

# The NGO Web

Khokahanyan'a Phiri



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# FORWORD

FROM PROGRAM DIRECTOR'S DESK

# EDITORIAL



# APPRAISING THE FIRST 100 DAYS OF COALITION GOVERNMENT IN OFFICE

By Sofonea Shale

**A** warm welcome dear readers to this issue of the NGO Web newsletter, a publication by civil society through the Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN). It is our pleasure here at LCN to produce a publication that talks about issues of public interest; issues of development, democracy, economic justice, and environment as well as health and social development. True to civil society's mandate being the voice of the voiceless, NGO Web is a reflection of this mandate, as shown by the topics in this issue.

There has been a general assumption and/or consensus in the public discourse that the current rule of the coalition government will be swamped in conflict. We have witnessed conflict in previous governments and we discuss the concept of conflict and its history in the politics of Lesotho, its challenges and prospects for handling it in this new era.

Political parties in the 8th Parliament also have high expectations from the Coalition government as well as collectively as members of Parliament. They have pronounced themselves; their expectations and pledges. These are highlighted in this issue.

Civil society is increasingly embarking on budget tracking as a core function in order to uphold the principles of good governance and hold governments accountable. We discuss why as civil society we should be concerned about the National Budget and track public expenditure and provide a snapshot of a recent budget tracking activity conducted by LCN.

We are hopeful that the above issues highlighted and those that you will find inside this issue will be of benefit to you. We will strive to continue on improving this publication with the help of your comments.

Together in Development!

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**F**ollowing his inauguration as the head of Executive and the Prime Minister of the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho and the establishment of government after May 2012 National Assembly as the Constitution requires, the Right Honourable The Prime Minister Motsoahae Thabane stirred public enthusiasm in the operation of government by announcing 100 days of service delivery. Although there is neither a consensus on the meaning of this (100 days) concept nor is there a shared appraisal memo for government delivery for the said period, the reality is that it generated public debate about the new government.

This article does two or three things. Firstly it interrogates the 100 days as a concept and how it was introduced to the public by the government; secondly it examines the public reaction widely and specifically civil society organisations to the announcement; thirdly, how far the government has gone since its inception; and lastly some ideas promoted by this initiative which could be effectively used by government for future public engagement.

## FIRST 100 DAYS OF COALITION GOVERNMENT IN OFFICE

The announcement by the Head of Government that, the government will come back to the people after 100 days to report on the progress made, generated expectations higher than what the government could realistically achieve in the said period. The 100 days concept is used in many democracies as a cut off point for a new government to set up its governance institutional arrangement. This includes identification of people for key positions whose term(s) of office are bound to the life of the political administration, setting priorities etc. At the end of this period, also referred to as honey moon, politicians are expected to deliver, account for the actions of government and take responsibility for the flops and credit of government. In Lesotho it has been the other way round. The government promised a report of work

done instead of foundations for the work to be done. In this way government put itself under a lot of pressure because nothing in real terms could have been done in 100 days by people who have just come into office.

In any event people took the government announcement for real and people expected to see something different. Since the government had not made its targets for this period public, many just expected something different, as to what specifically, they did not know except that it has to be something different. The pro and anti coalition divide could be sensed in the public debate where some would begin to attach their good experience with government to the promised 100 days. They would even go further to remark "this government promised 100 days but we see improvements even before the period expires". On the contrary others would question whether the weaknesses they see in government services represent the very 100 days of promise.

In recognition of a gap and in anticipation of how loose and subjective the appraisal of first 100 days of coalition government in office would be without set and know targets, Development for Peace Education, a civil society organisation based on Christian values of justice, sharing and respect for human dignity, working in the areas of peace and public participation filled the void. DPE staged a Lobby Session where MATŠOABOLI, a snapshot of Community Voices in 100 days of Coalition Government of Lesotho in office was presented to the relevant Ministries. In summary the community demands were as follows:

- Nullify Policies discriminating people on the basis of their HIV and AIDS status, resuscitate National AIDS Commission and establish Human Rights Commission;
- Formalise National Community Parliament,
- Legislate Public Participation; and
- Commit portion of Lesotho Highlands Water Revenue to a special community development fund;
- Re-commit to construct road to Kuebunyane;

- Provide seasonal Military protection to Hloahloeng, Qabone, Lebakeng etc cattle posts;
- Re-invigorate decentralisation and decide to allocate funds directly to Community Councils, allow them to open and operate own bank accounts and manage implementation of their plans;
- Review Local Government Act and
- Pledge to continue a plan to build a police station in Hloahloeng

When the period expired DPE again found it necessary to raise civil society voice on this important occasion and co-hosted a dinner on Sectoral Appraisal of 1st 100 Days of Coalition Government in Office. This provided different sectors of society with opportunity to dialogue with Ministers, officials and partners. Appraisal of government by these sectors is well articulated in the Moro Khotla Ha o Okoloe Mafura document. Although this document gives insights of how for an example an organisation representing people with disability appraises government, more importantly it carries three recommendations to government. First it applauds the government for the 100 days concept and calls for the next phase of 100 days. Significant about this call is that the next phase should be more participatory and each Ministry should plan and set targets for the 100 days with different sectors relevant to the mandate of the Ministry. In this way reporting in 100 days will be a collaboratory instead of an antagonistic encounter. Some people find this as a tedious work which deprives government a quality time to implement. It may be true that too much concentration of reporting affects implementation. However, it is a fact in a democracy that transparency and accountability are part of good governance. In fact doing work transparently reduces time spent on reporting because already people know.

The Public Finances Management Act requires that every Ministry should report to Parliament on the progress

made on capital budget every other quarter. No ministry has been able to do this to date, so taking this recommendation would be a sure way of fulfilling this legal requirement. The recommendation does not however hand over this civil society initiative to government, it remains a civil society process where both Parliament and Executive could benefit. Secondly, it calls for fiscal decentralisation and empowerment of councils to operate their bank accounts so that they could be able to address needs of the people they serve. This recommendation calls for the community development fund to finance community initiatives struggle to fight poverty. Thirdly, the call is made for a Public Participation Act that will facilitate participation of public in the legislative, budgetary and policy development processes.

