Advisory Council, on World Assistive Technology Day and on International Day of Persons with Disabilities.
- International Albinism Awareness Day was commemorated in collaboration with the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development and the Albino Aid Multi-Purpose Association, highlighting specific needs of persons with albinism.

*Policy development and advocacy:* The UN was invited to participate in developing two major national policies, the Assistive Technology Policy and the Disability Mainstreaming Policy. These policies are expected to recognize the UN's role in promoting disability inclusion as a key development priority. In addition, the RCO (via the Disability Inclusion Officer) contributed to the validation of Lesotho's Digital Health Strategy, ensuring the integration of digital accessibility considerations.

## Monitoring and evaluation

In light of the UN Secretary-General's Data Strategy and ongoing UN reforms, the UN monitoring and evaluation initiatives in

Lesotho have been focused on supporting the government to bridge critical national data gaps, particularly for reporting on national and international frameworks.

The UN Monitoring and Evaluation Team has therefore partnered with the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning to develop the Joint Programme on Development Data and Innovations Proposal, aimed at strengthening Lesotho's national statistics system. This initiative seeks to address key data gaps essential for effective reporting on NSDP II, the 2030 Agenda, the African Union Agenda 2063 and the Southern African Development Community Indicative Plan.

The UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2024–2028) and the accompanying Results Framework in the UNINFO online platform allow for the tracking of SDG progress by outputs and sub-outputs for comprehensive reporting to member states and other stakeholders. The UNINFO platform enhances transparency, improves monitoring and consolidates the efforts of all UN agencies and development and national implementing partners.

Looking to the future, as the country reports progress towards achieving the SDGs, the UNCT will provide substantial support to Lesotho in preparing for its Voluntary National Review 2025. As 2030 approaches, the Monitoring and Evaluation Team's data-driven strategies will ensure Lesotho can accurately showcase its achievements and challenges in advancing sustainable development.

## Joint monitoring visit

The joint monitoring visit to Mokhotlong (29 July – 1 August 2024) brought together UN agencies, government ministries and civil society to assess HIV, sexual and reproductive health, and GBV among men, boys, adolescent girls and young women. The visit highlighted high school dropout rates, early pregnancies, child marriage and new HIV infections, which have worsened due to economic hardship and El Niño-induced droughts. Many children, left unsupervised, face



exploitative labour and unsafe relationships, while cultural resistance hinders sexuality education and family planning. Despite these challenges, opportunities have emerged, including strengthening data management and health services, and engaging men and boys in behaviour change initiatives through the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority.

The visit also uncovered key human rights violations related to the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, including forced displacement, lack of compensation, destruction of homes, restricted water access, and exposure to hazardous conditions. Communities in Tsekong and Ha-Konki reported cracked houses, lost farmland and a lack of relocation plans, along with intimidation by security forces, non-transparent compensation processes and exclusion from decision-making. Rising GBV and teenage pregnancies, linked to construction workers, further increased vulnerabilities.

Key actions:

- The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority was tasked with ensuring transparent compensation and relocation, establishing a grievance mechanism,

