



UNICEF LESOTHO **2019/20**

# Social Protection Budget Brief



*This budget brief is one of four that explores the extent to which the national budget addresses the needs of children under the age of 18 in the Kingdom of Lesotho. This particular brief analyses the size and composition of budget allocations for social protection for the fiscal year 2019/20, and offers insights into the efficiency, equity and adequacy of past spending on social protection. The main objectives of this brief are, firstly, to synthesize complex budget information so that it can be easily understood by all stakeholders and, secondly, to highlight key messages which can inform decision-making around policy and budgeting.*

*Budget data used in this brief were provided by the Ministry of Finance. To adjust expenditures for inflation, the consumer price index was applied to the original baseline information. To obtain inflation-adjusted expenditures, the base year of the consumer price index was changed to that of 2014/15.*



## Key messages

- **Lesotho is increasingly affected by shocks and emergency situations.** The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho is therefore invited to review its social protection system to ensure it is shock-responsive. This includes developing a scalability framework; an integrated strategy for social protection and early warning and early action; and a method to upgrade the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) using existing community institutions.
- **The government is yet to implement the infant and the disability grant programmes, which are part of the six core social protection interventions in the country.** Given widespread multidimensional poverty affecting children and people with disabilities, it is important for the government to initiate these programmes in the coming fiscal year.
- **The social assistance budget of 1,808 million maloti (M) has increased by 5.9 per cent in nominal terms, up from M1,707 in 2018/19.** This shows the commitment of the government to improve the livelihoods of its most disadvantaged citizens in a context of scarce public resources and declining budgets in the overall social protection sector.
- **Budgets for child-focused programmes – school feeding, child grants and orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) bursaries – decreased by 1.8 per cent in nominal terms compared to 2018/19.** The government should endeavour to ring-fence public funds allocated to these specific programmes, which effectively address children’s vulnerabilities in Lesotho.
- **Coverage for social protection programmes remains limited.** For example, the child grant programme covers only 18.2 per cent of eligible children, while the school feeding programme covers 53.6 per cent. Facing an increasing stunting rate, the government should endeavour to progressively increase the coverage of these programmes by improving beneficiary targeting and increasing transfer size and frequency.
- **Currently, cash assistance programmes in Lesotho are not inflation-adjusted.** Using 2012/13 as the base year and taking inflation into consideration, transfer values for the child grant programme, for instance, have decreased by 29 per cent in real terms.

## 1

## Introduction

### 1.1 Overview of the sector

**Social protection is a priority of the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho.** The government has prepared the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) to strengthen social protection systems and make them shock-responsive.<sup>1</sup> The strategy's overall objective is to prevent and reduce economic and social vulnerabilities of the most disadvantaged people in the country. The strategy defines social protection as "... a decent and dignified quality of life for all Basotho, free from poverty and hunger, that allows them to share in the benefits of national economic growth."<sup>2</sup> As the country is increasingly facing shocks and emergency situations, the government is keen to deepen its social protection system so that it is adequately financed, satisfactorily coordinated and timely shock-responsive.

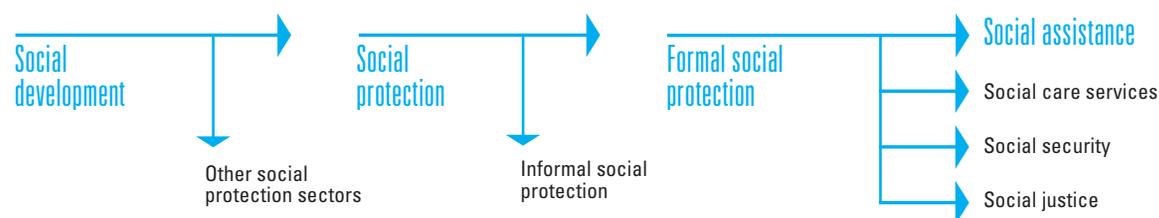
**The National Social Protection Strategy has three immediate objectives.** Firstly, it seeks to operationalize an integrated set of core social protection programmes aimed at reducing vulnerabilities throughout the life course (Annex 1). Secondly, it aims to contribute to the establishment of coherent and progressive social protection synergies by ensuring strong and positive linkages with other ministries and key stakeholders. Thirdly, it strengthens integration and harmonization of operational systems for

the effective implementation of social protection programmes. To achieve these objectives, adequate legal social protection instruments must be available, starting with the adoption of a Social Protection Act.

**The NSPS focuses on a specific set of social protection instruments.** These instruments have been categorized into social assistance, social insurance, also termed 'social security', and social care services. Although the strategy focuses primarily on social assistance (Figure 1) it includes references to existing social security and social care plans and policies. The NSPS also adopts a comprehensive integrated suite of core programmes across the life cycle.

**Social assistance covers core programmes and complementary programmes.** The core programmes include the infant grant, child grant, seasonal employment guarantee scheme (public works), old-age pension, disability grant and public assistance. The infant and disability grants are approved but have not yet been implemented, while the seasonal employment scheme received no allocation in either 2018/19 and 2019/20. Complementary programmes include school feeding, the orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) bursary, tertiary bursary and additional pension outlays (not targeted). An overview of the key social assistance programmes is given in Table 1.

Figure 1: Lesotho social protection framework



Source: NSPS 2014/15–2018/19, Government of Lesotho.

Table 1: Key social assistance programmes currently implemented in Lesotho, 2019

Social assistance programmes	Administrative responsibility	Eligibility criteria	Coverage	Transfer value
<b>Core</b>				
Child grant	Social Development	Poor and vulnerable households with children aged 0–17 years	41,049 households, covering about 90,821 children	Paid quarterly Amount of cash varies by number of children A family with 1–2 children gets M360; with 3–4 children, M600; and with 5 or more children, M750
Old-age pension	Finance	Any Lesotho citizen over the age of 70 and not receiving a civil-service pension	80,000	M700 per month
Public assistance	Social Development	Destitute individuals (OVCs, the severely disabled and the severely ill and elderly)	12,710	Monthly cash transfer, food package, medical fee exemption and other in-kind benefits for destitute households and individuals Amount determined by social workers Temporary cash benefit is M250 (US\$18) per person per month for six months
Seasonal employment, public works or watershed management	Forestry	Public works programme employing able-bodied individuals living in rural areas for conservation-related activities (not poverty-targeted)	Estimated 58,000–115,000 individuals a year (first come, first served)	M960 (US\$70) per month for a maximum of one month per year and on a rotational basis.
<b>Complementary</b>				
School feeding	Education	1–2 free meals daily to all children attending primary schools offering free education (1,450 schools) and some preschools	360,000 primary schoolchildren, 50,000 in preschool	M3.50 per head per day
OVC bursary (OVCs under 18 enrolled in secondary school)	Social Development	Students who have lost one or both parents; have a sick, disabled or incarcerated parent; or are considered needy	23,845 children	Bursary varies by grade and type of school, but usually includes tuition fees, examination fees, registration cost, stationery, books, special subject fees (e.g. science fees and boarding fees)
Tertiary bursary	Finance	Lesotho citizens	Information is not available	Fees, boarding and allowance

Source: Administrative data of the relevant ministries, Government of Lesotho, 2019.

