



UNITED NATIONS  
LESOTHO



COVID-19  
RESPONSE

# COVID-19 SOCIO ECONOMIC RESPONSE PLAN



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## INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 crisis is more than just a health emergency; it is likely to have a profound and negative impact on economies and livelihoods globally. Further, the anticipated prolonged global economic slowdown will adversely impact the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.<sup>1</sup>

As of the 26<sup>th</sup> August 2020, the Kingdom of Lesotho has recorded over 1,000 positive COVID-19 cases and is showing signs of extrapolating growth in positive results. As a result of the pandemic, the projection for economic growth in 2020/21 has been revised downwards from 0.4% to -5.1%.<sup>2</sup> Whilst the health crisis is likely to overstretch an already fragile health system, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable, the economic crisis is likely to result in an increase in unemployment, food insecurity and ultimately poverty, potentially reversing years of progress made towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Government's recovery plan has been repeatedly set back due to lack of financing and delays in drafting the final plan. Consequently, the Government of Lesotho has appealed to local development partners for assistance.

The UN Secretary General outlines three critical components of the UN's efforts to save lives, protect people, and rebuild better: (i) a Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, the health response led by the World Health Organization (WHO); (ii) a COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, led by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA); and (iii) a UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19, led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).<sup>3</sup>

Following from an earlier socioeconomic impact assessment of COVID-19 on the Kingdom of Lesotho<sup>4</sup>, the United Nations in Lesotho has developed this COVID-19 Socioeconomic Response Plan to support the Government of Lesotho to address the urgent short- and medium-term socioeconomic needs of the population. The recovery phase is led by the Government of Lesotho; however, the United Nations in Lesotho will support the Government of Lesotho by providing policy advisory and programme support, alongside mobilising financial resources for identified priority areas.

This report focuses on the five pillars outlined in the UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19: (i) Health First: Protecting Health Services and Systems during the Crisis; (ii) Protecting People: Social Protection and Basic Services; (iii) Economic Response and Recovery: Protecting Jobs, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, and Informal Sector Workers; (iv) Macroeconomic Response and Multilateral Collaboration; and (v) Social Cohesion and Community Resilience. At the same time, all five pillars consider the overarching principles of leaving no one behind, gender equality, environmental sustainability and building back better.

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<sup>1</sup> Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19

<sup>2</sup> Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on the Kingdom of Lesotho

<sup>3</sup> A UN Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19

<sup>4</sup> Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on the Kingdom of Lesotho  
Lesotho COVID-19 Socioeconomic Response Plan

## CONTEXT

The Lesotho COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan has been developed under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, with support from UNDP as technical lead, and in collaboration with the Lesotho UN Country Team (UNCT), including resident and non-resident agencies. International Financial Institutions (IFIs), such as the IMF, World Bank and African Development Bank (AfDB), have also contributed to the development of the response plan, so as to harness every institutions' comparative advantage.

The Lesotho COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan is anchored on the UNDAF (2019 - 2023), to the extent that it is responsive to COVID-19, and the National COVID-19 Response Integrated Plan 2020. It outlines 18 outputs, with a timeframe of 0-36 months, a budget of US\$ 67.6 million and a financing shortfall of US\$ 42.6 million. To date, US\$ 9.4 million has been reprogrammed by the UN in Lesotho to support the Kingdom of Lesotho's COVID-19 response and recovery. It is intended to be a relatively flexible framework that may be adjusted as the pandemic evolves or as more information regarding the impact of the pandemic becomes available.

Finally, the Socio-Economic Response Plan intends to remain fully cognisant of the Kingdom of Lesotho's development agenda. Postponing programmes and reprogramming resources severely risks reducing the Government of Lesotho's capacity to achieve its medium- to long-term agenda, including SDG targets. Similarly, a lack of coordination with IFIs risks duplication of programmes and wastage of financial resources. Therefore, the Lesotho COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan has been designed to complement established development plans, including:

- National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP II), 2018/19 – 2022/23
- The National Economic Recovery Plan (Ministry of Development Planning, Lesotho, in progress)
- African Union Agenda 2063
- United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Lesotho 2019-2023
- Lesotho Preparedness and Response Plan (Ministry of Health Lesotho)
- The National COVID-19 Response Integrated Plan 2020
- The National COVID-19 Education Sector Response Plan 2020
- Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan (WHO)
- Lesotho COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness and Response Project (World Bank)
- WFP Southern Africa COVID-19 Response
- IOM Southern Africa COVID-19 Response
- The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development



Throughout the Socio-Economic Response Plan, the United Nations in Lesotho has adhered to the promise to 'leave no one behind' and mainstream gender in all programmes.

Vulnerable populations, including women, face a higher risk of being excessively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and therefore are carefully considered in programming. Monitoring and data collection will disaggregate by gender, age, geography, socioeconomic status, disability etc. The data will then feed into comprehensive assessments to ensure that the socioeconomic response plan delivers an inclusive recovery strategy that leaves no one behind and incorporates gender mainstreaming.

Globally, older persons are not just struggling with greater health risks but are also likely to be less capable of supporting themselves in isolation. Homeless people, because they may be unable to safely shelter in place, are highly exposed to the danger of the virus. Persons with disabilities could be left without vital support and advocacy due to social distancing. Persons in prisons, in migrant detention centres or in mental health institutions could face higher risk of contracting the virus due to the confined nature of the premises.<sup>5</sup> In Lesotho, persons living with HIV/AIDs, women, returning labour migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers, rural populations, persons living with disabilities, young people, informal workers and low-income families are more likely to suffer extreme adverse consequences from the COVID-19 pandemic<sup>6</sup>. In a country where micronutrient deficiencies among children under five years and women of reproductive age is already widespread, the pandemic is likely to exacerbate the situation by exposing those who are already malnourished to become more vulnerable and immunocompromised and therefore more susceptible to illness.

An already fragile healthcare system is likely to be further stretched and access to any specialist healthcare services in South Africa may be restricted under nationwide lockdowns. There is evidence that access to sexual reproductive health services was suspended under the lockdown, whilst disruptions to supply chains may impact the delivery of antiretrovirals in the country.

Women are more likely to work in the informal sector without any form of social security and therefore are likely to be acutely affected by unemployment. Women are also frequently the main carers and providers for many families in Lesotho, and thus the impact of unemployment will affect whole families. There is a risk that women will take up increasingly exposed jobs in order to earn a living and provide for their families in the wake of growing unemployment. Further, there is also an increased risk of domestic and gender-based violence as household vulnerability escalates.

About 100,000 labour migrants returned from South Africa at the onset of the pandemic. The continued lockdown and closure of borders increases the risk of unemployment, especially for contract and informal workers, and thereby increases the risk of vulnerability among households. Returnees who came back to Lesotho due to loss of employment in South Africa feel "bored, useless and depressed" whilst at home and unable to provide for their families. The cumulative stress mentioned above has had a negative impact on mental health and overall wellbeing and presents need for psychosocial support for male and

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<sup>5</sup> Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19

<sup>6</sup> Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on the Kingdom of Lesotho  
Lesotho COVID-19 Socioeconomic Response Plan

female returnees who are over-stressed due to their perceived “failure to provide for their family who are solely relying on them<sup>7</sup>.”