The official report released by government for the work done in the first 100 days in government, is another source of dialogue. There are generally two approaches to engaging it. First is that looking at the targets and the progress to date it could be logical to give it slightly over half. This would be indication of progress made. Secondly, it could be looked at from a critical point of view where it would be shown that the report is not comprehensive as it did not include all the Ministries. The question would then be, why exclusion of others? Is it because they have performed badly and that is not what government wants to report about? If the second approach was to be taken, a broader coverage of issues and events would have been attempted and all Ministries would have featured. However the irony of this report reverts back to the starting point where it showed that no common ground was shared at the beginning. People did not know what government has set as targets for the period, can we therefore go for another phase, where all shall be on board from the word go?



## WHAT WE EXPECT IN THE 8TH PARLIAMENT: THE COALITION, OPPOSITION AND BLOC PRONOUNCE THEMSELVES

By Mpolokeng Mpele



Hon Members of Parliament Billy Macaefa, Monyane Moleleki and Molahlehi Lettoto

If Lesotho's democracy is not reinforced, the country shall be riddled with threats such as un-abating HIV and AIDS pandemic, state intolerance to alternative voices and limited public participation, high and increasing poverty levels, post-election tensions and political intolerance, weak public accountability processes and systems that encourage corruption, violation of human rights and weak or poor delivery of public programs.

This was the rationale behind Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN) call for a national dialogue on enhancement of political tolerance as a means of conflict management recently. Following the birth of a coalition government, it became imperative to pre-empt that in the absence of intentional open dialogue processes, conflict would be inevitable across the whole spectrum of the political

arena; within the coalition, within individual parties, between Government and the opposition down to the electorate. Now with the emergence of the 'Bloc', many became uneasy of its intentions and what this would mean for the new Government and Parliament. The dialogue thus brought together various stakeholders that included development partners, the Government, opposition parties, academia, political analysts and the media fraternity to unearth the issue of political (in)tolerance and how to effectively manage potential conflict that will undoubtedly be unavoidable.

This piece seeks to present the aspirations and expectations of political parties represented in the 8th Parliament as they pronounced themselves during the forum. Represented political parties were Basotho Democratic National Party (BDNP),

Basotho Congress Party (BCP), Basotho National Party (BNP), Democratic Party (DC), Lesotho People's Congress (LPC), Lesotho Workers' Party (LWP), Marematlou Freedom Party (MFP), National Independent Party (NIP) and Khoetsa ea Basotho (PFD).

### BDNP

Represented by Moeketsi Hanyane, the BDNP's expectations from the coalition government, which according to them are similar to those of the electorate centre on:

- Promoting and sustaining political freedoms and human rights thereby consolidating good governance;
- Promoting economic growth which will reduce poverty, enhance prosperity for the betterment of the people which will imply sustainable education, training skills, health, food security and employment opportunities;
- Addressing inequalities posed by gender, socio, economic and political background and the geographic positioning of members of communities; and
- Strengthening the national efforts on the fight against crime and corruption which are second enemies of humanity after non curable diseases."

BDNP is of the view that the Coalition Government must recognise that development is impossible without democracy, respect and observance of the principle of separation of powers, rule of law, respect for human rights, respect for human dignity, political stability and good governance.

To achieve this ideal, Parliament must according to the BDNP, be afforded its rightful role of designing and monitoring development while cognisant that public policy formulation is the prerogative of the Executive/Cabinet. The latter is expected to go beyond public policy formulation and oversee and monitor the implementation of policy and ensure that public funds are used and managed in a transparent and efficient manner.

The party advocates for a concerted effort by all political parties to work and champion reconciliation, political tolerance and deepen democracy. This process should be spearheaded by the Coalition Government through respect for public institutions, political diversity and minority views. Bulldozing by Government in Parliament is not healthy for democracy and would not respond to people's need for real change in Lesotho's governance approach.

## BCP

The BCP's Secretary General, 'Mateboho Noko, reminded the forum that since its establishment in 1952, the BCP has been a peaceful political party, and was never in conflict; and to this day they are still upholding the principle of non-discrimination. As an independent opposition party in the 8th Parliament, the BCP will not take sides; not for the Government, not for the main opposition nor the 'Bloc'. All the party aspires for is for good governance that would also eradicate poverty among the nation.

The party is adamant that should the Coalition Government deter from upholding good governance, they would not hesitate or be embarrassed to voice their concerns and give direction. According to Mrs. Noko, they are anticipating good things from the

Coalition Government. If Basotho want, they can work in harmony and make this new political dispensation work, starting with political leaders themselves because where there is a will there is a way.

## BNP

As one of the three parties in the Coalition Government to which most expectations are directed, the BNP also has its expectations from both the two parties with which it formed Government and the other parties in Parliament. On behalf of the party, Tšeliso Lesenya did not mince words to discourage floor crossing in the 8th Parliament which he says destabilises the rule of government. He urged all to support the term of the ruling Government.

He admitted that as a coalition they have to deal with challenges of entrenched stereotypes such as "Ma Congress a hlooho li thata". They need to let go of such stereotypes and be able to deal with political conflict objectively and with maturity. He urged political leaders in Parliament to vote for laws that are in the best interests of the nation.

According to BNP, the Coalition intends to improve service delivery, fight corruption, opportunities be open to all Basotho and assures Basotho that the coalition government will be a government in which everyone participates.

## DC

Having faced the May general Election with a general mood of confidence, the DC took an unexpected knock when they did not win enough seats to form government. This was indicated by the party's deputy leader, Monyane Moleleki, while also noting that the main reason for

the partnership of the parties which formed the coalition was to kick DC out of office. According to him, the infighting within the LCD which culminated to its split was a God send opportunity for opposition parties as it handed them the premiership of the country on a silver platter.

Having been thrown to the opposition benches, DC purports that it will behave as His Majesty's most loyal opposition. What does this really mean? DC claims that they have no plans to associate their party with any actions that might destabilise the country. "We are convinced that stability is the source and precondition for progress in any country. No investor will go anywhere near a country that is unstable". This assertion, according to Moleleki is borne out of their experience in office.

The DC also pledges that it shall never associate itself with any disruptive strikes, stay aways, work stoppages, student unrests or any disruptive behaviour whatsoever. In general, for DC, gone are the days when those in opposition view themselves as enemies to their own government and seek to destabilise it at all costs.