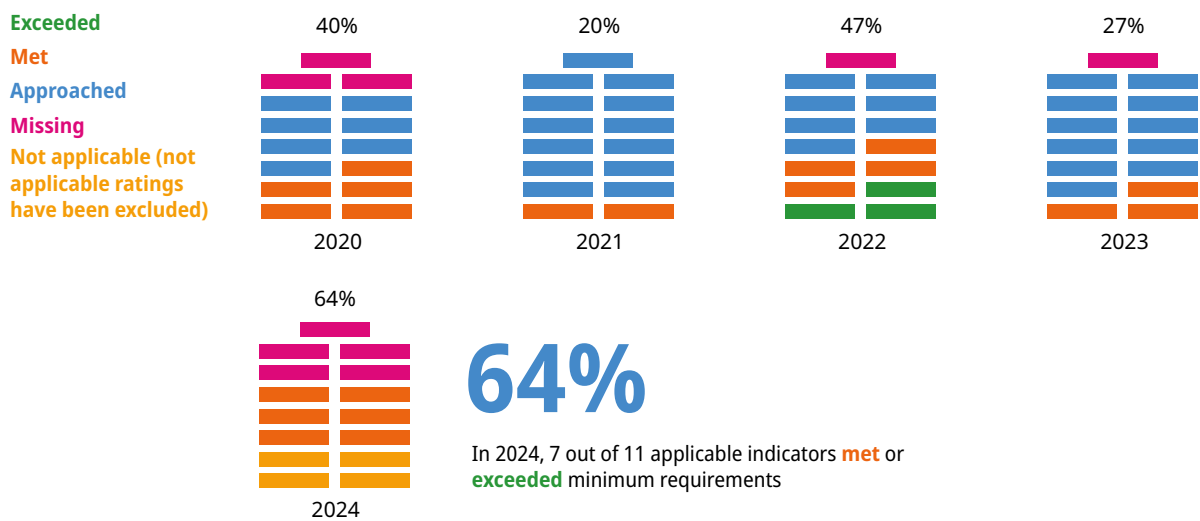
improving health and safety and providing clean water.

- The government was tasked with strengthening oversight and accountability, enforcing human rights standards and securing land rights, access to justice and alternative livelihoods for displaced families.
- UN agencies and civil society were tasked with monitoring compliance, providing legal assistance and advocating for gender-responsive interventions to address GBV.

Delivering impact: The Gender Programming Group

The Gender Programming Group has made significant progress in advancing gender equity, GBV prevention and PSEA awareness across the UN system. It successfully coordinated common messaging on these issues, leading to the development of information, education and communication materials being displayed across all floors of UN House and the formulation of standardized PSEA training to ensure uniformity across agencies. A major milestone was achieved with the submission of Lesotho’s long-overdue CEDAW report, for which the Gender Programming Group coordinated the UNCT’s corresponding report

Figure 2: Progress on gender scorecard, percentage of indicators by status, 2020–2024



Source: UN Sustainable Development Group (UNINFO), 2025

with OHCHR support. Additionally, under the Joint Gender and GBV Programme, the multipurpose centre for GBV survivors is undergoing renovations, preparing to provide safe shelter and support as demand continues to grow. However, despite these achievements, limited funding commitments have hindered the execution of several joint activities, emphasizing the urgent need for sustained financial support to fully realize the Gender Programming Group's vision of gender equality and survivor protection in Lesotho.

### **The Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus Group**

In response to El Niño-induced food insecurity, UN agencies in Lesotho mobilized rapidly, repurposing existing funds and coordinating joint fundraising efforts within the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus Group. As a direct result, the UNCT secured US\$2 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund, which was allocated to WFP, UNFPA and UNICEF to scale up emergency food and resilience programmes. Recognizing the escalating crisis, the UN Assistant Secretary-General and Climate Crisis Coordinator for El Niño and La Niña, Reena Ghelani, undertook a four-day UN mission in Lesotho with UN Resident

Coordinator Amanda Khozi Mukwashi, engaging directly with government officials, affected communities and humanitarian partners. This high-level engagement resulted in the announcement by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) of an additional US\$2 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund, reinforcing the UN's swift crisis response and long-term preparedness efforts. Fully aligned with the National Response Plan, UN system support prioritized humanitarian response, resilience-building and development, with nine UN agencies (FAO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and WHO) reprogramming or repurposing 109,698,966 maloti, approximately 5.5 percent of the government's identified response gap of over 2 billion maloti. Most of these funds were directed towards social protection, social safety nets, agriculture and food security, ensuring that the most vulnerable populations received critical support during the crisis while strengthening long-term food security and resilience mechanisms. This coordinated and strategic UN response underscores the power of collective action, resource mobilization and high-level advocacy in addressing humanitarian crises while building sustainable development solutions.





