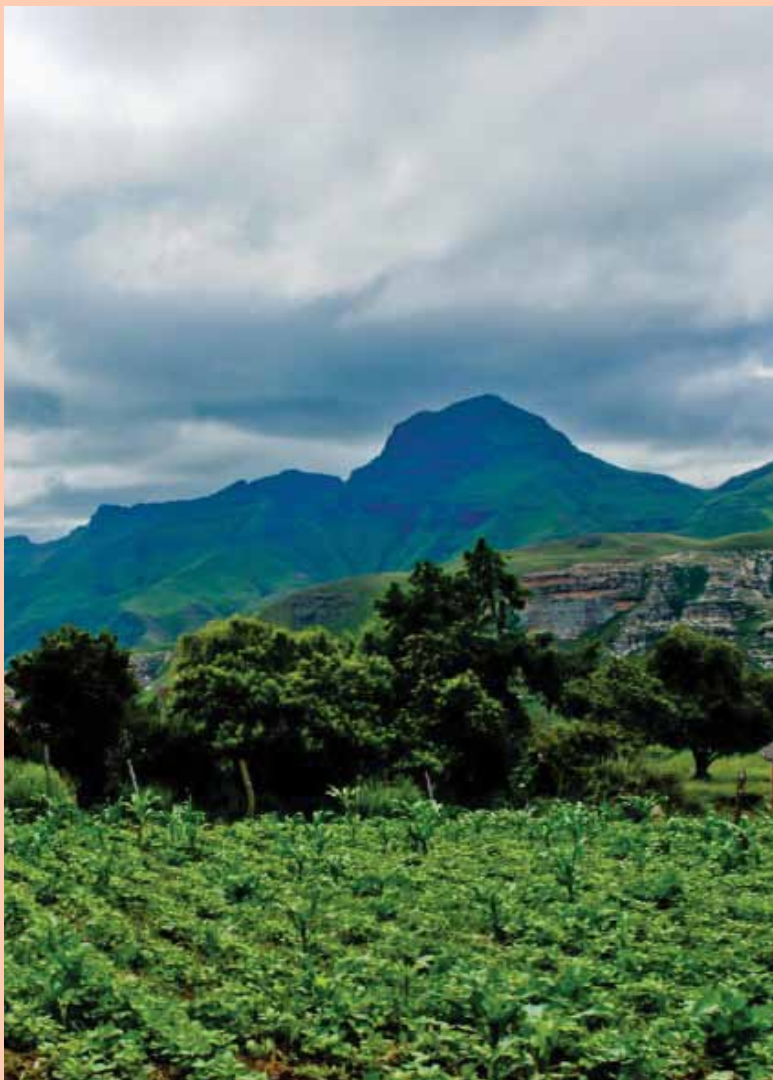




OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

LESOTHO ZERO HUNGER STRATEGIC REVIEW 2018



ZERO HUNGER CHALLENGE





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ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

AD& YP	Adolescents and Young People
ADB	African Development Bank
AFF	Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing
AGOA	African Growth and Opportunity Act
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ANC	Ante Natal Care
APHIS	African Postharvest Information System
AU	African Union
BOS	Bureau of Statistics
BTI	Bertelsmann Stiftung's Transformation Index
CGP	Child Grant Program
CHAL	Christian Association of Lesotho
CMA	Common Monetary Area
COHA	Cost of Hunger in Africa
CSNAP	Cross-Sectoral Nutrition Action Plan
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAR	Department of Agriculture Research
DFS	Directorate of Field Services
DHIS2	District Health Information Systems2
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
DMA	Disaster Management Authority
DOC	Directorate of Crops
DRWS	Department of Rural Water Supply
DWA	Department of Water Affairs
ECCD	Early Childhood Care & Development
EH	Environmental Health
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EPI	Expanded Programme on Immunization
EU	European Union
FISPs	Farm Input Subsidy Programs
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FNCO	Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office
FNSP	Food and Nutrition Security Policy
FY	Financial Year
GAM	Global Acute Malnutrition
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHI	Global Hunger Index
GMO	Genetically Modified Organism
GoL	Government of Lesotho
Ha	Hectare

ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

Hb	Haemoglobin
HBS	Household Budget Survey
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immune Virus
IDS	Institute for Development Studies
IECCD	Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IWRM	Integrated Water Resources Management
LAPCA	Lesotho AIDS Programme Coordinating Authority
LDHS	Lesotho Demographic Health Survey
LEHOVA	Lesotho Horticultural Farmers Association
LENAFU	Lesotho National Farmers Union
LRA	Lesotho Revenue Authority
LVAC	Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee
LFNP	Lesotho Food and Nutrition policy
LZHSR	Lesotho Zero Hunger Strategic Review
LVAA	Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis
MAD	Minimal Acceptable Diet
MAFS	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
MCC	Millennium Challenge Account
MDA	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MDWSP	Metolong Dam Water Supply Program
MET	Ministry of Environment and Tourism
MFLR	Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation
MIS	Management Information System
MoET	Ministry of Education and Training
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoL&E	Ministry of Labour and Employment
MoPW&T	Ministry of Public Works and Transport
MoSD	Ministry of Social Development
MoTI	Ministry of Trade, and Industry
MoW	Ministry of Water
MSA	Management Service Agent
MSBCM	Ministry of Small Businesses, Commerce and Marketing
MT	Metric Tonne
NAC	National AIDS Commission
NAPFS	National Action Plan for Food Security

ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

NDSO	National Drugs Supply Organization
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NISSA	National Information System for Social Assistance
NSFP	National School Feeding Policy
NSDP	National Strategic Development Plan
NUL	National University of Lesotho
OPVs	Open Pollinated Varieties
OVCs	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PA	Public Assistance
PD	Positive Deviance
PHL	Postharvest Loss Estimate
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief
PMT	Proxy Means Test
PMTCT	Prevention of Mother to Child HIV Transmission
RMA	Range Management Area
RSA	Republic of South Africa
RSDA	Rural Self-Help Development Association
RUTFs	Ready to Use Therapeutic Foods
SACU	Southern African Customs Union
SADP	Small Holder Agriculture Development
SCS	Seeds Certification Service
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
SWAP	Sector Wide Approach
TB	Tuberculosis
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Program on HIV and AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VAA	Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis
VAT	Value Added Tax
WB	World Bank
WESA	Water and Sewage Authority
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
YP&AH	Young People and Adolescents' Health
ZHSR	Zero Hunger Strategic Review

FOREWORD



THE GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO is committed to support all efforts in the fight against hunger and achieving prosperity for the people of Lesotho. Progress has been made in many of the economic and social development indicators, although more is still required. The country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth has averaged 3.7 percent over the last 30 years, driven by high growth in the secondary sector, which is commendable. However, this growth has not translated into sustained high levels of employment, food and nutrition security and poverty reduction, and this is of concern for Government of Lesotho (GoL). In order to address the challenges that inhibit the country's potential to achieving zero hunger by 2030, the Government commissioned the Lesotho Zero Hunger Strategic Review (LZHSR) report.

The report has highlighted factors affecting food and nutrition security in Lesotho, progress made by Government and development partners in addressing hunger, the gaps in the national response and the strategic actions required to achieve zero hunger in the country. It is a culmination of extensive literature review and stakeholder consultations at national and district levels. The LZHSR report focuses attention on the critical issues needed to accelerate progress towards zero hunger nationally.

This review coincides with the process of developing the second National Development Strategic Plan (NDSP) II and the review of the country's Vision 2020. At a regional level, Lesotho is in the process of domesticating the African Union Commission's Agenda of commitment to end hunger by 2063. Moreover, the LZHSR comes at the right moment when our King, His Majesty King Letsie III, is the African Union Nutrition Champion and Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' (FAO) Special Ambassador for Nutrition. These converging development initiatives and endeavors are creating an opportune and conducive environment for the implementation of the LZHSR recommendations.

In addressing recommendations emerging from the strategic review, it is essential that all stakeholders are involved across all sectors covered by the zero hunger pillars. Bringing all stakeholders together requires strong and empowered coordination mechanisms. This means policies and programmes of government ministries and partner institutions should be aligned with the national priorities that aim to address hunger.

I take this opportunity to urge all development sectors, government ministries, development partners, civil society and the private sector to work together in the implementation of the recommended actions in order to achieve zero hunger in Lesotho. I further implore academia and research institutions to focus their training, research and development innovations to the issues prioritized in this report. The successful implementation of the recommendations will depend on the commitment, cooperation and partnerships of all stakeholders and sectors ■

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Motsoahae Thomas Thabane".

Dr. Motsoahae Thomas Thabane

The Prime Minister of Lesotho

9 March 2018

KHOTSO. PULA. NALA.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER of the Government of Lesotho would like to express its sincere appreciation to Lead Researcher, Dr. Maluke Emmanuel Letete, and his team of researchers that include Mr. Malefetsane Gerard Masasa, Dr. Phiny Hanson, Ms. 'Mamakhaola Mofota-Shomari and Dr. Makoala V. Marake, for undertaking the Lesotho Zero Hunger Strategic Review. The Office acknowledges that, despite eminent challenges, they managed to produce a sound report. The Office would also like to thank financial and technical support from the World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank (WB). Furthermore, the Office expresses appreciation for the expert support it received from the Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office (FNCO) under the leadership of the Director, Dr. 'Masekonyela Sebotsa, and the Focal Technical Officer, Kekeletso Lekatsa, for this undertaking; the Technical and Advisory Teams, whom the researchers consulted at various stages of this Review, and stakeholders who gave their invaluable views and technical inputs during the review process.

The Office is also grateful to the convenor of the Lesotho ZERO Hunger Strategic Review, Dr. Mohlalefi Moteane, for his insightful comments, commitment and inspirations during the review. The invaluable contributions and support throughout the review process were also received from Mary Njoroge, Marian Yun, Chris Toe, Justin Smith, Napo Ntlou and Merlyn Chapfunga from WFP; Yves Klompenhouwer, Mwesigwa David and Mokitinyane Nthimo and Alain Onibon from FAO; Dr. Cornelia A. Atsyor and 'Mantsane Tšoloane-Bolepo from WHO; and Ijeoma Emenanjo from WB. The Office is very grateful for your patience, mentorship, perseverance and leadership. Without you, this review would not have been completed.

The Office of the Prime Minister would also wants to acknowledge and thank the various sectors of Government, including Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security, Ministry of Forestry and Land Reclamation, Ministry of Health and Child Welfare, Ministry of Labour and Employment Services, Ministry of Public Service, Ministry of Social Development, Ministry of Small-Businesses, Cooperatives and Marketing, Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Water, Ministry of Trade and Industry, and Ministry of Energy and Meteorology, for their contributions during the review process.

We also thank the international donor community, civil society and the United Nations (UN) community for their steadfast support during the review process. Finally, Office of the Prime Minister, on behalf of the Government of Lesotho, would like to register its profound appreciation to the United Nations Resident Coordinator, Mr. Salvator Niyonzima, for the unwavering support he provided through the UN agencies throughout the review process ■

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Introduction

THE ZERO HUNGER CHALLENGE (ZHC) is an international call for action made by the United Nations (UN) towards a vision of a world without hunger. It is fully aligned to the 2030 Agenda and reflects the five elements from within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The zero hunger challenge is also aligned to the Africa Union Commission's Agenda 2063 on 'The Africa we Want'.

Lesotho is generally food deficit, hence addressing hunger is imperative and a top priority in the country's development agenda. Overall, a large part of the population remains exposed to situations of chronic food and nutrition insecurity, especially the rural population, which is heavily dependent on subsistence farming and other rural non-farm activities. Therefore, the Government of Lesotho (GoL)'s commitment to eradication of hunger and undernutrition is infixed in the national vision 2020 and elaborated in the 2017 Food and Nutrition Security Policy (FNSP).

Achieving zero hunger requires integrated approaches that respond to the multiple, interconnected causes of hunger and malnutrition. To respond to the Zero Hunger Challenge, the Government of Lesotho (GoL) commissioned the Zero Hunger Strategic Review (ZHSR). The purpose of the ZHSR was to support national efforts to accelerate actions towards eliminating food insecurity and malnutrition. The specific objectives of the review were to:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of the food security situation in Lesotho, including assessment of the adequacy of the strategies, policies, programs, institutional capabilities meant to support food security and nutrition for vulnerable groups and the poor in the country.
2. Highlight the progress made and identify the challenges Lesotho must overcome if the country is to achieve zero hunger in line with the targets of SDG 2 and the country's national commitments.
3. Recommend how policies, programmes and strategies can be adjusted or adapted to have a food security or nutrition impact.
4. Initiate the development of a national Zero Hunger Roadmap.