### 1.2 Programme coordination

**The Ministry of Social Development leads and coordinates the implementation of relevant social protection activities, despite a persistent capacity challenge.** Currently, the ministry is responsible for implementing three core programmes: child grants, OVC bursaries and public assistance. Shortages in financial and human resources have limited the ministry's capacity to fulfil its mandate of coordinating several social protection programmes implemented by other ministries and integrating social assistance programmes for efficiency and effectiveness. Furthermore, the Ministry of Social Development has to rely on disparate databases and strategic documents (Annex 2) to assess achieved results against programme targets making coordination challenging. Coordination of social protection interventions during emergency and humanitarian situations is devoted to the Disaster Management Authority. Its technical capacity is being improved progressively,<sup>3</sup> but inadequate human resources (numbers and skills) and funds persist.

**Some aspects of social protection coordination mechanisms have improved in 2019/20 according to the review of the NSPS in November 2019.**

The technical coordination committee held meetings at national level, while the profiles of ongoing social protection interventions have been updated. District coordination committee members were trained on the social protection system, covering topics such as the social protection policy framework, management and delivery mechanisms; sector coordination; and case management. The government is now addressing the challenges of fragmented and uncoordinated payments to beneficiaries by developing a payment integration strategy with a guiding manual.

**The National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) is now operational.** This is a web-based database or single registry for storing and processing socio-economic information on all households in Lesotho, which allows vulnerable populations to be identified and beneficiaries for different social assistance programmes to be targeted. Data collection in all 64 rural councils was completed in 2019/20, reaching a total of 331,993 rural households (100 per cent). All 10 districts have been cabled in preparation for the decentralization of NISSA. The integration of NISSA with the national civil registration will improve continuous updating of registered household profiles.

**Preparations to make the social assistance system shock-responsive are at an advanced stage.** The development of a scalability framework – an integrated strategy for social protection and early warning and early action – is under way. A method to upgrade NISSA using existing community institutions will be designed and fully integrated with this framework. Through coordinated efforts, an agreement has been reached between the Ministry of Social Development and the Disaster Management Authority that NISSA data will be used during emergencies; this awaits Cabinet approval.

### 1.3 Population vulnerability

**Poverty and inequality remain structural problems in Lesotho, making social protection critical.** Lesotho is one of the poorest countries in sub-Saharan Africa, with half of the population living below the national poverty line (Table 2). Of the poor, about one in four are extremely poor, living below the national food poverty line of M352.4 (or about US\$24) per adult per month. The country also has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world, with a Gini coefficient of

Table 2: Lesotho's socio-economic indicators for Lesotho

Indicator	Value	Source	Indicator	Value	Source
Total population	2,007,201	[1]	Rank on Human Development Index	160/188	[3]
Population <18 years	765,614	[1]	Poverty rate (%)	49.7	[4]
Children (% of population)	38.1	[1]	Extreme poverty rate (%)	21.9	[4]
Demographic growth (%)	0.68	[1]	Gini Index	0.445	[4]
Percentage stunted children <5 years (%)	34.5	[6]	Open-defecation rate (%)	19.6	[1]
Life expectancy (years)	56	[1]	Unemployment rate (%)	28	[5]
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births	62.4	[6]	Under-five mortality rate per 1,000 children	76.2	[6]
Maternal mortality rate per 100,000 births	1,024	[2]	Access to water (%)	88.1	[1]

Sources: [1] Lesotho Housing and Population Census, 2016; [2] Lesotho Demographic Health Survey, 2014; [3] Human Development Report, 2013, 2016, 2017; [4] World Bank, 2017; [5] Q1 2014/15 Continuous Multipurpose Survey [6] Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS), 2018.

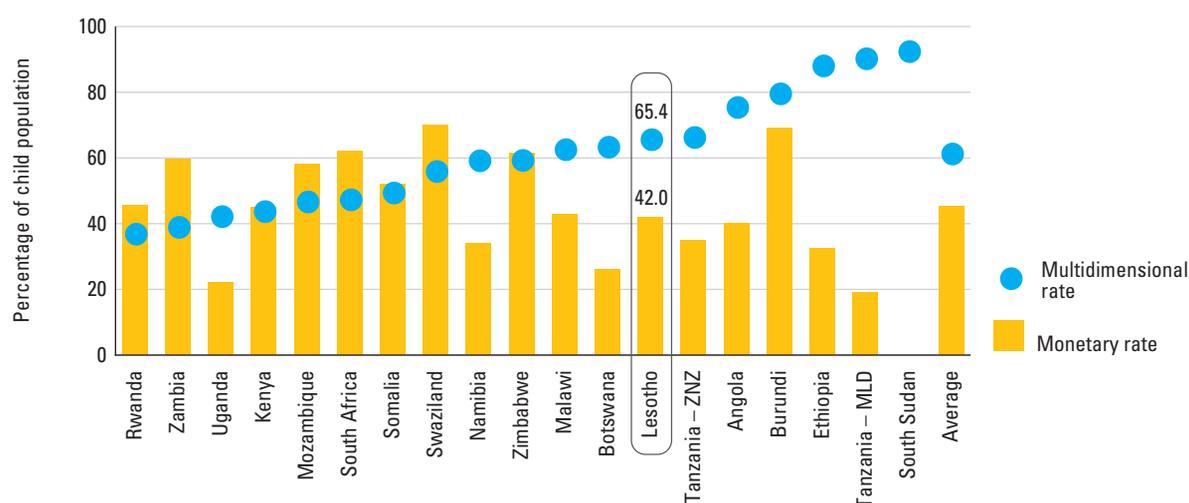
0.45. Poverty and inequality are further exacerbated by HIV, which affects 25 per cent of adults. Other challenges include a high unemployment rate and food insecurity caused by frequent droughts and floods.<sup>4</sup>

**The extent of poverty affects children the most; adequate social protection for**

**them is required to live a dignified life.**

Child poverty in Lesotho, both monetary and multidimensional, is among the highest in the region (Figure 2). Monetary child poverty stands at 42 per cent, with multidimensional child poverty at 65.4 per cent. About 34 per cent of children in Lesotho simultaneously face monetary poverty and multidimensional poverty.

Figure 2: Multidimensional and monetary child poverty in Eastern and Southern Africa, 2018



Source: Multiple Overlapping Deprivation Analysis (latest year available, downloaded October 2018).