2.4 LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The implementation of planned activities faced several challenges, including limited financial resources that constrained infrastructure upgrades and workforce expansion and resulted in severe shortages of skilled professionals. However, these challenges also presented opportunities, such as leveraging multisectoral partnerships and donor support to address resource gaps, implementing task-shifting and training programmes to mitigate workforce shortages and enhancing governance through training and technical support. Phased integration of digital health solutions and infrastructure upgrades ensured scalability, while community-

centred awareness campaigns engaged local leaders to facilitate improved outcomes.

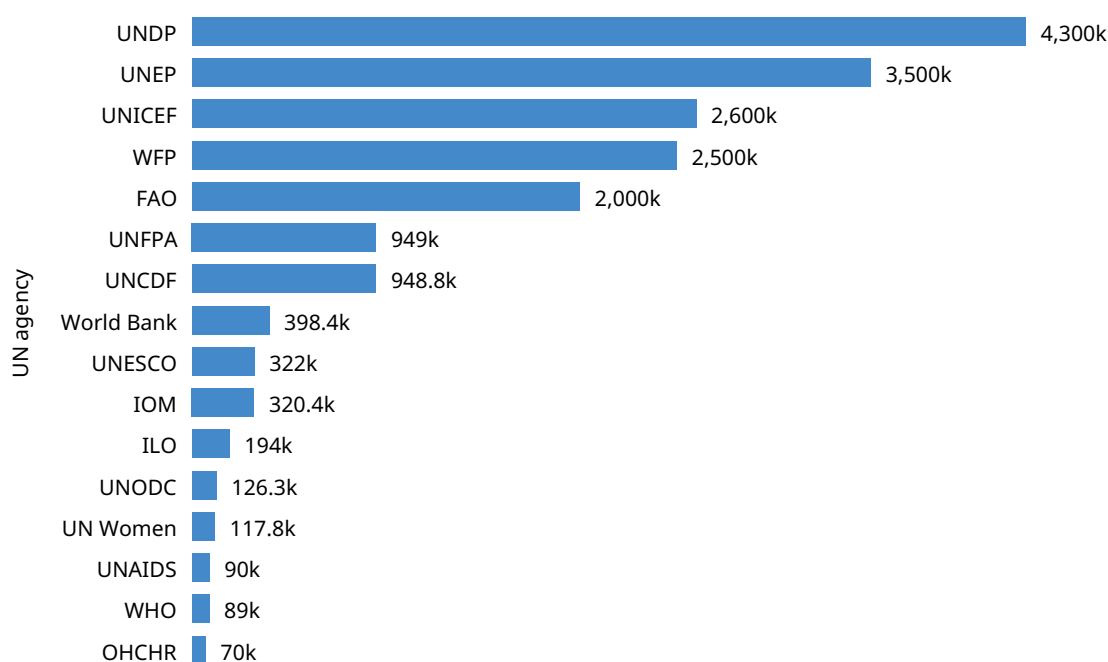
Despite strong interest in collaborative efforts among UN agencies, the lack of dedicated funding has hindered the implementation of joint programmes, particularly in the area of education transformation. Nonetheless, the relevant UN agencies – for example, UNICEF, UNDP, WFP and UNFPA – have conceptualized a Joint UN Programme for Youth Empowerment, which has pillars on education, health and improved livelihoods. Deliberate resource mobilization efforts in 2025 will be intensified in order to support implementation of this programme.