In line with Agenda 2030, Lesotho demonstrates inclusiveness towards asylum seekers and refugees, by inviting them to access social services, such as health and education, at par with nationals.

Persons with disabilities are likely to be severely impacted by the pandemic due to pre-existing stigma and discrimination and a lack of access to information, basic services and remote or distance-learning options.

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Young people are also likely to be affected under nationwide school closures, which are likely to exacerbate income inequalities. Children who depend on school feeding programmes have been gravely affected by school closures, as hunger and malnutrition rates increase. Families that do not have access to digital technology are likely to be excluded from education opportunities, whilst there is an increased risk that children from low income families may not return to school as they instead support their families to recover lost income. A prolonged slowdown may push young boys to become cattle herders and may increase the prevalence of child marriages<sup>8</sup>. There is a serious risk of reversing gains in access to education and literacy in rural areas if school closures are prolonged.

Smallholder farmers have also been affected by supply chain disruptions that have reduced their access to inputs for winter cropping and medicines for livestock. Whilst the impact of this may not be felt immediately, supply chain disruptions now may affect productivity over the medium-term, which would pose a threat to food security and smallholder incomes, that are already vulnerable to climate change.

The Lesotho COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan recognises the aforementioned vulnerabilities and ensures that no one is left behind in the response.

## BUILDING BACK BETTER

The COVID-19 crisis is likely to have a profound and negative effect on sustainable development efforts. A prolonged global economic slowdown will adversely impact the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.<sup>9</sup> In Lesotho, the pandemic is likely to reverse the gains made on the National Strategic Development Plan, and prospects for attaining the SDGs targets as growth rates fall below sustainable levels.

Therefore, it is imperative that the Lesotho COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan focuses on building back better: supporting a more resilient and inclusive economy that is better able to withstand future shocks. Recovery efforts must strengthen institutional coordination, protect jobs, promote food security, strengthen local supply chains and build economic resilience for sustainable and inclusive economic

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<sup>7</sup> Rapid Assessment of the Livelihood Situation of Returnees and COVID-19 Preparedness and Response in Migration Affected Areas in Lesotho

<sup>8</sup> Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on the Kingdom of Lesotho

<sup>9</sup> Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19  
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growth. The United Nations in Lesotho will work with the Government of Lesotho to ensure that the priorities of the National Strategic Development Plan II are maintained.

*With the right actions, the COVID-19 pandemic can mark the rebirthing of society as we know it today to one where we protect present and future generations.<sup>10</sup>*

## FIVE PILLARS OF THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESPONSE

### CHART 1: FIVE PILLARS OF THE UNDS RESPONSE

**1**  **HEALTH FIRST:**  
Protecting health services and systems during the crisis

**2**  **PROTECTING PEOPLE:**  
Social protection and basic services

**3**  **ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY:**  
Protecting jobs, small and medium-sized enterprises, and the informal sector workers

**4**  **MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION**

**5**  **SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE**

This Lesotho COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan focuses on the five pillars outlined in the UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-Economic Response to COVID-19: (i) Health First: Protecting Health Services and Systems during the Crisis; (ii) Protecting People: Social Protection and Basic Services; (iii) Economic Response and Recovery: Protecting Jobs, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, and Informal Sector Workers; (iv) Macroeconomic Response and Multilateral Collaboration; and (v) Social Cohesion and Community Resilience. At the same time, all five pillars consider the overarching principles of leaving no one behind, gender equality, environmental sustainability and building back better.

The Plan outlines the strategic interventions of the United Nations in Lesotho; it leverages resources and identifies gaps necessary to effectively support the Government of Lesotho's national response and recovery to COVID-19. Based on the individual and joint comparative advantages, the UN, World Bank, African Development Bank and IMF will collaborate to mobilise technical and financial resources and implement strategies to enable Lesotho to recover stronger and faster.

## HEALTH FIRST: PROTECTING HEALTH SERVICES AND SYSTEMS DURING THE CRISIS

Health systems are being overwhelmed by the COVID-19 outbreak. When health systems collapse, deaths from the outbreak itself can quickly be exceeded by deaths from preventable or treatable conditions, no longer managed by a failing health system. It is therefore crucial to maintain essential lifesaving health services even while addressing the pandemic.<sup>11</sup>

Despite relatively high government expenditure on healthcare (10.6% of GDP) and government subsidised access to health services, Lesotho's healthcare system is fragile and much of the population are geographically constrained from accessing health services. Lesotho has high incidences of HIV and TB, high infant and maternal mortality rates and only 6 nurses, 1 physician and 1 pharmacist per 100,000

<sup>10</sup> Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity: Responding to the Socio-Economic Impacts of COVID-19

<sup>11</sup> A UN Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19

people. Further, Lesotho is largely dependent on South Africa for secondary and tertiary healthcare services, which will now be compromised under border closures.<sup>12</sup>

This Lesotho COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan is aimed at preventing any further regression of sustainable human capital development and the continuity of normal health services. The pandemic and associated lockdown has exerted unsustainable pressure on an already pressured health system. Movement restrictions have affected access to essential and continuing health services including HIV treatments, contraception and maternal health services. Assessments conducted by the UN and partners have highlighted that the health response to COVID-19 has made it more difficult for people with pre-existing conditions, including HIV and TB, to access necessary health services. A strike by healthcare workers has only exacerbated the limited capacity of Lesotho's health system.

Through this plan, the UN will identify the largest exposures in the health system brought by the pandemic which may need additional resources and support.

The United Nations in Lesotho has already supported the Government of Lesotho to develop a Lesotho Integrated National COVID-19 Plan and the National Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19, aligned to the WHO guidance. Subsequently, the United Nations in Lesotho has successfully mobilised US\$ 4,053,688 in grant financing under the GF CR-19 Mechanism (C19RM) to support the Government of Lesotho's Integrated National COVID-19 Plan and National Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19. The grant will work towards mitigating the impact on HIV and TB programs from COVID-19, reinforcing the national COVID-19 response and urgent improvements in health and community systems through to 2022.

The United Nations in Lesotho has also mobilized US\$ 1 million under the UN COVID-19 Response and Recovery Multi-Partner Trust Fund to control spread and minimize the social -economic impact of COVID-19 in Lesotho. The funds will strengthen coordination, planning and monitoring at national, district and community level, enhance disease surveillance for rapid case detection and management, investigation, tracing and monitoring of contacts, strengthen mechanisms and measures for infection prevention and control at health facilities and in community settings and will ensure that the continuity of other health services is maintained.

The proposed strategies focus on increasing national preparedness and establishing national mechanisms for an early response in the case of a surge in infectious diseases, and the potential resurgence of COVID-19. The UN will further support a revision of the targets to achieve universal health coverage in light of COVID-19, to ensure that universal health coverage can still be met despite the additional pressure on the health system.