## Takeaways

- The NSPS aims to operationalize an integrated set of social protection programmes that take advantage of coherent and progressive synergies and adequate capacity in the Ministry of Social Development to integrate and harmonize social protection systems. In this regard, key legal social protection instruments must be adopted, starting with a Social Protection Act.
- Of the core social assistance programmes in the NSPS, the infant and disability grants are yet to be implemented; these will contribute to reducing the high rates of multidimensional child poverty in Lesotho. The government should address the technical and financial issues preventing implementation of these child-focused programmes.
- The NISSA has information on all rural households (100 per cent), the profiles of which have been certified at council level. The government must approve the agreement that the NISSA database will be used to cope with emergencies and shocks. The envisaged integration of all urban households in NISSA is key to achieving shock-responsive social protection sought for by the government.
- Recurrent droughts and floods make a strong case for the government to allocate adequate resources to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Social Development and the Disaster Management Authority to effectively lead an early warning and action social protection system and make the existing social protection system shock-responsive.

# 2

## Social protection expenditure trends

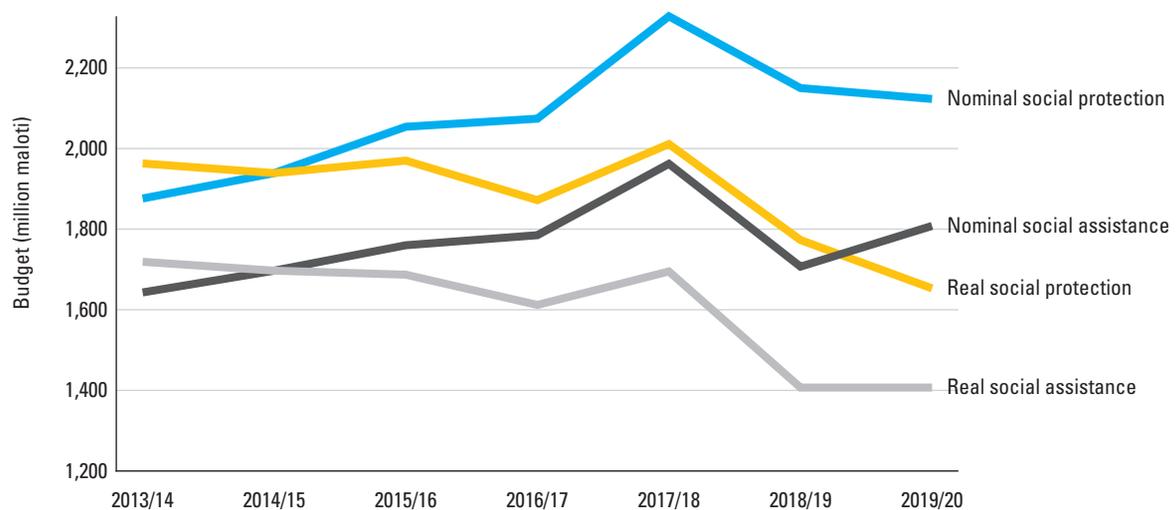
### 2.1 Size of expenditure

The social protection budget has decreased for the third consecutive year.

The nominal budget allocated to social protection declined to M2,123 million in 2019/20 from M2,150 million in 2018/19, which had declined by 7.6 per cent from that in 2017/18 (Figure 3). In real terms, the budget allocated to social protection has also declined from M1,773 million in 2018/19 to M1,653 million in 2019/20. Over the period under review, the purchasing power – the buying capacity of money – of the social protection budget has declined on average by 2.6 per cent of the nominal budget each fiscal year.



Figure 3: Real and nominal budgets in social protection and social assistance



Source: World Bank Group Boost (up to 2018/19) and Lesotho’s budget estimates books (2018/19 and 2019/20).

Table 3: Composition and change in the social protection budget

		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Social protection	(million M)	1,939.2	2,054.2	2,074.1	2,327.6	2,150.5	2,123.0
	(% change)	3.4	5.9	1.0	12.2	-7.6	-1.3
Social assistance	(million M)	1,696.8	1,759.9	1,785.1	1,961.8	1,707.3	1,807.7
	(% change)	3.3	3.7	1.4	9.9	-13.0	5.9
Social security	(million M)	242.3	294.4	288.9	365.8	443.2	315.3
	(% change)	4.0	21.5	-1.9	26.6	21.2	-28.8

Source: World Bank Group BOOST (up to 2018/19) and Lesotho's budget estimates books (2018/19 and 2019/20).

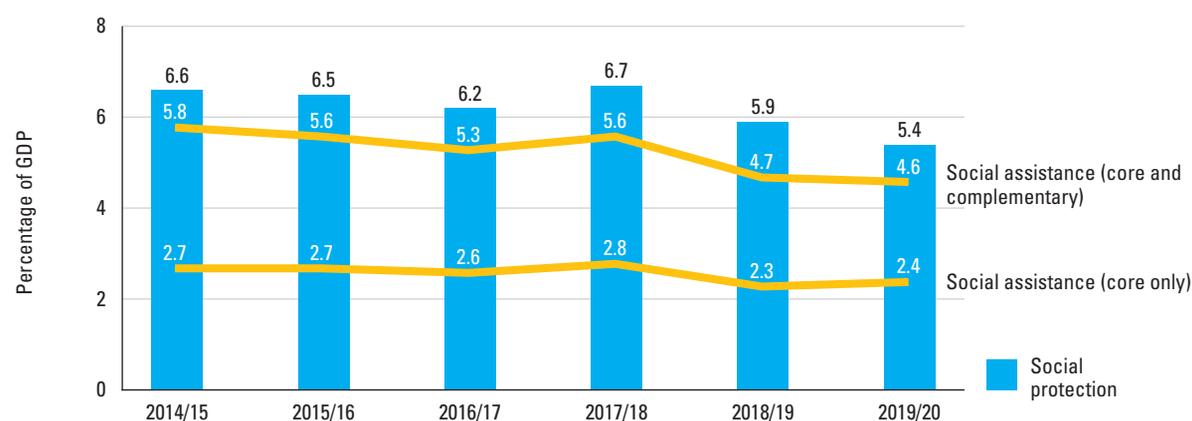
**Although the overall social protection budget has declined, the allocation to social assistance programmes has increased.** The budget allocated to the social assistance component of the social protection sector reached M1,808 million in 2019/20, up from M1,707 million in 2018/19 (Table 3). This amounts to an increase of 5.9 per cent. Since 2014/15, the nominal budget of social assistance has increased each fiscal year, except in 2018/19 when the government allowed a significant decline of 13 per cent (Table 3). Overall, this budget has increased by 1.9 per cent annually since 2014/15, a good development for extremely poor and most vulnerable households.