2.5 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

Table 2: Cooperation Framework budget, mobilized funds and expenditure for 2024

Cooperation Framework pillar	Cooperation Framework outcome	Required resources (US\$)	Available resources (US\$)	Expenditure (US\$)	Delivery rate (%)
Pillar 1: Good governance and social equity	People living in Lesotho are better served by improved governance systems and structures that are inclusive and accountable, with people empowered, engaged and enjoying human rights, peace, justice and security by 2028.	10,831,608	10,441,183	6,710,851	64.2
Pillar 2: Equitable food systems, environmental sustainability and climate resilience	All people living in Lesotho enjoy improved food and nutrition security, with transformed national food systems, and benefit from natural resources and green growth that is risk-informed and climate-resilient.	14,887,898	5,240,513	3,429,364	65.4
Pillar 3: People's well-being and economic development	People living in Lesotho, especially the most vulnerable, have equitable and sustainable access to social services, increased decent employment in an enabling business environment, and benefit from transformed economic development.	3,020,270	2,973,047	1,780,776	60.0
Total (all pillars and outcomes)		28,739,776	18,654,743	11,920,991	63.9

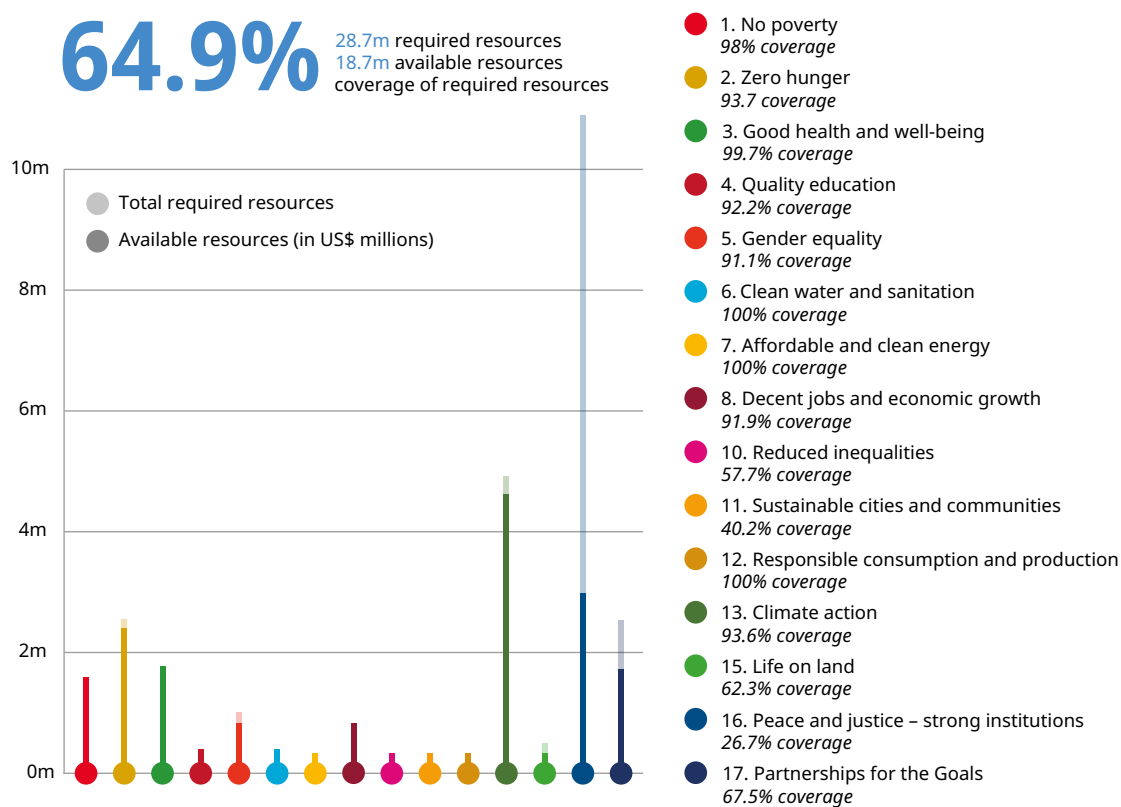
Figure 3: Mobilized funding in US\$ by UN agency, 2024



Source: UN Sustainable Development Group (UNINFO), 2025

Note: UNEP = United Nations Environment Programme, UNODC = United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