NUMBER OF OUTPUTS: 3

BUDGET: US\$ 5.9 million

AVAILABLE RESOURCES: US\$ 5.4 million

REPROGRAMMED FUNDS: US\$ 350,000

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<sup>12</sup> Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on the Kingdom of Lesotho  
Lesotho COVID-19 Socioeconomic Response Plan



FINANCING GAP: US\$ 450,000

RESPONSIBLE UN AGENCIES: UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO

PARTNERS: Churches, traditional leaders, family, CSOs/networks/initiative groups, Ministries of Finance; Social Development, Health; Development Planning; Gender and Youth, Sports and Recreation; Local Government and Chieftainship Affairs; Justice, Human Rights and Correctional Service; Prime Minister's Office- Disaster Management Authority, BoS, NAC, CHAL, other development partners

TARGET AUDIENCE: the total population of Lesotho, but specific attention for: women and young girls; children and young people in school; women of reproductive age; people living with HIV and under ART including the key populations; migrant workers; victims of domestic violence and sexual violence; people with disabilities

## PROTECTING PEOPLE: SOCIAL PROTECTION AND BASIC SERVICES

The COVID-19 crisis impacts the world's poorest and most vulnerable hardest, with significant intergenerational implications for poor families.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to high healthcare spending, the Government of Lesotho also prioritises relatively high expenditure on social services (4.6% of GDP), which has allowed for the expansion of social services, including government and donor-funded cash transfer programmes. However, a high proportion of the population of Lesotho remain vulnerable and in need of inclusion in social support programmes. Before the COVID-19 crisis, it was estimated that drought had triggered 24% of the population (508,125 individuals) to be food insecure.<sup>14</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to exacerbate individual and household vulnerability and poverty levels. The number of individuals facing food insecurity has increased by 50% to 764,000<sup>15</sup>, whilst poverty is expected to increase by 1.2% between 2020-22 as a direct result of the pandemic, or 1.9% in a worst-case scenario.<sup>16</sup>

The Lesotho COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan aims to prevent any further regression of sustainable human capital development and the continuity of social services. In particular, access to quality education and basic social services must be stabilized, whilst measures must be implemented to prevent gender-based violence and increased inequalities within households and in society.

## SOCIAL PROTECTION

In order to ensure a successful recovery, it is crucial that shock-responsive social protection support is strengthened and increased to ensure that nobody is left behind under the changing environment and to prevent a potential regression of the SDGs. Largely, the priorities of the UNDAF can be maintained, so long as the vulnerable population, who may have changed due to COVID-19, are properly identified.

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<sup>13</sup> A UN Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19

<sup>14</sup> LVAC 2020 and United Nations Lesotho: HCT Response Plan 2019-2020

<sup>15</sup> Government of Lesotho policy document on COVID-19 response

<sup>16</sup> Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on the Kingdom of Lesotho  
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Simultaneously, existing vulnerable and poor households will require increased support to prevent falling deeper into poverty as their limited resilience is undermined by the effects of COVID-19. To cope with reduced and inadequate income, women and adolescent girls may resort to transactional sex to meet their, and their dependents', basic needs, including food. As women have less economic resources than men, they are at heightened risk of adopting negative coping strategies.

A poverty assessment will be necessary to determine the extent of vulnerability and emerging deprivations within the population, building on and enhancing as much possible the existing structures in the social protection sector to ensure its shock-responsiveness. The National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) must ensure that current social protection programmes can operate following a scalability framework, e.g. be scaled-up and scaled-down to respond to shocks, such as the COVID-19 crisis, in an adequate and fast manner. The social protection Management Information System (MIS) must embrace new options of receiving cash transfers through mobile payments. This must all be supported by enhanced coordination between development and humanitarian actors.

## MIGRANTS, REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

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Migrants will likely also need additional support, given the closure of borders and movement restrictions, which limit their ability to work. It will be necessary to map potential migration patterns or migration scenarios to ensure their social protection, access to employment and to ensure that they do not fall into poverty. Socio-economic factors such as unemployment, lack of job opportunities in rural areas and low-income levels have been highlighted as risk factors fueling irregular migration from Lesotho to South Africa, which further exacerbates Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and smuggling of migrants. The unique geographical position of Lesotho, economic power of South Africa compared to Lesotho, and porous borders between Lesotho and South Africa, which easily enables Basotho to migrate irregularly, present structural factors that contribute to irregular migration. South Africa's economy has also been affected by COVID-19 and it is highly likely that this will result in reduced job opportunities for migrant workers. It is therefore critical to ensure that vulnerable returnees and their family are considered in existing social protection schemes.

Due to high levels of poverty and lack of a comprehensive social protection system, asylum seekers and refugees will be acutely vulnerable to the impact of COVID-19. The UN in Lesotho already provides Cash Based Interventions (CBI) in line with the 2018 Global Compact on Refugees<sup>17</sup>, which will be extended to vulnerable Basotho households. Further, the UN and stakeholders will continue to support asylum seekers and refugees by advancing the Kingdom of Lesotho's pledges made during the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) in December 2019. During the GRF, the Government of Lesotho pledged to facilitate refugees' access to income generation opportunities, including in construction and seasonal agricultural markets, provide land so that refugees may be more self-sufficient, incorporate a refugee response plan within the national disaster management strategy and contribute towards skills development by allowing refugees to access higher and vocational education.

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<sup>17</sup> The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) is a manifestation of solidarity, the political will and ambition to operationalize the principle of burden and responsibility-sharing, to mobilize the international community and to galvanize action for an improved response to refugee situations including enhancing refugee self-reliance and supporting host communities.

## SUPPORT TO GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

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Support to victims of gender-based violence (GBV) will need to be increased, which can be achieved by ensuring access to basic essential services for survivors of GBV. Safety shelters for abused people should be developed and existing ones improved.

## YOUTH AND CHILDREN

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Finally, there will also be a need to provide additional support to young people, who may be particularly vulnerable and engaging in risky behaviours due to the closure of schools and vocational centers. Those that depended on school feeding programmes will be particularly vulnerable as hunger and malnutrition rates increase. Many children from low-income households may never return to school as boys are coerced into become animal herders and girls are coerced into child marriages. Access to safe employment may also be adversely affected by the pandemic for many youths.

Within the education sector, the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) will need support with response coordination and real-time monitoring, ensuring safe school operations through hygiene supplies and risk communication, the continuity of learning through access to remote learning programs, the scale-up of child protection and WASH services in schools and opening up better through back to school campaigns, catch up classes and accelerated learning.

It will be necessary to assess the situation of young people, paying particular attention to education and postgraduate training, including vocational skills training, employment opportunities and sexual reproductive health.