**The total social protection budget has declined as a share of GDP.** Over the period under review, the ratio of social

protection budget to gross domestic product (GDP) has decreased each fiscal year, except in 2017/18 when it peaked (Figure 4). The social protection budget is estimated at 5.4 per cent of GDP in 2019/20, down from 5.9 per cent in 2018/19. Social assistance budgets – core and complementary programmes – have followed a similar pattern. As a share of GDP, spending commitments have continuously fallen since their high of 5.8 per cent in 2014/15. Social assistance budgets for core programmes only have increased slightly from 2.3 per cent of GDP in 2018/19 to 2.4 per cent in 2019/20.

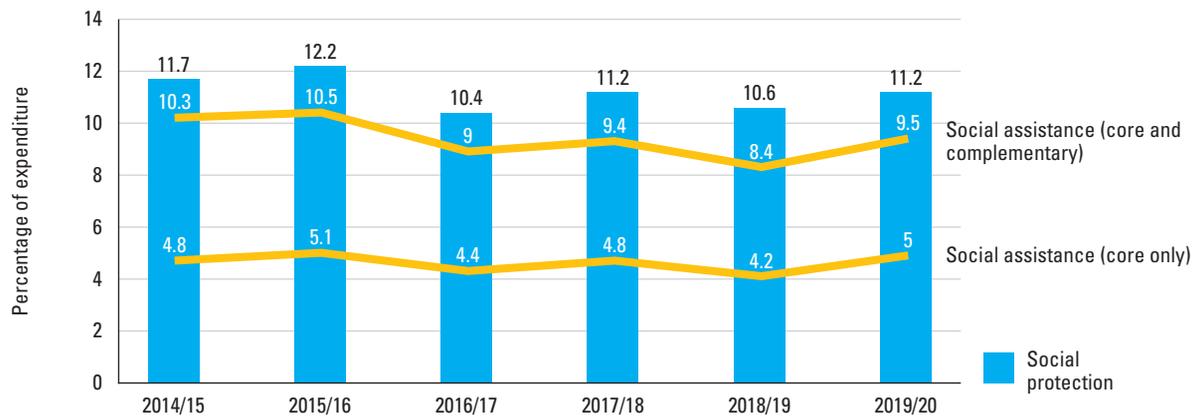
**The social protection share of the national budget has increased.** The budget allocated to social protection programmes represents 11.2 per cent of the national budget in 2019/20, up from 10.6

Figure 4: Budgets in social protection and social assistance as a share of GDP



Source: World Bank Group Boost (up to 2018/19) and Lesotho's budget estimates books (2018/19 and 2019/20).

Figure 5: Budgets in social protection and social assistance as a share of the national budget



Source: World Bank Group Boost (up to 2018/19) and Lesotho’s budget estimates books (2018/19 and 2019/20).

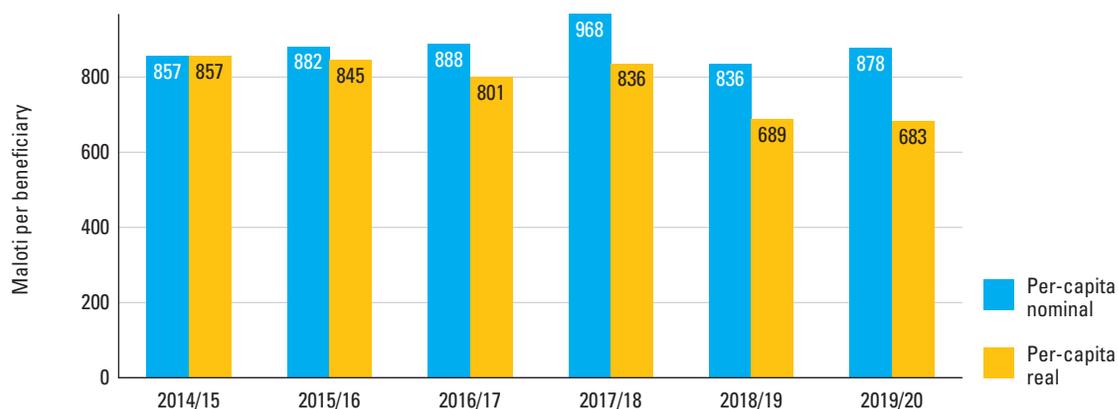
per cent in 2018/19. The social protection share is, however, volatile (Figure 5). The budget allocated to social assistance programmes (core and complementary) has also improved: as a share of the national budget, it has increased by 1.1 percentage points between 2018/19 and 2019/20. This increase is the result of an increase of 0.8 percentage points in the budget of core programmes and an increase of 0.3 percentage points in that of complementary programmes. With proportionately more budget committed to social assistance core programmes in the current context of limited fiscal space, the government shows willingness to address the basic needs of beneficiaries of child grants,

old-age pensions, public works and public assistance.

**Per-capita expenditure in social assistance has increased in nominal terms, but declined in real terms.**

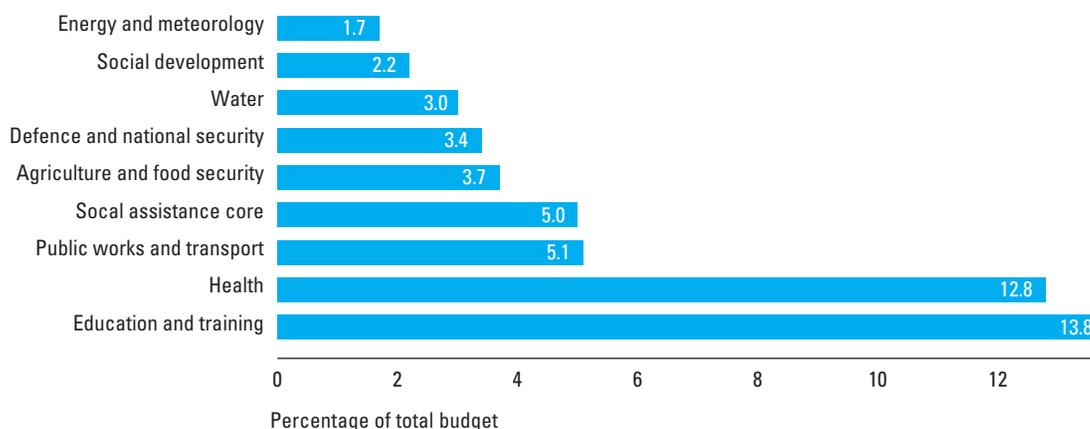
The social assistance budget per capita will attain M878 in 2019/20, up from M836 in 2018/19 (Figure 6). This is a positive change in nominal terms of 5.0 per cent. After accounting for inflation, the budget per capita declined slightly in real terms by 0.8 per cent over the same period. This suggests that slightly fewer social assistance goods and services offered to each (average) beneficiary in 2018/19 will be offered to the same (average) beneficiary in 2019/20.

