

## **Ambassador's Remarks at Announcement of Lesotho's MCC FY24 Scorecard**

**November 7, 2023, 08:30**

**State House, Maseru**

Lumelang and good morning bo-Mme le bo-Ntate.

Please allow me to pay my respects to:

His Majesty King Letsie III,

The Right Honorable the Prime Minister Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane,

Honorable Deputy Prime Minister,

Honorable Ministers,

Senior Government Officials,

Distinguished Guests,

All protocols observed.

I am very pleased to be here with you all to announce the results of the fiscal year 2024 MCC scorecard for Lesotho. I want to take this moment to express my sincere gratitude to the Honorable Prime Minister for his presence here today and for his unwavering support. The attendance of the Prime Minister and numerous members of his cabinet is a clear demonstration of the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho's commitment to the success of the Compact.

It is wonderful to witness Lesotho once again passing the scorecard. . Lesotho's improvement, from passing 14 out of 20 indicators in fiscal year 2023 to 15 out of 20 in fiscal year 2024, is truly commendable. These improvements signify Lesotho's commitment to strengthening democratic governance and economic freedom.

I also want to commend the Government on enacting three laws in December 2022 that are conditions to the start of the compact (also known as "entry into force"). The Counter Domestic Violence Act and the Harmonization Act strengthened protection and the legal status of women. The third law, the Act establishing Millennium Challenge Account-Lesotho, led to the recent

establishment of the MCA Board and the appointment of the MCA-Lesotho II CEO, Mme 'Mannana Phalatse.

However, as we commend these accomplishments, it is vital to note that the success of the Health and Horticulture Compact hinges on the Government's continuous commitment and actions. To achieve entry into force of the compact by March 30, 2024, Lesotho must urgently accelerate the enactment of the Labor Bill of 2022, occupational health and safety regulations, and additional inheritance reforms. Prioritizing the enactment of these laws will strengthen Lesotho's legal framework and is vital, as the Compact cannot enter into force until they are enacted.

I have confidence in the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho's ability to meet the conditions precedent to ensure the timely entry into force of the \$300 million Compact, which will ensure greater access to quality healthcare, create equitable business development opportunities, invest in high-value crop production, and boost profits and formal employment for women- and youth-owned enterprises.

In conclusion, I extend my appreciation once more to the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho for their dedication to ensuring the success of the Health and Horticulture Compact. The United States stands as your trusted partner in upholding the principles that underpin MCC's eligibility criteria, such as political rights, civil liberties, and the rule of law.

With great hope, respect, and sincerity, I wish you every success in the implementation of the Compact, leading us toward a brighter and more prosperous future for all.

Khotso. Pula. Nala.