The ZHSR is framed within the pillars of SDG2 or zero hunger: (i) Access to Adequate Food and Healthy Diets for All People All Year Round (ii) An End to Malnutrition and All its Forms (iii) All Food Systems are Sustainable (iv) Double Smallholder Productivity and Income and (v) Zero Loss or Waste of Food. **While the analysis is informed by key national policies and strategic frameworks geared towards addressing food and nutrition insecurity, the 2017 Food and Nutrition Security Policy (FNSP) is the overarching framework for the implementation of the ZHSR recommendations.**

The Hunger Challenge in Lesotho

With a Global Hunger Index (GHI) of 24.1, Lesotho indicates a serious food security situation. The rising number of undernourished people continues to pose serious challenges in the country. As a result, the 2017 Global Hunger Report ranked Lesotho 80 out of 119 countries that were assessed. This is higher than Swaziland (71) and South Africa (55)

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but lower than Botswana (81), Namibia (87) and Malawi (80). According to the situational analysis, other key food and nutrition security issues identified within the zero hunger pillars include:

Access to Adequate Food and Healthy Diets All Year Round: The main source of food for the majority of Basotho population is own crop production; livestock products; remittances through economic migration, labour exchange and direct market purchases supplemented with the Government social protection interventions. Heavy reliance on food imports makes Lesotho susceptible to high food prices which increases pressure on vulnerable households' food and nutrition security. Low-income earners and the poor especially the rural population struggle to meet their minimum daily requirements for food intake as they can only access poor quality foods with low micronutrient content. The most affected households are those relying on farming with low earnings, herding, informal business or casual labour for most of their incomes; those headed by women and children, with high age dependency ratio; those with fewer employment opportunities and few assets. Overlying the food access situation is the high prevalence of HIV in the country.

An end to Malnutrition and all its Forms: : Lesotho is currently experiencing the triple burden of malnutrition - under and over nutrition and micronutrient deficiency across all age groups. Although the prevalence of underweight children has marginally improved, low birth weight remains steady at 9.4 percent. Wasting is at 3 percent, which is an improvement relative to the 6 per cent and 5 per cent wasting attained in 2004 and 2009 respectively. Stunting at 33.2 percent remains a serious health challenge. Obesity is a growing challenge with 7 percent in children under the age of five years and 45 percent of women and 12 percent of men aged 15 to 49 years recorded as obese. The other challenge worsening nutrition outcomes in the country is the low intake of micronutrients such as Vitamins and Iron-folic acid. An underlying challenge is the poor access to improved sanitation. On the positive end, the proportion of mothers practicing exclusive breastfeeding has increased almost two-fold from 36 (2004) to 67 percent (2014).

All Food Systems are Sustainable: Climate change in Lesotho is likely to cause significant impacts on agriculture and general livelihoods. Land degradation is a pressing sustainable system issue. The effects of land degradation associated with soil erosion have already reduced the productive capacity of Lesotho's croplands and rangelands. This will continue to constrain efforts to improve production efficiencies and total production in the face of climate change impacts. The cumulative effect of landcover losses from degradation and soil erosion ultimately reduces the country's capacity to achieve zero hunger.

Double Small-Scale Productivity and Income: Lesotho continues to be a net importer of food to meet the needs of its people. In good harvest years, Lesotho is only able to meet roughly 30 percent of its annual cereal requirements. More than 70 percent of the population in rural Lesotho is engaged in agriculture and the performance of the sector plays an important role in their wellbeing. However, arable land is below 10 percent of total land area and the country utilizes only half of this land, with implications on resource use efficiency. Domestic food production has concentrated on three main cereal crops: maize, wheat and sorghum and their productivity has been on a decline. Maize dominates local cereal cultivation with 70-80 percent of total national cereal production. The low levels of maize production and yields (on

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average 0.5 MT/hectare) are primarily due to Lesotho's high cereal production costs and other factors such as climate change and land degradation.

Adapt All Food Systems to Eliminate Loss or Waste of Food: This pillar focuses on minimizing food losses during production, storage and transport, and waste of food by retailers and consumers; empowering consumer choice; commitments by producers, retailers and consumers within all nations. According to the African Postharvest Information System (APHIS), Lesotho's Post Harvest Losses (PHLs) for maize have been fluctuating over eleven years, between 2004 and 2015 across districts. For example, in Maseru post-harvest losses for maize were recorded at 2509 tonnes in 2004 compared to 2589 in 2015. The underlying constraints in measuring the losses and waste of food globally, has been lack of consensus in definitions and underdeveloped methodologies.

Key Strategic Gaps and Challenges

The following key strategic gaps and challenges were identified:

Weak enforcement of policies: While the country has a relatively developed enabling policy environment for food and nutrition security programming, the enforcement and implementation of these policies, strategies and plans remain problematic. To implement good policies and programmes that bring change will require effective public institutions and serious commitment by senior policy makers, and government. The weak implementation of policies and programmes is due to the absence of implementation frameworks and regulations and this is the major underlying constraint.

Coordination and implementation challenges: The major limiting factor has been the ad-hoc and uncoordinated manner in which policies and programmes have been implemented. While the Food and Nutrition Coordination Office (FNCO) is mandated with coordinating food and nutrition programmes in the country it lacks the capacity for coordination. There are also many structural, financial and technical challenges that stifle the operation of FNCO. These include: lack of coordinating skills, and management skills, lack of communication facilities such as internet connectivity, telephones, computers etc. Furthermore, FNCO operates within a meagre budget and depends on donor support to carry its mandate.

Weak decentralisation process: There are shortages of skills within the civil service to implement demand-led, market-oriented development, which is the focus of the Government and development partners. There is manpower as well as technical and critical skills shortages to undertake food and nutrition security activities particularly when it comes to nutritionists.

Insufficient/unavailability of nutrition data: The major gap here refers mainly to unavailability of data for monitoring of nutrition programming. This is against the absence of a functional nutrition surveillance or early warning system. At its best, the NSS collects, analyses and disseminates information on nutritional status on a quarterly basis; identify areas and

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groups at risk of malnutrition; and issue early warning to relevant stakeholders on nutrition related problems. However, there are data quality issues that are of concern and need to be addressed.

Weak monitoring and evaluation: Without strong monitoring and evaluation frameworks linked to the project and programme objectives with solid qualitative and quantitative indicators, nutrition and food security will not be achieved. During the stakeholders' discussions it was found that there are places where such frameworks do not exist and where they exist, they are not followed with sincerity.

Recommendations

Based on the situational analysis and gaps identified in policy making and programme implementation, the following strategic and specific recommendations needed to achieve zero hunger by 2030 by the GoL and its development partners are made:

Addressing the policy and institutional landscape

The first recommendations entail strengthening development and implementation of food security and nutrition related policies through a number of mechanisms that include: review of the constitution to make food and nutrition security one of the fundamental human rights; endorse and implement the long-outstanding decentralization policy, and its implementation mechanisms and finalize the Food Quality Control and Improvement Standards. Furthermore, there's need for enhancing multi-sectoral coordination and implementation by engaging multiple ministries, agencies, other stakeholders (e.g., donors, civil society organizations (CSOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academia, development partners and the private sector. Finally, enhance the capacity of FNCO for multi-sectoral and stakeholder coordination and leadership. This will also require building capacity of the institution through skills development and training.

Sector - Specific Recommendations

In improving access to adequate food all year round, the GoL should strengthen procurement and audit controls, and public financial management systems to address over-pricing of goods and services. Social protection has a positive impact on food and nutrition security, the systems should be strengthened and the transfers expanded in coverage ensuring it covers all the vulnerable populations.

To address high stunting levels in Lesotho and micronutrient deficiencies for sustained improvements in nutritional outcomes, there is need to scale up the implementation of multi sectoral evidence based, high impact, cost effective nutrition interventions as well as the integration and linkages across multiple sectors and development programs that have indirect impacts on nutritional status. There is also need to increase private sector partnerships to improve nutrition for mothers and children. Advocating for increased government investment for proven interventions to tackle malnutrition is essential. Similarly, strengthening systems to ensure effective monitoring, evaluation and knowledge management to improve nutrition policy and programming is recommended.

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Building sustainable food systems will require the GoL to intensify land, water and environmental management efforts that will ensure effective forest and agroforestry management strategies that are key to climate mitigating efforts.

To boost smallholder productivity and incomes, there is need to address the following strategic issues: development of policies and legal frameworks covering livestock feed, agriculture irrigation and mechanization, rangeland management and land use policy. Alongside this is the need for reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of policies in place such as the universal subsidy policy. Another recommendation relates to the aggregation of smallholder farmers into upgraded value chains and establish market information centres that recognize the diversity of farmers.

No tangible work has been done to understand food waste and food loss in Lesotho. The main recommendation would be the commissioning of a baseline survey that is meant to provide an overview of the subject. The survey should point to critical sectors that require detailed research.

Develop a common Lesotho Zero Hunger Road Map

Informed by the Strategic Review Report, the country should develop a common Zero Hunger Road Map that describes what actions are required, a timeframe for action, and which key partners are required for each of the zero hunger pillars. The Road Map will constitute the primary vehicle that will be used by GoL and all stakeholders to carry out its work, and its plans and assess progress toward the most important milestones. The Zero Hunger Investment Plan translated as MORALO oa PHELISO ea TLALA LESOTHO (MPT-LESOTHO) 2018-2023 supported by UN Agencies and non-governmental organizations forms an essential component part of the Zero Hunger Road Map ■

1 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

THE GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO (GoL)'s commitment to the eradication of hunger and undernutrition is enshrined in its vision 2020¹ and further elaborated in the Food and Nutrition Security Policy². This long-standing goal for tackling hunger was cemented through the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). SDG2 calls on governments to: “end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.” Related to this is the Zero Hunger Challenge (ZHC) - an international call for action made by the United Nations (UN) towards a vision of a world without hunger. It is fully aligned to the 2030 Agenda and reflects the five elements from within the SDGs. The Zero Hunger Challenge is built around five pillars: (i) Access to Adequate Food and Healthy Diets for All People All Year Round (ii) An End to Malnutrition and All its Forms (iii) All Food Systems are Sustainable (iv) Double Smallholder Productivity and Income and (v) Zero Loss or Waste of Food. Taken together, their goal is to end hunger, eliminate all forms of malnutrition and build inclusive and sustainable food systems.

Lesotho is generally a food deficient country and for years the country has experienced successive and increasingly frequent climate shocks such as recurrent droughts, dry spells and floods with serious consequences on the food security of the population. Overall, food security conditions in Lesotho have not been improving and a large part of the population remains exposed to situations of chronic and irreversible food insecurity especially the rural population, which is heavily dependent on subsistence farming and other rural non-farm activities. In the 2017 Global Hunger Report³, Lesotho was ranked 80th out of 119 countries that were assessed. This is higher than Swaziland (71) and South Africa (55) but lower than Botswana (81), Namibia (87) and Malawi (80). With a Global Hunger Index of 24.1, Lesotho indicates a serious food security situation. It should be noted though, that the GHI has generally decreased from the 26.5 and 33.2 recorded in 1992 and 2000 respectively. The rising number of undernourished people continues to pose serious challenges in the country⁴.

Lesotho's food and nutrition situation has remained elusive in the past decade due to a multiplicity of factors analyzed in this review. The number of food insecure population in rural areas has been hovering just under half a million since 2009 except for 2016/17 where it rose to 679,437 people. The affected populations are from the very poor and poor wealth groups across all districts who faced deficits until March 2017. Despite this overall significant improvement in food security, the production of cereal was still insufficient to avert the country's dependence on imports from South Africa.

Food and nutrition insecurity is a multi-faceted problem that needs integrated, multi-sectoral solutions. Hence, the Zero Hunger Challenge promotes integrated approaches that respond to the multiple, interconnected cause of hunger and malnutrition. Further, the integration of the Zero Hunger elements into the nationally led SDG implementation strategies will be essential in ending hunger and attaining the other SDGs. Against this background, the GoL commissioned the Zero Hunger Strategic review to identify opportunities to strengthen current and future programmes and strategies that could

¹ http://www.gov.ls/gov_webportal/important%20documents/lesotho%20vision%202020/National_Vision_Document_Final.pdf.

² FNCO, 2017: Lesotho Food and Nutrition Policy.

³ IFPRI, 2017: Global Hunger Index- The inequalities of Hunger: <http://www.globalhungerindex.org/pdf/en/2017.pdf>.

⁴ *ibid.*

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be adopted to end hunger. The Strategic Review is explicitly intended to provide direction to the achievement of SDG2 (Zero Hunger) by 2030 in Lesotho. It does this by establishing a baseline that links appropriate national priorities to the SDG 2 targets and reinforcing national capacities to profoundly enhance food security and nutrition.

This review coincides with the process of developing the National Development Strategic Plan (NSDP) II and the review of the Country's Vision 2020. At a regional level, the country is in the process of domesticating the African Union's Agenda and commitment to end hunger by 2063. Therefore, the findings of the review will inform Lesotho's National Development Planning and food and nutrition security policy implementation processes. Similarly, it will contribute to planning frameworks of United Nations Lesotho under United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) which is under preparation for the periods 2019-2023.

1.2 Objectives of the Zero Hunger Strategic Review

The purpose of the Zero Hunger Strategic Review was to support national efforts to accelerate actions towards eliminating food insecurity and malnutrition. The specific objectives of the review were to:

1. Conduct a comprehensive review of the food security situation in Lesotho including assessment of the adequacy of the strategies, policies, programs, institutional capabilities and resource flows meant to support food security and nutrition for vulnerable groups and the poor in the country.
2. Highlight the progress made and identify the challenges Lesotho must overcome if the country is to achieve zero hunger in line with the targets of SDG 2 and the country's continental and national commitments.
3. Recommend how policies, programmes and strategies can be adjusted or adapted to have a food security or nutrition impact.
4. Initiate the development of a national Zero Hunger Roadmap.