Figure 6: Nominal and real per-capita social assistance budget



Source: World Bank Group Boost (up to 2018/19) and Lesotho’s budget estimates books (2018/19 and 2019/20).

Figure 7: Share of social assistance core programmes and other priority sectors, 2019/20



Source: Lesotho's budget estimates book (2019/20).

### 2.2 Increased prioritization for social assistance

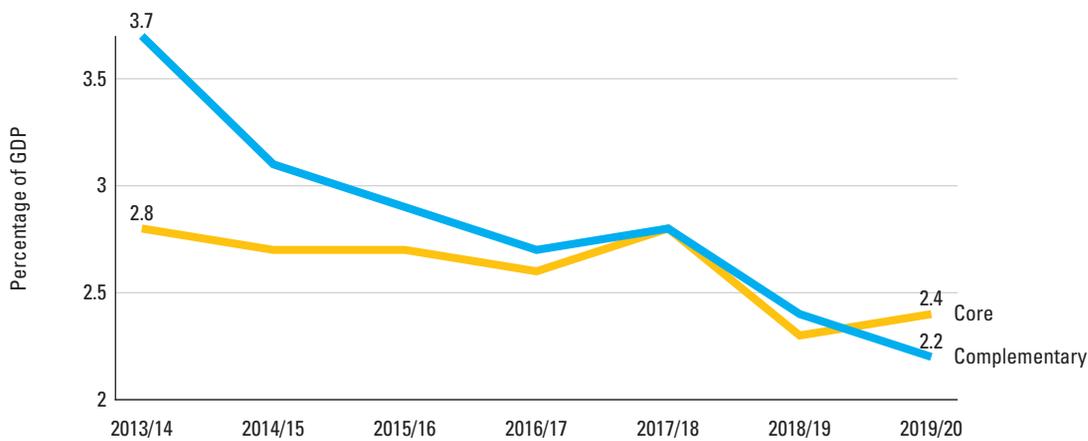
**Social assistance remains a top priority of the government in 2019/20.** Receiving 5.0 per cent of the national budget in 2019/20, the core programmes of the social assistance sector are the fourth most important budget priority in Lesotho in terms of the size of allocation.<sup>5</sup> These programmes are surpassed by the sectors of education and training, health and public works and transport (Figure 7). In contrast, the sectors of agriculture and food security, defence and national security, water, social development and energy and meteorology should receive smaller budget allocations than the core programmes of social assistance.

### 2.3 Public expenditures versus commitments

**The government faces a significant challenge in reaching the national targets for social assistance budgets.** According to the NSPS, the government should spend 3.92 per cent of GDP on core social assistance programmes and 4.8



Figure 9: Spending on core and complementary social assistance programmes



Source: World Bank Group Boost (up to 2018/19) and Lesotho’s budget estimates books (2018/19 and 2019/20).

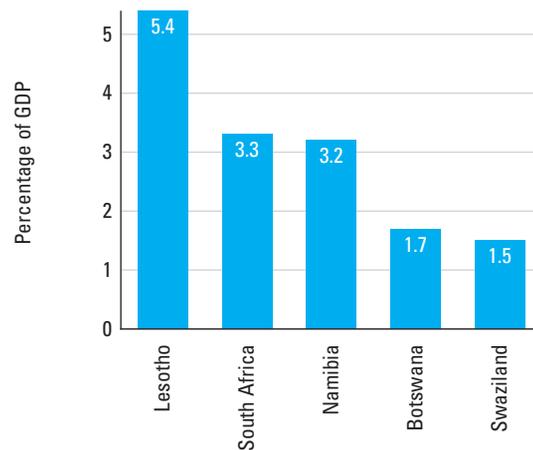
per cent of GDP on two complementary programmes, namely, the OVC bursary and school feeding programmes. For 2019/20, the government has allocated 2.4 per cent of GDP to social assistance core programmes and 2.2 per cent of GDP to social assistance complementary programmes, which fall below the very ambitious national commitment targets.<sup>6</sup> In fact, the government has been unable to reach any of these budget targets since 2013/14 (Figure 8), casting doubt on their feasibility in the Lesotho context.

## 2.4 Public expenditure on social protection in the region

### Lesotho spends more on social protection than other countries in the Southern African Customs Union.

Figure 9 shows that Lesotho allocates 3.5 times more budget (as a percentage of GDP) on social protection than Swaziland and, almost twice as much as Namibia and South Africa. The impact of this remarkable share for social protection programmes in the national budget of Lesotho is yet to be maximized; multidimensional child poverty remains

Figure 9: Social protection budget in the Southern African Customs Union, 2019/20



Source: World Bank ASPIRE Social Expenditure Indicators (accessed December 2019) and Lesotho’s budget estimates book (2019/20).

highest in Lesotho than in other Southern African Customs Union countries. Measurement issues aside, this finding suggests inefficiency in the Lesotho social protection system that may require further research to inform decision-making on actions to maximize benefits.



### Takeaways

- The budget allocated to social protection has declined for the second consecutive year. The social protection budget amounts to 5.4 per cent of GDP currently, down from 5.9 per cent in 2018/19. This reduction reflects the increasing challenge the government faces to mobilize adequate funds for this priority sector.
- Accounting for 85 per cent of the social protection budget, social assistance programmes have received more resources than social security programmes. As a result, the social assistance budget's share of GDP has almost stabilized and its share of national budget has increased. This is good for Lesotho's poor and vulnerable people.
- Although social protection in Lesotho receives the highest proportion of national budget in comparison to social protection in other countries in the Southern African Customs Union, Lesotho still records the highest prevalence of child poverty. This discrepancy requires specific research on the driving forces that prevent Lesotho's social assistance and social security systems from maximizing their impact for intended beneficiaries.