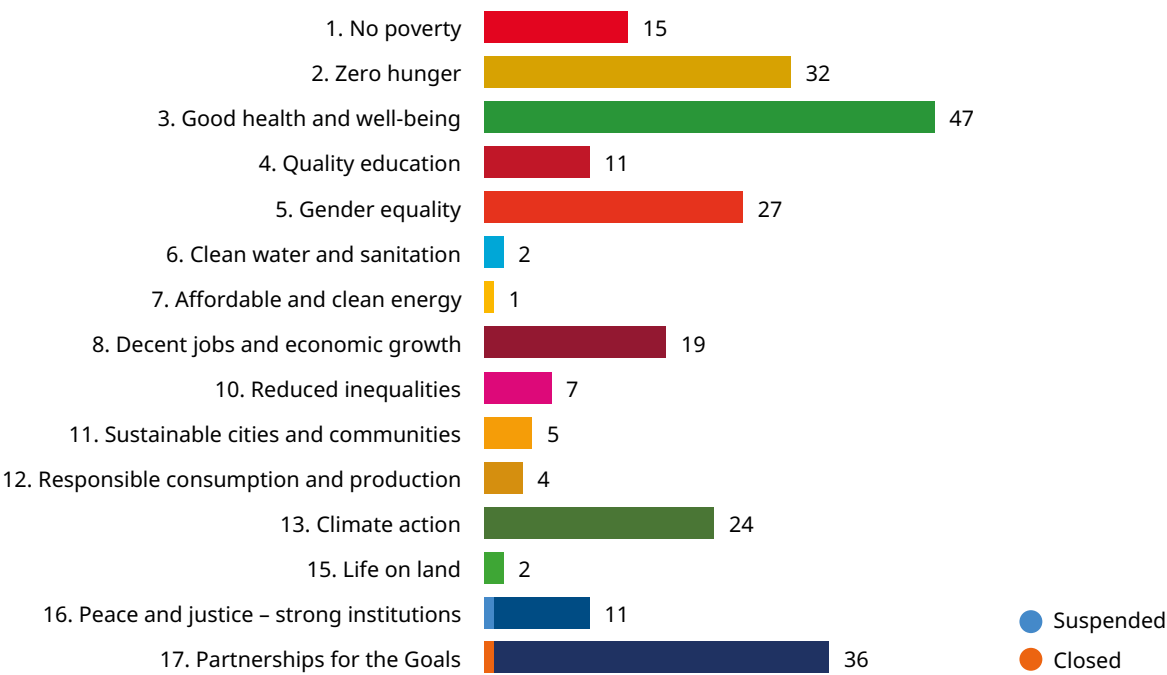
Figure 4: UN funding gap by SDG in US\$ millions, 2024



