



UN75
2020 AND BEYOND

UN DAY 2020



INTRODUCTION

The United Nations in Lesotho celebrated 2020 UN Day on Friday 23rd October, as the 24th October fell on a weekend. The celebrations consisted of a clean-up campaign in the morning and a model UN event in the afternoon. The UN in Lesotho also launched an online essay competition in partnership with the European Union earlier this year, where Basotho youth were asked to be a part of the UN75 conversation by writing essays which express their hopes and fears for 2045, when the UN turns 100. The top ten essays were selected through a rigorous marking process by the UN and the EU, and the prize giving ceremony was held on 30 October 2020 at the EU Residence in Maseru where the top essay writers got to interact with the UN Resident Coordinator and the EU ambassador over lunch as one of the competition prizes.



UN STAFF MEMBERS JERUSALEMA DANCE



THE CLEAN UP CAMPAIGN

The clean-up campaign was designed to complement His Majesty King Letsie III and the Prime Minister, Dr Moeketsi Majoro's, 'Operation Hloekisa Lesotho', "keep Lesotho clean". It was attended by UN staff in Lesotho. Resident Coordinator, Salvator Niyonzima, and UNICEF Country Representative and UNCG Chair, Anurita Bains, provided opening remarks for the event, thanking everyone for their attendance and for their commitment to stay and deliver throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite the heat, the clean-up campaign was a success. UN staff were provided with disposable gloves, garbage bags and clean-up sticks and collected litter in the area surrounding the UN compound and the golf course. The litter was collected and taken for waste separation so that recyclable material would be recycled, and non-recyclable material would be taken to the dumping site, whilst the clean-up sticks were retained by the UN for future clean-up campaigns. The morning's proceedings closed with remarks from Resident Coordinator Salvator Niyonzima and a performance by musician Sentsho who composed a special UN75 song titled: UN ke tshepo ya sechaba, "the UN is the hope of the nation".

One area of improvement for the clean-up campaign would be to reduce the amount of single-use plastic. Both the plastic gloves and garbage bags used by all UN staff were single use plastic, which although the most economic option, they are not be the most environmentally friendly. In the future, a more environmentally friendly alternative will be sought, or staff could use one plastic bag per group.



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As staff members, we are really proud to have been able to clean up around the UN house.

MODEL UNITED NATIONS

The model UN event in the afternoon combined the physical presence of the Minister of Education and Training, Hon. Ntlhoi Motsamai, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, Hon. 'Matšepo Ramakoae, the European Union Ambassador to Lesotho, Christian Manahl, UN Resident Coordinator, Salvator Niyonzima, UNICEF Country Representative and UNCG Chair, Anurita Bains, WFP Country Representative, Aurore Rusiga, UNDP Resident Representative Betty Wabunoha and Deputy Resident Representative Nessie Golakai as well as many other UN staff, with the virtual presence of Youth Guest Speaker, Muvhango Actress, Liteboho Molise and 14 schools and universities.

The event opened with remarks from Salvator Niyonzima, who stressed the adverse socio-economic impacts of the pandemic, the continuous impacts of climate change and the pressing need for the UN in Lesotho to support the Government and population of Lesotho, a pre-recorded video from Liteboho Molise and remarks on the importance of maintaining access to education from Anurita Bains. Christian Manahl indicated that the EU believes in multilateralism, which is why it partnered with the UN Lesotho.

Mr Manahl subsequently announced the winners of the UN75 online essay competition before the model UN debate started. The model UN debate hosted 14 schools virtually, who represented 20 UN member states in a debate at the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Although the model UN event started late, it finished on time. Sentsho performed again, whilst the winners of the model UN event were decided. The winners were announced by Hon. Ntlhoi Motsamai (MoET). Hon. 'Matšepo Ramakoae (MoFA) provided the closing remarks, thanking the participants for their articulate portrayal of 'the future we want, the UN we need' (the theme for UN Day 2020), also stressing the importance of addressing the adverse socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 and climate change and thanking the UN for their continued support to the development of Lesotho.

The entire event was streamed on Bokamoso FM and Sky Alpha Radio and TV. [The online Sky Alpha Radio platform alone reached over 15 countries, with over 400,000 listeners.](#) Overall, the event was a success; participants were very articulate and made very relevant remarks to the work of the UN in Lesotho.



UN75 ESSAY COMPETITION PRIZE GIVING CEREMONY



In partnership with the EU in Lesotho, the UN75 essay competition which called on youth between the ages of 18-35, was well received by the public in Lesotho. The essay question was asking: “what kind of world do you want to create by 2045, and how can we collectively get there?”. The essays reflected ideas from youth on what can be done differently in order to achieve the world they want both for themselves and future generations in 25 years time.

The winner of the essay competition, Grace Makwaza from Machabeng college, expressed that they were all grateful for the opportunity: “I feel that as young people we have a lot to say especially on issues of global importance such as the UN75 initiative, however there are usually very few platforms available to express ourselves, so I am glad that the UN created this essay competition”.

Mr Salvator Niyonzima, the UN Resident Coordinator in Lesotho and Mr Christian Manahl of the EU presented the prizes to the winners which included laptops, tablets and cell phones. Mr Niyonzima encouraged the winners to never stop pursuing their dreams as well as continuing to learn.

The top three essays, will be published on the UN Lesotho website and that of the EU Delegation in Lesotho. Further, a booklet will be produced of the top 10 essays, which will be publicly available.

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