# 3

## Composition of social protection expenditures

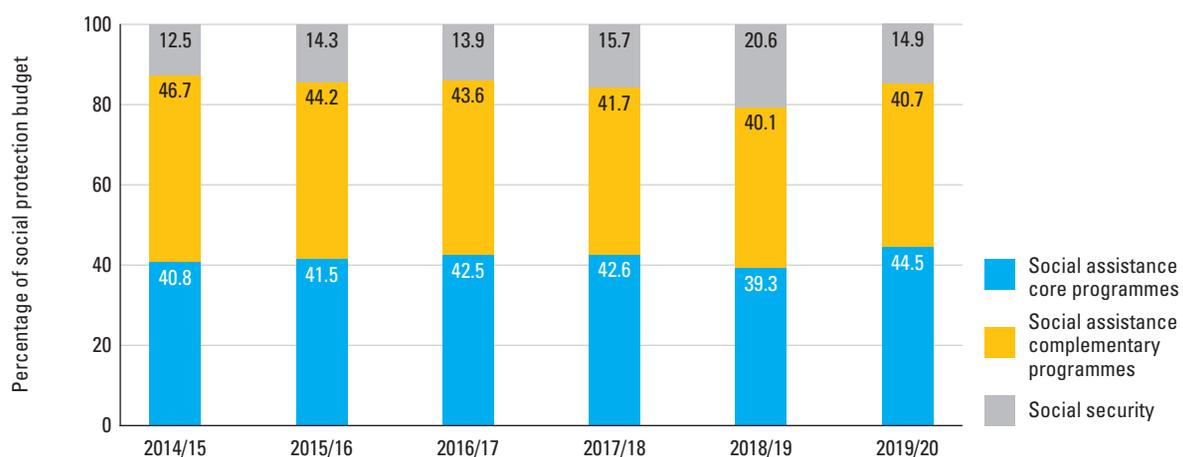
The majority of Lesotho’s social protection resources are for social assistance. The core programmes of social assistance receive the largest share of the budget at 44.5 per cent in 2019/20. The social assistance complementary programmes receive 40.7 per cent, while social security programmes receive the remaining 14.9 per cent (Figure 10).<sup>7</sup>

### 3.1 Composition of social assistance expenditures

Lesotho’s social assistance is dominated by two programmatic

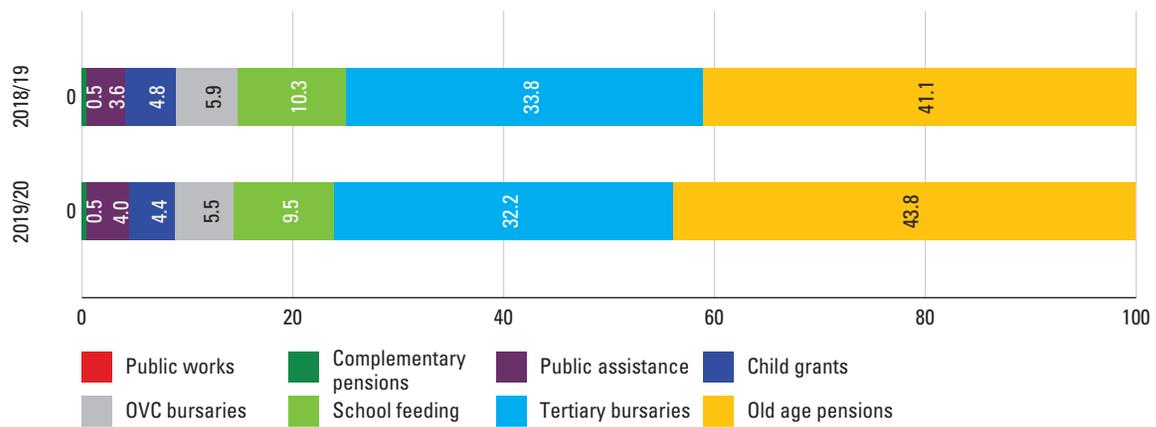
interventions, old-age pensions and tertiary bursaries. These will receive 43.8 per cent and 32.2 per cent, respectively, of all social assistance resources in 2019/20 (Figure 11). Allocation to these programmes are followed by the school feeding (9.5 per cent), OVC bursary (5.5 per cent), child grant (4.4 per cent) and complementary pension (0.5 per cent) programmes. This distribution of the social assistance budget across programmes was similar in 2018/19. However, it is worth noting the decline in share for the school feeding, OVC bursary and child grant programmes. Public works have not been allocated any budget for these two fiscal years.

Figure 10: Budget shares of social protection programmes



Source: World Bank Group Boost (up to 2018/19) and Lesotho’s budget estimates books (2018/19 and 2019/20).

Figure 11: Programme composition of social assistance budget

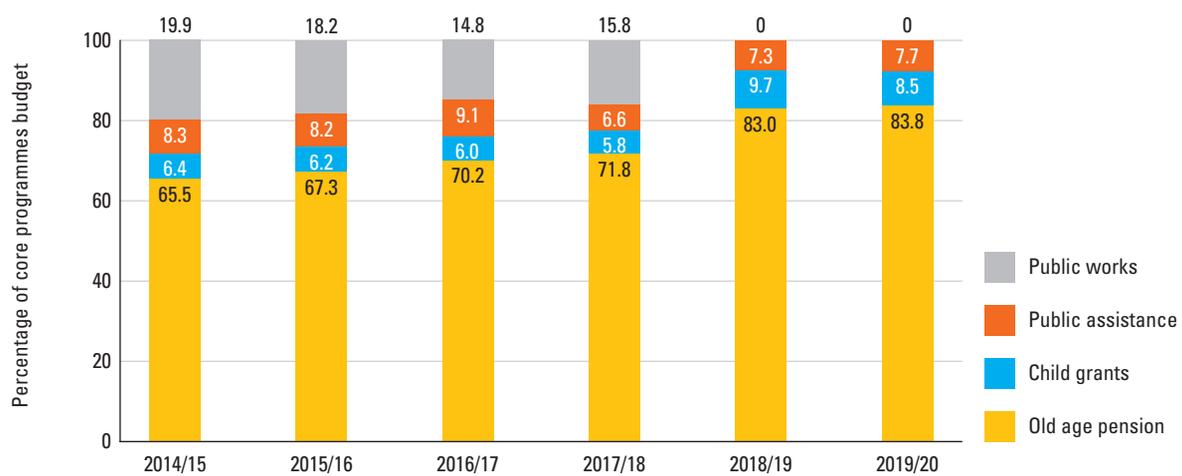


Source: World Bank Group Boost (up to 2018/19) and Lesotho’s budget estimates books (2018/19 and 2019/20).

The bulk of the budget for the social assistance core programmes is targeted to address adult poverty, not specifically child poverty. The share of budget allocated to the pension scheme has increased each fiscal year in the period under review (Figure 12). Currently, the old-

age pension’s share of the social assistance core budget is 83.8 per cent, up from 83.0 per cent last fiscal year. Also, public assistance has increased from 7.3 per cent in 2018/19 to 7.7 per cent in 2019/20. These positive developments have, however, been achieved at the detriment of child grants.

Figure 12: Composition of the social assistance core programmes budget



Source: World Bank Group Boost (up to 2018/19) and Lesotho’s budget estimates books (2018/19 and 2019/20).

