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CONSULTATIONS WITH BASOTHO IN THE DIASPORA (SOUTH AFRICA) ON NATIONAL REFORMS

Introduction and background

The Kingdom of Lesotho is in the process of national reforms intended to spearhead the transformation of the Kingdom into a stable, prosperous and united nation as articulated in the document, *The Lesotho We Want: Dialogue and Reforms for National Transformation - Vision Overview and Roadmap* (the Roadmap) and in various statements including reports and communiques of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Inclusive national dialogue is the agreed starting point of the reforms. The Dialogue process is designed and implemented in three distinct phases, namely

- National Dialogue Plenary 1
- In-District Consultations
- National Dialogue Plenary 2

The First Plenary (Plenary 1, together with its Extension) have been concluded, and the country, under the guidance of a National Dialogue Planning Committee (constituted in law), is in the process of undertaking the In-District Consultations (scheduled to conclude by 03 May 2019). These Consultations are intended to ensure that Basotho in their diverse formations have a direct opportunity to be part of the dialogue process leading to the reforms.

a. Basotho in the Diaspora

Lesotho's Diaspora population in South and Southern Africa is significant in many ways.

At an ethno-cultural level, Basotho are a cross-border population, with significant contiguous ties with the South African provinces of Kwazulu-Natal, Free State, Gauteng and Eastern Cape. South African Basotho are the third biggest ethnic group (after Zulus and Xhosas), and are estimated at more than four million. Many have direct familial links with Basotho in Lesotho. In addition, it is estimated that up to 500,000 Basotho from Lesotho reside permanently or temporarily in South Africa.

Economically, Lesotho's emigrants send a high volume of remittances home, which are used primarily by their family members to finance the daily expenses of their families or some investments –although exact estimates of their impact in this connection has not been extensively studied (Abadura, Fahrenhorst and Zelazny, 2014).

In terms of simple human movement across the border, the two main frontier posts of Maputsoe and Maseru feature in the top five crossing points into and out of South Africa. Business flows between South and Southern Africa on the one hand, and Lesotho on the other, are significant, with almost all imports and exports of the country traversing these countries, and Southern African Customs Union (SACU) remittances contributing (at their height in the 1980s-1990s) between 15% and 25% to the Lesotho budget.

This shows the importance of specifically South Africa-based Basotho Diaspora populations for Lesotho. Other countries in the region which feature prominently in this connection include Botswana, Swaziland, Zambia and Mozambique.

The NDPC has resolved to undertake a trip to South Africa in order to collect views of Basotho Diaspora members living there on reforms, essentially as a complement and extension to the In-District Consultations that are aimed at collecting and distilling the popular voice on reforms that will recalibrate governance, the economy, and stabilise the country –with the support and facilitation of the Southern African Development Community (SADC). LCN will be engaged as a lead facilitator in this consultations.

Justification

Because of the nature and economic, social, political and cultural impact of Lesotho's Diaspora in South Africa, it is important to involve these populations and include their input in all significant national developments in Lesotho. The inclusion of Basotho in the Southern African Diaspora in the current national reforms dialogue is justified on the basis of the above. Indeed, the Government of Lesotho is involved in designing, elaborating and implementing a Diaspora policy.

During the NDPC's Consultative Meeting in Pretoria in March 2019, it was agreed with the SADC Facilitator that the NDPC should endeavour to cast its net of popular input into reforms beyond the borders of the country, and to capture this in the form of a Diaspora outreach trip to South Africa. This activity will fall within the "data collection" period of In-District Consultations and will therefore not disrupt progress on the overall reforms roadmap, and will further contribute to enhancing the inclusivity of proposals to be tabled at subsequent stages of the schedule (i.e. National Leadership Forum and Plenary II of the Multistakeholder Consultations).

In line with the foregoing, therefore, the national Dialogue Planning Committee (NDPC) has identified engagement with the Diaspora, especially in South Africa, as one of the steps to be included in the process of obtaining opinion, analyses and recommendations that will build into the reforms.