NUMBER OF OUTPUTS: 2

BUDGET: US\$ 16.9 million

AVAILABLE RESOURCES: US\$ 3.5 million

REPROGRAMMED FUNDS: US\$ 150,000

FINANCING GAP: US\$ 13.4 million

RESPONSIBLE UN AGENCIES: UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP

PARTNERS: School proprietors, churches, traditional leaders, family, CSOs/networks/initiative groups, Ministries of Finance; Labour and Employment, Education and Training; Social Development, Health; Development Planning; Gender and Youth, Sports and Recreation; Local Government and Chieftainship Affairs; Justice, Human Rights and Correctional Service; Police; Home Affairs; Agriculture; and Prime Minister's Office- Disaster Management Authority, BoS, NAC, CHAL, other development partners

TARGET AUDIENCE: the total population of Lesotho, but specific attention for: women and young girls; children and young people in school; women of reproductive age; people living with HIV and under ART including the key populations; migrant workers; refugees and asylum seekers; victims of domestic violence and sexual violence; people with disabilities; vulnerable households whose food insecurity has been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic

## ECONOMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY: PROTECTING JOBS, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES, INFORMAL SECTOR WORKERS AND RETURNEES

Economic recovery is about protecting jobs and workers, ensuring decent work and protecting productive assets, productive units and productive networks during the crisis. Ensuring the continued or improved functioning of small producers, informal workers and SMEs across sectors is vital to ensure production of, and access to, food and other essential goods and services.<sup>18</sup>

In Lesotho, disruptions to supply chains have elevated unemployment beyond the nationwide lockdown. The textile and apparel industries are major sources of employment and are dependent on external supply chains; as supply chains struggle to ensure continuity, industries cannot sustain production and thus employment. The large informal sector will also suffer from rising unemployment, including many agricultural workers in a sector that was already experiencing dwindling productivity due to climate change<sup>19</sup>. At the same time, remittances, which are a valuable source of income to vulnerable families and a lifeline for 17% of families, will fall due to rising unemployment abroad.<sup>20</sup>

### MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (MSMES)

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Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), which account for the majority of activity in the private sector and the majority of employment in Lesotho, have been disproportionately affected by disruptions in supply chains, the closure of borders and the continued lockdowns across South Africa and Lesotho. Most MSMEs are unlikely to survive the crisis due to an inability to source inputs and the absence of capital buffers. High levels of informality amongst businesses exacerbate the negative impact by limiting access to formal financial services and rendering it difficult to efficiently provide important government relief packages.

Excluding the public sector, the textiles and garment industries are the largest source of employment in Lesotho, in particular for formal female employment. As above, these industries have experienced disruptions to supply chains and consequently are currently limited in their production capacity, therefore reducing employment and working hours.

### RETURNEES

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There are a large number of returnees that have migrated back to Lesotho under COVID-19. It is important to ensure that returnees are socially and economically reintegrated into Lesotho, this is particularly important given that it is highly unlikely South Africa will be able to reabsorb migrant workers in the near term. Returnees should be profiled with respect to their skills and experience, their preferred choice of livelihood support, such as business startup, skills training or agricultural support, and should be supported in line with local market needs. Reintegration is a tool that can make a large difference to the success of the SDGs, but if returnees are ignored then they risk becoming part of the vulnerable

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<sup>18</sup> A UN Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19

<sup>19</sup> A UN Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19

<sup>20</sup> 2020 March Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee

population. The Government of Lesotho currently does not provide reintegration support, but there is now an opportunity to pilot sustainable reintegration as part of the COVID-19 recovery.

## PRIVATE SECTOR

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Consistent with the NSDP II objective to achieve sustainable and inclusive economic growth through private sector led job creation, the United Nations in Lesotho will support the private sector, in particular MSMEs, to protect the livelihoods of vulnerable populations. Private sector initiatives may include scaling up employment creation programmes and promoting decent work practices. At the same time, the UN in Lesotho will focus on minimizing the risk that the pandemic poses to long-term government objectives, including inclusive economic growth and job creation, and to the SDGs.

The UN support will include targeted and integrated policy advice and programme support, based on the findings and recommendations of recent socio-economic issue papers. It is likely that the UN may need to work with the Government of Lesotho to revise some of the assumptions in the NSDP II, to provide a more relevant and targeted recovery effort in light of COVID-19.

NUMBER OF OUTPUTS: 3

BUDGET: US\$ 4.0 million

AVAILABLE RESOURCES: US\$ 600,000

REPROGRAMMED FUNDS: US\$ 250,000

FINANCING GAP: US\$ 3.4 million

RESPONSIBLE UN AGENCIES: FAO, ILO, IOM, UNCTAD, UNDP, WFP

PARTNERS: African Development Bank; Ministry of Development Planning; Ministry of Small Business Development; Ministry of Trade and Industry; Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security; Ministry of Labour and Employment; Private sector; Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security; Ministry of Forestry and Land Reclamation; Ministry of Gender and Youth; Sports and Recreation; World Bank; Catholic Relief Services; LNDC; BEDCO; Financial Institutions

TARGET AUDIENCE: MSMEs; 500 rural farmers and vulnerable communities, particularly in migration affected areas; youth; women; 3,000 migrants; people with disabilities

## MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION

Large-scale fiscal measures, supported by targeted monetary easing, will be needed to contain the spread of the disease, ease the shock to jobs, reduce layoffs and guarantee minimum living standards, with a special focus on vulnerable population groups.<sup>21</sup>

Lesotho's economic growth in 2020/21 has been revised downwards from 0.4% to -5.1% under a sizeable global recession that will have a medium-term impact on Lesotho's manufacturing and mining sectors and a nationwide lockdown that affected almost all businesses over the short-term.<sup>22</sup> Nonetheless, the

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<sup>21</sup> A UN Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19

<sup>22</sup> Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 on the Kingdom of Lesotho  
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cumulative impact will be felt over the medium- to long-term. Depressed demand for Lesotho's textiles and diamonds (in addition to a reduced ability to source inputs and disrupted supply chains) is expected to erode Lesotho's export earnings and contribute to a widening current account deficit, from 7.6% of GDP in 2019/20 to 9.5% of GDP in 2020/21. Meanwhile, increased government expenditure to combat the pandemic, combined with reduced resource mobilisation under an ailing economy and falling SACU revenues (which constitutes over 40% of Lesotho's public revenue), is expected to increase the fiscal deficit, from 4.7% of GDP in 2019 to 5.9% of GDP in 2020.<sup>23</sup> Finally, as the economy suffers, the Central Bank of Lesotho will have to maintain a high level of net international reserves; ultimately both the Government of Lesotho and the Central Bank of Lesotho will face heightened pressure to enact the necessary expansionary policy amidst reduced space to do so.

## MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE

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The Government estimates that it will need US\$ 70 million to support the economic recovery from COVID-19. This would be used to provide economic and social relief to the Basotho, provide finance for businesses and support businesses' access to finance, stimulate private sector investment and maintain financial stability. This would be done by expanding social protection schemes, offering tax relief to businesses, offering support to the agricultural sector, alongside improving access to finance to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs, largely through credit guarantee schemes). In addition, the Central Bank of Lesotho has supported the economic recovery by cutting interest rates and through exceptional expansionary monetary policy that will provide a liquidity injection to the domestic financial sector.

However, the Government's recovery plan has been delayed due to lack of financing and delays in drafting the final recovery plan. Consequently, the Government of Lesotho has appealed to local development partners.

## MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION

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Under the Debt Service Suspension Initiative (DSSI), the Government of Lesotho requested for US\$ 9.3 million in debt relief from bilateral creditors, to increase the fiscal space available to respond to the pandemic. In addition, the IMF has approved US\$ 16.5 million under the Rapid Credit Facility and US\$ 32.6 million under the Rapid Financing Instrument to prevent a balance of payments crisis. Meanwhile, the World Bank has approved US\$ 25.5 million under the Lesotho COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness and Response Project to procure ventilators, establish a national testing facility and expand intensive care facilities. The World Bank has further reallocated an additional US\$ 0.8 million to procure personal protective equipment (PPE) and support COVID-19 sensitisation (the money was reallocated from the Southern Africa Tuberculosis and Health Systems Support Project). In the 2021 financial year, the World Bank intends to implement a US\$30m Emergency Development Policy Operation (DPO) and fast-track the Contingency Emergency Response Component (CERC) to provide US\$ 5 million for the second phase of the Small Agriculture Development Project (SADP-II).

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The UN continues to mobilize critical financial and technical resources to support the national response and the long-term recovery to meet the ambitions of the NSDP II and the SDGs. The United Nations in Lesotho have been requested to support the Government's National Recovery Plan and will therefore support the Government of Lesotho to identify sectors acutely affected by the pandemic, to engage with communities and CSOs and to help raise additional financing.

The United Nations in Lesotho intends to support the Government of Lesotho through its US\$ 1.1 million Joint Programme on Economic and Financial Management Integration for the Achievement of SDGs (JP-EFMIS). The goal of the joint programme is to support the Government of Lesotho to establish a functional and sustainable integrated planning and public financial management (PFM) ecosystem that contributes to accelerated achievement of the SDG targets and the National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP II). The joint programme aims to support the Government of Lesotho to achieve private sector-led economic growth and employment creation through facilitating the creation of a conducive policy environment, strengthening PFM processes, providing platforms for dialogue and generating evidence for private-public collaboration.

The United Nations in Lesotho will also support the Government of Lesotho to implement a gender-sensitive Integrated National Financial Framework (INFF) to ensure a prioritized financial strategy that preserves fiscal sustainability and stimulates partnership especially with the private sector for achieving sustainable development. This will be particularly important in the wake of COVID-19; the additional pressure on fiscal resources and potential new financial flows to mitigate the impact of the crisis will require any financing to be coordinated alongside other financial flows and properly directed to the most appropriate cause.

Finally, the United Nations in Lesotho will provide between US\$ 5 to 8 million to expand social protection schemes, including cash transfers to vulnerable persons. This is likely to be supported by US\$ 5 million from the European Union (EU).

NUMBER OF OUTPUTS: 4

BUDGET: US\$1.1 million

AVAILABLE RESOURCES: US\$1.1 million

REPROGRAMMED FUNDS: US\$ 0

FINANCING GAP: US\$ 0

RESPONSIBLE UN AGENCIES: IOM, UNDP, UNICEF

PARTNERS: World Bank; IMF; AfDB; European Union; Ministry of Finance; Ministry of Development Planning

TARGET AUDIENCE: The entire population of Lesotho; MSMEs; vulnerable communities; the private sector

## SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Social cohesion and community resilience are complementary and closely related. Strong social cohesion serves as a strong basis for community resilience. Social cohesion is stronger in societies that enjoy higher levels of social capital, which is characterised by trust, norms of reciprocity and informal networks that increase the propensity for collective action. Within the context of social cohesion and social capital,

community resilience signifies the sustained ability of a community to use available resources to respond, withstand and recover from adverse situations.

The Basotho largely have a common language, culture, religion and a history of two centuries of statehood. Collective action against socio-economic hardships, drought and food insecurity in Lesotho's recent past has also strengthened its social cohesion and community resilience. While there are inherent challenges, these societally internalised identities and collective actions provide a strong basis for social cohesion and community resilience, which should help the Basotho face COVID-19.

Nonetheless, there are definite challenges. The pandemic has highlighted the limited state capacity. There is insufficient access to water and sanitation, which is critical to slow the transmission of the virus and is a fundamental right that the Kingdom of Lesotho has committed to under the 'International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights'.<sup>24</sup> Limits on social gatherings, in particular funerals, the enforcement of new laws by the police and chieftains and limited training and PPE provided to local authorities threatens to erode societal trust. It will be important to support state-society engagements to maintain societal trust and cohesion and thereby support community resilience. At the same time, it will be important to maintain harmony between local communities, refugees and asylum seekers in order to protect social cohesion.

## SOCIAL COHESION

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Increasing numbers of returnees, due to rising unemployment in South Africa, threatens social cohesion. Vulnerable workers, such as casual labourers and street vendors, will be severely affected, as will women, who will experience heightened pressure to provide and care for their families. There is already evidence that gender-based violence (GBV) and crime is increasing.

There have been a number of reports of rising stigma in communities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Such real and perceived stigma is eroding social cohesion, which has the potential to undermine community resilience and thus the ability of communities to work together to address the threats posed by COVID-19 and other diseases.

The UN in Lesotho and partners will assess how COVID-19 is impacting the social cohesion and community resilience of the Basotho people. This will require collaborating closely with government and civil society organisations to generate evidence-based analysis that will help formulate and implement context-specific response policies, strategies, programmes and projects.

The impact of COVID-19 will be significant for vulnerable and marginalised individuals, who are more dependent on social cohesion. It will be necessary to develop social capital by re-building trust, norms of social reciprocity and formal and informal networks to bring positive societal changes. This will include reducing stigma and discrimination against already vulnerable individuals, such as returning migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, and encouraging their reintegration into society. Dialogue and community engagement will be critical to ensuring that the social fabric of society – its social cohesion and community resilience – is not eroded by the COVID-19 crisis.

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Through the process of social dialogue, it will also be important to engage with national and regional stakeholders, including workers organizations and the business community, to develop strategies to Build Back Better through broader social consensus. It will be critical to build partnerships to bring together all stakeholders, including representatives of state institutions and non-state actors such as civil society leaders, women and youth leaders, representatives of migrants, refugees and asylum seekers and the diaspora, faith-based organizations, the business community, trade unions, academia and development partners, to develop holistic recovery strategies.

It will be necessary to assist the Government to establish a Mobile Vulnerability Assessment Committee (mVAC) in order to collect data remotely using telephone calls, instead of through field visits (as was previously the norm). Under the changing landscape, it is more important than ever to conduct vulnerability assessments to ensure that interventions are well targeted, although their implementation will have to reflect COVID-19 safety measures. Assessments will be complimented by monthly price data from the Bureau of Statistics, migration data from IOM and employment data from LNDC.

Finally, it will be necessary to strengthen community-based delivery of health services to decongest health facilities and build resilience. This would require strengthening existing Community Resource Centers and enhancing mobile services for HIV, TB, diabetes, immunizations, family planning etc. Information sharing systems will need to be strengthened, as will the capacity of community-based organizations, faith-based organizations and traditional structures to provide sufficient support to communities.