Source: UN Sustainable Development Group (UNINFO), 2025

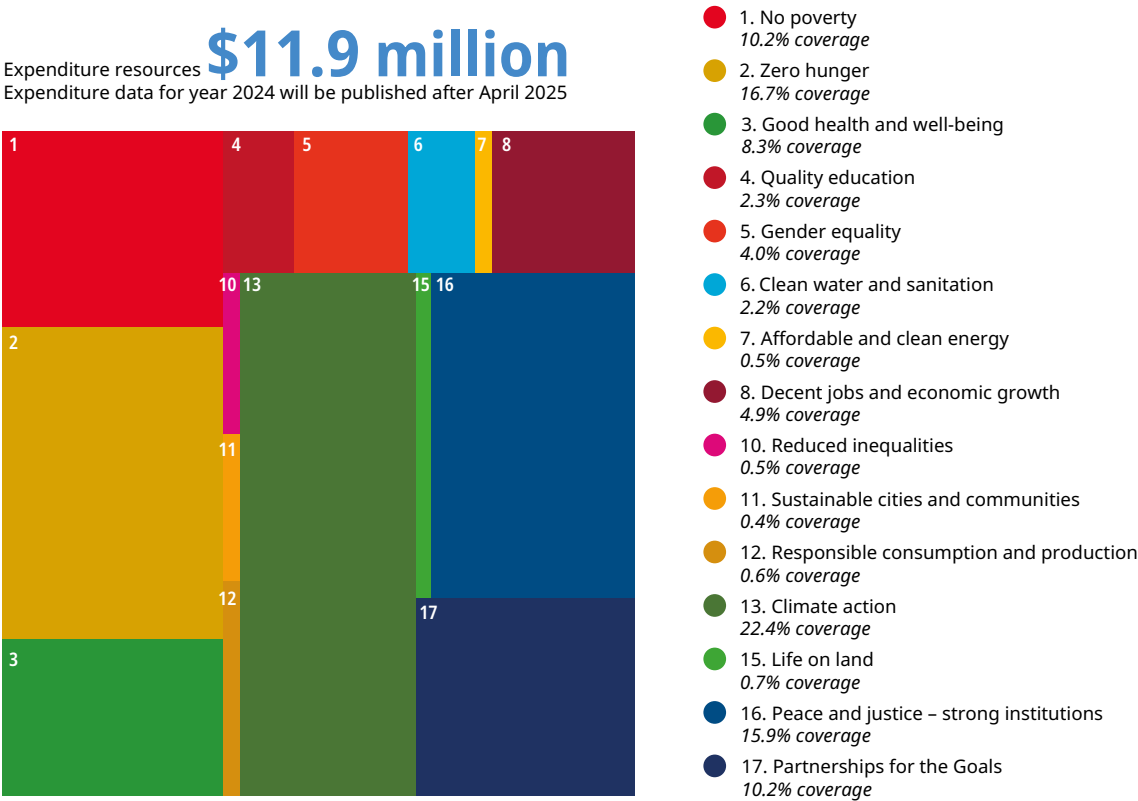


Figure 5: Number of programmatic interventions per SDG, 2024



Source: UN Sustainable Development Group (UNINFO), 2025

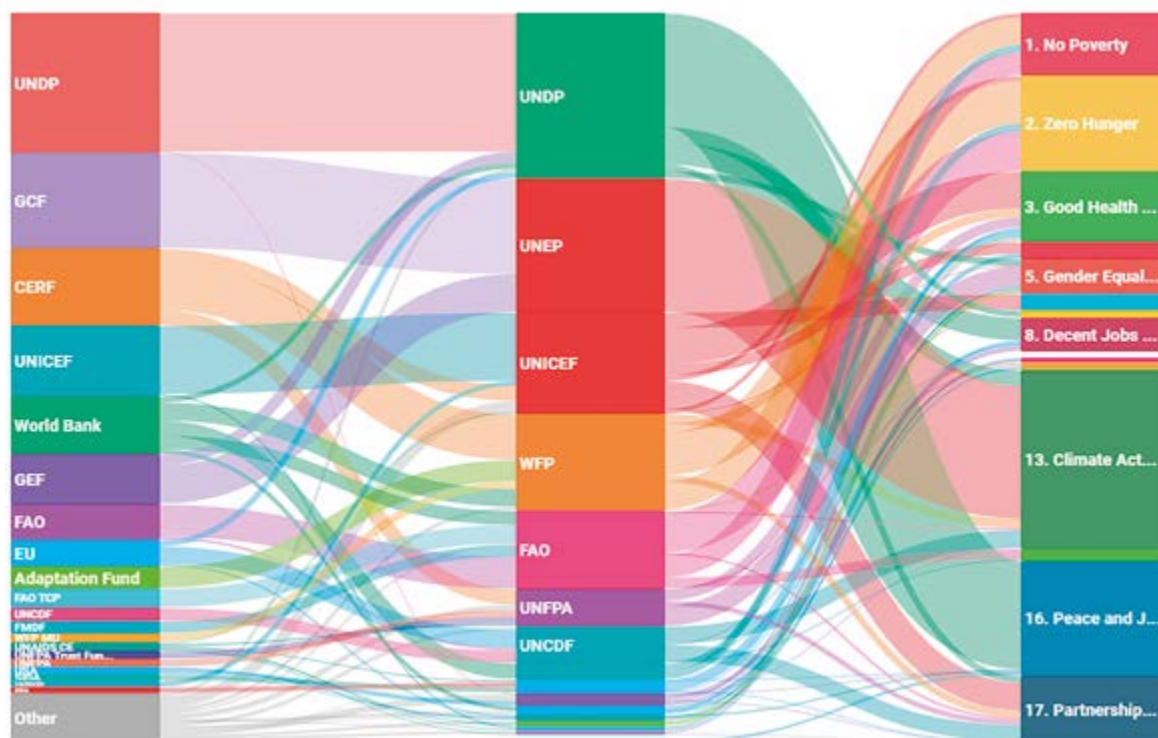
Figure 6: UN contribution to expenditure resources by SDG, 2024



