

**Ambassador Remarks at MCA-Lesotho II announcement of CEO
and launching of the Board of Directors**

Date: 23 October 2024

Location: MCA Office, 5th Floor, Post Office Building

Lumelang and good afternoon 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 President of the Senate,

Honorable Speaker of the National Assembly,

Honorable Deputy Prime Minister,

Honorable Ministers,

Honorable Members of the Senate and the National
Assembly,

Senior Government Officials,

Distinguished Guests,

All protocols observed.

I am pleased to join you today in celebrating the launch of the Board of Directors for Millennium Challenge Account-Lesotho and the announcement of its Chief Executive Officer.

As mentioned by the Honorable Minister and Mme Mannana, the Board will play a pivotal role in oversight and advocacy. CEO Mannana Phalatse will report to the Board, a part of good corporate governance. A highly effective MCA Board will also actively support the MCA CEO and advocate for the necessary resources and actions to successfully implement the Compact.

We would not be here today without the partnership of the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho. Since I had the pleasure to join the compact signing in May 2022, the Government has achieved critical milestones to ensure the start of the compact.

I want to congratulate the Honorable Minister and the government on the Counter Domestic Violence Act, the Harmonization Act, and the Act establishing MCA-Lesotho.

The compact also requires the government to demonstrate its commitment through country contributions.

These contributions, whether in-kind or financial, are just as critical to the success of the compact as the grant funds from MCC. We are grateful for the government's contributions thus far. These include providing office space and the human resources to support the MCA.

Much of this progress has been accomplished due to the diligent efforts of the Honorable Minister, who also is the government's Principal Representative to the Compact. Rea leboha, Mme!

One of my favorite Sesotho saying is: "Moketa ho tsosoa O ite kang." It basically means, "You can help when people have started to help themselves." That is the spirit of the MCC Compact – that the U.S. will help nations who are already investing in their own development.

The success of the Health and Horticulture Compact relies on the government's commitment and actions. In the coming months, we aim to accelerate momentum to achieve entry into force by March 30, 2024.

This acceleration requires the enactment of the Labor Bill of 2022, health and safety regulations, and additional inheritance reforms.

These legislative preconditions are vital, as the Compact cannot enter into force until they are achieved.

To the MCA Lesotho Board, congratulations on your selection and thank you for your service to the people of Lesotho. Board Chair Maleshoane Lekomola-Danziger, a special thank you for the leadership role you have accepted. It is already requiring sacrifice on your part, I know.

The Compact's three projects have the potential to help Lesotho unlock equitable and sustainable economic growth that lifts Basotho out of poverty. The Board's effectiveness will be critical to achieving this goal.

I was very pleased to learn that as one of its first acts, the Board approved, through a competitive process, the appointment of Mme 'Mannana Phalatse as Chief Executive Officer. Her appointment is excellent news!

Mme 'Mannana has demonstrated strength of character and unwavering dedication throughout her service to Lesotho, including as Head of the MCC Compact Development Team, economist at the Central Bank, and even earlier in her career as an economic specialist with the U.S. Embassy here in Maseru.

Given MCC's 5-year timeline, leading MCA-Lesotho may be one of her most challenging tasks to date. We are confident that with the Board's support, she possesses the experience and abilities to successfully guide MCA-Lesotho and implement MCC's second compact with the Government of Lesotho.

The \$300 million Compact seeks to 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.

Honorable Minister of Finance and Development Planning Matlanyane, Chair of the Board Maleshoane Lekomola-Danziger, members of MCA Lesotho's Board of Directors and CEO Mannana Phalatse, it is with great hope, respect, and sincerity that I wish you much success in implementing the Lesotho Health and Horticulture Compact.

Khotso, Pula, Nala.