## LPC

LPC feels the coalition was formed only on the basis of office seeking amongst parties with different mandates, history and cultures, thus it will be faced with a constant threat of instability. The expectation of the party mainly centres on deliberating on promises made to the electorate and ensuring growth of living standards and equal distribution of wealth.

## LWP

'Comrade' Billy Macaefa confessed that he was among those who en-

sured that the previous government was uncomfortable for the whole five years. As opposition, they wanted the LCD government out of power at all costs, and even before the election the opposition agreed to form a coalition government. They were however surprised when after electing the Speaker only three parties formed Government. That led to the formation of the 'Bloc', a formidable force that can decide whether Government is stable or not.

LWP wants to see the promises made kept, failing which, they will devise means to pull the coalition government down. The party admits that some promises were too ambitious. Unlike the DC, the workers' party will not be a loyal opposition. They expect the government to put something on the table if it wants their loyalty (maleo). The government would have to nurture its relationships with DC and the Bloc, since their majority is very slim, a view shared by the DC. Comrade Macaefa however, provides assurance that as the 'Bloc', they will judge an issue upon its merits.

## MFP

On behalf of the MFP, Mr. Mofube confirmed that the MFP is part of the 'Bloc' and a sound opposition in Parliament. As a party, being part of the 'Bloc' does not mean that they ex-

pect something from Government for them to support them in Parliament. All they want is for Government to respond to the needs of the nation. They will therefore follow up on its delivery as promised.

Their expectation from the Coalition government is virtuous governance which is accountable to the electorate. PFD wishes for the government to finish its five year term and they will ensure that it stays on track by monitoring their performance and where necessary show cause for concern.

## NIP

As part of the 'Bloc' NIP wants to see service delivery improving during the Coalition Government's rule. As part of the 'Bloc', that is the reason why they exist; to ensure that the Coalition Government stays on track. Representing the party, Tumelo Nthako claims that they will not take sides but anticipate vigorous debates in Parliament that will take public opinion into account. The party wants to see the education system accommodate the country's needs and opportunities becoming available to all and jobs created, especially for youth.

The party advises the new Government to initiate preparations for the

next elections immediately unlike previous Governments; who waited until the eleventh hour to do so.

## PFD

The PFD's main concern is for the Government to address the education issues that are compromising the country's development. The party wants to see better communication and negotiation in Parliament and see promises made to the public honoured, especially to the textile workers.

In a nutshell, while political parties may have individual expectations, they all want to see change both in the manner in which Parliament will conduct its business and in the provision of services. In effect, positive change should be seen in all aspects of the lives of Basotho and in the overall performance of the country. A lot is indeed expected of the 8th Parliament of Lesotho. It is evident that this will be a Parliament whose proceedings Basotho will be eager to follow.

The forum also established that for peace and stability to rein, there is a need for political maturity among the roles players such as political parties, particularly those who are in Parliament.



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# PROMOTING CIVIL SOCIETY CAPACITY TO ENGAGE EFFECTIVELY

By Seabata Motsamai



In the developing world, we have noted that the developed countries have continuously donated resources to our governments without asking them to provide policies that would ensure sustainability, prevent corruption and political instability. This has led us to underdevelopment even today and there is a need for a shift.

As form of a shift, many civil society organisations are talking about effective engagement with government and the private sector with an aim of improving the lives of the poor people. Currently, most organisations see the advocacy as a means for effective engagement. Advocacy is understood as a tool for social change, specifically for changing the lives of the poor and marginalised people through engaging various systems available in the democratic dispensation (such as ). It has been demonstrated that the advocacy process demands people's commitments as well as commitment from organisations towards policy change. By so doing, the change of power structure at grass roots level will facilitate the destruction of fear, vulnerability, dependency and submission. The advocacy process is intended to restore confidence and the ability to demand and negotiate the poor people's space. It has been demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that this is a painful and long process but does out-weight the pain of poverty, hardships and other forms of social exclusion that impact negatively to the electorate.

Engaging in the policy process offers an opportunity for ensuring transparency, accountability and responsiveness in democracy. The advocacy can thus become an effective means of building strong mass movement of the development actors for policy transformation.

Government ministries have also realised that engagement with other stakeholders such as civil society is critical though their capacity is still at a fragile state. There is an increasing understanding that advocacy needs to be understood in a broader perspective for it to support initiatives that are geared towards eradicating poverty and social exclusion in our communities.

The world today is coming closer towards developing an understanding of the role of civil society in development. For the past three decades, most scholars, government officials and civil society activists had been concentrating on defining the concept of civil society and perhaps they were right. However, it was noted that in that context the concentration to define the civil society was a strategy to derail growth of the sector because CSOs were becoming very strong on issues of development challenges. Within the civil society movement as a whole, there were some challenges of legitimacy and credibility which needed to be addressed and it was not easy to deal with such issues at the same time trying to address pertinent governance and development issues.

As of today, we see civil society in its different formations as a sector that complements governments in their efforts to attain development and this is sometimes misunderstood. This misunderstanding is to the extent that it is thought that the place for civil society is only for service delivery agenda. We have noted that this approach is not adequate because it undermines civil society's contribution in bringing sustainable development to our society. Civil society organisations which provide support services to poor communities should not stop there but should be able to analyse and ask questions why those services are not in place to support the poor and excluded people.

In the context of Lesotho, the Coalition Government is faced with the challenges of consolidating power and at the same time changing most of the actions and policies of the previous regime. The critical question for it is whether civil society will engage effectively under this context. As development activists we are immensely challenged by the unjust policies and laws that are perpetuating inequality and injustice practices. The net result of this is increased poverty, social exclusion and marginalization. At any time when the participation of the electorate is excluded in the governance and development agenda the economic mismanagement, poverty, corruption, environmental degradation and other social ills prevail to the disadvantages of the poor people. The nature of engagement should be defined within the context of the issue being addressed. However, it is noted that effective engagement requires structures that have a clear mandate. The Coalition Government should think of how it intends to work with civil society organisations in Lesotho. One of the areas that govern-

ment should look at is the signing of memorandum of understanding with civil society that would define areas of engagement and which structures should be established as facilitators and drivers of the relations. By so doing, the country embraces herself to the concept of democratic governance. It is within this context that we understand the concept of democratic governance as a framework for participation and a base for rights-based-policy advocacy.