## FOOD SECURITY

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Prior to the onset of the pandemic a sizeable proportion of Lesotho's population was already under major strain of chronic food insecurity and widespread poverty. Measures put in place to save lives and contain the spread of the disease have resulted in major disruptions in food supply chains.

Harvests of important agricultural commodities, such as beans, have been significantly delayed, resulting in quality deterioration and the spoilage of crops. In some instances, such as for green maize, the lockdown was imposed at the height of the harvest season, which triggered a massive loss of output. Further, the closure of informal markets, restaurants and other hospitality establishments has blocked access to markets for local farmers, leading to post-harvest losses and the erosion of income-generating opportunities for both farmers and informal traders. In addition to denying vulnerable children of school meals, the closure of schools has acutely affected the demand for eggs, as school meals previously constituted a high proportion of egg sales.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the Kingdom of Lesotho's reliance on food imports, which when disrupted risks exacerbating food insecurity and national stability. The crisis has highlighted the importance for Lesotho to develop more resilient, efficient and sustainable food systems and shorter food value chains in order to achieve greater food self-sufficiency. Agricultural productivity must be enhanced, particularly from smallholder farmers. For example, average cereal production per hectare remains below 1 ton, yet progressive farmers have demonstrated their production above 4 tons per hectare.

Access to markets, particularly for smallholder farmers, is also critical. Many farmers in Lesotho report limited incentive to increase production due to a lack of access to markets. In order to identify and address the bottlenecks in farmers access to markets, a policy dialogue will be necessary with buy in from farmer groups.

In the meantime, it may be possible to learn from previous success stories: the recent homegrown school feeding initiative doubled local production of beans under increased demand. Other institution that procure food in bulk, such as the military, correctional services and hospital, may consider similar initiatives.

Beyond institutional procurement, stern efforts must be made to link smallholder farmers with the mainstream food market. Contract farming, where farmers and buyers agree advance terms and conditions for the production and marketing of farm produce, may promote horizontal and vertical coordination within the agri-food value chain. However, contract farming must be supported by a policy-enabling environment as it is currently characterised by mistrust between farmers and buyers. A dialogue between farmers and buyers would contribute towards establishing a reputable policy and regulatory framework to support contract farming.

Finally, in order to develop and maintain a sustainable and resilient food system, the Kingdom of Lesotho will have to prioritise investments and policies that ensure responsible management of land, soil and water. Unsustainable land use practices contribute to excessive soil erosion and increased environmental degradation and will undermine agricultural productivity if not arrested immediately. Climate change will only exacerbate environmental degradation as Lesotho is prone to drought. Therefore, climate smart technologies, including low-energy, low-water irrigation technologies, conservation agriculture, energy efficient production and post-harvest processes and the gradual replacement of biomass with clean and renewable energy, must be promoted.

NUMBER OF OUTPUTS: 6

BUDGET: US\$ 39.7 million

AVAILABLE RESOURCES: US\$ 14.4 million

REPROGRAMMED FUNDS: US\$ 8.6 million

FINANCING GAP: US\$ 25.3 million

RESPONSIBLE UN AGENCIES: FAO, IFAD, IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO

PARTNERS: Office of the Prime Minister; Ministries of Justice, Law, Defence, Public Service, Foreign Affairs, Finance, Development Planning-BoS, Trade & Labour, Home Affairs, Local Government; Parliament; Correctional Service; Judiciary; Central Bank of Lesotho; CSOs; SADC; private sector; NGOs

TARGET AUDIENCE: farmers; farmer groups; actors in the food chain; youth; migrants; other vulnerable groups

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Given the rapid and devastating impact of COVID-19 on the population of Lesotho, in particular for the most vulnerable, it is critical to ensure that interventions achieve the intended outcomes. Monitoring and Evaluation is more important than ever, but equally needs to be adapted under the current circumstances to provide rapid results to a fast-changing environment and rapid interventions.

Policymakers, INGOs, IFIs and others in the development sphere have responded hastily to minimise the socio-economic impact of COVID-19. Therefore, there may be need for initiatives to be realigned to have the desired impact. Equally, many programmes are short-term and thus there is little time to capture



their impact. At the same time, monitoring may be limited due to the very nature of the pandemic and related travel restrictions and social distancing requirements. Monitoring and Evaluation must therefore be innovative; it needs to be light, provide fast results and be undertaken more regularly than usual.

During monitoring and evaluation, data collection must be disaggregated by sex, age, geography, disability and income group to ensure that programmes reach the most vulnerable and no one is left behind.

In line with the Secretary General's call for a "single, consolidated dashboard to provide up-to-date visibility on [COVID-19] activities and progress across all pillars", UN DCO has provided a series of programmatic indicators to assess the Socio-Economic Response Plan, which will be updated every 3 months. These indicators complement existing indicators that monitor the health and humanitarian response and the human rights impact of COVID-19.

The indicators that will be monitored under the Lesotho COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan are presented in the project pipelines.

## ANNEX – KEY OUTPUTS

### PILLAR 1 - HEALTH FIRST: PROTECTING HEALTH SERVICES AND SYSTEMS DURING THE CRISIS

National Strategic Development Plan II outcome: Improving the country’s productivity and innovation capacity by strengthening human capital through investments in health, education and training

Lesotho UNDAF 2019-23 outcome: By 2023, all people, particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from gender-responsive social policies and programmes for the sustainable and equitable realization of their rights

Related SDGs: 3, 5, 6, 10

UN agencies: UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO

Output	Indicators	Activities	Timeframe	Agencies
Health sector capacity strengthened to continue normal (non-COVID-19 related) health services, including promotive, preventative and curative health services, including NCDs	Number of people accessing essential (non-COVID-19 related) health services, disaggregated by sex, age group and at-risk populations)**	Support the development, implementation and monitoring of relevant laws, policies and strategies for integrated health services particularly targeting key populations and disadvantaged children and youth, noting that the vulnerable population may have changed due to COVID-19	0-12 months	UNFPA, UNICEF
Health facilities and community structures in all 10 districts maintain the capacity to deliver integrated quality gender sensitive RMNCAH, nutrition, HIV, TB and WASH services in the wake of COVID-19	Number of health facilities that received UN support to maintain essential immunisation services since COVID-19 disruptions, disaggregated by type of support**  Number of health service plans formulated (and funded) that include measures to provide continued essential services**	Enhance access to WASH and educate communities on the importance of handwashing, in addition to social distancing and wearing a mask, as a prevention method for COVID-19  Ensure duty bearers are equipped with the capacities to supply integrated, quality, gender-sensitive, age appropriate and disability friendly nutrition and WASH services	0-12 months	IOM, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO

		<p>Enhance stakeholders' capacities in the provision and monitoring of health care services, ensuring minimal disruption to essential health services</p> <p>Support capacities within health facilities to maintain adolescent and youth friendly health services, ensuring minimal disruption</p> <p>Enhance capacities within the MoH, health facilities and community structures to deliver integrated and quality gender sensitive RMNCAH, encompassing NCDs, and birth registration and ensure that women continue to have access to health services before, during and after pregnancy</p>		
Government, civil society and private sector maintain capacity to continue to deliver quality HIV and TB prevention, treatment, care and support services in the wake of COVID-19	Number of community health workers receiving UN support to maintain essential services since COVID-19 disruptions, disaggregated by type of support**	<p>Support supply chains for ARVs and other medicines to ensure minimal disruptions in access to medicines and treatments as a result of national, regional and global lockdowns</p> <p>Support national and subnational capacities to prevent and treat HIV and TB infections, particularly for the vulnerable, ensuring that HIV and TB infections and mortality due not increase from COVID-19 stress on the health system</p> <p>Generate evidence to identify bottlenecks for mobilizing communities to increase demand for integrated SRHR/HIV, SGBV and TB services, including for migrants and ensure that access to these services is not disrupted</p> <p>Support in the revision and updating of health-related strategies and guidelines, particularly in relation to TB and COVID-19</p>	0-12 months	IOM, UNAIDS, UNICEF

\*indicator from JWP

\*\*COVID-19 indicator

## PILLAR 2 - PROTECTING PEOPLE: SOCIAL PROTECTION AND BASIC SERVICES

National Strategic Development Plan II outcome: Improving the country's productivity and innovation capacity by strengthening human capital through investments in health, education and training

Lesotho UNDAF 2019-23 outcome: By 2023, all people, particularly the most vulnerable, benefit from gender-responsive social policies and programmes for the sustainable and equitable realization of their rights

Related SDGs: 1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11

UN agencies: UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF

Output	Indicators	Activities	Timeframe	Agencies
Education sector capacity strengthened to provide quality, inclusive formal and non-formal education for all children, adolescents and youth, including capacity for distance learning	Number of children supported with distance/home-based learning, disaggregated by sex**	<p>Design and provide back-to-school packages, including school meals, cash transfers and other interventions, to incentivize and support the return of vulnerable children, especially girls and children with disabilities</p> <p>Conduct communication and outreach efforts targeting parents and caregivers on the importance and benefits of continuous education, and targeting parents, caregivers, learners and instructors on measures taken to ensure safety in learning institutions</p> <p>Support the development of alternative modalities for learning, including distribution of learning kits in print</p> <p>Support the delivery of out of school comprehensive sexuality education, including in the development of school health plans in line with international standards</p>	0-12 months	UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP

		<p>Support the provision of community owned, quality integrated early childhood development initiatives</p> <p>Enhance stakeholders' capacities to capture and use data in the provision of quality formal and non-formal education in primary, secondary and non-formal learning centres</p>		
Community members have improved knowledge on quality responsive social services and positive practices	Number of beneficiaries of social protection schemes and services related to the COVID-19 pandemic, disaggregated by type of programme, geography, sex, age and at-risk population**	<p>Develop capacity within community structures to create demand for health services and improve universal health coverage</p> <p>Develop capacity within community structures to create demand for improved social services, include for women, people with disabilities, migrants, refugees and asylum seekers</p> <p>Support the expansion of social services, including sensitisation of COVID-19, access to WASH, cash transfers and food parcels in an inclusive manner</p>	0-12 months	IOM, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP

\*indicator from JWP

\*\*COVID-19 indicator

### PILLAR 3 - ECONOMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY: PROTECTING JOBS, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES, AND INFORMAL SECTOR WORKERS

National Strategic Development Plan II outcome: Supporting inclusive and sustainable economic growth and private sector led job creation

Lesotho UNDAF 2019-23 outcome: By 2023, government and private sector increase opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, improved food security and decent work especially for women, youth and people with disabilities

Related SDGs: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 17

UN agencies: FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNICEF, WFP



Output	Indicators	Activities	Timeframe	Agencies
<p>National institutions (public and private) strengthened to formulate and implement inclusive, innovative and evidence-based policy instruments which enhance efficiency and development effectiveness in selected sectors</p>	<p>Number of agri-value chains profiled*</p> <p>Number of countries that reinforce UN supported employment policies and a regulatory environment conducive to economic recovery and decent work, especially in high risk COVID sectors**</p>	<p>Develop of a MSEs register and database with integration to the national identity and business register platforms</p> <p>Adopt inclusive models and strategies for developing local productive capacities and supply chains , targeting agri-based products and market linkages</p> <p>Facilitate the process of National farmer registration to ensure better targeting, programme implementation and reporting</p> <p>Profile and facilitate development of gender sensitive and high potential agri-food value chains</p> <p>Undertake socio-economic impact assessments in key sectors and population groups</p> <p>Review existing legislation and policy frameworks to promote market access, contracts enforcement, and contract farming</p>	<p>12-36 months</p>	<p>FAO, UNDP, WFP</p>
<p>Gender responsive and evidence-based policies, strategies and programmes are in place and implemented to generate decent employment and promote green economy particularly for rural and</p>	<p>Number of private sector companies and formal and informal sector workers supported during and after the COVID-19 pandemic**</p>	<p>Identify and promote community-based solutions and innovations for youth economic participation and resilience building</p>	<p>12-36 months</p>	<p>FAO, IOM, UNDP, UNICEF</p>

<p>urban youth, migrants, vulnerable women and men, and PLWDs</p>		<p>Facilitate adoption of innovative technologies to develop productive capacities and services</p> <p>Support to MOET on implementation of secondary school curriculum with a focus on skills</p> <p>Provide non-formal Education to out of school children and adolescents including those with disabilities by age and sex</p> <p>Promote water harvesting and appropriate irrigation technologies to increase food self-sufficiency and resilience</p> <p>Support livelihoods and reintegration of returnee migrants and vulnerable groups</p> <p>Facilitate safe, credible and affordable mechanism for transmission of remittances</p> <p>Support development of policies for safe labour migration and decent work</p>		
<p>Knowledge and capacity of communities, smallholder farmers and service providers improved to diversify livelihoods and production systems for increased incomes, food and nutrition security particularly for poor and vulnerable households</p>	<p>Number of guidelines and standards to improve livelihoods and production systems for increased incomes, food and nutrition security*</p> <p>Number of private sector companies and formal and informal sector workers supported during and after the COVID-19 pandemic**</p>	<p>Facilitate organised markets and linkages for local farmer producers</p> <p>Undertake a post-harvest loss study and strategy to use in capacity building efforts for the smallholder farmers</p>	<p>12-36 months</p>	<p>FAO, WFP</p>

		Provide access to inputs, and facilitate adoption of climate smart technologies and services Support local capacities for contract farming in identified agri-food value Support establishment of organised and registered farmers' associations and cooperatives		
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\*indicator from JWP

\*\*COVID-19 indicator

#### PILLAR 4 - MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION

National Strategic Development Plan II outcome: Strengthening the governance and accountability systems

Supporting inclusive and sustainable economic growth and private sector led job creation

Lesotho UNDAF 2019-23 outcome: By 2023, government and non-governmental institutions deliver their mandates and uphold good governance, rule of law and human rights, with all people having improved access to justice and participating in social and political decision-making processes in a peaceful environment