Source: UN Sustainable Development Group (UNINFO), 2025

Note: Total UN contribution in 2024 = US\$11.9 million

Figure 7: Leveraging of UN investments to advance achievement of SDGs, 2024



Source: UN Sustainable Development Group (UNINFO), 2025

## 2.6 SUPPORT TO PARTNERSHIPS AND FINANCING THE 2030 AGENDA

The Kingdom of Lesotho hosts a limited number of donor and diplomatic missions, largely due to its small size and geographical position within South Africa, a much larger and more economically advanced country. As a result, many donor missions opt to establish their offices in South Africa, engaging with Lesotho remotely for cost-effectiveness and strategic access. This limited donor presence poses a significant challenge for resource mobilization, as direct engagement opportunities remain constrained. Of the over 40 UN funds, programmes and specialized agencies, only eight UN agencies are resident in Lesotho, alongside five donor missions: the American Embassy, Chinese Embassy, British High Commission, GIZ, European Union and World Bank. The majority of other donor and diplomatic missions operate from Johannesburg and Pretoria, South Africa. While there are a few non-resident partners that have invested significant resources in Lesotho, the limited presence of most donors is a constraining factor for resource mobilization. Regular face-to-face interaction

between partners is a more effective approach to resource mobilization, thus donors based inside the country tend to be more responsive to day-to-day development issues and more likely to allocate resources than those based outside the country.

Despite these challenges, the UN in Lesotho demonstrated resilience, securing new resources for joint programmes, including funding mobilized locally and through private sector partnerships. This underscores the UN's proactive approach to diversifying funding sources and leveraging innovative financing mechanisms to sustain development efforts in the country. The El Niño-related food insecurity caught the attention of the Central Emergency Response Fund and African Development Bank, leading to the commitment of resources to UN Lesotho. Of significance are the resources mobilized locally through UN joint initiatives as well as through public-private partnerships.

### Humanitarian coordination

In 2024, Lesotho was hit by food insecurity with 699,000 people in food crisis, of which 28,000



were at level 4. This led the Prime Minister to declare a state of emergency regarding food insecurity. The UN in Lesotho, in partnership with the OCHA regional office, established a Humanitarian Coordination Team (HCT-light) to support resource mobilization and humanitarian interventions. The team provided both technical and financial support, helping to ensure that the National Emergency Response Plan was successfully implemented.

### Improved partnerships and resource mobilization

*National Emergency Response Plan and implementation:* As a contribution to the implementation of the National Emergency Response Plan, some partners repurposed their existing funds, while others were able to secure new resources. For example, through support from OCHA, three UN agencies (UNICEF, WFP and UNFPA) secured US\$2 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund for emergency interventions, such as food security and nutrition, protection (GBV), and water and sanitation in the southern districts, which were heavily affected by the crisis. Civil society organizations, such as Lesotho Red Cross Society and World Vision Lesotho, were brought on board as implementing partners.

*African Development Bank (AfDB) Climate Action Window – Adaptation:* A concept note was developed and submitted to the AfDB Climate Action Window by UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO and FAO in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, Nutrition and Food Security. This has been approved for funding amounting to US\$5.8 million for implementation. The objective of the proposed programme is building resilience for inclusive food and nutrition

security in Lesotho. Preparations are under way to develop a full proposal.