1.3 Conceptual Framework of Food and Nutrition Security

There is need for a conceptual basis for understanding the interaction and relationships between factors that lead to food and nutrition insecurity in Lesotho. Such an understanding is necessary for developing appropriate policy and programmatic responses to address the challenges and in food and nutrition security.

The overall research is framed within the SDG2 goal and targets as well as the zero hunger pillars as shown in **Figure 1**. The analysis was driven by the Food and Nutrition conceptual framework described below in articulating the pillars of food and nutrition security in a structured and systematic way. The strategic review was guided by the universal 1996 World Food Summit definition that states that: *"food security exists when all people, at all times, have physical, social, and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs, and food preferences for an active and healthy life"*. This concept comprises four dimensions, including availability, access, utilization and stability of food which need to be satisfied simultaneously to achieve food security both at the individual, household and national levels.

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While the broad definition of food security is inclusive of the key determinants of good nutrition, the term “food security and nutrition” is now commonly used to combine food and nutrition security. This definition best reflects the conceptual linkages between food security and nutrition security while also expressing a single integrated development goal for achieving zero hunger.

Food and nutrition security was analysed at national, community, household and individual levels. Ensuring food availability at different levels is determined by a web of macroeconomic and trade-oriented policies, producer-oriented policies and climatic adaptation conditions meant to increase food production, and the country’s foreign policy that determines how much the country receives in food aid transfers. It is not enough that food is available at national level unless it can be accessed by households in an equitable manner.

Food access is also affected by macroeconomic policy variables that include exchange rates, price levels, tax and fluctuations in buffers, social protection policies and other consumer-oriented policies and labour market policies that create jobs and enables individuals to have stable incomes. In addition, domestic market conditions and information asymmetries as well as physical infrastructure, and institutional factors have a bearing on food access. Therefore, to break the vicious cycle of poverty and hunger, people who are extremely poor and hungry would have to be assisted through social protection interventions. Adequate and well-designed social protection systems would enable vulnerable people in society to quickly overcome poverty, hunger and undernutrition⁵.

However, the availability and access of food by all individuals are necessary but not sufficient condition to ensure food and nutrition security. It is, therefore, necessary that food be utilized in a safe manner and be of correct dietary composition if the country is to eliminate all forms of malnutrition and achieve Zero hunger. The way people utilise food depends on factors such as economic status, cultural preferences, health status, water availability, environmental conditions, food processing and preservation, technology, child and maternal practices and food safety. The food security situation needs to be stable over time across the three pillars.

This web of interlocking factors is to be understood within the broader development and vulnerability context that comprises macro-economic issues, environmental (including climate change) and social factors especially issues of gender and women’s empowerment. Analysed within this context, a combination of sufficient food and nutrition ultimately results in the achievement of zero hunger and SDG2.

Using the conceptual framework described, the review sought to answer the following five basic questions:

⁵ IFAD, 2015

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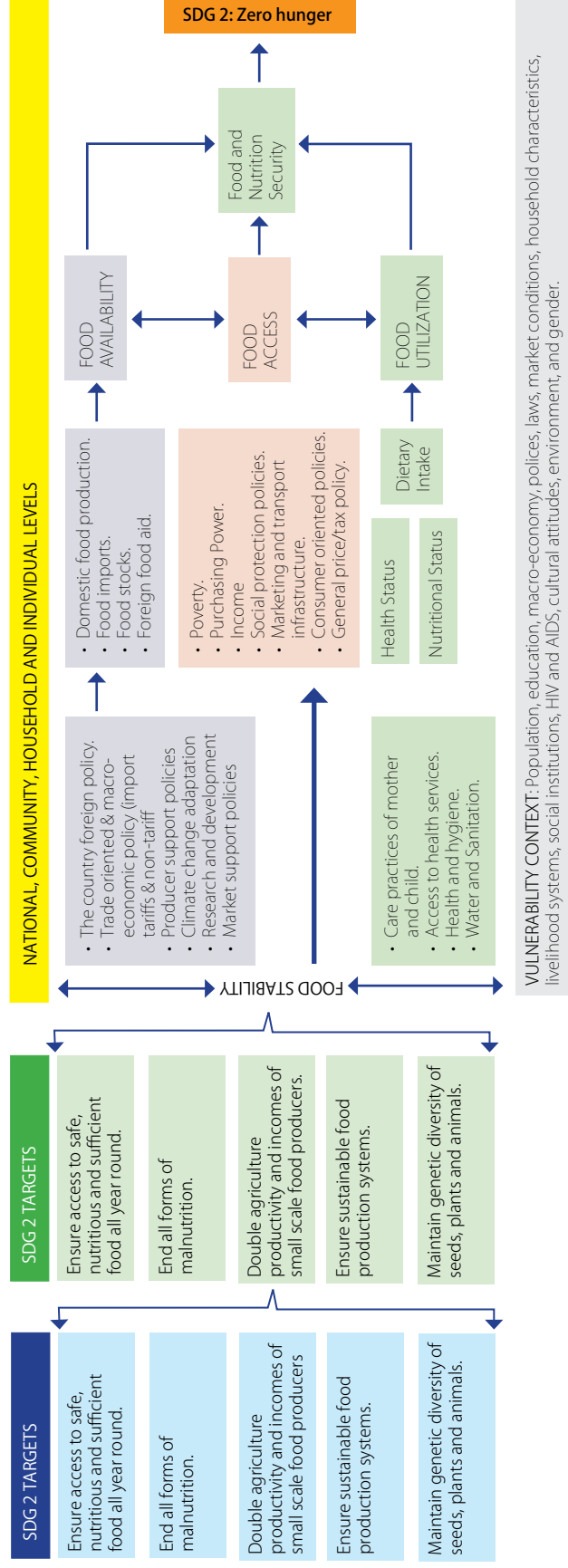


1. To what extent has Lesotho strategies, policies, programs, institutional capabilities and resource flows, meant to support food and nutrition security, not food security and nutrition for poor and vulnerable groups in the country, been effective?
2. What factors have contributed to the erosion for the effectiveness of these interventions in addressing food and nutrition challenge?
3. What role is played by social protection, macroeconomic, and environmental policies in ensuring food and nutrition security in the country, and how can the role of different stakeholders and institutions be strengthened to achieve zero hunger target?



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Figure 1 Framework and Nutrition Security Conceptual Framework



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1.4 Review Process, Approach and Methodology

The review process was coordinated by the Office of the Prime Minister through Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office (FNCO) in collaboration with the National Steering Committee (NSC). The review was led by independent consultants who carried out a comprehensive situational analysis along the five dimensions of the Zero Hunger Challenge. The financial and technical support was provided by the World Food Programme (WFP), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO).

The approach to the strategic review was consultative and participatory and took a two-pronged strategy. Firstly, the team held consultations with selected Ministries that are involved in food and nutrition security related issues; Members of Cabinet; Principal Secretaries and Directors of Ministries; the Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office who basically are the custodians of food and nutrition policy in Lesotho; private sector representatives; Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Church leaders. In addition, information was collected through desk study of important food and nutrition security related documentation. Secondly, a series of meetings were held with representatives of different stakeholders at district level. These representatives were drawn from Local Government officials, NGOs and civil society, Private Sector, Academia, youth organizations, women organizations and nutrition and coordinating office at district level, traditional leaders, and labour federation movement

A workshop was held in Maseru with multi sectoral stakeholders to generate consensus on the Zero Hunger Strategic Review process and findings.

A generic research methodology that has been used in other Zero Hunger review studies was adopted as reflected in **Figure 2**. The methodology follows four key process steps:

1. Situational analysis of the food security and nutrition situation.
2. Analysis of national policy and programmatic responses.
3. Identification of gaps in the food security and nutrition response.
4. Recommendations.

The methodology provided guidance on the key questions to be asked per step and the respective sources of information..

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Figure 2 Zero Hunger Strategic Review Methodology

NO.	PROCESS STEPS	KEY QUESTIONS	INPUT
1.	ANALYSIS OF THE FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION SITUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the main trends and problems? What are the causes? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Literature and secondary data review. Vulnerability & food security assessments. Gender analysis. Consultations.
2.	NATIONAL POLICY AND PROGRAMMATIC RESPONSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the main national targets and goals? What programmes and policies are implemented to achieve these targets and goals? With what financial and institutional resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of national policy programme frameworks and budgets. National evaluations. Sector funding reviews. Consultations.
3.	GAPS IN THE FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION RESPONSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which gaps, including in planning, design, implementation, capacity and resourcing, hinder the achievement of targets and goals? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Benchmarking of the situation against the targets and the response. Review of findings from previous steps. Consultations.
4.	RECOMMENDATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What needs to be done to fill the gaps? What institutional, financial and human resources are required? How will priority actions be implemented? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of all findings. Consultations, including validation of outcomes.

The Zero Hunger Strategic Review Report is presented in the following structure:

CHAPTER 1 introduces context of the review by outlining the linkages between Sustainable Development Goal (SDG2) with Zero Hunger Challenge pillars, outlines the objectives, conceptual framework, and explains the process and methodology used in the review.

CHAPTER 2 presents the country context and situational analysis of food security and nutrition, relating it to the five pillars of the Zero Hunger Challenge in Lesotho.

CHAPTER 3 provides an analysis of the national policy and programmatic responses to food security and nutrition with an emphasis on identifying gaps and opportunities.

CHAPTER 4 builds on the strategic gaps in the country responses, suggests recommendations and indicates necessary institutional arrangements for the road map towards achieving zero hunger ■

2 CHAPTER 2: SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

2.1 The Context of Hunger in Lesotho

LESOTHO IS CLASSIFIED AS A LOW MIDDLE-INCOME country with per capita income of just above US\$1,327 in 2016⁶ and a population size of about 2.2 million. Lesotho's 2016 HDI is below the average for countries in the low human development group (0.505). The country's Gini Coefficient at 0.53 masks deep spatial and income inequalities with depth of inequality rising overtime. This inequality level ranks Lesotho among the 10 most unequal countries in the world in terms of income distribution⁷. The limited impact of growth on livelihoods and access to social services has also contributed to income and rural-urban inequalities. Since 2012, the country has been under unstable coalition governments with the second coalition collapsing in 2017 to make way for the current coalition. The instability of the coalition governments and political unpredictability of the past six years has negatively affected economic development and perpetuated chronic dependence on South Africa for food and other essential goods and services. Hence this political underpinning is a driver and determinant of the food and nutrition situation in the country.

Since the early 1990s the country has maintained stable macroeconomic environment characterized by low inflation, less than 5 per cent fiscal deficits, 4-5 months' levels of international reserves. This is a figure that was above the IMF recommended minimum threshold of three months of import cover necessary to maintain the peg. This environment was conducive for growth, food and nutrition security. In some years the country achieved fiscal surplus due to SACU windfall receipts thereby sustaining the current account balance. However, since 2012, the country's fiscal management has and continues to become more challenging owing to rising wages and salaries, declining SACU receipts, inefficiencies in government spending and expansion of Government ministries which has exerted high pressure on its expenditures. The spending patterns of the government since then have threatened the peg and will likely lead to its breakdown if no drastic policy measures are taken to contain government spending. The breakdown of the peg implies that the Loti can no longer exchange at 1:1 with the Rand hence will likely make imports more expensive and unaffordable to the poor segments of the society. This will likely make achieving zero hunger more difficult.

The country's GDP growth has averaged 3.7 percent over the last 30 years driven by high growth in the secondary sector at 7.5 percent. However, this growth has not translated into sustained high levels of employment, food security and poverty reduction. While the mining sector continues to make a significant contribution to the country's economic growth, it remains an economic enclave with limited direct contribution to employment creation, poverty reduction and food security. The economy is completely integrated with that of South Africa not only through trade relations but also through labour markets. South Africa accounts for nearly 80 percent of its imports and approximately about 30 percent of its exports.

The economic activity in the country is dominated by subsistence agriculture - mostly traditional, low output, rain fed cereal production and livestock rearing with extensive overgrazing, and small manufacturing of textiles, garments and apparel. The manufacturing of textiles, garment and apparel was boosted by the introduction of an African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) that gave the country duty free access to the US markets. Although the Agricultural sector

⁶ World Bank Development Indicators, 2016.

⁷ World Bank 2015.

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continues to play a very significant role of supporting livelihoods for more than 60 per cent of the population mostly living in rural areas through subsistence crop and animal farming, it contributes only about 7.3 percent to GDP⁸.

The country continues to grapple with a range of other persistent development challenges, including chronic poverty and high levels of unemployment estimated at more 25 percent of total labour force and 45 percent among the youth. The country's high poverty rate (57.1 per cent) indicates that growth has not been inclusive, with the incidence of poverty virtually unchanged from a decade ago. Unemployment rates have soared, especially among youths.

