



Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security

**Country general statement for video posting at the 43
IFAD Governing Council**

by

**The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security
Honourable Lits'oane Simon Lits'oane**

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Honourable Governors,

His Excellency the President of IFAD,

Distinguished Delegates and the entire global farming community

On behalf of the Kingdom of Lesotho and on my behalf as the Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, I should highlight we are honoured to be taking part at this 43rd Governing Council. The current year's theme, **'investment in sustainable food systems to end hunger by 2030'** responds directly to our national priority of working towards the eradication of poverty and food insecurity caused by climate change that is characterized by prolonged droughts and erratic rainfall. Food systems are indeed primarily responsible for feeding people well by increasing availability, affordability and consumption of diverse, safe, culturally appropriate, nutritious foods and diets without harming the environment.

Lesotho relies on rain fed agriculture and in recent times, extreme weather conditions – late rains and damaging flooding negatively impact lives of the people. There is an acute awareness among

stakeholders that climate change is already impacting Basotho and threatening their future hence the need to climate proof farmers' activities. Livelihoods of smallholder producers of livestock are threatened by degradation of the rangelands and the compounding impact of climate change on this fragile environment and this is further worsened by overstocking and poor management of these resources. These call for adaptive measures to reverse the damaged rangelands and require a need to restore the protective cover. All these reiterate and underscore the importance of this year's theme.

Excellencies;

The Government of Lesotho appreciates the assistance provided by IFAD through the award of scholarships under the Lesotho Adaptation for Smallholder Agricultural Production (LASAP) for the benefit of Research and Meteorological services in Lesotho. Further to this, is the demonstrations and trials on maize, sorghum, wheat, beans and potatoes that are but a few endeavours geared towards the fight against increased vulnerability to climate change under SADP, not to mention investments in protected agriculture and innovative

husbandry structures in livestock production as well. All these are indicative positive outcomes in the enhancement of lives of Basotho based in the rural area. The upcoming Project impact assessment is expected to support these observations that are anticipated to extend beyond direct beneficiaries and the Project itself.

In the same vein, the Wool and Mohair Promotion Project (WAMPP) puts in the forefront measures aimed at efficiently employing natural resources for today and tomorrow's generations through a variety of interventions, inter-alia trainings and investment in information technology to maintain desired timeless availability of productive rangelands.

Distinguished Governors;

These two Projects (SADP and WAMPP) share similarities in that they are both value chain based, where the latter improves small stock breeds and their management whilst further focusing on enhancing efficiency at the harvesting points. In view of the foregone, one cannot for example overemphasise the importance of shearing sheds

as marketing points to the lives of smallholder farmers. All these are highlighted to emphasize the importance of IFAD towards Lesotho's economic development because the rural poor centre their livelihoods on the said resources.

With this year's theme and accompanying discussions focusing on how IFAD's role and experience in supporting sustainable, inclusive, nutritious and efficient food systems in the contribution of SDG 2, I should highlight that approximately 57% of Basotho live below the poverty line, and therefore resulting in rampant food insecurity and an alarming situation of malnutrition characterized by 30% of the population stunted.

In response, the Government of Lesotho has initiated The Nutrition and Home Economics Strategy (NHES) 2020 - 2024 which provides a menu of evidence-based interventions and advocates for increased resources for effective results. Furthermore, the Government of Lesotho is making efforts to raise the profile of nutrition at the

highest level. These initiatives are taken to build on the role of His Majesty as AU Champion of Nutrition and FAO Ambassador of Nutrition (Globally), and aligning to the goals of the Lesotho Food and Nutrition Security Strategy and Costed Plan of Action 2019-2023.

As a line Ministry responsible for food and agriculture, my Ministry is fully committed to working closely with other national and international agriculture and food and nutrition security institutions and academia to effectively implement the NHES. I therefore, call on IFAD to join forces with us in the attainment of food security for all. With causes of malnutrition being various, complex and demanding effective coordination mechanisms amongst partners – this makes such platforms as IFAD Governing Council commendable.

With these few words, let me thank IFAD and the people of Italy for their welcome and this well organised Council convention. Thank you.