



Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security

**Country general statement for posting at the 44
IFAD Governing Council**

by

**The Minister of Agriculture and Food Security
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**MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE
AND FOOD SECURITY**

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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 in this 44th Governing Council. The current year's theme, **“Rural development: a prerequisite for global resilience”** correlates directly with our national priority of working towards the eradication of poverty and food insecurity, which is most acute in the rural areas where over 60 % of the population is based. The

need to secure nutritious food for the rural poor and eventual development is set back by a changing global environment - which constantly threatens agricultural production and rural development.

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 critical awareness among stakeholders that climate change is already impacting Basotho and threatening their future, hence the need to climate-proof farmers' activities. To this effect, the country has responded by its

completion of a National Irrigation Masterplan considered as a proactive measure towards improved production and productivity of crops to mention but one; and preparations are advanced for the initiation of related investments on the ground.

Advancement of rural areas in Lesotho particularly for smallholder livestock producers is crippled by degradation of the rangelands and overarching poor natural resources management, which urgently require attention for improved and sustained resilience of communities within these areas. The importance of immediate attention cannot be

overemphasized in view of the prevailing environmental era, where supplies and access to water resources is erratic and waning.

Excellencies;

The Government of Lesotho appreciates the assistance provided by IFAD and in this respect the country can cite that together with support of on-going Projects – the Wool and Mohair Promotion Project and the Smallholder Agriculture Development Project (SADP), the Fund has stood shoulder to shoulder with the people of Lesotho against the prevailing consequences of COVID-19

pandemic. Smallholder livestock producers' access to inputs has been improved through the introduction of a dedicated relief fund and recently, the Rural Poor Stimulus Facility(RPSF) - which have both already proven pivotal in farmers' production endeavours.

The said efforts all contribute to the development of rural households' development; this is essential for eventual global resilience. The SADP received funding from Global Environment Fund (GEF) amounting to USD 228,000.00 which supported one hundred and twenty-one (121) sub-projects in

improving resilience to the harsh climatic conditions.

In response to Covid-19 pandemic, there is USD 5 million allocated as a responsive measure to ensuring access to farming inputs as well. To date, there are 15,000 farmers who received maize seed and 20,000 received bean seed under these efforts.

Distinguished Governors;

With these few words, let me wish you all fruitful deliberations as we venture into a reign of new leadership for the Fund expected subsequent to

election of the new President, and let me thank IFAD for the continued support shown to the people of Lesotho and indeed nations of the wider globe in its investment and emancipation of the rural poor.

Thank you.