The high levels of stunting at 33.2 percent nationally and micronutrient deficiencies among children aged 6 to 59 months (particularly iron deficiency anaemia which stands at 51 percent) are adversely affecting food and nutrition security, as well as the overall economic performance of the country⁹. Over 27 percent of girls and women and 14 percent of boys and men in the 15-49 age range are also anaemic¹⁰. Stunting is more prevalent in rural areas than urban areas (35 percent vs 27 percent), and boys are more frequently affected (39 percent) compared to girls (28 percent). The highest stunting prevalence is in the mountainous areas (42 percent), followed by the foothills (41 percent) and the Senqu River Valley (34 percent). The prevalence of global acute malnutrition (GAM) remains low at 2.8 percent nationally. Malnutrition has acute consequences on brain development of children and will likely affect its functioning and affect labour productivity in the future.

Another pressing issue in Lesotho is the high HIV and AIDS prevalence estimated at 25 percent (one in four people in Lesotho live with HIV) among adult men and women aged between 15 and 49. This has affected overall labour productivity particularly in agricultural sector, and impacted nutrition and livelihoods of individuals as well as the viability of institutions¹¹. Given the high national prevalence rate, the country is ranked second highest in the world and HIV remains a major cause for morbidity and mortality. HIV prevalence is significantly higher in women (29.7 per cent) than men (18.6 per cent)¹². HIV and AIDS cuts at the fabric of the most productive segment of society. Several national reports note that about 43 percent of textile workers and 72 percent of sex workers are HIV infected¹³. HIV and AIDS infection has serious repercussions for household food security and nutritional status of children. It is indisputable that HIV prevalence represents a direct challenge to the achievement of zero hunger given its devastating effects on productivity, nutrition and almost incalculable burden to the national budget over a relatively short period. Further, such prevalence makes efforts to reduce stunting and infant and maternal morbidity and mortality even more challenging as well.

Gender inequality in Lesotho has been identified as one of the main contributing factors to poverty and food insecurity. With a value of 0.55, the country ranks 132 out of 159 in the Global Gender Inequality Index (GII), a metric which considers three dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and economic activity¹⁴. In Lesotho, women and girls are the most vulnerable to HIV and the ones without access to adequate food, income and land, and are more likely to be forced into

⁸ BoS, 2016: National Income Accounts Estimates.

⁹ MoH, 2015 and UNAIDS Country Profile, 2014.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ MDGs Report (2013).

¹² LDHS.

¹³ MoH (2015) and UNAIDS Country Profile (2014).

¹⁴ MUNDIP, Human Development Report, 2016.

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situations that place them at risk of HIV infection such as mobility for work, transactional or commercial sex, or staying in abusive sexual relationships due to economic dependency¹⁵.

Lesotho is also vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. The reoccurring extreme weather events such as droughts, desertification, erratic rainfall and other natural hazards like heavy and often off-season snowfall, hailstorms, early frost and late frost incidences and strong winds have exacerbated food and nutrition insecurity in the country¹⁶. A relationship has also been found between drought and Gender Based Violence (GBV). The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) completed the first baseline study on drought effect on GBV in Lesotho during the 2015/16 El Nino. The study showed that GBV amongst women, elderly women and adolescent girls were perceived to have increased during this period. The results emphasize the intricate gender dimensions of vulnerability to food and nutrition insecurity and women that need to be mainstreamed in policies and programmes in order to achieve zero hunger.

At the same time, the country's topography makes its ecology fragile with limited vegetative cover that exposes the thin soils to erosion. The increasing pressure on soils by human activity and livestock have increased gully erosion, reduced agricultural productivity, and raised serious environmental problems including increasing shortage of water. Thus, the country remains highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, which directly affects food and nutrition security. These events have disproportionately affected rural population, which is heavily dependent on natural resource-based subsistence farming and other rural non-farm activities. The country's vulnerability to hazards is compounded by other factors, including high levels of poverty, particularly in rural areas, and the scattered nature of rural settlements, which makes provision of and access to food and other social services very difficult.

2.2 The Zero Hunger Challenge in Context

2.2.1 Pillar 1: Access to Adequate Food and Healthy Diets All Year Round

The main source of food for the majority of Basotho population is own crop production; livestock products; labour exchange and direct market purchases supplemented with the Government social protection interventions such as the school feeding programme, old age pension, subsidies, and the child grant. Coupled with the heavy reliance on food imports, which makes Lesotho susceptible to high and fluctuations in food prices, this increases pressure on vulnerable households' food security. Low-income earners and the poor especially the rural population struggle to meet their minimum daily requirements for food intake as they can only access poor quality foods with low micronutrient content.

There are number of factors that influence people's access to food in Lesotho and these are discussed in the following pages. The country's high national and extreme poverty rates have a big impact on people's access to food. Lesotho's poverty profile has not changed over the past decade, and poverty is not only high, but also deep and its depth has

¹⁵ http://data.unaids.org/pub/manual/2008/jc1515_policy_brief_nutrition_en.pdf.

¹⁶ Letsie 2015.

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increased overtime¹⁷. As already stated, an estimated 57 percent of the population live below poverty line, and 30 percent are below food (or extreme) poverty line, with expenditures below minimum food requirements¹⁸. For many people in Lesotho, poverty is associated with the inability to overcome hunger, illness, and large families¹⁹. In terms of gender, female headed households are slightly more likely to be poor (58.1 percent) and single-father families are substantially less likely to be poor (48.5 percent)²⁰.

National poverty has been stagnant, with mild increase from 2003/03 to 2010/11, while extreme poverty increased by 1.1 percentage points between this period (see **Table 1**). The spatial distribution of food poverty is biased towards rural households with more than 60 per cent of the population living below poverty line. The number of people who were subject to extreme poverty rates (food poverty) stood at 20.3 per cent in 2002/03 while in 2010/11, it stood at 20.4 in urban areas. Whereas in rural areas it was 37.4 and 38.5 in 2002/03 and 2010/11 respectively. Poverty also differs by region with Quthing recording 43.5 per cent of population living below poverty line and Botha-Bothe recording 66.5 per cent of population living below poverty line. In general, poverty is higher in the north and northwest of the country, and relatively lower in the central and southern regions.

Table 1: Poverty Levels in Lesotho by Urban and Rural locations, 2002/02 and 2010/11

	National poverty rates			Extreme poverty rates			USD1.25PPP/day poverty rates		
	2002/03	2010/11	Change	2002/03	2010/11	Change	2002/03	2010/11	Change
National	56.6	57.1	0.5	34.0	35.1	1.1	55.3	55.8	0.5
Urban	39.0	39.6	0.6	20.3	20.4	0.1	37.1	38.5	1.4
Rural	60.9	61.2	0.3	37.4	38.5	1.1	59.8	59.9	0.1

Source: Bureau of Statistics, HBS 2002/03 and HBS, 2010/11

Access to food is also strongly determined by the households' income, and therefore purchasing power and affordability to purchase food. In Lesotho, the most insecure households are those that have most difficulty in generating sufficient incomes to meet food requirements. Most of these households reside in rural areas and largely dependent on agriculture, rural non-farm enterprises and migration.

Table 2: Distribution of Monthly Incomes of Farm Workers

Income Level (Maloti)	Percentage
Less than 200	10.9
200 – 400	36.6
401 – 600	16.2
601 – 800	17.3
801 – 1000	5.4
Over 1000	13.5

Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2012

Note: The first three income levels (Less than 200, 200-400, and 401-600 Maloti) are grouped together as 'earn less than M600/month'.

¹⁷ For instance, in 2002/03 about 56.6 per cent of the population lived under poverty while in 2010/11 the proportion of those under poverty had even gone up to 57.1 per cent.

¹⁸ World Bank, 2015.

¹⁹ World Bank, 2015: Lesotho Systematic Country Diagnostic.

²⁰ *ibid.*

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While these sectors provide employment and incomes for most of the population, this has tended to be informal and seasonal. For example, households reporting farm income as the main source of income fell from 40 per cent in 2003/04 to 35.6 per cent in 2010/11²¹. In 2012, about 24,951 were hired as farm workers of whom 85.7 per cent are male. Yet the earnings of farm workers are generally very low as indicated in **Table 2**, and often fall short to secure food.

An important comparison of the incomes of farm workers could perhaps be made to the international poverty line that currently stands at US\$1.90 per person per day. This converts to US\$ 57.00 over 30 days, which is equivalent to M722.76 per month. Therefore, using this equivalence indicator, 63.7 per cent of farm workers earn incomes below M600. Due to data aggregation, it is difficult to determine exactly how many workers earn below M722.76. However, it is important to note that incomes from farming are not adequate to provide food for at least two-thirds of the farming population, which is a big policy concern.

Table 3 presents the degree of dependence of the farming households on income from farming. The dependence on farming as the major source of income in Lesotho generally seems to be inversely related to the level of income. More than 70 per cent of lowest income households, in the income bracket M 0 – M9, 999 depend on farming as their major source of income. However, Letete *et al.*, (2016) show that in Lesotho poverty is more severe among those households that rely on subsistence farming and unpaid family work as means of income while those that are self-employed experience relatively less poverty levels compared²².

Table 3: Percentage Distribution of Households by Activity and Annual Income Levels

Income level (Maloti)	Farming	Mine Remittance	Wage/ Salary	2002/03	2010/11	Change
0 – 9,999	70.8	3.1	13.2	6.8	6.1	100.0
10,000 – 19,000	51.5	4.7	34.1	5.7	4.0	100.0
20,000 – 29,999	42.0	12.6	37.7	4.7	3.0	100.0
30,000 – 39,999	37.6	10.7	44.1	2.8	4.8	100.0
40,000 – 49,000	28.6	26.1	39.7	5.6	0.0	100.0
50,000 – 59,000	20.1	26.2	49.0	4.7	0.0	100.0
Over 60,000	37.4	16.7	36.9	5.8	3.2	100.0
Lesotho	63.7	5.0	19.6	6.3	5.2	100.0

Source: Bureau of Statistics, 2012

Other significant sources of income comprise social protection (pensions, subsidies and grants), which support 6.3 per cent of households, and formal employment in government and in the textile industry especially for households living in urban areas as well as remittances. Traditionally, many people particularly in rural areas depended on inflows of workers' remittances mostly from South Africa as a source of their incomes. Lately the migrant labour system is facing serious challenges and has been on a decline. In 2001, there were 406 000 migrant labourers and this number declined to about 27 947 workers in 2015²³. The rapidly falling migrant labour has affected remittance inflows, and hence cash income of the rural households thereby worsening their food insecurity and rural poverty. This is particularly because cash income

²¹ Bureau of Statistics, 2012.

²² Letete *et al.*, (2016), "the future of work discussion paper II", Maseru 100.

²³ *ibid.*

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coming through remittances were often used to supplement smallholder farm produce and guarantee food access and availability in rural areas.

From the preceding analysis, it can be concluded that the most food insecure households are characterized by:

- High reliance on farming with low earnings, herding, informal business or casual labour for most of their incomes.
- Households headed by women and children.
- High age dependency ratio.
- Fewer employment opportunities and few assets.

The above is also aggravated by the high prevalence of HIV in Lesotho.

2.2.2 Pillar 2: An end to Malnutrition and all its Forms

Lesotho is currently experiencing the triple burden of malnutrition--under and over nutrition and micronutrient deficiency across all age groups. Undernutrition characterized by wasting (a low weight for height), stunting (low height for age) and underweight (low weight for age) and low-birth weight remain critical challenges in the country. The 2014 LHDS show that although the prevalence of underweight children has marginally improved from 13.5 percent (2009) to 10.3 percent (2014), low birth weight remains steady at 9.4 percent. Therefore, the levels of child undernutrition are a continuing challenge for reduction of child hunger²⁴. With regards to wasting²⁵, three out of hundred (3 per cent) children from birth to five years old are wasted²⁶. However, this is an improvement relative to the 6 per cent and 5 per cent wasting attained in 2004 and 2009 respectively. It must however be noted that wasting could be a result of short-term dietary inadequacies due to seasonal food shortages, childhood illnesses, or the growth milestones. As it shall be outlined later, this could be corrected easily with dietary improvements.

²⁴ See also Cost of Hunger Study (2016).

²⁵ This is measurement of low body weight for height and assesses thinness or weight for stature.

²⁶ Lesotho Demographic Health Survey (2014).

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Table 4: Stunting amongst children under the age of five years and infant and young children feeding practices in Lesotho

District	Nutritional Indicators						
	Stunting (per cent)	Ever Breastfed (per cent)	Prelacteal (per cent)	Anaemia (per cent) < 11g/dl Hb	Iron rich foods intake within the last 24 hours	Vitamin A rich foods within the last 24 hours	Vitamin A supplements over past 6 months (per cent)
Mokhotlong	47.7	96.4	15.3	58.5	18.4	34.4	58.9
Botha-Bothe	40.3	93.6	10.4	59.2	35.5	66.5	66.3
Thaba-Tseka	40.0	98.0	13.1	53.3	33.3	65.4	60.5
Mohales'Hoek	38.1	95.2	10.5	56.1	26.5	51.8	60.3
Quthing	34.1	94.0	13.9	47.4	44.0	64.2	53.3
Qachas'Nek	32.5	96.1	7.2	47.3	16.8	39.2	53.6
Leribe	31.3	97.0	8.8	55.7	49.6	65.0	58.5
Maseru	29.9	92.2	15.9	48.5	47.4	64.4	60.8
Berea	27.4	97.6	13.0	40.9	44.6	61.8	63.0
Mafeteng	25.9	95.9	17.2	44.5	52.0	68.2	73.6
National Average	33.2	95.4	13.0	50.8	40.5	60.5	61.3

Source: 2014 LDHS.