The issue of investing in capacity building in advocacy for civil society among the donor community is beginning to widely gain momentum for some. This paradigm shift comes after a long traditional funding that had been channelled towards service delivery without strong emphasis on policy advocacy for demand driven development. It is to this end a strong feeling that the level of development that can be attained due to civil society's capacity to advocate for it can go a long way to alleviate poverty.

## NEW RECIPE TO FIGHT UNDERDEVELOPMENT

By Crosbey R S Mwanza, Co-Director, Southern Africa Media Alliance (SAMA)

The World Bank has spent M731billion over the last 10 years across the globe but says very little change has taken place. In a report released on November 14, this year, the Bank has admitted that little progress was made to achieve the targets. This failure is attributed to lack of sensitivity to complex factors including social, political, historical and geographical realities as well as the failure to put in place effective evaluation and monitoring systems.

This failure according to the Bank hampered learning by communities to adopt ways to improve their livelihoods. The Bank says this failure is not a result of weak states but in the

same breathe acknowledges that states that provided strong central support minimized the damage.

Involving local communities in decisions that affect their lives is central to making development more effective and it has the potential to transform the role that poor people play in development by giving them voice and agency.

But inducing civic engagement in development is not easy, admits the World Bank in its report which covers community development and decentralization which it and other donors support.

Challenges faced by the Bank and

other donors supporting such development, are shared in the evidence-based report. Such challenges include the need for a responsive state and a strong awareness of local context. A number of steps are recommended to ensure that financiers support projects effectively such as flexible long term engagement and participatory monitoring.

Ghazala Mansuri, one of its lead economists in the department of Poverty Reduction and Equity Group says in the report covering 500 studies across the globe that " Genuine efforts at inducing civic engagement require a sustained long-term commitment and a clear understanding of the social and political forces at all

levels of society”.

Another lead economist in its research department Vijayendra Rao says, “Rarely is much thought given to the possibility that it is not easy to effectively organize groups of people to act in a way that solves market and government failures.

In fact, such efforts face multiple challenges such as lack of coordination, inequality, lack of transparency, corruption, free-riding and low capacity.

Participation works best as a sandwich with bottom-up participation supported by top-down supervision.”

The Bank identifies three lessons to be learnt from its studies, namely,

- Clear, measurable results within a specific timeframe aren't always possible
  - Community participation works best when the state is responsive to the demands of local civic groups, and
  - Projects need to be sensitive to local and national contexts, which vary widely and often have unpredictable effects on outcomes.
- For future financial injection from the Bank and other donors, it recommends the following,

- Include political, social and economic analyses when designing and implementing projects as well as evaluating their impact
- Allow for flexibility in project structures
- Create a clear system for feedback and monitoring
- Implement cost-effective monitoring tools
- Cultivate an environment where participants can give honest feedback without being subjected and where failure is tolerated. Such an environment can foster innovation and evidence-based policy decisions.

Conducted over a six year period, the Southern Africa Media Alliance (SAMA) last year established similar findings for Lesotho as established by the world Bank globally that one factor that plays less prominence in project management visa-viz the roles of community, government, private sectors, church, donors and any other parties was that information was key element poorly managed.

SAMA has established that in order for commitments the country has committed to, to succeed, whether through instruments of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) or

any other, information management needs to play a key and meaningful role to provide checks, balances and success. SAMA has developed a facilitation support system based on a cyclic communication sharing mechanism involving all parties through the use of all communication tools. When efficient communication plays a central role in development, it becomes integral to success and ensures that:

- There is room for honest feedback that facilitates learning instead of being judgmental or engulfed in the fear of failure.
- That failure is properly understood that sometimes it can provide ways about what works. Properly managed information and communication tools can provide evidence-based policy development environment in which failure can be tolerated and used as a learning platform for future success.
- Expose project structures to the need for change to accommodate flexible long-term engagement.
- Clear understanding of the essentiality of designing projects with built-in feedback, participatory monitoring, and evaluation taken very seriously and redress systems.



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## THE 13TH NGO WEEK AS A MEANS FOR PUBLIC PARTICIPATION



**T**he NGO Week is meant to be a forum for all civil society formation under the Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN). It has become a tradition that every year NGOs come together to discuss and debate policies that affect both NGOs and government. In the past our focus was to talk to government but recently we have expanded our net to include regional bodies such as the SADC-Council of Non Governmental Organisations and development partners. This provides an opportunity for broader engagement and also to provide a platform NGOs to establish and satisfy their own needs as well as the needs of the society they serve.

It is for this reason that LCN aims at building capacity of member NGOs and also aims at assisting member organisations to be increasingly more effective in meeting their goals and to be able to initiate and maintain self-supporting and self-sustaining development. LCN provides an epitome of higher NGO platform towards deliberate efforts to address the challenges facing Lesotho. It does this by linking issues of governance, human rights,

poverty, environment and agriculture and economic justice. LCN sees human development as integrated initiatives, thus, needing responsive interventions and comprehensive approaches.

It is noted that LCN and her member organisations as part of broader civil society agenda are seen at the moment as one of the legitimate forces to influence policy change processes due to their strategic positioning in the development arena. Through public dialogues such as NGO Week, LCN facilitates the engagement between government and civil society movement in Lesotho. The Coalition Government in Lesotho presents the best opportunity for the engagement if it would political will to engage.

The role of civil society does not go without challenges, it is in this context it is noted that the fight on poverty and political instability is a long-term war which needs government, private sector and civil society efforts. It is accepted by most development actors in Lesotho that civil society organisations (CSOs) continue to play a signifi-

cant role in poverty eradication strategies, engendering and sustaining democratic culture and values.

Although there are still many challenges to be overcome, the civil society in Lesotho remains a viable sector in addressing the issues of development and governance. The institutionalisation of dialogue processes in the country has demonstrated the fact that civil society has a role to play in the development and governance agenda of the country as evidenced by its involvement during the long conflict marathon Lesotho took from 2007 - 2012. The fact is that the capacity of civil society has to be enhanced if a meaningful progress has to be registered in the areas of development and governance. A meaningful progress cannot be registered unless both human and financial resources are available for civil society's work. At the moment there is a decline in donor funding in the country; it is therefore essential to explore different options from which civil society organisations can be assisted in order to continue its operations.