By 2023, government and private sector increase opportunities for inclusive and sustainable economic growth, improved food security and decent work especially for women, youth and people with disabilities

Related SDGs: 1, 16, 17

UN agencies: IOM, UNDP, UNICEF

Output	Indicators	Activities	Timeframe	Agencies
A National Recovery Plan that protects the ambitions of the NSDP II and the SDGs		Support the Government of Lesotho to identify sectors acutely affected by the pandemic, to engage with communities	0-12 months	FAO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP,

		and CSOs and to develop a national recovery plan that protects the NSDP II and the SDGs		UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO
Implementing a gender-sensitive Integrated National Financial Framework (INFF), to ensure a prioritized financial strategy that preserves fiscal sustainability and stimulates private sector engagement to secure a sustainable socio-economic recovery	Number of integrated financing strategies that were tested (disaggregated by per cent successful/ unsuccessful)*  Number of integrated financing strategies that have been implemented with partners in lead*		0-28 months	IOM, UNDP, UNICEF
Establishing a policy framework that fosters dialogue on shared value amongst the Government, CSOs, Parliament, and private sector to increase resilience against future shocks	Number of functioning partnership frameworks for integrated financing strategies to accelerate progress on SDGs made operational*		0-28 months	IOM, UNDP, UNICEF
Improving transparency, accountability and reporting in public financial management (PFM) through the implementation of Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEF) – at both central (Ministry of Finance) and spending units’ levels – that are aligned with the macroeconomic framework and fiscal discipline, following top-down and bottom-up approaches to determining reliable expenditure ceilings	Number of MTEFs prepared and implemented by pilot spending units through a tripartite structure / arrangement involving Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Development Planning, and pilot line ministries*	Finalization and adoption of the revised PFMA Act  Institutionalization of sector / ministerial working groups following the inter-ministerial committees’ proposal of Ministry of Finance  Preparation and implementation of MTEFs in pilot sectors / ministries, including their dissemination to the public	12-36 months	IOM, UNDP, UNICEF

		Advocacy and sensitization – at both national and sub-national levels – for institutionalizing the utilization of MTEFs in the preparation of national budgets		
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\*indicator from JWP

\*\*COVID-19 indicator

## PILLAR 5 - SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

National Strategic Development Plan II outcome: Supporting inclusive and sustainable economic growth and private sector led job creation

Lesotho UNDAF 2019-23 outcome: By 2023, the people of Lesotho use natural resources in a more sustainable manner and the marginalized and most vulnerable are increasingly resilient

Related SDGs: 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15

UN agencies: FAO, IFAD, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP

Output	Indicators	Activities	Timeframe	Agencies
Gender responsive and inclusive policies, regulatory frameworks and financial mechanisms strengthened and implemented to protect employees and maintain formal work opportunities, in particular for sustainable energy technologies	<p>Number of direct and indirect jobs created in privately owned mini grids/energy centres*</p> <p>Number of organizations benefiting from institutional capacity building so that governments, employers' and workers' organisations can work together to shape socio-economic policy responses**</p>	<p>Support the GoL and private sector to develop environmentally friendly, inclusive and gender sensitive economic opportunities and policies</p> <p>Support the private sector to retain workers in a safe working environment</p> <p>Identify opportunities for engagement of youth, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and other</p>	0-12 months	UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR

		vulnerable groups in innovative economic recovery initiatives		
The capacity of farmers, communities and institutions at national, district and local levels strengthened to protect food security, reduce export reliance on food and encourage domestic food production, through climate smart and sustainable natural resources management initiatives	<p>Proportion of households with acceptable food consumption score*</p> <p>Number of communities and villages engaged in initiatives that focus on protection of environment and conservation of natural resources*</p> <p>Number of community-based organisations capacitated to respond to and mitigate the pandemic, fight against COVID-19 related domestic violence, racism, xenophobia, stigma, and other forms of discrimination, prevent and remedy human rights abuses, and ensure longer-term recovery – including livelihoods support and basis service delivery - disaggregated by type of community**</p>	<p>Support food supply chains to maintain farmer’s access to inputs and consumer’s access to food despite travel restrictions</p> <p>Support resilience programs to improve livelihoods affected by land degradation and/or climate change to promote well-being for men and women at all ages.</p> <p>Promote natural resources and land management to improve environmental sustainability for men and women of all ages.</p> <p>Facilitate policy dialogue for greater national food self-sufficiency and resilient food systems.</p>	0-12 months	FAO, IFAD, UNDP, WFP
National, district and Community level early warning systems strengthened to safeguard human security, build resilience and support preparedness and response	<p>Proportion of Government and Civil society organizations trained on IDSR*</p> <p>Gender sensitive National Strategic Resilience Framework in place*</p> <p>Existence of an Emergency Preparedness Index*</p> <p>Functional and maintained early warning system in place*</p> <p>Number of data collection tools on the effects of climate change on health and migration*</p> <p>Number of organisations benefitting from institutional capacity building so that governments, employers’ and</p>	<p>Prioritize activities that bring immediate relief to the livelihoods of affected populations while also restoring their productive potential and long-term resilience</p> <p>Collect disaggregated data and undertake research on the effects of COVID-19 on health and migration</p> <p>Support the GoL to implement gender- inclusive national resilience and preparedness strategy and disaster response plans</p>	0-18 months	FAO, WFP, UNDP, UNICEF

	workers' organisations can work together to shape socio-economic policy response**	Support the GoL to build national and community response capabilities including developing a functional hazard monitoring and early warning systems; and disseminating and communicating risks and early warnings		
Increased capacities of governance institutions to enable; (i) effective delivery of mandates; (ii) citizen participation; and (iii) reporting to international instruments and commitment (protection of the rights of non-citizens)	Number of (a) national and (b) local elections judged free and fair by independent observer* Number of Universal Periodic Review reports submitted* Proportion of women participating in sessions of dialogue on reforms at a) national and b) community levels* Percentage of human rights treaty bodies State Party reports completed and submitted*	Support the strengthening of the National Consultative Committee on Migration and Development (NCC)	0-12 months	IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, WHO
Government and partners are able to generate, access and use evidence to inform policy formulation and decisions, relating to the implementation of political, social and economic programmes, including SDGs	Costed national statistical plan and implementation*	Support the generation of quality strategic information to inform policy, strategy and programme planning, implementation and reporting, including childbirth registration Support the development of a migration profile	0-18 months	IOM, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO
Local and national level mechanisms are strengthened; (i) to facilitate an all-inclusive, open and participatory national reforms process, and (ii) to mitigate conflict	Number of data-informed mechanisms in place to strengthen social cohesion*	Support social cohesion through addressing protection issues and facilitate community reintegration of returnees in the districts of origin	0-12 months	UNHCR



	Capacities of CSOs, communities and institutions at national and local level strengthened for conflict prevention, peacebuilding and social cohesion*	Strengthen diaspora association abroad		
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\*indicator from JWP

\*\*COVID-19 indicator