While the national average of stunting declined from 39.2 percent (2009) to 33.2 percent (2014), it remains a serious health challenge given that this level still falls within the WHO global high prevalence category of 30 to 39 per cent. Stunting varies across districts with mountainous districts experiencing higher levels than lowlands districts as illustrated in **Table 4**. Furthermore, stunting in Lesotho varies by age and gender with 43.1 percent of children aged between 24 – 35 months stunted and boys (38.8 percent stunted) more stunted than girls (28.1 percent stunted)²⁷.

Likewise, in line with global trends, there is an alarming increase in the prevalence of overweight and obesity among all Basotho. For instance, the 2014 Lesotho Demographic Health Survey (LDHS) found that 7 percent of children under the age of five years were obese and 45 percent of women and 12 percent of men aged 15 to 49 years were obese. If not reversed, obesity has potential to increase the risk of many other serious diseases such as heart diseases, diabetes, stroke and osteoarthritis-all of which seem to be on the rise in the country.

The other challenge worsening nutrition outcomes in the country is the low intake of micronutrients such as Vitamins and Iron-folic acid. For instance, the DHS (2014) shows that there was a decrease in reported intakes of Vitamin A rich food sources using the 24 hours recall method in 2014 across districts except in Mafeteng and Botha-Bothe that increased Vitamin A rich food sources intake marginally at 1.4 per cent and 3.9 per cent respectively (**Figure 3**) This is the reversal of the gains made between 2004 and 2009, when the intake of foods rich in vitamin A increased amongst children aged 6 to 59 months countrywide. The problem of low vitamin A intake is severe in the mountainous districts (Qacha's Nek and Mokhotlong). In 2014 during the DHS survey, less than 50 per cent of the children had taken vitamin A within the 24hrs preceding the survey. Thus, generally low proportion of children are fed on vitamin rich foods.

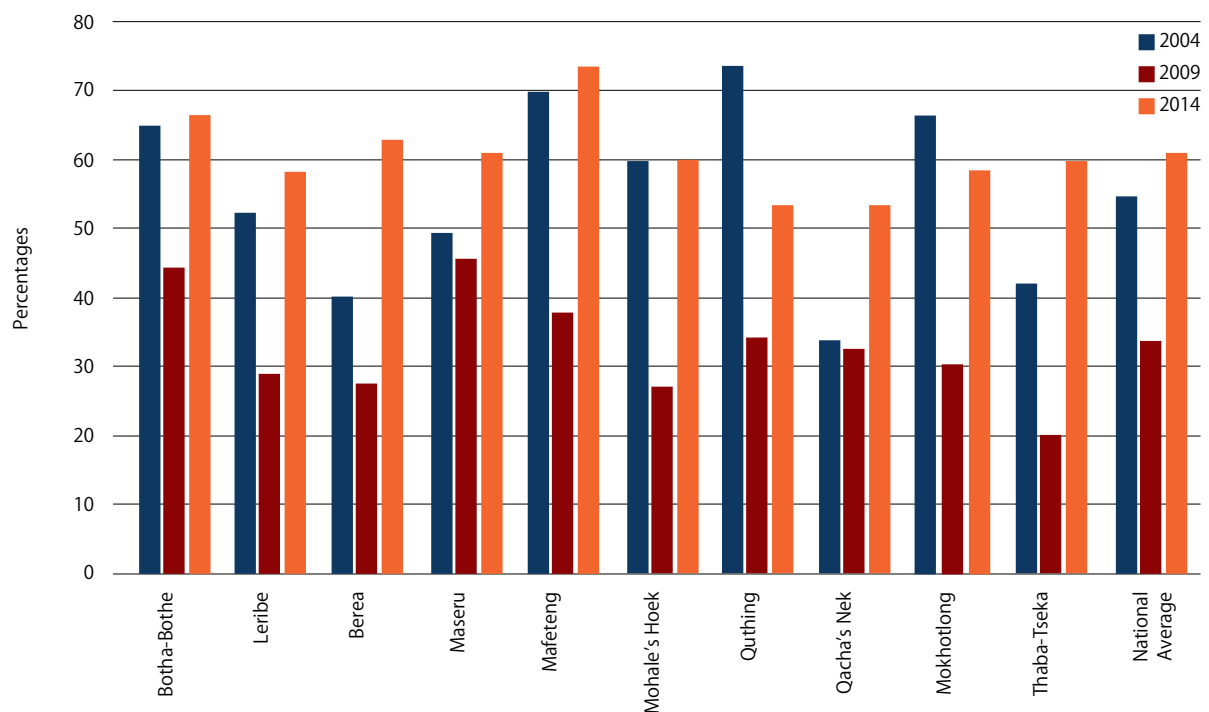
²⁷ LDHS, 2014.

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Conversely, LDHS (2014) shows that the proportion of children that received Vitamin A supplements declined from 54.6 per cent to 33.8 per cent between 2004 and 2009 before rising to 61.3 per cent in 2014 (Figure 4). This increased intake of Vitamin A supplements was driven by a six-months Vitamin A and de-worming intervention by the Ministry of Health under the Health Nutrition Programme targeted at children aged less than 5 years.

Figure 3 Vitamin A supplementation of children under the age of five years in Lesotho

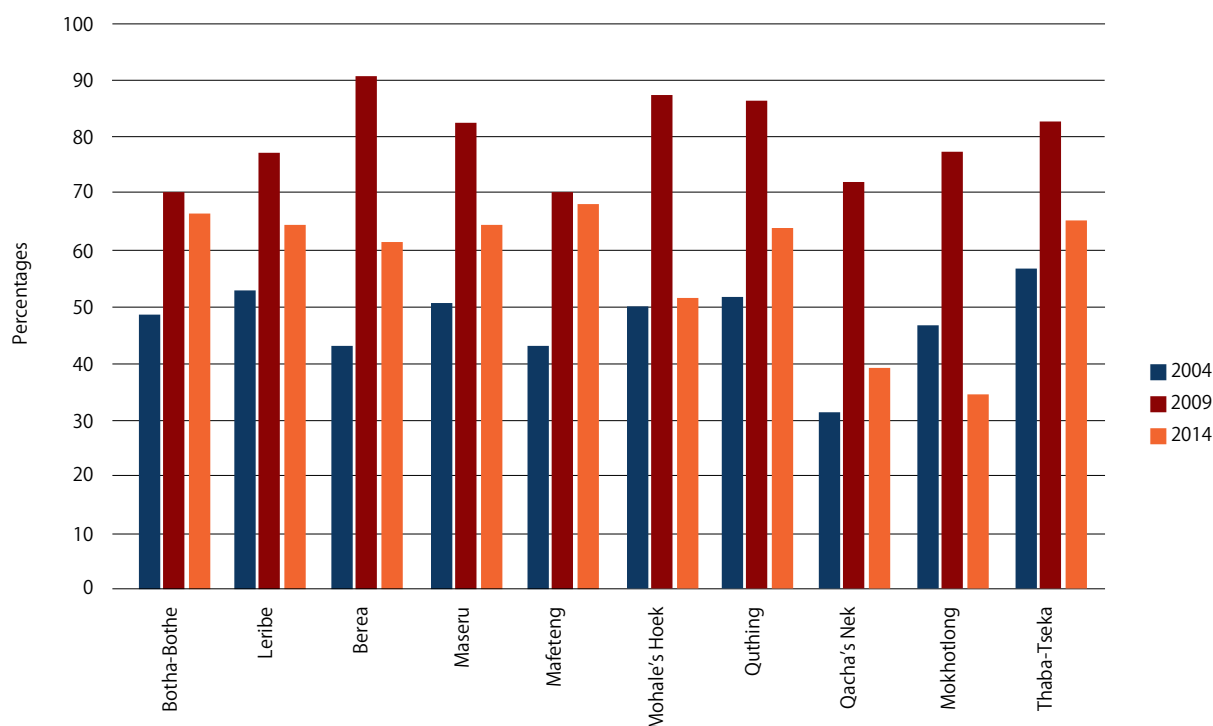


Source: LDHS 2014

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Figure 4 Proportion of children under the age of five years consuming Vitamin A rich foods in Lesotho



Source: LDHS 2014

However, the proportion of children consuming iron-rich food sources declined between 2014 and 2009 across districts except Mafeteng district which realised an increase from 39.8 per cent (2009) to 52 per cent (2014) as shown in Figure 6. Less than 30 per cent children in Mochale's Hoek, Mokhotlong and Thaba-Tseka were consuming iron rich food in 2014. The iron blood levels also showed a low level of haemoglobin amongst more than 50 per cent of the children in the last LDHS. The declining trends in consumption of vitamin A rich food sources for complimentary feeding is a cause for concern and needs immediate attention. According to the Lesotho Demographic Health Survey (LDHS), only 11 per cent of children aged 6-23 months received the recommended minimal acceptable diet (MAD), which clearly demonstrates a problem of inadequate consumption of both macro and micronutrient rich foods.

There is strong evidence²⁸ indicating that many children aged under-five years suffer from anaemia (iron deficiency) across districts (Figure 5), affecting 51 per cent of children, and is also high among women aged between 15 and 49 years at 27 per cent. Only three (3) districts (Berea, Quthing and Qacha's Nek) showed a decline in anaemia between 2009 and 2014. The problem of iron deficiency anaemia and general iodine deficiency are also common in adolescents and young adults. These challenges arise from childhood and adversely affect school performance though primary to secondary school level.

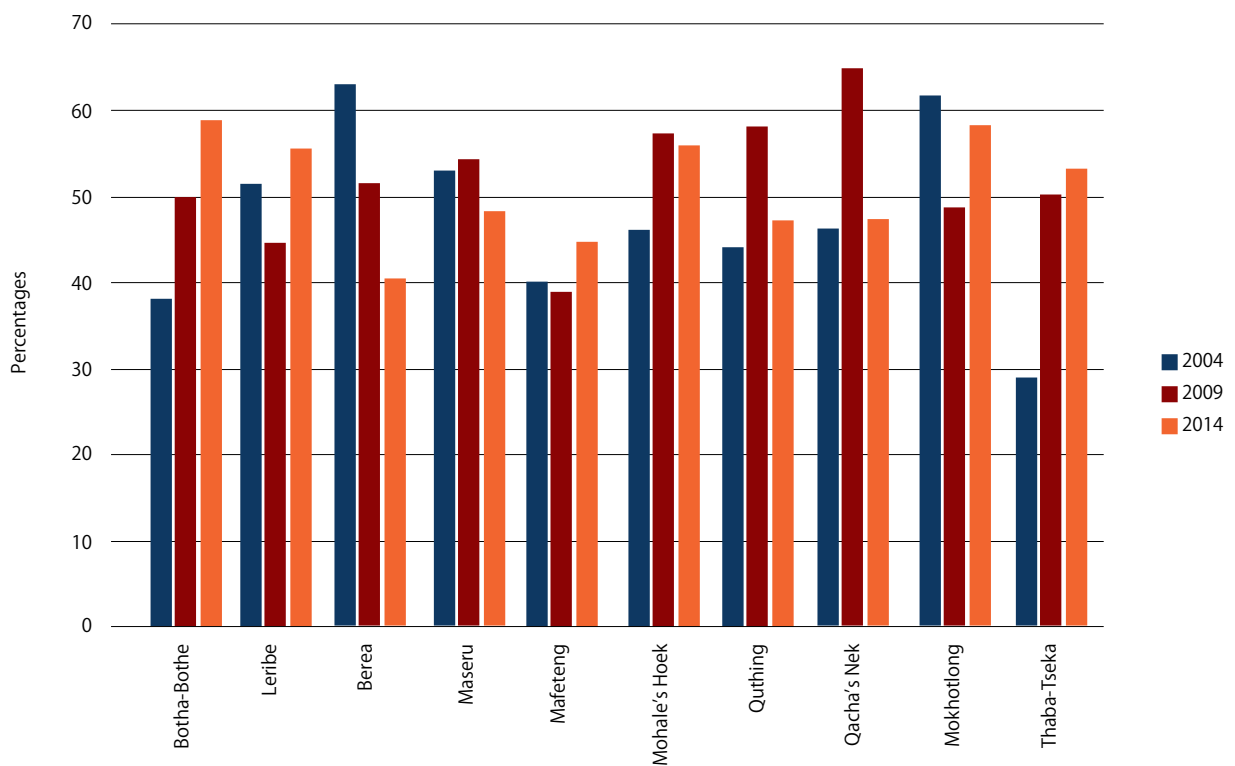
²⁸The LDHS reports and the GoL, Ministry of Health. 2015. National Health strategy for Adolescents and young people 2015 - 2022.

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There is a general understanding within the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) that the exclusion of food and nutrition in the curriculum could be the underlying problem. Hence, there are considerations in the Ministry of Education and Training for integrating food and nutrition in the school curriculum.