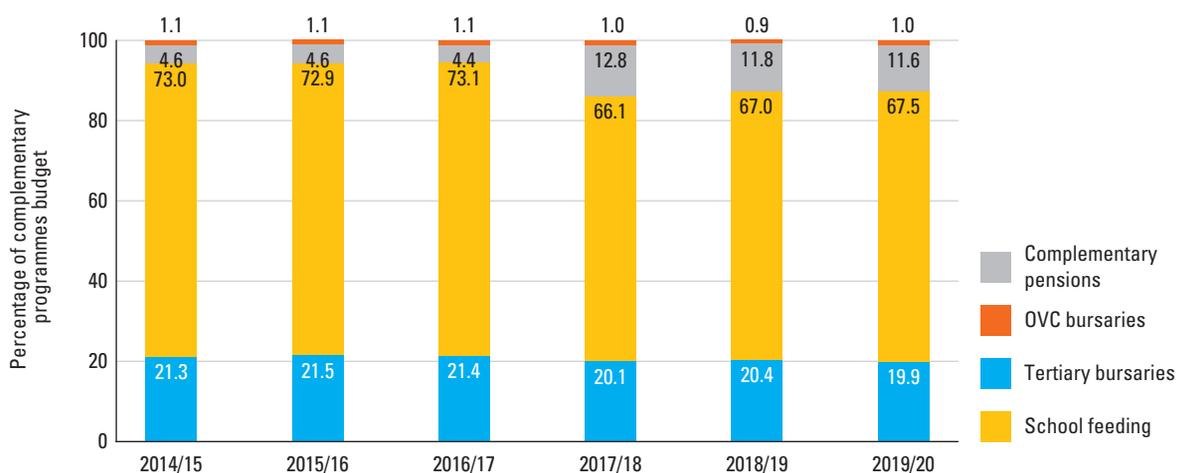


**The tertiary bursary programme gets the majority of the budget allocated to social assistance complementary programmes.**

The share of the tertiary bursary programme budget has increased to 67.5 per cent of the complementary programme budget for 2019/20, up from 67.0 per cent in 2018/19. The respective (social assistance complementary programme) budget shares of the school feeding and OVC bursary

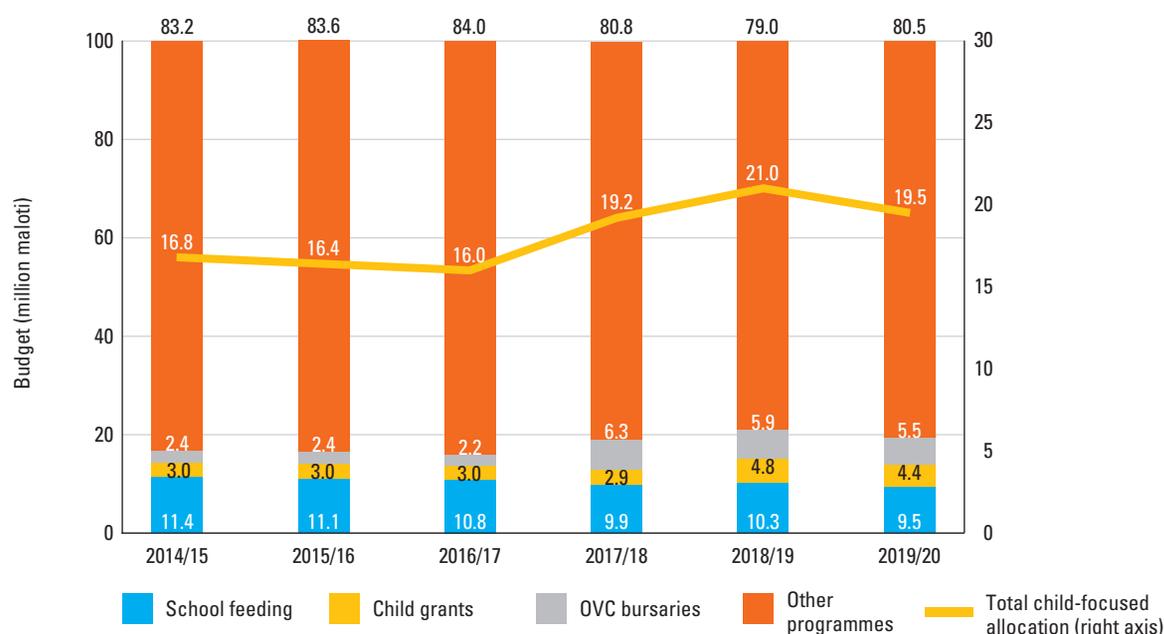
programmes have declined, while the complementary pension programme has remained stable, displaying a budget share of 1.0 per cent currently. More resources devoted to tertiary bursaries will contribute to lifting the quality of human capital in the country. Due attention should be paid to equity issues so that poor and vulnerable children are prioritized and can better access the programme.

Figure 13: Composition of the social assistance complementary programmes budget (percentage of total budget for SA complementary programmes)



Source: World Bank Group Boost (up to 2018/19) and Lesotho's budget estimates books (2018/19 and 2019/20).

Figure 14: Child-focused expenditures



Source: World Bank Group Boost (up to 2018/19) and Lesotho’s budget estimates books (2018/19 and 2019/20).

### 3.2 Child-focused expenditures

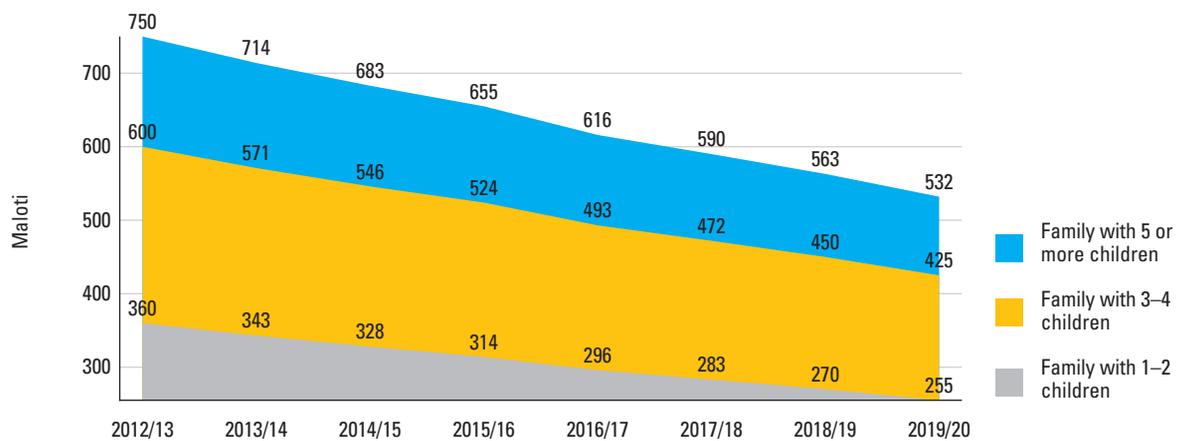
To address the high level of child poverty in the country, the government has relied on a handful of child-focused social protection programmes. The programmes that directly target children include child grants, OVC bursaries and school feeding. About 500,000 of Lesotho’s children are poor; but only 18.2 per cent receive the child grant. The school feeding programme is universal, covering 360,000 primary school and 50,000 preschool children. But, not all the eligible children are attending school to benefit from this programme. The OVC bursary covers 23,845 children. However, the amount of the bursary is not sufficient to cover basic costs.

