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Handover Ceremony of items to Strengthen Border Security and Migration Management at Ports of Entries (POEs) in Lesotho

13 November 2019 – The International Organization for Migration (IOM) held a handover ceremony at Moshoeshoe I International Airport that marked some of the key milestones of the project related to border management and counter trafficking / smuggling. IOM handed over various items – (a) document examination equipment; (b) boom gate (Maputsoe, Caledon Spoots); (c) CCTV (Moshoeshoe I International Airport); and (d) two vehicles for immigration department.



These items are expected to contribute to increasing the capacity of Immigration department of Ministry of Home Affairs to deliver immigration services and fulfil its mandates, to strengthen border security and to address human trafficking / migrant smuggling at the key Ports of Entry. The handover of these items from IOM to MoHA was witnessed by the donor of this project, the Government of Japan, represented by the representatives from Embassy of Japan to the Kingdom of Lesotho.



In his remarks the Minister of Home Affairs, Hon. Mokhele Moletsane (MP) reminded participants of the 2010 UN General Assembly Global Plan of Action to combat Trafficking in Persons and further said that there was *“a need to be better coordinated and consistent in fighting Trafficking in Persons. We need to integrate the fight against Trafficking in broader programs to boost development and to strengthen security.”*

On behalf of the Embassy of Japan, Mr. Shuichiro Kawaguchi, Minister Counsellor, said that *“proper border management and enhancement of border security are critically important for*

Lesotho for further development, as building a safe and stable nation will attract more foreign investments”.

On the installation of CCTV to enhance border security, Mrs. Mapeete Jonathan, Immigration Manager at Moshoeshoe One Airport said that *“The CCTV camera would prove to be highly useful to prevent criminal activity that happens at the airport and this equipment will help us learn more about things that happen at the airport that we do not always see”.*

In addition to the enhancement of border security and migration management, the project also contributes to the protection and rehabilitation of the vulnerable female Victims of Trafficking in persons (VoT). The check of 168,000 Maloti was handed over from IOM to the Ministry of Home Affairs in order to support the Crisis Shelter for the Victims of Trafficking run by a NGO called Beautiful Dream Society (BDS) Lesotho. In addition, a short video of human trafficking produced by Skillshare Lesotho which is used for sensitizing youth was displayed at this occasion.



Beautiful Dream Society, an NGO that is working with the Ministry of Home Affairs on providing shelter to Victims of Trafficking thanked the government of Japan for *“This noble gesture to partner with us in the war against Human Trafficking, in 2019 so far we have served 14 clients of which 11 of them have been reintegrated with the community and we still assist them through our non-residential program.”* Mr. Molikoe Lali, President of BDS.

One of the participants attending the handover ceremony who also watched the Video Documentary, Ms. Palesa Masite, said that *“We are deeply encouraged to see that Government is doing something on trafficking in persons. We are losing our brothers and sisters to this scourge. I still think that the Ministry of Home Affairs and its partners including IOM, sensitize communities all over the country. I believe some people do not know about this problem.”*

In her remarks, IOM Head of Office, Ms. Eriko Nishimura, thanked the Ministry of Home Affairs for the good collaboration on this Project and indicated that while strides have been made, *“There are still a lot to do in order to bring border and migration management up to international standards, and fight against human trafficking in the Kingdom of Lesotho. I would like to assure you that IOM is firmly committed to working with the Government of Lesotho and in supporting strengthening migration governance in Lesotho. If we manage migration well, we can gain developmental impact from migration”.*

The project titled *“Counter Trafficking and Addressing Irregular Migration through Strengthening Border and Migration Management, Sensitization on TIP and Building Capacity of Law enforcement and Border Officials in Lesotho.”* was supported through the generous support of the Government of Japan and its people.

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