Figure 5 Rates of Anaemia (Hb <11g/dl) in children under the age of five years in Lesotho

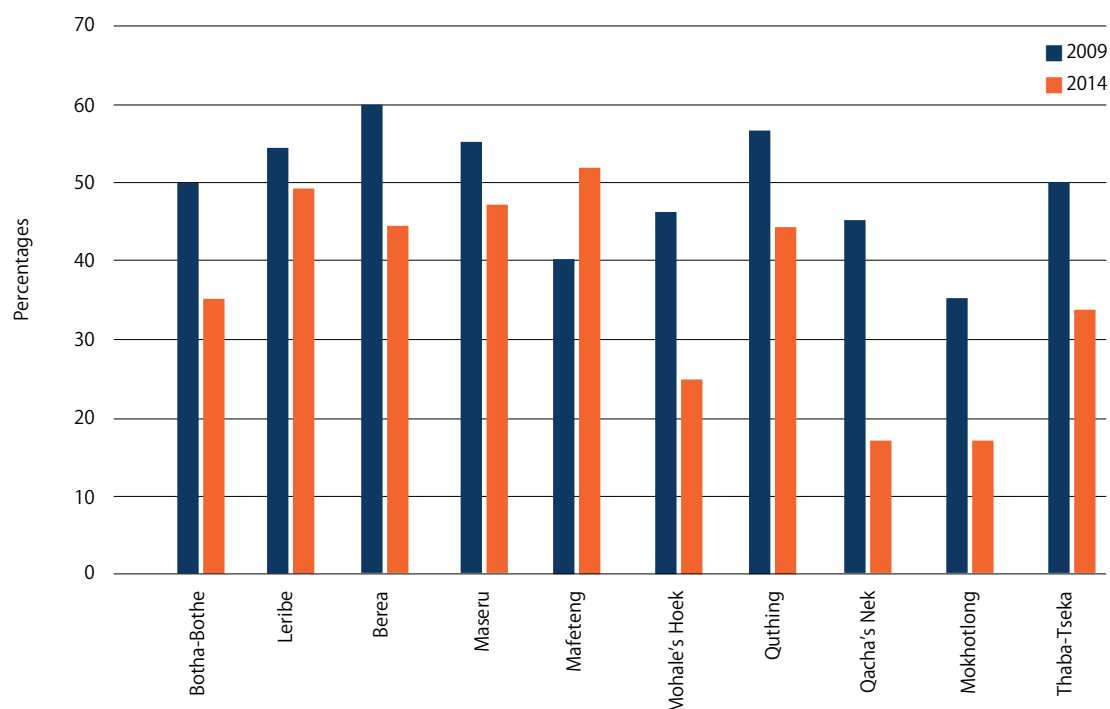


Source: LDHS 2014

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Figure 6 Proportion of children under the age of five years consuming Iron rich foods in Lesotho



Source: LDHS 2014

These challenges notwithstanding, there are positive results for infant and young child feeding where indicators have also improved over the past 10 years. For instance, the proportion of mothers practicing breastfeeding has remained high at 95.4 percent. Exclusive breastfeeding has increased almost two-fold from 36 (2004) to 67 percent (2014). The median duration of exclusive breastfeeding has also increased from 0.9 (2004) to 3.9 percent (2014). The use of prelacteal foods has been steadily declining countrywide from a national average of 45.2 (2004) to 30.4 (2009) and 13 percent (2014). However, the challenge remains for children whose mothers are participating in labour force and not able to have longer maternity leave, or/and those under the care of other siblings or the elderly/grandparents. Prudent exclusive breastfeeding and complementary feeding needs to be continuously encouraged, and this requires a more coherent coordinated, evidence based national nutrition programme, so that the country can be able to reach the 2025 and 2030 nutrition targets.

By 2015, Lesotho had made impressive advances in access to safe drinking water for its people, and the country ranked third among 24 African countries sampled in moving people from untreated surface water to higher levels of water services. At the time, approximately 77 per cent of the Lesotho's households had access to improved water sources (including 7.7 per cent who rely on protected wells or springs), and 72 per cent were less than 30 minutes from water

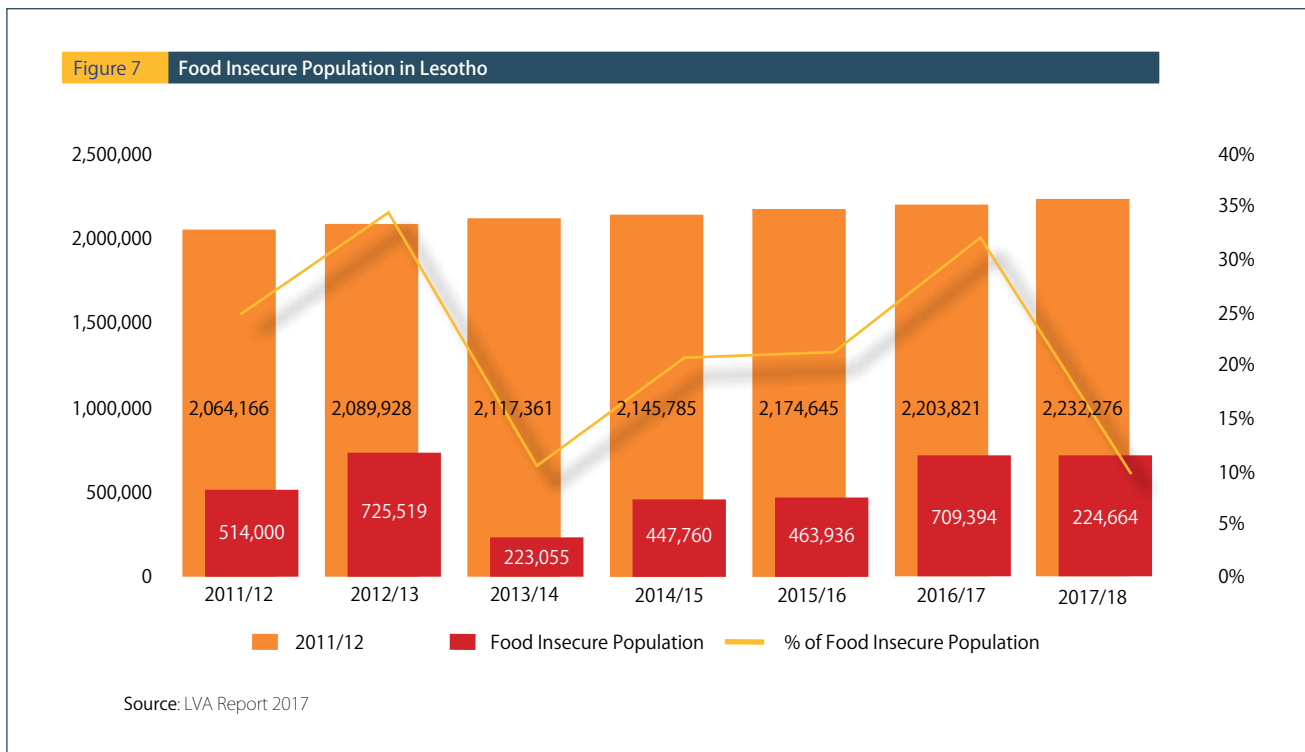
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sources²⁹. Sanitation remains the greatest challenge but it has improved significantly over the past three decades, with 25 per cent of the population having improved, non-shared facilities, 39 per cent having non-improved shared facilities and 36 per cent still without facilities. Poor access to sanitation has negative effects on health outcomes, especially among the poor.

2.2.3 Pillar 3: All Food Systems are Sustainable

Sustainable food systems deliver food and nutrition security for all in such a way that the economic, social and environmental bases generate food and nutrition security for future generations are not compromised³⁰. The effects of climate change will require sustainable and climate-compatible agriculture practices. Climate change scenarios predict warmer future climatic conditions over Lesotho, lower precipitation, particularly in the spring and summer seasons, higher precipitation in winter, and gradually increasing precipitation in autumn³¹. This is likely to have serious implications for agro-ecological conditions in the country as the growing season is pushed forward and perhaps shortened and will also result in heavier snowfall occurrences and strong devastating winds³².



²⁹ BoS (2015) and WB (2015), "Lesotho Systematic Country Diagnosis".

³⁰ LPE, 2014. Food losses and waste in the context of sustainable food systems. A report by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security.

³¹ Lesotho National Adaptation Programme of Action (NAPA) on climate change, Ministry of Natural Resources, LMS.

³² *ibid.*

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Like many countries in southern Africa, climate change is likely to result in greater frequencies of extreme events such as droughts. The impact of drought in combination with other factors has been contributing to the fluctuating numbers of food insecure population in Lesotho as reflected in **Figure 7**. For example, the impact of the 2015/16 El Niño resulted in devastating drought conditions with close to a million people being affected as shown in **Figure 7**. In 2016, the domestic cereal production dropped by 66 percent, increasing imports and external food aid needs, and sharply increasing food prices³³.

Flood disasters of 2010/11 in Lesotho were the worst since 1933 with total losses and damages estimated at M462.7 million – 3.2 per cent of Gross Domestic Product³⁴. Specifically, heaviest damages were sustained by roads (M80.3 million), livestock (M29.8 million), education (M28.3 million) and housing (M22.4 million) sectors. The worst impacts on production were sustained by crops (M103.6 million), road transport (M57.4 million), livestock (M29.8 million), and commerce (M20.5). The post-disaster recovery and reconstruction costs for Lesotho were estimated at M649.3 million

Another pressing sustainable system issue in Lesotho is arguably land degradation. Some suggest that land degradation is exacerbated by recurrent droughts, rapid population increase and pressure on land resources, poor land management practices and ineffective and inadequate land legislation/policy and tenure, leading to accelerated desertification³⁵. Elsewhere others have challenged such conventional arguments on the interactions between land-use, socio-economic alterations, biophysical factors and land degradation in southern Africa. For example, variations in soil type and rainfall were found to have a stronger effect on vegetation cover than human land-use³⁶ and congestion on rural-urban fringes resulted from competition between urban and rural land-use under the principle of land rents in a free market³⁷ and not the result of human use per se³⁸.

The Land Cover Atlas of Lesotho³⁹ aggregates agricultural land into five (5) land cover classes constituting 18.9 percent (578,039 ha) of the total land cover while rangelands account for 49.6 percent (1.52 million ha). The state (quality, health and size) of the different classes of agriculture land types are not characterized by size. The effects of soil erosion and land degradation have already reduced the productive capacity of Lesotho's croplands and rangelands⁴⁰. This will continue to constrain efforts to improve production efficiencies and total production in the face of climate change impacts⁴¹.

³³ Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment and Analysis Report, 2016.

³⁴ Lesotho Disaster Management Authority, Post Needs Disaster Assessment Report, 2011.

³⁵ Mbata, J. N. (1997). Land use practices in Lesotho: Implications for Sustainability in Agricultural Production. Paper presented at the southern African workshop on "Regional Land Cover Change, Sustainable Agriculture and their interactions with global change", 28–30 July in Maputo, Mozambique. Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, National University of Lesotho.

³⁶ Dahlberg, A. 2000. Vegetation diversity and change in relation to land-use, soil and rainfall – a case study from North-East District, Botswana. *Journal of Arid Environments*, 44(1), 19–40. Academic Press.

³⁷ Nkambwe, M. and Arnberg, W. 1996. Monitoring land use change in an African tribal village on the rural-urban fringe. *Applied Geography*, 16 (4), 305–317.

³⁸ Chakela, Q. K. 1981. Soil Erosion and Sedimentation in Lesotho. Uddevalla, Scandanavian Institution of African Sciences.

³⁹ FAO, 2017.

⁴⁰ Chakela, K. Q. and M. Stocking. 1988. An Improved Methodology for Erosion Hazard Mapping Part II: Application for Lesotho. *Physical Geography* 70 (3): 181 - 189.

⁴¹ Chakela, Q. K. 1981. Soil Erosion and Sedimentation in Lesotho. Uddevalla, Scandanavian Institution of African Sciences.

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In subsequent studies, Makara (2013)⁴² modelled the relationship between annual average flow and sediment loads for three main catchments of Lesotho from 1980-2012. The recorded sediment loads in three major catchments were as follows: Mohokare 86 percent (4, 285.36 tons ha⁻¹ yr⁻¹), Makhaleng 11 percent (13, 494.22 tons ha⁻¹ yr⁻¹) and Senqu three (3) percent (107, 255.56 tons ha⁻¹ yr⁻¹) of the total average sediment loads. The recorded sediment load yield per catchment in the same period were: 1.31, 2.93, 10.04 million tons yr⁻¹ over a 30-year period. Chakela (1981) reported soil loss of 23-million-ton ha⁻¹ yr⁻¹ whereas Schmitz and Rooyani, (1987) reported that 40 million ton per hectare is being lost per year. In 2009 the maximum soil loss predicted by the RUSLE model is over 50 million tons per hectare per year with most erosion recorded in the mountain areas and the southern lowlands districts (Makara, 2013). According to Makara (2013), the most critical areas where erosion is still active falls within north-eastern highland and parts of Mohokare catchment in the northern lowlands.