The budget for key child-focused social protection programmes has declined again this fiscal year. Child-focused programmes are projected to receive M352.2 million in 2019.20, down from M358.5 million in 2018/19 and M376.9

million in 2017/18. As a share of social assistance’s total budget, child-focused programmes will now represent 19.5 per cent in 2019/20, a 1.5 percentage decrease from 2018/19 (Figure 14). All child-focused programmes will experience a budget decline. Facing an increasing stunting rate,<sup>8</sup> the government should rather increase the budgets for school feeding and child grants by using any (expenditure) savings envisaged in 2019/20 and by mobilizing more donor funds to supplement domestic resources.

The transfer value for most social assistance programmes has decreased significantly due to inflation. For instance, since the start of the child grant programme in 2009/10, cash benefits have not been inflation-adjusted. So, families still receive the same absolute amounts. A family with one or two children gets M360 per quarter, while those with three or four children gets M600, and those with five or more children get M750 (Figure 15).

Figure 15: Inflation-adjusted child grant transfer received by families per quarter



Source: Estimations based on Ministry of Social Development data on benefits and Bureau of Statistics for data on consumer price index.

### Takeaways

- The lion’s share of the social assistance budget goes to two programmes, namely, the old-age pension (43.8 per cent) and the tertiary bursary scheme (32.2 per cent). This suggests that social assistance programmes are benefiting adults more than children.
- The two programmes are said to face inefficiency issues due to, for instance, poor targeting (for the first one) and a low repayment rate (for the second one). Rigorously analysing and addressing these issues could free up resources for inter alia child-focused programmes.
- At only 19.5 per cent of the total social assistance budget this fiscal year (2019/20), child-focused programmes are in dire need of funding to scale them up to a level that would have greater impact on children’s lives.
- The benefits received from flagship child-focused programmes have been stagnant for years, insufficient to cover all basic costs and eroded by inflation. Unless adjusted for inflation, social assistance transfers may not fully achieve the intended objective of alleviating the suffering of most deprived families and children.

## Annex 1

### NSPS objectives and vulnerabilities facing Basotho across the life cycle

Life-course stage	Pregnancy/early childhood	School age/youth	Working age	Old age	Disability/ chronic illness	Disability/shocks
Potential vulnerabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stunting</li> <li>Reduced cognitive development</li> <li>Missed immunization</li> <li>No access to antenatal and postnatal care</li> <li>Loss of parental care from bereavement or migration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child labour</li> <li>No access to school (esp. girls)</li> <li>Malnutrition</li> <li>Loss of parental care from bereavement or migration</li> <li>Inadequate skills</li> <li>Unemployment</li> <li>Inability to access training</li> <li>Alienation</li> <li>Early marriage/ motherhood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unemployment and underemployment</li> <li>Inadequate wages</li> <li>Debt</li> <li>Need to care for children and parents</li> <li>No child care</li> <li>Gender discrimination</li> <li>Domestic violence</li> <li>Dowry payments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increasing frailty</li> <li>Inability to work</li> <li>No care from family</li> <li>Discrimination in labour force</li> <li>Need to care for grandchildren</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional costs</li> <li>No access to school/vocational training</li> <li>Physical barriers</li> <li>Stigmatization</li> <li>Discrimination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>INDIVIDUAL</li> <li>Illness</li> <li>Theft</li> <li>Death or invalidity of breadwinner</li> <li>WIDESPREAD</li> <li>Drought</li> <li>Natural disaster</li> <li>Financial crisis</li> </ul>

Source: National Social Protection Strategy 2014/15–2018/19, Lesotho.

## Annex 2

### Key strategies and targets for social protection

Key documents	Year	Target 1	Target 2
Vision 2020	2000–2020	Universal infant grant to all pregnant women and mothers of under-twos	Poverty-targeted child grant to all poor households with children (50%)
National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP)	2017/18–2022/23	The NSDP does not have clear targets; it is designed to promote and strengthen initiatives to reduce vulnerability (disability, HIV/AIDS, gender issues)	Step up education and immunization of children
National Social Protection Strategy	2014/15–2018/19	Child grant: Increase coverage to 15% of households with children	Reduce age of eligibility to 69 for old-age pension
Ministry of Social Development Strategic Plan	2014/15–2016/17	Reach out to the 29% of households identified as ultra-poor with social protection services	NISSA used as a single national registry for social assistance targeting
Budget Speech 2018/19	2017/18	Increase the coverage of NISSA to all community councils and to cover over 350,000 households	Child grants programme and the public assistance will increase the benefit to at least 25% of consumption needs
National Disability Mainstreaming Plan	2014	No targets	No targets
Lesotho Policy for Older Persons	2014	No targets	No targets

Source: Government of Lesotho Vision 2020; NSDP ; National Social Protection Strategy, 2014/15–2018/19, Lesotho; Ministry of Social Development Strategic Plan; Budget Speech 2018/19; National Disability Mainstreaming Plan (2014); and Lesotho Policy for Older Persons (2014).

## Endnotes

- 1 It builds on Lesotho's Vision 2020, the National Strategic Development Plan and the National Policy on Social Development.
- 2 Government of Lesotho, National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS), 2014/15–2018/19, page 1.
- 3 United Nations Agencies, under the leadership of UNICEF and with the support of the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), have been supporting the Disaster Management Authority and Ministry of Social Development to strengthen early warning and early action, as well as shock-responsive social protection systems. Therefore, there is progress in both leadership and technical capacity of the ministry and Disaster Management Authority, but still insufficient to adequately address chronic vulnerabilities and shocks during emergencies.
- 4 United Nations Common Country Assessment, 2017, United Nations Lesotho.
- 5 Social assistance is a cross-cutting sector, making it challenging to compare with other priority sectors since the programmatic budget funding for social assistance overall falls under the budget lines of several different ministries. Social assistance core programmes comprise four key programmes that fall under either the Ministry of Social Development or the Ministry of Finance.
- 6 The budget for two programmes included in the overall social assistance budget, namely the tertiary bursary and the complementary pension programmes, were not part of the national commitment. The tertiary bursary has the second largest allocation in the social assistance budget (32.2 per cent). So, if the tertiary bursary budget were excluded from the social assistance budget, the expenditure on social assistance as a percentage of GDP would be a lot less than was committed to.
- 7 The fourth component of the Lesotho social protection sector deals with 'social care services'. The budget of social care services is not taken into consideration in this brief.
- 8 Stunting affected 34.5 per cent of under-five children in 2018, up from 33.2 per cent in 2014 (see UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (2018) and the government's Demographic and Health Survey (2014)).



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