Objectives

The Diaspora Consultations are intended

- Afford Basotho in the Diaspora (South Africa) an opportunity to contribute to the reform process in similar manner that their compatriots in the country have been allowed during In-District Consultations

- Demonstrate the commitment of national partners to including all sectors of Basotho stakeholders in dialogue towards reform
- Acknowledge the regional economic, political and social ties and interdependence of Basotho populations across the borders and their stake in a stable and prosperous Lesotho

Outcomes

It is expected that after the event and as a result of it, the following shall have been achieved:

- Basotho in the Diaspora shall have contributed directly to the reforms currently being undertaken, and therefore will own them and assist in their durability, and
- The inputs of Basotho in the Diaspora will be incorporated into the reports that will be tabled by NDPC before the NLF and Plenary II

Methodology

NDPC (Committee and Secretariat) will work in coordination with the identified stakeholders, and will be responsible primarily for the following¹

- Identifying and securing appropriate venues (central, based on populations targeted and facilities available in South Africa).²
- Publicity (announcements and call for participation)
- Monitoring and overseeing the sessions (with assistance of the LCN)

For the conduct of the sessions, NDPC will form itself into seventeen (17) parallel teams to execute the assignment. The teams will aim at covering six of the nine provinces of South Africa, namely North-West, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Free State, Kwazulu-Natal, and Gauteng. Each Team will comprise FIVE (4) people as follows (per team): save for two teams that will each have one extra person in the form of an interpreter and a guide.

1. NDPC –1 supervisor/monitor
2. LCN – 2 facilitators
3. Transport –1 Driver

The instruments used for In-District consultations will be employed for collection the views of the Diaspora, and for monitoring.

It is estimated that each team will conduct five meetings, making a total of eighty-five (85) sessions in all.

Monitoring and Quality Assurance

In addition, LCN will have a roving team of THREE (3), made up of two monitors/coordinators (plus a Driver), whose function will be to oversee the execution of the assignment for purposes of

¹ NDPC has had experience defining (with LCN) the constituencies, venues and populations to be covered for in-district consultations; and coordinating publicity and sensitisation. For this assignment, the Committee held a consultative working meeting with LCN on 22 May to prepare and agree on the frame and schedule of work.

² For this purpose, the NDPC is coordinating with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations through Lesotho's representative (diplomatic) missions in South Africa. In addition, Cabinet Office has also been involved in the planning of the initiative.

harmonising reporting and ensuring that the frame for administration of the Instrument is adhered to from a technical perspective, in order to ensure uniform and realistic reporting. This approach was also included in the In-District consultations.

Dates and Venue

The consultations are planned to cover six Provinces in South Africa over a period of seven days, starting on 05th – 12th June, 2019 as outlined below.³

Preliminary Schedule of Diaspora Consultations (South Africa)

<i>Province</i>	<i>Venues (with dates)</i>				
Free state	Bloemfontein/ Botshabelo and Thaba – Nchu <i>(Days 1-3)</i>	Welkom <i>(Day 5)</i>	Qwaqwa <i>(Day 7)</i>	Kroonstaad <i>(Day 8)</i>	
Gauteng	Pretoria <i>(Day 1)</i>	Johannesburg and Vanderbijl Park <i>(Days 2-3)</i>	Caltonville <i>(Day 5)</i>	Katlehong section <i>(Day 6)</i>	UNISA <i>(Days-7-8)</i>
North West	Rustenburg <i>(Days 1-2)</i>	Klerksdorp <i>(Day 3)</i>	Portchesdroom <i>(Day 4)</i>	Oarkney <i>(Day 5)</i>	Kimberly <i>(Day 6)</i>
Kwazulu Natal	Newcastle <i>(Days 1-2)</i>	Thekwini <i>(days 3-4)</i>	Manzini <i>(day 5)</i>		
Eastern Cape	Matatiele <i>(Days 1-3)</i>		East london and Fort Hare <i>(Days 4-5)</i>	Univ Mangozuthu – PE <i>(Day 6)</i>	
Western cape	Ceres/Mapolas i <i>(Days 1-4)</i>	Cape Town and UCT <i>(Days 5-8)</i>	Stellenbosch and UWC <i>(Days 5-8)</i>		

³ Not all the dates total to TEN, because travel days are not included (only working/meeting days are indicated)