The same agencies have submitted a programme preparation funding request to AfDB. If successful, the UNCT will have access to an additional US\$260,000. These funds will help in conducting pre-project assessments such as social and environmental risk assessments, as well as support development of the full proposal.

*Locally mobilized resources:* UN agencies have pooled resources to respond to emerging needs of the UN as a collective. An estimated total of US\$3,261,330.42 was locally mobilized to finance the establishment of a multipurpose GBV centre; disability inclusion; high-level visits of the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, Assistant Secretary-General and the heads of UN Rome-based organizations.

*Public-private partnerships:* The UN has been able to mobilize both government (the ministries of gender and defence, as well as other line ministries) and private resources (Vodacom Lesotho) for the establishment of the multipurpose GBV centre. Resources mobilized are in-kind, human and financial.

*Development partner coordination:* In 2024, four Development Partners Coordination Forum meetings, one Aid Coordination Forum meeting and one Joint Steering Committee meeting were held. These meetings provided platforms for information-sharing on emerging development issues and accountability for commitments between government and development partners, as well as resource mobilization.

Table 3: Resource mobilization pipeline

Project	Donor	Budget (US\$)	Proposed	Approved	Secured	Not approved
Central Emergency Response Fund rapid response: Lesotho 2024 (El Niño-related drought)	Central Emergency Response Fund	2,000,000			•	
Building resilience for inclusive food and nutrition security	AfDB	5,800,000		•		
Project preparation fund	AfDB	260,000	•			
GBV multipurpose centre	French Embassy	10,431	•			
Locally mobilized funds	UN, Government of Lesotho, Vodacom Lesotho	3,261,330			•	
Supporting community-driven violence reduction and sustainable peace in Lesotho	Peacebuilding Fund	1,524,750			•	
Facilitating regular migration and decent work through implementation of labour migration policy	Migration Multi-Purpose Trust Fund	1,700,000				•





## Chapter 3:

# Key focus for 2025

The UNCT in Lesotho remains committed to supporting the government in achieving long-term development goals and the SDGs. Building on 2024 progress, efforts will focus on deepening impact, addressing emerging challenges and fostering sustainable and inclusive growth.

### KEY FOCUS AREAS



**Governance and social equity:** The UN will support the **passage of the Omnibus Bill**, ensuring constitutional reforms, including the **establishment of the Human Rights Commission**. Public sector efficiency will be enhanced through **competency-based recruitment, leadership coaching and public financial management reforms**. **GBV prevention and response efforts** will also be intensified.



**SDG progress and national review:** The government will present its **Voluntary National Review at the High-Level Political Forum 2025 in New York**. The UN will provide **financial and technical support** to ensure a **comprehensive assessment** of SDG progress and challenges and required policy actions.



**Climate resilience and sustainable development:** The UN will deploy a **comprehensive approach to climate action**, ensuring commitments align with global obligations. The **SDG Investor Map** will guide **private sector investment** in **manufacturing, agriculture, healthcare, renewable energy and financial services**. Efforts will also **advance climate-smart agriculture, strengthen disaster preparedness and build resilience against environmental shocks**.



**Health and social protection:** The UN will support **HIV and tuberculosis interventions**, including the **rollout of long-acting injectable cabotegravir for HIV prevention**. Health system governance and **digital transformation** will be prioritized, along with **maternal and newborn care expansion**.

### PARTNERSHIPS AND RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

To achieve these goals, the UN will strengthen partnerships with government, development partners, civil society and the private sector. The Cooperation Framework will channel over US\$300 million into Lesotho's development programme over four years. New joint

programmes will drive resource mobilization, ensuring funding and technical expertise for ambitious interventions.

By fostering collaboration and leveraging collective strengths, the UNCT aims to maximize impact and ensure development benefits reach all corners of Lesotho.



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