As a way of creating awareness, the 13th LCN NGO Week is organised under the theme: Democratizing Anti-Poverty Agenda: Perspectives of civil society. This came at the right time where all actors are expected to address issues related to governance and development in Lesotho. The level of hunger in the country calls for more dialogue in seeking solutions for eradicating poverty in Lesotho. The topics that will be addressed during the NGO Week included the following: Today's Economic integration Realities (liberalisation) opportunities, threats and implications for consumers and producers in Lesotho: the case EPA; Lesotho Government Policy Response to disaster vulnerability: Challenges and Opportunity for Anti-Poverty Agenda and The State of Private Sector Development in Lesotho: Best Options for Economic Development, to name but a few.

The resolutions of the 13th NGO Week will be adopted by the AGM as way of giving them legitimacy within LCN leadership.

Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS-related deaths at Mabote in Maseru district in 2011. The question that immediately come to one's mind, is, "are we really getting there"? According to Millennium Development Goal 2012 report the country is making slow progress with regard to halting and reversing the spread of HIV. It is expected that by 2015 Lesotho will have halted and begun to reverse the spread of HIV and AIDS, left with three years will Lesotho be able to meet this target? Are we making any sense when we also talk of "getting to Zeros?"

The 2009 Demographic and Health Survey reveals that Lesotho's HIV prevalence has remained essentially unchanged since 2004, the prevalence rate has stabilized at a very high rate of 23% placing Lesotho as the third worst affected country in the world. What is it that Lesotho is not doing well to reduce this shocking rate?? The country has faced challenges in coordination and management of the response which has led to dissolving of the coordination structure, National AIDS Commission, there were reasons that has led to this decision. Important will be to build a structure that will respond to the challenges of the initial coordinating body in a "true sense" meant to strengthen coordination in Lesotho and this should not take long. There were also challenges relating to political commitment as well behavioural ten-

dencies of Basotho that hampered progress in prevention interventions. While the country has made progress in other areas of prevention such as prevention of mother to child transmission, the following drivers remain challenges:

- Multi Concurrent Sexual Partnerships
- Inconsistent and low use of condoms
- Risky behavioural practices
- Sexual and gender based violence
- Male dominated gender norms
- Early sexual debut
- Inter-generational sex

While commemorating World AIDS Day this year, it should be responsibility of every Mosotho to take a deep breath and think deeply of:

- How many lives have been lost because of HIV,
- How many children today are orphans because of HIV,
- How much Lesotho has spent in the response against HIV.

It is the responsibility of every citizen whether a politician, student, civil servant, business man, media people, civil society, ordinary Mosotho, everyone needs to play her/his role effectively. It depends on us, and it begins with an individual; let's close the tap on new HIV infections.

## WORLD AIDS DAY

GETTING TO ZERO: ZERO NEW HIV INFECTIONS. ZERO DISCRIMINATION. ZERO AIDS RELATED DEATHS": ARE WE REALLY GETTING THERE?

By Mamathule Makhotla.



for reminding people that HIV and AIDS are still a reality, and that there is need to strengthen efforts on the fight against HIV and AIDS.

Commemoration of World AIDS DAY creates an opportunity for people to unite in the fight against HIV/AIDS, to remember those who have died of the disease and to celebrate accomplishments.

Between 2011-2015, World AIDS Days will have the theme of "Getting to zero: zero new HIV infections. Zero discrimination. Zero AIDS related deaths". The World AIDS Campaign's focus on "Zero AIDS related deaths" signifies a push towards greater access to treatment for all; a call for governments to act now. It is a call to honour promises like the Abuja declaration and for African governments to at least hit targets for domestic spending on health and HIV.

In 2011, Lesotho commemorated World AIDS Day with adoption of the same theme: Zero new HIV infections.

The World Health Organisation established World AIDS Day in 1988. On the first of December every year, World AIDS Day is commemorated. HIV and AIDS is a threat to men, women and children around the world. World AIDS day is about raising awareness, fighting prejudice and improving HIV and AIDS education. The day is important

## CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF HANDLING CONFLICT EFFECTIVELY IN LESOTHO

By Sofonea Shale

The state in Lesotho inherited from the colonial architecture a legacy of unequal, exploitative and exclusionist society where struggle for power and survival is the culture of life. The institutionalisation of modern political governance has not succeeded to transform the strongly entrenched socio-cultural attitudes into the new democratic dispensation. Neither has this new system of governance found a power sharing mechanism to arbitrate between the contending forces in society. Those who found themselves at the core of political power control worked

very hard to maintain the status quo while those in the periphery found themselves in perpetual struggle for change. It is this tension that this article seeks to highlight and show how it manifested in the political history of Lesotho. However that is not the interest of the article. What necessitates this article is the urge to deconstruct the growing phenomena that conflict cannot be effectively managed. It argues that Basotho have come a long way and that their long journey had challenges but most importantly lessons which could be used to build a peaceful society.

Whether conflict can in reality be handled effectively or not, is the debate that commences with conceptual orientation-what is conflict? Conflict is an incompatibility of interests of parties. When the actions of party A to achieve its goal minimise chances of party B to achieve its own, then there is conflict of interests. The Marxist perspective of society that survival of one sector is at the expense of the other through exploitation resonates with what Harris (2003:16) refers to as structural violence; where maintenance of dominance of one group at the centre of power over another at the periphery is done through struc-



tures set to maintain that kind of skewed balance and asymmetrical power relationship.

Contrary to the physical violence which is inflicted directly, structural violence is built-in within social and cultural institutions [political as well] which deny some people the right to participate in their own governance, limit freedom of expression, prescribing how girl children should be raised etc (Barash, 1991:8). Since these structures and institutions hold power, they even determine what people should believe as right and as wrong. It is within this set up that some people believe that conflict can never be managed. Conflict admittedly is inevitable but people still have power to choose how to handle it.

Properly handled, conflict can be changed into a basis for development. Relevant to the conceptualisation of structural violence and confidence in civilisation to tame violence into peace, is the definition of change provided by Palmer (1989). He refers to change as an alteration of any existing state or condition of social institutions, structures and relationships. This means that the very institutions and structures that exploit people and deny them freedom can be changed to promote effective handling of conflict and institutionalise new conceptions of power. Transforming institutions and structures of governance to promote co-existence of contending views refers to a political development. In his definition of political development as the response of political system to changes in its societal or international environments and, in particular, the response of the system to the challenges of state building, nation building, participation and distribution, Huntington(1971) reiterates that the power of human kind is to make a system, a creature that which it wants it to be.

