

THE FORTY FIRST SESSION OF THE IFAD GOVERNING
COUNCIL

LESOTHO COUNTRY STATEMENT

BY

THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND
FOOD SECURITY

HONOURABLE MAHALA MOLAPO

ROME, 13 – 14 FEBRUARY 2018

Chairperson,

Honourable Governors,

His Excellency the President of IFAD,

Distinguished Delegates and Participants

On behalf of the Lesotho Delegation and on my behalf, I feel greatly honoured to address the 41st session of the IFAD Governing Council. For those of us coming from Southern African region, this session has come at the critical period of devastating unpredictable weather patterns that continue to negatively affect our farmers and the agricultural sector as a whole.

Before I go any further, allow me to first thank IFAD and Government of Italy for their excellent arrangements and hospitality afforded to us. I further wish to congratulate Mr. Gilbert F. Hounbo, IFAD President on his First successful anniversary at the helm of this important UN Organization. Please be assured of our support during your tenure of office.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We further express our heartfelt appreciation for a continued support by IFAD to improve agricultural development in Lesotho in order to reduce the high levels of hunger and poverty, especially; the rural areas where majority of the households are food insecure. Lesotho is challenged by its mountainous and difficult terrain that creates a mammoth task to deliver services. The current economic crisis would not allow and enable us to efficiently extent the necessary services for our communities. With these IFAD support, it has become easy for us to extent such service and we are therefore thankful.

An estimated 57 per cent households live below the basic needs poverty line. Food insecurity has been a huge challenge as a result of factors including the current

climate change. This situation has over the years endowed Lesotho into alarming cases of malnutrition with stunting rates of almost 40 per cent. We are current at 33.3 per cent and we need to thank IFAD as well as other development partners for this achievement.

Chairperson

We experienced favourable weather conditions with good rains in 2016/17 that resulted in a boost in agricultural production. The number of the vulnerable households in need of humanitarian assistance was reduced by 50 per cent from the previous year 2015/16. Despite all the effort made, the Early Warning System and shock responsive initiatives still remains weak and this is the area that Lesotho request further technical support to deal with.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Council's theme gives us impetus in improving communication, sharing information and mobilizing resources with all stakeholders with the agriculture and food security sector. Indeed the fight against hunger, malnutrition and poverty requires a continued concerted effort by all partners. In this respect, I would like to commend IFAD for having organized the side events as they provide us with the means to truly exchange and share our individual views, expertise and experience for supporting smallholder farmers towards increasing resilience to shocks, so that they are better equipped to address the impact of climate change.

The Government of Lesotho is implementing the two developmental projects with the assistance of IFAD namely: Smallholder Agriculture Development Project (SADP) and Wool and Mohair Promotion Project (WAMPP). With regard to SADP, the significance progress

has been achieved and 602 beneficiary groups and companies have been assisted. The total of USD12 million has been disbursed. As mitigation of climatic changes, there is a significant number of interventions on protected agriculture, irrigation and encouraging farmers to produce short cycled animals.

Under WAMPP, the Project Coordinating Unit is fully functional. The Merino Breeding Stud in Quthing has commenced and over three hundred ewes and rams have been procured. The farm staff has been hired. The farm machinery and implements have been procured and they have been handed over to the Lesotho National Wool and Mohair Growers Association.

In conclusion, Chairperson, I commend and urge IFAD to continue its good work to assist developing countries, like Lesotho, in order to reduce inequality, eradicate hunger and poverty as well as contributing to our economic growth, as it is clearly articulated in the policy

of the new Government where agriculture is at the top list of its priorities. On behalf of the Kingdom of Lesotho, we pledge to commit ourselves to act as catalysts in leveraging support to the smallholder farmers, their local and national farmers' organizations and in promoting consultative forums for partnership development with the non-governmental organization, private sector and other agricultural development stakeholders.

I thank you for your attention