OUTCOME STATEMENT

1. From 14th to 15th July, 2016, the Government of Lesotho and the United Nations held a successful High-level Roundtable (HRT) under the theme “Transformation and Reform: The Path to Lesotho’s Sustainable Development.” The HRT brought together the Government, the UN, international development partners, academia, civil society and other stakeholders.

2. The HRT was organized in the context of a high-level mission to Lesotho by the Regional United Nations Development Group from 13th to 15th July 2016. The purpose of the mission was to gain a first-hand understanding of the situation in Lesotho and to engage the government and other stakeholders regarding how the UN can best support the government and people of Lesotho with respect to current development challenges and opportunities. The R-UNDG Mission was led by Mr. Abdoulaye Mar Dieye, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Director, Regional Bureau for Africa, Chair of UNDG Africa and included the Regional Directors and representatives of UNDP, UNFPA, UNESCO, UNWOMEN, FAO, IOM, WHO, UNDPA, OCHA.

3. Discussions of the HRT focused on four thematic areas:

   a) Strengthening Health Systems to Deliver on the SDGs
   b) Environment and Climate Change
   c) Socio-Economic Outlook
   d) Governance Reforms.

4. The HRT provided a platform for various stakeholders and policymakers to discuss the complex challenges confronting the country; identify the underlying contributory factors; and explore the best way the UN system can support the country’s efforts toward sustainable development and to meliorate the current development challenges.

5. Participants discussed alternative proposals for immediate steps and long-term solutions to meet the challenges for ensuring inclusive and sustainable development. The HRT took place in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) localization and the upcoming reviews, respectively, of the National Development Assistance Plan and the Lesotho United Nations Development Assistance Plan.

6. The HRT noted the tremendous progress made by Lesotho and reviewed the mutually reinforcing challenges around the four thematic areas. Contributors to the discussions emphasized that current vulnerabilities need to be addressed in a concerted manner in order to avoid any deterioration or reversal of the development gains made through years. The complex reality facing the country also
suggests the need to take stock and rethink strategies employed so far. The current roll-out of the SDGs, the humanitarian response to the effects of the drought, and the commitment to governance reforms offer a critical moment and an opportunity for a coordinated effort to address the current vulnerabilities.

7. The HRT was a timely opportunity for a candid and constructive dialogue among stakeholders. This dialogue, no doubt, could not be exhaustive in such a short time and participants expressed the view that it needed to be continued.

8. Other activities of the visiting UN mission included meetings with the Right Honourable the Prime Minister Dr. Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili, and Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations Hon. Khotso Letsatsi.

9. Key Conclusions, Recommendations and Key Enabling Activities for the GoL–UN Cooperation

**Strengthening Health Systems to Deliver on the SDGs**

**Key Conclusions and Recommendations**
- Despite the relatively high investment in the health sector, this has not translated into better health outcomes for Basotho
- Given the current Health Sector Strategic Plan which is still in draft form and ending this year, there is a need to develop a comprehensive all-inclusive costed Health Sector Plan that includes Health Sector Reform to ensure delivery of quality of care
- An all-inclusive, consultative process to finalize the health sector strategic plan with mainstreaming of SDGs followed by a coordinated joint implementation and review process aligned to the decentralized governance structures are needed
- The Health sector strategic plan should also include the Development of a comprehensive Human Resource Strategy which addresses recruitment, retention, capacity building, and an exit strategy for health care professionals
- The roundtable calls on the Ministry of Health to have dialogue with stakeholders to ensure delivery of quality, people-centred services
- Further analytical work is needed to determine and address the underlying causes of inefficiencies in the health sector.
- Implementation of the Health Management Information System Strategic Plan to harmonize the multiple data systems and ensure the availability of real-time data that is accessible to all Health Stakeholders.
- Speedy implementation of the national supply chain strengthening plan is needed
- Increased investment in community structures to mobilize the population and engage communities for health
- Establishment of a robust surveillance system and putting in place contingency plans to mitigate, prepare for and respond to emergencies and outbreaks and ensure health systems resilience to these events
Way forward

- Organize a health stakeholders’ forum to discuss and build consensus key conclusions and recommendations from the round table
- Strengthen the partnerships and coordination among health stakeholders for all-inclusive engagement of all partners, in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the national health strategic plan
- Legislate all the critical health-care bills
- Facilitate establishment of Health Service Commission
- Strengthen all the six building blocks of the health systems including human resource management and information system development
- Develop a strategy on health care financing including prioritizing what services should be free to address inequities for example abolishing user fees for maternal care in hospitals
- Strengthen the Health systems resilience against shocks such as drought, flood and epidemics

Key enabling activities for the GoL – UN Cooperation

- Provide technical assistance including the use of drones for distribution of medical supplies
- Cooperate to ensure the inclusive partnerships with all the national stakeholders