Conflict in Lesotho could be under-

stood through a multi varied approach which takes into consideration the history context which is not only social, cultural, political and economic but also that which interrogates how these dynamics shape and are being shaped in the process by the contending forces.

The repertoire of bout(s) of political instability emanating from failure of the system to accommodate and manage the emerging and contending views, points to a discernable trend. The power concerns overshadowing the pre-independence talks over the role of the King and the subsequent shift of positions by parties are equally recognisable in the 1970 conflict and the period that followed. The post-1993 and the post 2006 political conflict have been characterised by lack of political development. The Social fragmentation and conflicts in the broader society such as in schools, institutions of higher learning, workplace, sports fraternity, civil society, transport sector etc point to the fact that Basotho are steadily degenerating into a violent and no longer peaceful society.

In many instances conflict manifests in ways that are not so clearly linked to the underlying factors. Failure therefore to understand conflict(s) clearly has led to either hurried and short lived solutions or perpetual antagonism of parties to conflict. The perception that effective conflict handling is illusive has been entrenched in the minds of Basotho by ineffectiveness of the partially thought non-confrontational approaches hence they resort to power of force, smear campaigns, defections etc. The attitude of Basotho therefore towards conflict and the manner in which it should be handled, are informed by belief in the power of force. Again insufficient structures and institutions facilitating and upholding the culture of peace allow entrenched ideas about conflict to dominate. One explanation to the current widespread conflict is the increasing political

consciousness and changing societal attitudes which put enormous pressure on the existing institutions not only upholding the old style of operation but also use their influence to suppress the emerging attitudes/culture.

In the journey that Basotho have crappled with conflict at various levels, there is sufficient evidence that confrontation and antagonism does not resolve conflicting interests. The efforts done by civil society organisations in the promotion of dialogue as a means of handling conflict effectively present an opportunity to build on. Some of these examples are Conflict transformation in local government, a programme run jointly by Lesotho civil society organisations and Centre for Conflict Resolution in Cape Town, the taxi industry-government conflict in 2008, Post 2007 elections discontent, the post Masire dialogue and the Coalition of Concerned Organisations-Government confrontation in the pre-2012 National Assembly elections.

All the key policy guidelines in Lesotho make provision for the institutionalisation of peaceful resolution of conflicts: Vision 2020, APRM Action Plan and National Strategic Development Plan.

Contending views in society need to be accommodated and given space in a manner that they all participate in the re-creation of a society where all are free to make their contribution. In order to (i) harness the experience and the achievements of Basotho in conflict management and (ii) realise the policy pronouncements referred to above, Lesotho should establish a National Peace Institution that will promote peace architecture through (a) education, (b) institutionalisation of conflict management and Policy advocacy, (c) practical intervention and support,(d) research and documentation.

# WATER AND AIR POLLUTION IN OUR TOWNS

## A THREAT TO OUR LIVELIHOODS

By Tšeliso Tšoeu

The current environmental situation in Lesotho leaves much to be desired despite many efforts by government, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and the general community. The article highlights the environmental challenges posed by pollution of the Mohokare River by deposits from what is known as the 'blue river' and the 'landfills' that are not well managed in the country.

### THE BLUE RIVER

Writing for the NGO WEB in 2006, Tracey Irvine revealed that the Blue River from Thetsane Industrial area contains cancer causing heavy metals (Chromium hexavalent) that are very dangerous to animals and human health. The evidence of the heavy metals was corroborated by a study undertaken by Lerotholi Polytechnic in 2006 with water samples taken from Maseru, Nyenye and other towns. The polluted river feeds into the Mohokare River, which supports the livelihoods of many communities that live along the river bank. This is in the form of irrigation and drinking by their livestock. Although not yet substantiated, there is reason to believe that the blue river adversely affects microbial activity both flora and fauna, as animals are usually seen drinking from this river.

According to Lesotho Water and Sanitation Policy of 2007, Lesotho commits to manage trans-boundary water resources on the basis of Lesotho's sovereignty in a way that ensures maximum benefits while taking cognizance of her obligations to downstream users under international law. Downstream countries include South Africa, Botswana and Namibia. With the picture portrayed above, it is clear that Lesotho as a country is not meeting this obligation.

Furthermore, Lesotho has to report on Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) Goal number 7 which emphasises on ensuring environmental sustainability. Can Lesotho proudly claim that her waters are clean? If in the context of their source yes, but they get polluted as they approach cities and towns where "development" has to occur. Mohokare River is not being polluted only in Maseru. A similar situation was found in Nyenye where polluted industrial water feeds into the same river. Evidently, Mohokare River is perhaps more polluted than other rivers in the country owing to industrial activities established close to it.

The polluter pays principle states that whoever destroys or pollutes the environment in which he/she operates, must provide a certain compensation that goes to the community or the physical environment itself in the form of projects that addresses the environmental pollution caused by such a company or individual to reclaim the damage caused. However, the polluter, who is known, is doing nothing about the situation and is not being held accountable.

Apart from the Blue River, sludge from the factories in Thetsane is being dumped near Ha Tsolo which, according to the residents emits a pungent smell into the air. The effects of constantly inhaling that air have not yet been established but are undoubtedly adverse.

### LANDFILLS.

There has been a great challenge with respect to landfills in Lesotho. Over many years in the past, a lot of debates evolved around the then Tsosane dump site, now called Tsosane land fill. Since 2000, LCN directed her efforts towards advocating for the better management of the landfill or its complete closure as a result of air pollution and other environmental hazards presented by the dump site. The dump site, which was close to a residential area, presented smoky conditions almost 24 hours per day.

Apart from the smoky conditions presented by the landfill all sorts of waste were dumped here, from rotten food items to medical waste, without being sorted and separated accordingly. Some residents nearby particularly those low-income households could pick up whatsoever from the site for consumption. Residents complained that the dump presented a daily inhalation of fumes and smoke, littering around the households, a stench of spoiled food items, clothes being subjected to the smoke thus becoming dark and in some cases, as has been advanced before people scavenging expired food commodities. The community feared that they were at risk of contracting respiratory diseases.

