



GOVERNMENT
OF LESOTHO

FINANCE AND DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Ministry of Finance and Development Planning Responds: DPoA Midterm Review Consultations Did Take Place

Maseru — Ministry sets the record straight after Public Eye's "Ghosts of Doha haunt government" alleged a "phantom" consultation process

A recent Public Eye investigation, "Ghosts of Doha haunt government" (July 03-09, 2026 edition), contains significant factual gaps that give a misleading picture of how Lesotho's 2025 Doha Programme of Action (DPoA) Midterm Review was prepared. In response to a parliamentary-style set of questions on the matter, the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning has set out the documented record of the consultation process that the newspaper's report claims never occurred.

The central claim: "not one" stakeholder meeting was ever held

The Public Eye article's central allegation is unambiguous: "This investigation has established that since the DPoA's adoption in 2022, the National Focal Point in the Ministry of Finance has never convened a single formal multi-stakeholder meeting dedicated to mainstreaming the DPoA into the national agenda. Not one."

This is false. A three-day national stakeholder consultation for the DPoA 2025 Mid-Term Review was held from **15 to 17 December 2025** at **Lancer's Inn Hotel, Maseru**. The event featured plenary sessions, thematic breakout groups organised around the DPoA's priority areas, and the development of consolidated recommendations. The United Nations, through the Resident Coordinator's Office, supported the process by convening UN agencies and development partners and providing technical and financial assistance.

Copies of invitations, participant lists, meeting minutes, and summaries from this consultation are available at the Ministry's offices — precisely the kind of documentary evidence the Public Eye report says does not exist.

Coordination mechanisms the report says were never established

The article also questions what "specific coordination mechanisms" were put in place beyond the National Focal Point's general mandate. Several structures were established:

- A Technical Working Group provided technical leadership, oversaw data collection and analysis, and led the drafting of the national report.
- Sectoral Thematic Working Groups, aligned with the DPoA's six priority areas, ensured focused stakeholder engagement across key sectors.
- A National Steering Committee has been proposed and will be constituted, to be co-chaired on a rotating basis by the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning and the Ministry of Trade,

Industry and Business Development, with membership drawn from government ministries, departments and agencies, the private sector, civil society, and development partners.

Stakeholders were identified in alignment with the DPoA's priority areas and included government institutions, private sector associations, civil society organisations, youth and women's groups, persons with disabilities, academia, development partners, and UN agencies. Formal invitation letters were issued by the National Focal Point to all identified stakeholders, accompanied by an Implementation Template that structured what information was required and ensured consistent inputs. Inputs were gathered through the December consultation, written submissions using the template, and focused breakout sessions, and were systematically documented, analysed, and incorporated into the draft report. Bilateral follow-up meetings and a validation workshop followed, presenting to stakeholders how their contributions had been integrated, with final comments incorporated before the report was finalised.

On mainstreaming into the National Strategic Development Plan II

Public Eye also questioned how DPoA priorities were integrated into the Extended National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP II). The integration followed a structured process: an alignment-mapping exercise matched the DPoA's six pillars to NSDP II's four strategic priority areas; dedicated mainstreaming workshops were held during the NSDP II review and extension; DPoA-related outcomes, outputs and indicators were embedded into the NSDP II results framework for monitoring and tracking; and the Department of Policy and Strategic Planning conducted a policy coherence review covering both horizontal coherence (across sectors such as agriculture, trade, digital transformation, infrastructure, education and health) and vertical coherence (from national to district and local council levels). This mainstreaming approach is not unique to the DPoA. Other frameworks, including Agenda 2063, the Sustainable Development Goals, the SADC Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan, and AfCFTA, are incorporated the same way, as part of a single, coherent national development agenda rather than parallel or competing processes.

Addressing the perception of exclusion

On the question of why some stakeholders nonetheless perceive that no engagement took place, the Ministry does not dismiss the concern. Clarification is welcomed on which specific stakeholders or groups feel excluded, so the matter can be properly understood and addressed. Engagement was broad: it included the December consultation, written submissions, breakout sessions, and a decentralised approach in which individual ministries, departments and agencies were encouraged to extend invitations to their own sectoral stakeholders. This approach was deliberately designed to ensure wider reach and greater relevance across government, the private sector, civil society, development partners, and community groups.

Communication and outreach could have been further strengthened in some cases. Invitations were sent out in good time, but some invited participants did not ultimately take part. This perception gap stems from a communication gap, not an absence of consultation. The Ministry remains fully committed to meaningful, inclusive, and broad-based participation, and will take this feedback into serious consideration to improve future consultation processes as implementation of the DPoA continues.

What remains unresolved

The Ministry's position addresses the specific dates, venue, coordination structures, and documentation that the Public Eye report claimed did not exist. It does not extend to a point-by-point account of every claim in the original article — including the characterisation of the Ministry's July 2023 presentation to UN National Focal Points, or the UN Resident Coordinator's Office's own account of what it observed. Those aspects of the dispute remain contested between the two accounts.

This article is based on the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning's written responses to questions on the DPoA 2025 Midterm Review consultation process.