



PREPARATION OF 2024/25 PRE -BUDGET CONSULTATIONS WITH CITIZENS AT DISTRICT LEVEL

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Allow Me to Pay My Respects to:

His Majesty King Letsie III and Head of State

The Right Honourable the Prime Minister and Head of Government

The Honourable President of The Senate

The Chief Justice and Judges of The High Court

The Honourable Deputy Prime Minister and Leader of The House

My Colleagues, Honourable Ministers of His Majesty's Government

Honourable Members of Both Houses of Parliament

Their Excellencies, Heads of Diplomatic Missions and International
Organisations

Distinguished Members of the Private Sector

Distinguished Members of The Media

Sechaba sohle sa Basotho ka hare le ka ntle ho naha

Bo 'M'e le Bo Ntate.

The Government of Lesotho is implementing the Extended Second National Strategic Development Plan with the objective of achieving

strong private sector-led economic growth and job creation for all unemployed Basotho across the country, ultimately contributing to poverty reduction and building resilience against climate and economic shocks, health hazards, and income vulnerability.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

The Ministry of Finance and Development Planning is tasked with the mandate of guaranteeing need-based utilization of Lesotho's public funds by the Spending Units; I stand before you today to show distinctly the Government's resolute commitment to reestablishing a tradition of stakeholder and citizens engagement in the decision-making process; regarding Lesotho's public resource planning, budgeting, monitoring and evaluation. Prior to this gathering, you will recall that pre- and post-budget discussions began back 2018/19, at district-level to date.

By being transparent with public funds' utilization and the financial constraints thereof, we expect to encourage constructive public debates around socioeconomic reforms and investment programs, which – we believe – will significantly contribute to effectiveness in addressing unmet needs at the grass-root level. However, for transparency to carry over the tangible livelihood transformation, it should come along with institutionalized public participation in Government's financial commitments and spending priorities, where it is allowed by the Public Financial Management and Accountability (PFMA) Act.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

According to a global independent evaluation from the Open Budget Survey supported by our UNICEF partner, the Government of Lesotho is improving its budget transparency. But progress—such as the participation mentioned above, the community parliaments, and social accountability interventions, supported by our esteemed partners in engaging stakeholders and citizens in opened public debates on budgets - has yet to materialize in terms of improved global ranking for Lesotho.

This is the reason we are here to get your views on: (i) What improvements can be made to the budget to deal with the challenges of long-term fiscal sustainability? (ii) how should Lesotho finance her key priorities? (iii) What are the two main priorities that should be included in the budget for your district and why?

At this point, I would like to thank you in advance for your active participation in the debate that will be guided by our presentations, with supporting handout materials. Your contribution and suggestions will be recorded and used to improve the credibility of the 2024/25 budget.

I Thank you for your attention!