LCN with member organizations including the communities around Tsosane held and conducted a lot of campaigns and talks against the dump site for a long time. Eventually, their plight was heard. Currently, the situation at Tsosane is much better. The site is fenced, there is no burning and it is being managed by a private company.

At least some of the situations presented by the dump site are no longer there. It took a lot of effort, determination and focus by different actors for this to happen. It is therefore believed that If Tsosane no longer presents the environmental pollution it used to do, then with the same vigor and determination by all relevant stakeholders the Blue River will cease to exist and/or pollute the Mohokare river and the industries will abide by the environmental standards that consider both human health and physical environment.

#### OTHER DUMP SITES IN THE COUNTRY.

The same situation that used to occur at Tsosane was found at Nyenye and Hlotse dump sites where both dump sites produce smoke to the nearby villages. In the case of Nyenye, the dump site is located very close to the Nyenye Community High School. During the visit to the area, the Principal indicated that they talked to the community council about the conditions brought about by the dump site and other relevant departments but no help has been offered. Other dump sites that can be mentioned are those in Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek. Generally, the challenges are still very serious with the current landfills in the country, at least regarding those that were visited. There was an exception with Mohale's Hoek where a private company manages the landfill, just like at Ha Tsosane in Maseru. With the Mohales'Hoek site, no burning occurs, and there is proper sorting and separation of materials. Trenches are dug to bury those that are biodegradable; whereas bottles and plastic containers are recycled. Materials delivered to the landfill are even weighed so as to produce statistics per month. However, an interview with the landfill workers revealed that some of the shops, companies and individuals do not take their waste to the designated area. Otherwise in comparison, Mohale's Hoek fares better, though of course more needs be done to improve it.

#### WHAT CAN WE DO?

Advocacy for law enforcement, CSOs engagement CSOs should continue to engage with the government and other institutions on environmental issues in general, with emphasis on water and air pollution containment in the capital city and other towns. CSOs need to be persistent and strategic to ensure improved management of Lesotho's air and water resources by reducing and minimizing pollution. Evidence based advocacy messages should be developed owing to prior assessments undertaken to inform the development of CSOs'

campaigns and engagement. With tactical, strategic and patient approach, it has proven possible to change and bring about positive results; an example has been given of the Tsosane dump site. Strengthening consistent and systematic documentation will be an important tool to get the message across to the policy makers and other actors in terms of desired changes to be realized.

#### PROPER DESIGN OF LANDFILLS

Many of the landfills visited need to be well designed. Proper planning will help even cater for the population growth even in the future and allow better management of the landfills. All landfills should be monitored to ensure their compliance to both local and international standards bearing in mind both human and physical environmental protection.

#### RESEARCH ACTIVITIES

Research activities on water and air quality testing should be strengthened in the country. This will help indicate the levels of pollution of these two important environmental resources. The results will aid the country to put up corrective measures where required. It will also facilitate more improved reporting both locally and internationally. Research also helps inform policy decision making processes. Academic institutions such the National University of Lesotho have the expertise to provide technical support and equipment to lead these research activities.

#### STATE OF ENVIRONMENT REPORT.

Report on the state of environment in Lesotho provides information about general issues and development in the country. It is a very important tool to refer to in order to gauge the level of environmental development in Lesotho and areas that need attention. The Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture through the Department of Environment is responsible for the production of this important report. However, the report was last produced in 2002. Ideally, the report should be prepared every five years; however two five-year periods have elapsed without such a report. This paints a very gloomy and bleak environmental picture. How do we carry out environmental planning and implement proper and appropriate initiatives without the proper guiding tool and instrument? The government should dedicate resources to the production of this important document if we are to address environmental challenges in a better and informed manner because since 2002, a lot of events have taken place, and the current document is indeed outdated.

# GOOD GOVERNANCE AND BUDGET TRACKING

By Kopano Masilo

National Budgeting processes year after year are looked at by the citizens with genuine expectations that the solutions to their sufferings and aspirations are contained in the budget document. From its historical definition (statement of government needs and finances) to the modern definition (financial plan on how money is to be spent against the revenue received), budgets do really reflect policy intentions as well as national priorities.

Due to its importance in any nation, national budgets are a business of many stakeholders be it the executive, legislature, parliament, public servants, civil society organizations and the general public. It is therefore imperative for all stakeholders to have good intentions in whatever role they play in the budget cycle as this would directly reflect principles of good governance.

Although it is an ideal that is hardly possible to achieve in its totality, the concept of good governance is an old phenomenon. In general terms, it implies the process by which decisions are made and implemented in a given social fabric. Governance may be understood in several contexts such as corporate management and decision-making, social administration, national or local management of state administration. It therefore, cuts across many segments of human interactions but in a nutshell, good governance aims at the creation and running of a more open and transparent society where every member contributes his share, however small and insignificant that participation may sound.

Being the most important ingredient for equitable and sustainable growth, good governance enables organs responsible for public administration to effectively discharge their responsibilities in a manner free from abuses and corruption. It is a widely held notion that good governance embodies a process that takes into account the following major features.

- Participation: Involvement of all actors in the decision making process directly or through legitimate intermediaries.
- Rule of law: A fair legal system with independent and impartial law enforcement machinery.

- Transparency: The existence of clearly spelt out rules and procedures on the basis of which decisions are made and implemented.
- Responsiveness: A process by which the needs of all concerned are met in an expeditious and effective manner.
- Consensus oriented: A broad understanding of the common good and the modalities of working to that end.
- Equity and inclusiveness: Ensuring opportunities that will maintain and improve the well being of diverse groups in any given social or political setting.
- Effectiveness and efficiency: Making the best possible use of resources to the needs of the group to be served.
- Accountability: Answerability of decision makers and implementers to those whose interests are affected by their actions or inactions.

Based on this conceptualization of good governance, why should we be concerned about National Budget and why track public expenditure?

