

## **Statement by the Honorable Minister of Finance and Development Planning on the Occasion of the Introduction of the MCA-Lesotho Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer**

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I am pleased to welcome you to this press conference., May I also express my sincere gratitude for the presence of Her Excellency the Ambassador Brewer, MCC Resident Country Director, Deputy Resident Country Director and our guests of honour; the MCA Board of Directors and MCA Chief Executive Officer, MCA Deputy Chief Executive, the MCA staff and all the media houses. I invited you all here to celebrate key milestones towards the achievement of the Government of Lesotho's bigger goal "the commencement of the compact implementation".

Ladies and gentleman, I have two important announcements today.

Firstly, I am pleased to introduce to you and the public at large the newly appointed MCA II Board of Directors, which is led by Ms. Maleshoane Lekomola-Danziger. This Board of Directors is comprised of a dedicated team of government, private sector and civil society leaders committed to providing strength, stability and oversight to the organization. Our Board members come from diverse backgrounds and expertise including financial management, agriculture, and healthcare to mention a few. They bring a combination of talent, expertise necessary vigor, diversity and inclusion that to the project is synonymous with. They will play a pivotal role in moving the organization's mission forward.

The Board was established in fulfilment of the requirements of the MCA Act, 2022 as governing body to provide oversight, direction and decisions of the MCA-Lesotho II. Members of the Board are: and I humbly request that you rise as I recognize you individually:

## **Government Of Lesotho Representatives**

Ms. Maleshoane Lekomola – Danziger – Chairperson (Budget Controller) and Representative of Ministry of Finance and Development Planning

Mr. Moshe Mosaase – Deputy Chairperson (Principal Secretary) and Representative of the Ministry of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police.

Mr. Selebalo Moeketsi – Member (Chief Agricultural Engineer) Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition.

Ms. 'Mats'oanelo Seipati Monyobi - Member (Deputy Principal Secretary) Ministry of Health.

Ms. Matau Futho Letsatsi – Member (Director Gender) Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports, Arts, Culture and Social Development.

Mr. Lisema Lekhooana – Member (Deputy Principal Secretary) Ministry of Natural Resources

Mr. Mahlomola Pokello – Member (Principal Secretary) Ministry of Trade, Industry, Business Development and Tourism

Ms. Makhoabane Ledimo – Member (Principal Secretary) Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Employment.

Mr. Makhele Sekati - Member (Deputy Attorney General) Ministry of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs

Ms. 'Mabataung Khalane – Member (Principal Secretary) Ministry of National Security, Defence and Environment.

## **Private Sector and Civil Society**

Mr. Lesenyeho Nkopane – Member and Representative of Junior Chamber International Lesotho.

Ms. Bongwiwe Buzi – Member and Representative of Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled.

Ms. Makama Masitha-Hönes – Member and Representative of Lesotho Chamber of Commerce, SMME Support Network and Private Sector Foundation of Lesotho

Ms. Veronica 'Mabohle Sekhibane – Member and Representative of Federation of Lesotho Women Entrepreneurs.

Dr. 'Mathabo Tsepa – Member and Representative of Lesotho National Farmers Union.

Secondly, I am pleased to introduce to you the MCA II Chief Executive Officer, Mrs. Mannana Phalatse. Her appointment is an outcome of an extensive and rigorous selection process to identify the CEO.

She will lead the implementation of Lesotho second compact and work closely with MCC Resident Country Mission, including being the liaison between the partners.

Mrs. Phalatse brings a wealth of experience in leading a multidisciplinary team of experts, in government and international development organizations. She has contributed to the Lesotho's development agenda in various capacities including serving at the former Lesotho Revenue Authority, Central Bank of Lesotho and the US Embassy in Lesotho.

In her new role as CEO, Mrs. Phalatse faces the onerous responsibility of steering MCA-Lesotho II toward achieving its mandate, which involves implementing the \$322.5 million second compact within a five-year timeline, commencing in March 2024.

The compact is important for two reasons; it is aligned with the country's NDSP II. It will also contribute to the alleviation of high levels of unemployment among youth, well as addressing socio-economic inequalities and inequities.

This compact aims to enhance access to quality healthcare, foster equitable business development opportunities, invest in high-value crop production, and boost profits and formal employment opportunities for women- and youth-owned enterprises.

The appointment of the Board of Directors and the CEO signals progress and readiness towards commencement of Compact implementation, in March 2024.

For the Compact to commence in March next year, the government is faced with a responsibility to urgently finalize and fast track progress on pending the reforms that are key to compact implementation namely: labour and inheritance reforms, irrigation and water reforms for enactment by Parliament.

Ladies and gentleman, I wish noted that failure to adopt these reforms would have adverse impact where the start of the compact will not happen. The Government of Lesotho, is committed to ensure that we fulfil these commitments to avoid any delays to this important program for our country.

Together the MCA Board and the CEO are dedicated to uphold the highest standards of transparency and accountability within the MCA. They are aligned to ensure a sustained momentum and performance in delivering the compact.

Looking ahead, the Board of Directors and the CEO envision an MCA that improves rural livelihoods and enhance the role of the private sector in national development while improving the health outcomes of our people.

Further, they are committed to an open-door policy, welcoming inputs and collaboration with all stakeholders and partners. As government, we see this vision aligning well with the national development goals and are excited to support and work with them to bring it to fruition.

In closing I wish to appreciate the true partnership and generosity of the American people. The Compact would not have been possible without the unwavering support of the Government of United States of America through Millennium Challenge Corporation. The Compact will be of great service to the Basotho.

At this juncture I invite Her Excellency, the US Ambassador to Lesotho, Maria E. Brewer, to congratulate the Board of Directors and the CEO.

Thank you for your Attention.