The cumulative effect of landcover losses from degradation and soil erosion ultimately reduces the country's capacity to achieve zero hunger. This is because, severe land degradation, including excessive soil erosion caused by water run-off, inappropriate agronomic practices and overgrazing is one the main contributors to declining food security and nutrition in Lesotho⁴³. As already noted, the situation is compounded by the impacts of climate change.

2.2.4 Pillar 4: Double Small-Scale Productivity and Income

Lesotho continues to be a net importer of food to meet the needs of its people⁴⁴. The country has had food deficit since the early 1960s and this situation has worsened in recent years. In good harvest years, Lesotho is only able to meet roughly 30 per cent (110,000 tonnes) of its annual cereal requirements (approximately 360,000 tonnes). Domestic food production has concentrated on three main cereal crops: maize, wheat and sorghum and their productivity has been on a decline. For instance, between 2012 and 2015/16, production declined drastically because of the El Niño drought: maize (89 per cent), sorghum (93 per cent) and wheat (96 per cent) thereby raising prices of staple food above the rate of general inflation.

Agriculture is still one of the most important sectors addressing livelihood and poverty issues in Lesotho. In rural areas agriculture remains predominantly subsistence farming in nature (90 per cent of farmers are subsistence growers while women are maize primary producers and net buyers)⁴⁵. More than 70 per cent of the population in rural Lesotho is engaged in agriculture and the performance of the sector plays an important role in their wellbeing. However, arable land suitable for agriculture is below 10 per cent (270,000 hectares) of total land area (3 million hectares), 25,000 hectares of which are irrigable⁴⁶. There are more competing labour demands as well as gender-based limitations in roles for women compared to men, all of which contribute to reduced production and increased food loss. The situation has been further exacerbated by social-cultural norms, which have classified women as minors.

⁴² Makara M. 2013. Msc.Thesis: Assessment of spatial and temporal loss in and out of Lesotho using RUSLE model and GIS. University of Zimbabwe.

⁴³ FAO: Lesotho Land Cover, <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i5563e.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee (2016).

⁴⁵ FAO.2016. Lesotho Country Gender Assessment for Agriculture and Rural Sector.

⁴⁶ United Nations Lesotho.2017. Lesotho Country Analysis,working document, final draft. http://ls.one.un.org/content/dam/unct/lesotho/docs/Ourwork/Lesotho%20CCA_Final%20Draft_22%20September%202017.pdf



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Maize dominates local cereal cultivation with 70-80 per cent of total national cereal production. The bulk of home-grown maize is cultivated in the lowlands whereas the mountain areas produce most of the country's wheat crop. Leribe, Maseru, Mokhotlong and Berea are the four leading districts in maize production and jointly they provide 75 per cent of the country's maize production⁴⁷ (see **Table 5**).

Table 5: Maize production by Districts in Lesotho, 2010/11-2016/17 (Figures in metric tonnes)

District	Actuals						Forecasts
	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17
Botha-Bothe	3,670	3,884	3,180	2,673	4,505	1,284	9,782
Leribe	14,488	7,598	13,947	14,479	22,211	3,748	45,461
Berea	6,686	5,037	13,817	15,608	9,454	528	8,799
Maseru	10,232	7,730	15,671	15,171	19,504	3,710	52,794
Mafeteng	6,284	1,850	10,069	10,200	7,763	649	23,948
Mohale's Hoek	5,791	2,297	3,529	11,175	4,766	1,551	15,062
Quthing	5,088	1,958	2,813	3,474	1,734	609	4,478
Qacha's Nek	2,775	760	1,696	951	528	1,191	7,369
Mokhotlong	11,213	7,278	13,493	10,537	4,734	3,742	11,289
Thaba-Tseka	6,963	4,078	8,089	6,361	3,048	2,170	21,160
National	73,390	42,471	86,304	90,628	78,246	19,181	200,143

Source: LVAC Market Assessment, 2016 and BoS Crop Production Statistics, 2017.

The low levels of maize production and yields (on average 0.5 MT/hectare) are primarily due to Lesotho's high cereal production costs and other factors such as climate change and land degradation. The degradation problem is a result of unsustainable land management practices and over-exploitation of the country's ecosystems. All these have worsened food insecurity situation in the country.

The three major cereal crops (maize, sorghum, wheat) are grown across all agro-ecological zones in Lesotho. The climatology and environmental factors have over time induced evolution of genetic diversity due to natural selection, aided by farmer preference of particular traits. The use of hybrid varieties has already eroded some of the genetic diversity especially in the lowlands despite a strong initiative to maintain open pollinated varieties (OPVs) with climate proof qualities of early maturity especially in the high lands. These need to be collected, characterized and undergo population improvement programs to retain more genetic diversity. The National Seed Policy was approved in 2017 but there is no Seed Law to regulate activities in the seed sector hence the urgent need to enact a Seed Act with an official Seed Certification Scheme.

⁴⁷ FAO/WFP. 2007. Crop and food supply assessment mission. <http://www.fao.org/docrep/010/ah865e/ah865e00.htm>.

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Aggregate analysis of key commodity groups, shows that agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (AFF) as a share of total GDP has declined from 12 percent in the 1990s to around seven (7) percent in 2017⁴⁸ (see **Table 6**). The contribution of crops to the total AFF output has declined from 39 to around 25 percent since 1990 even though the majority (70 per cent) of people is still engaged in crop production⁴⁹ for their livelihoods and coping strategy in the face of shocks and as a means for income generation. Thus, without serious strategic long-term interventions, it is highly probable that crop production will completely cease on large tracks of agricultural land and magnify food and nutrition vulnerability of rural households. Cultivated land is also diminishing year-after-year as more and more members of society run out of livestock resources (oxen) and general shortage of and/or increasing costs of primary tillage operation for production. Poor households are hard hit due to rampant and increasing livestock theft in rural areas, which leaves them more vulnerable to food insecurity.

Table 6: Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (AFF), GDP, 5 -Year Averages, 1995 – 2014

Industry	1995-99	2000-04	2005-09	2010-14
Agriculture, forestry and fishing (per cent of total GDP)	775 (12)	785 (10)	683 (8)	808 (7)
Growing of crops; horticulture (per cent of AFF GDP)	303 (39)	285 (36)	176 (26)	207(26)
Farming of animals	352 (45)	390 (50)	398 (58)	423 (52)
Agricultural service activities (per cent of AFF GDP)	68 (9)	54 (7)	41 (6)	44 (5)
Forestry (per cent of AFF GDP)	52 (7)	55 (7)	68(10)	133 (16)
GDP at purchasers' prices	6,500	7,544	8,982	11,274

Source: Bureau of Statistics, Lesotho 2014 & LCA, 2017.

The declining shares of AFF in the national economy represent a direct challenge for the achievement of zero hunger. Although Lesotho's suitable land for agriculture is estimated below 10 per cent (270 000 hectares) of total area of 3 million hectares of which 25, 000 are irrigable, the country utilizes only half of this arable land. For instance, between 2010/11 and 2011/12, an increase of 98.1 percent was observed on land that lied fallow (see **Table 7**). However, no clear trend can be discerned on year-to-year fallow land. In some years perhaps due to change in weather conditions areas that lie fallow decreased (i.e. from 2011/2012 to 2012/2013, it decreased by 46.3 percent and further decreased by 7.2 percent from 2012/2013 to 2013/2014). In 2014/2015, it decreased by 31.8 percent. Yet in 2015/16 a 406.7 percent increase was observed in areas that lied fallow. It has been argued that if Lesotho could utilize all arable land; it could produce surplus in cereal, and halt cereal imports from South Africa.

⁴⁸ UNDP, 2017.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

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Table 7: Area Fallow (ha) by District, 2011/2012-2015/2016 Agricultural year

District	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016
Botha-Bothe	2,588	1,208	602	1,121	5,240
Leribe	27,682	16,671	9,724	6,038	40,619
Berea	19,063	12,052	11,352	8,060	31,632
Maseru	20,172	7,564	8,766	7,924	44,926
Mafeteng	29,444	19,486	18,060	12,638	56,878
Mohale's Hoek	19,793	7,191	8,154	4,321	34,815
Quthing	8,128	3,927	2,883	1,484	19,145
Qacha's Nek	4,452	1,921	1,947	1,627	6,097
Mokhotlong	3,634	2,800	3,614	1,511	4,345
Thaba-Tseka	2,187	813	3,229	1,881	2,643
Total	137,143	73,632	68,329	46,605	246,340

Source: -.

2.2.5 Pillar 5: Adapt All Food Systems to Eliminate Loss or Waste of Food

This pillar focuses on minimizing food losses during production, storage and transport, and waste of food by retailers and consumers; empowering consumer choice; commitments by producers, retailers and consumers within all nations. Food losses refer to the decrease in edible food mass throughout the part of the supply chain that specifically leads to edible food for human consumption. Food losses take place at production, postharvest and processing stages in the food supply chain. Food losses occurring at the end of the food chain (retail and final consumption) are rather called “food waste”, which relates to retailers’ and consumers’ behaviour⁵⁰. Food losses and wastes have an impact on food security for poor people, on food quality and safety, on economic development and on the environment.

Roughly one-third of the edible parts of food produced for human consumption, gets lost or wasted globally, which is about 1.3 billion ton per year⁵¹. Cereal losses are estimated at 19–32 percent, root and tuber losses at 33–60 percent, and fruit and vegetable losses at 37–55 percent⁵². In Sub-Saharan Africa, the largest per capita food losses and waste occur at production to retailing stages as reflected in Figure 8. A closer look at the cereals, shows that the greatest food losses occur at post-harvest and processing levels. In contrast, food wasted at consumer level is minimal in Sub-Saharan countries. The main causes of food losses and waste in developing countries have been found to be due to: poor storage facilities and lack of infrastructure; premature harvesting; lack of processing facilities and inadequate marketing facilities.

⁵⁰ Parfitt et al., 2010.

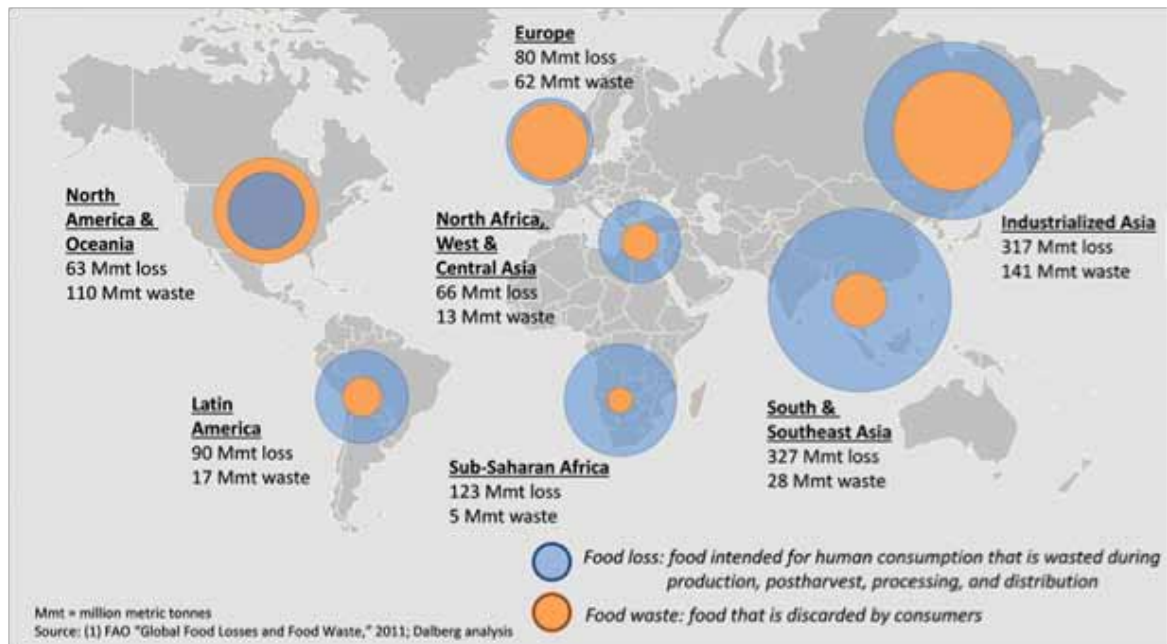
⁵¹ FAO, 2011: Global Food Losses and Food Waste- Extent, Causes and Prevention.

⁵² ibid.

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Figure 8 Extent of Food Losses and Waste



Source: FAO, 2011: Global Food Losses and Food Waste- Extent, Causes and Prevention (adapted from an analysis by Dalberg)

There is generally a lack of data on the magnitude of food loss and waste in southern Africa and Lesotho is no exception, making it difficult to address the problem. The current glimpse of the problem is that provided by the African Postharvest Information System (APHIS)⁵³, which is a transnational network of cereal grain experts. In Lesotho, the network is represented by the Disaster Management Authority. The APHLIS website displays postharvest loss estimates (PHLs) for the cereal crops of Sub-Saharan Africa, for individual countries and for their provinces using a PHL calculator using data collected from the Ministries of Agriculture.