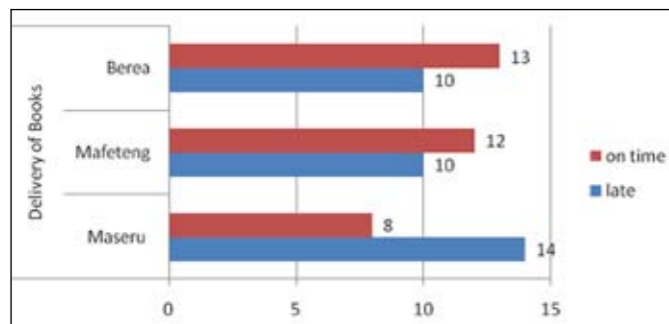
Budget tracking is one of the core functions of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that uphold good governance principles in their philosophy. Other than being one of the entry points for CSOs' contribution in the budget process, expenditure tracking is a system that looks at the flow of public funds and determines the extent to which resources actually reach the target groups. It is an attempt to examine the manner, quantity, and timing of releases of resources to different levels of government, particularly to the units responsible for the delivery of social services such as health and education. This is normally conducted as a survey over a specified period of time and is a key tool for the government and CSOs to guard against corruption and work towards ensuring transparent, accountable and effective public financial management.

In the most recent public expenditure monitoring exercise that was done in October 2012, Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN) focused on the Free Primary education programme as it is one of the heavily financed programmes due to its magnitude. The scope of the tracking activity covered the districts of Maseru, Mafeteng and Bera.

The following findings were generated during the budget tracking exercise and are just a snap short since a full analysis is in progress.



**Arrival of Books –Teachers Observation**

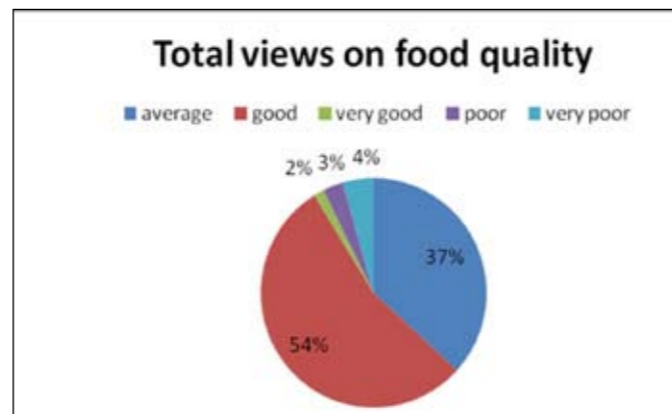
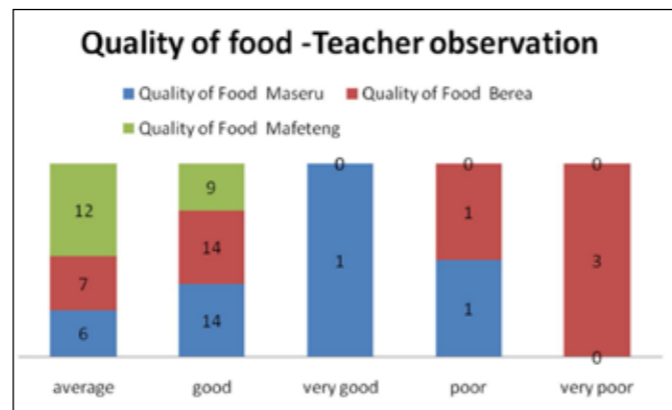


The above table is a reflection of the timeliness of delivery of books as was reported by teachers in the selected schools.

While Berea and Mafeteng recorded more timely arrivals than late, the difference is marginal. Maseru's performance on delivery is very poor given that transport infrastructure and delivery warehouses are located in Maseru. On the overall it is noted that more schools reported late arrivals than on time. This is a situation that will undermine quality of education if not reversed.

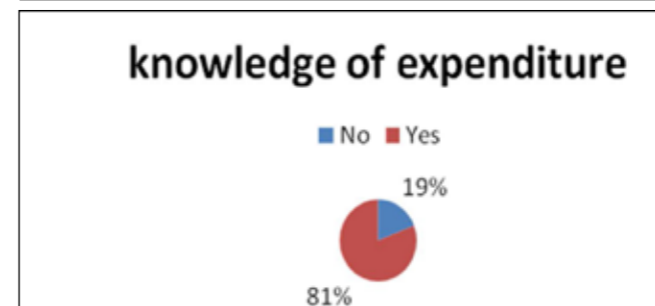
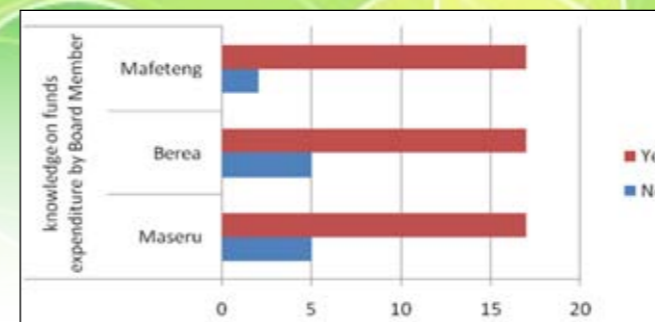


**Quality of food**



In general terms, the quality of food given to kids in schools is acceptable as reflected above. Although this represents views of teachers, majority of students were happy with the quality but a major complaint was on the quantity.

**Transparency**



Transparency can be measured in many ways but the results presented here look at transparency in terms of awareness of financial transactions by board members and the result is satisfactory (81%). 19% shaded in blue represent those that reported that they don't know anything about school funds because principals do not report. Percentage distribution on openness is acceptable but the question is why would other principals not report?

**General observations**

- Schools do not have facilities to keep books and stationery
- The level of building deterioration poses a threat of availability of classes to meet increased numbers
- Schools have devised a number of income generation modalities in their bit to survive financial burden (operational costs)
- Some schools still do not have furniture for learners and some still hold classes under the tree due to lack of classes
- Compliance with compulsory primary education is still voluntary because the number of learners enrolled in 2011 in Mafeteng for instance has declined from 41138 to 38088 in 2012.

Lesotho's performance in basic education in terms of access is satisfactory and it resonates the commitment by the Ministry of Education that Basic Education is an essential part of social and economic development hence regarded as a fundamental human right. This being the case, sitting on the laurels about the numbers will lead the nation in to disappointment in the long run if issues of quality cannot be emphasized.

Tracking expenditure of free primary education was the first step in institutionalizing budget tracking by civil society. For future purposes, CSOs have committed to continue with the process of budget tracking in various Government Ministries, hoping that these efforts will pay dividends to the deserving citizenry of this country. Next in line for budget tracking is possibly the Pensions grant.





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