Environment and Climate Change

Key Conclusions and Recommendations

- Effective management of land, range and water catchment; and the implementation and enforcement of environmental laws are needed to support vulnerable Basotho and make the nation more resilient to natural hazards and effects of climate change
- Promotion and support Climate Smart Agriculture to enable it serve will be a key driver for reducing climate related vulnerabilities in Lesotho and for sustainable livelihoods and food security for the Basotho
- Regulation of access to natural biomass should be consulted with policy reviews
- Quality seeds need to be adapted to improve agriculture production
- Generation of green energy should be strengthened and improved
- Implementation and enforcement of environmental laws and implementation of sustainable land management practices is strongly recommended
- The current crisis highlights the need for preparedness and response, in other words the bridge between humanitarian and developmental agenda
- Support to the Government of Lesotho in institutional response to climate change will make Basotho more resilient to shocks and to reduce chronic vulnerabilities
- Early Warning Systems are needed at national, regional and local level to monitor and respond to natural hazards
- Better coordination at organizational level is needed to get all partners involved to respond efficiently in preparation and response of crises
- Financial mechanisms to support Climate Smart Agriculture (CSA) and Conservation Agriculture must be ensured
A need for institution preparedness is identified in order to access environmental finance including Green Climate Fund
- Available finance must be blended with national resources for effective and transformational impact
- An appeal need to be demonstrated to Government to approve the DRR bill and endorse the Resilience Strategic Framework being finalized
- Stakeholders are requested to assist DMA in implementing the resilience strategy
- All stakeholders are encouraged to adhere to the DRR policy and to budget for those plans. So is the Ministry of Planning to integrate DRR into development plans and programmes
- Importance to implement the National Adaptation Plan is identified to deal with climate change in Lesotho
- Range management is crucial to ensure sufficient water availability in the country
- Data collection is very vital for CSA as agriculture contributes to Climate Change
- Ensuring quality and quantity of data will inform programming to fill information gaps. Policy making would benefit from more evidence and a deliberate support of academia

Way forward
- The Government of Lesotho together with partners should ensure the finalization of the National Resilience Framework to provide a holistic approach to bridging the humanitarian and development gap and address climate change and environmental related vulnerabilities and natural hazards.
- The Government of Lesotho should adopt an inclusive (engagement of private sector, civil society and the citizenry) and evidence-based approach and ensure the mainstreaming of climate change, environmental management and disaster risk reduction in the development of the National Strategic Development Plan and its supporting budgetary frameworks.

Key enabling activities for the GoL – UN Cooperation
- Ongoing development of the National Resilience Framework, the National Climate Change Policy and the current response to the El Nino related drought
- National Determined Commitments by the Government of Lesotho to reduce greenhouse emissions, the comprehensive set of environmental SDGs and Environmental Impact Assessment should be the basis for policy development and programming by the Government and Development Partners
- Strengthen and support the national capacity in accessing international environmental funds, such as the Green Climate Fund and the Global Environment Facility
- Review of environmental policies and legislative framework to enhance a conducive environment for climate inclusive investment

Socio-Economic Outlook

Key Recommendations
- Review economic development models to build agility and resilience, by focusing on the creation of new engines and model for economic growth and enhancing value addition in the sectors that Lesotho has competitive advantage
- Initiate fiscal reforms and adjustments to build fiscal space, reduce government expenditures and mobilize domestic savings and revenue while enhancing effectiveness of the social protection
- Ensure political stability as a prerequisite for sustainable economic and social development

**Way forward**
- Promote capacity development for financial literacy, contract negotiation and industry-specific knowledge to enable private sector participation in large projects and to leverage developments in policy and institutional frameworks
- Promote SME sector, facilitate mentorship, skills and technology transfer, and build artisan centers to promote creativity and innovativeness to enable value retention and competitiveness of small and medium enterprises
- Support internal value chain analysis for investment entry points and linkages, to facilitate development of opportunity driven entrepreneurship and increase domestic total factor productivity

**Key enabling activities for the UN/GOL**
- Promote capacity development for financial literacy
- Facilitate industry-specific knowledge to enable private sector participation in large projects and to leverage developments in policy and institutional frameworks
- Facilitate mentorship and build artisan centers to promote creativity and innovativeness to enable value retention and competitiveness of small and medium enterprises
- Support internal value chain analysis for investment entry points and linkages, to facilitate the development of opportunity driven entrepreneurship
- Mobilise mentorship and knowledge transfer programs that take advantage of the skills and experience among the retired personnel
- Support reforms for stable political environment as prerequisite for sustainable economic and social development
- Support improvement in targeting efficiency of social protection
- Support fiscal and public sector reforms

**Governance Reforms**

**Key Conclusions and Recommendations**
- The participants fully embraced the centrality of governance to sustainable stability, peace and development and affirmed the need for the expeditious completion of all reforms to enhance governance; political stability; durable peace; and sustainable and inclusive development
- There is a need to continue and deepen the dialogue among Basotho stakeholders on the way forward. The momentum must be seized to take the dialogue beyond the HRT discussions
- Reforms are urgently needed, and the Government of Lesotho is committed to pursue a comprehensive reform agenda. The current constitution is due for amendment in order to adjust it to the current social and political realities and address, among other issues, gender inequalities. In addition to constitutional reform, there is need for: 1) Parliamentary reforms 2)
Security sector reform 3) Public service reform 4) Judicial reforms. The reform agenda has to take a participatory approach inclusive of all stakeholders and all Basotho, women and men

- There is agreement that the constitutional reform process should be fully inclusive of all Basotho – from process planning to execution
- Existing concerns and reforms which can be dealt with administratively need not await the full review of the constitution
- The robust discussions during the session pointed to a very clear need for the continuation of this dialogue. The need for continuously building consensus – within the Coalition Government, among Non-State Actors, and more importantly among all Basotho. This dialogue must continue for the sake of the future of this beautiful Kingdom
- The GoL and all Basotho should take advantage of the opportunity provided by the 50th independence anniversary to take stock of achievements and reflect on what is needed to achieve real transformation

Way Forward
- The UN is committed to support the GoL in its reform efforts, including assisting towards the process of alteration of the constitution
- Through the work with civil society leadership and religious leaders, the UN will continue to promote dialogue and consensus-building

Key enabling activities for the GoL – UN Cooperation
- Continue efforts to support the implementation of the reform agenda, subsequent to its approval by the Cabinet
- Through the public sector reform project, the UN will continue providing support to GoL in modernizing and reform the public service