As part of this network, Lesotho PHLs for maize have been estimated per province from 2004 to 2015 as reflected in **Table 8**. The figures quoted are estimates of cumulative weight loss from production incurred during harvesting, drying, handling operations, farm storage, transport and market storage. The loss values for each link in the postharvest chain are taken from the scientific literature and are modified by several seasonal factors that vary from year to year and are submitted by the APHLIS network. As can be seen for **Table 8**, PHLs for maize have been fluctuating since 2004 across and within provinces. While the network is good source of information, it fails to provide the causes and factors influencing the extent of PHLs in the countries.

⁵³ http://archive.aphlis.net/?form=phl_network.

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Table 8: Estimated Postharvest Losses for Maize (tonnes) 2004-2015

District	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Berea	1643	3543	247	1900	1303	1098	3565	1033	60	2405	1000	490
Butha-Buthe	849	1078	570	476	477	319	1073	598	282	491	392	516
Leribe	3857	1468	6700	3283	2312	1695	3792	2515	89	2425	3272	677
Mafeteng	1808	1083	353	948	960	1021	1348	971	133	1753	1774	464
Maseru	2509	1786	5595	2184	1526	1568	4165	1781	723	2728	2619	2589
Mohale's Hoek	1111	1188	780	1467	1301	790	1504	895	106	545	1944	628
Mokhotlong	668	823	192	439	461	1022	3014	1952	663	2349	1833	1266
Quacha's Nek	45	270	16	95	243	404	1355	429	7	262	146	61
Quthing	544	772	78	377	240	361	610	786	178	435	295	104
Thaba Tseka	1064	1695	487	1464	1110	910	1667	1076	355	1408	981	699

Source: African Postharvest Information System (APHIS), http://archive.aphis.net/?form=phl_network.

As part of this network, Lesotho PHLs for maize have been estimated per district from 2004 to 2015 (see Table 8 above). The figures quoted are estimates of cumulative weight loss from production incurred during harvesting, drying, handling operations, farm storage, transport and market storage. The loss values for each link in the postharvest chain are taken from the scientific literature and are modified by several seasonal factors that vary from year to year and are submitted by the APHLIS network. As can be seen for Table 8, PHLs for maize have been fluctuating since 2004 across and within districts. While the network is good source of information, it fails to provide the causes and factors influencing the extent of PHLs in the country.

3 CHAPTER 3: RESPONSES

3.1 Introduction

THIS SECTION OF THE REPORT takes stock of the policies, programmes and other interventions implemented to address the food and nutrition insecurity in the country. The interventions are analyzed along the five zero hunger pillars to ascertain the level at which they have been effective in addressing the problems identified in the situational analysis. The chapter also highlights the gaps and challenges in responses and aims at identifying opportunities for strengthening these interventions to enable the Lesotho government to achieve zero hunger for its population.

As already stated, Lesotho's 2012-2017 NSDP and vision 2020 are the overarching strategic policy frameworks that guide implementation of development programmes in the country. These strategic policy documents recognize Food and Nutrition as the overriding goal for the Government. Government commitment has also been expressed in various policy instruments that include the Food Security Policy (2005), the National Disaster Risk Reduction Policy (2011) and the recent Lesotho Food and Nutrition Policy (2017).

3.2 Pillar 1: Access to Adequate Food and Healthy Diets All Year Round

As a strategy to combat food and nutrition insecurity for the vulnerable members of society GoL with assistance from development partners instituted⁵⁴ many social protection programmes. Social protection describes all initiatives that: (1) provide income (cash) or consumption (food) transfers to the poor; protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks; (3) enhance the social status and rights of the excluded and marginalised⁵⁵. Spending on social protection grew remarkably over years since 2005. In 2016, the country was spending 9.6 percent of GDP on transfer programmes, well above the 1-2 per cent allocated by most developing countries⁵⁶. By 2015, the number of beneficiaries under social protection were estimated at more 163 000 (7.5 of total population) with 83 000 supported under an old age programme and 80 000 supported under Child Grant programme.

Despite many achievements under social protection and the availability of many programmes, a large segment of society remains uncovered. **Table 9** shows social protection coverage for 2013/14 and 2016/2017 financial year. Although coverage of the Old Age Pension has increased from 83 805 in 2013/14 to 85 245 in 2016/2017, this coverage has declined relative to the population size that has increased to 2,204 million from 1,904 million. Similarly, other social protection programmes have also declined relative to population size except the public assistance programme that has increased by less than one percent (0.07 per cent).

⁵⁴ Currently the whole budget for social protection is financed by Government resources.

⁵⁵ Devereux and Sebates-Wheeler, 2004.

⁵⁶ Benjamin D., Handa S., Rossi N.W., et al., (2016), "From Evidence to Action: the Story of Cash Transfers and Impact Evaluation in Sub-Saharan Africa".

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Table 9: Social Protection Programmes, and beneficiaries in 2013 and 2016

Programme	2013 Coverage			2016 Coverage		
	Approx. Beneficiary	Per cent of population	Per cent of the very poor	Approx. Beneficiary	Per cent of population	Per cent of the very poor
Old Age Pension	83, 805	4.4	4.4	85 245	3.87	8.02
School Feeding Programme	389, 000	20.5	22.5	450,000	20.4	42.34
Child Grant Programme	27, 200	1.5	3.9	80,043	3.63	7.5
Public Assistance	9,500	0.5	1.3	12,741	0.57	1.19
OVCs Bursary	20,000	1.1	1.5	21,000	0.95	1.98
Agriculture Inputs Fairs	21, 600	1.1	0.8			
National Fertilizer and Input Subsidy	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a	n.a
ECCD Feeding	30, 000	1.6	1.6	50, 000	2.27	
Tertiary Bursary Scheme	16, 200	1	< 0.1			
Forestry Public Works	58, 000-115,000	3-6	2-4			

Source: World Bank, 2013 and MoF, MoAFS and MoET (2016).

The Lesotho Child Grants Programme (CGP) is a non-conditional cash transfer programme, providing support to very poor and vulnerable households caring for children. Launched as a pilot in 2009, it now covers over 26, 000 beneficiaries but expected to cover all the ten districts. It is implemented by the Ministry of Social Development with financial assistance from the European Union (EU) and technical support from UNICEF. The targeting process feeds into the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) database. The ultimate objective of the Government is to have a common single registry for identification of all social assistance programmes beneficiaries. The recent impact evaluation of CGP showed that beneficiaries spend about sixty percent of the transfer on food, and the rest on school needs of children.

Targeting in the initial phase of CGP, used community based targeting that was confirmed by the application of the Proxi Means Testing formula (PMT), and only those who are confirmed ultra-poor by both community targeting and the PMT formula were selected. The problem with this approach was the high exclusion and inclusion errors, especially because the PMT formula was based on old data in NISSA which was static and has not been updated. This only applied in the pilot phase and has since been corrected. The current targeting is community based and the PMT is only used to exclude the non-poor.

The expansion of NISSA is expected to cover all community councils (about 350,000 households by end of 2018/19 financial year. Please note that this excludes the urban councils.

Similarly, the public assistance (PA) programme operated by the MoSD provides cash or in-kind to extremely destitute people. The PA is largely discretionary and benefits both destitute households and individuals. In its current form, this programme is subject to political abuse and there is a need to have clear guidelines on how it should be administered and controlled. The MoSD is currently working on the reforms of PA to be a provision for household shocks, as a temporary intervention, while beneficiaries are being assessed for long-term social assistance support.

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In 2014, the GoL with technical support from WFP formulated the National School Feeding Policy (NSFP) which was later approved by the Cabinet of the GoL in July 2015. The NSFP sets the framework for implementation of the national school feeding programme; including both Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) component and the primary schools. The School Feeding Programme (SFP) is fully supported financially and operationally by the GoL and is providing school meals to learners from 1,425 public primary schools across the country, out of which, WFP assists 920 public primary schools providing each school child with two meals per day; a mid-morning snack and a lunchtime meal. School meals for an additional 505 schools are provided for by both National Management Agents - NMAs (private sector companies engaged to procure food, distribute to schools and engage cooks to prepare the food) and Caterers (members of the community that selected to buy, prepare and serve lunch for learners in schools). Although the SFP is managed and administered by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), the Food Management Unit (FMU) under the Office of the Prime Minister is also responsible for the transportation, storage and delivery of food commodities to schools. Anecdotal evidence suggests that school feeding has had positive impact on enrolment, stabilised attendance, increased concentration and reduced dropout levels. This is corroborated by a few WFP commissioned school feeding evaluations, reviews and surveys.

Starting in January 2017, the MoET piloted the implementation of the school feeding programme by the NMA – a private sector company that is engaged to buy food; from local producers and processors and subsequently distribute the commodities to schools. As already stated, while the caterers, NMA and WFP assist the MoET in implementing the school feeding programme, the oversight and coordination roles remain with the MoET. Furthermore, monitoring of the programme to ensure timely food deliveries to schools needs to be intensified by the MoET. The National School Feeding Policy (NSFP) advocates for Home Grown School Feeding (HGSF) where food commodities for the programme are sourced within the schools' localities. This is aligned to the declaration of the African Union Summit in 2016 that called on member states to adopt HGSF as a strategy to enhance access and retention of children in schools and also promoting the generation of income and enterprising in local communities through linking it to Agriculture. As a step to achieving this HGSF initiative, there are efforts to link smallholder farmers to schools thus creating markets for their produce—the product of which would be increased incomes for farming households and increased agricultural productivity. However, this component remains weak due to lack of capacity for monitoring and evaluation systems. In the long-term, the HGSF will provide a new livelihood opportunity for poor rural households by improving food and income security through local food procurement.

To promote children's access to education, healthcare and reduce hunger or poverty, the GoL has a long-standing bursary scheme established in 1978. The support is treated as a loan and covers fees and living expenses for students who attend universities and other tertiary education institutions. Although in theory a loan scheme, there is almost no repayment, so it is effectively a pure transfer program. It has been estimated that only 1 percent of the scheme's benefits go to the extreme poor. This programme is not targeted at the poor and even those that can afford to pay for their education have access to the programme.

The Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation is implementing the conditional public works programme locally called *Fato Fato* using a cash transfer modality, providing safety net support to vulnerable communities nationwide. The

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objective of the project is to poverty alleviation as well as rehabilitation of degraded lands using the Integrated Catchment Watershed Management Approach. However, the programme is facing challenges related to technical design and also the targeting of beneficiaries which has resulted in increased inclusion and exclusion errors in targeting. WFP is providing technical support in the redesigning of this programme to improve efficiency, effectiveness and equity.

The National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA), which was initially designed as a targeting tool for the CGP, is being progressively expanded and its quality enhanced for it to become a single registry for all social assistance (and social security) programmes. There are also plans to link it directly to Lesotho's new national identity biometrics system which is being rolled out by the Ministry of Home Affairs. The country is promoting the use of NISSA to promote better targeting that ensure effectiveness, efficiency, equity and harmonization or avoiding duplication or inclusion and exclusion across social protection programmes.

In terms of institutional and implementation arrangements, the social protection sector in Lesotho is well-resourced, but fragmented, poorly organised and managed. It is wide-ranging in scope, funded from numerous sources and spread across many ministries. This situation presents opportunities and challenges to government - opportunities in terms of resource availability from different partners, but challenges relating to government capacity to coordinate these partners towards one goal of effective and responsive sector. For this reason, international organisations such as European Union and the World Bank are currently supporting the GoL in systems strengthening of social protection to be more efficient and equitable. This includes coordination mechanisms and leadership at different governance levels.

The GoL has also implemented various economic instruments to improve food access. Through tax system, the GoL has promoted food access of most of the population. The country amended its tax system in 2001 and introduced Valued Added Tax (VAT) by enactment of VAT Act No.9 of 2001 (as amended) and the 2003 Amendment Act No.6. These amendments provided for exemptions and zero rate on all basic consumption goods and staple foods such as maize grain, maize meal, bread, beans, sorghum meal, unmalted sorghum, milk, peas and lentils.

Trade and trade remedies can contribute to ensuring food access through regulation of fair trade across and within the borders of Lesotho. Through the country's membership in South African Customs Union (SACU), it cannot make any unilateral decision regarding its external tariff structure nor can it impose certain customs taxes without prior consultation of other member states in the block. In 1997, the GoL liberalized its food trade policy which applied to most products imported from RSA except vegetables, milk, meat and eggs where permits are still being used to regulate the quantity of imports into the country and to protect local producers in times of production excess. This food marketing deregulation led to increased food imports thereby lowering consumer prices. Since food imports into Lesotho are duty free, this has resulted in an increased physical availability of maize on Lesotho's domestic market. The constraining factor to sustainable food access has been the lack of income to purchase food imported from RSA especially among poor households in the country.

Lesotho has also pegged its currency (Loti) at par to that of South Africa (Rand), which is also an official legal tender in the country, through the Common Monetary Area (CMA) Agreement of 1986. As such inflation in Lesotho is managed to a

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large extent by the South Africa monetary policy which has been very accommodative in recent years thereby protecting the purchasing power of Lesotho citizens. Food inflation in the country has averaged 5.5 per cent over the past five years owing to prudent South African monetary policy although there has been pressures on food prices recently because of drought conditions that affected not only Lesotho but South Africa as well, and the depreciating South Africa currency against the US dollar.

3.3 Pillar 2: Ending malnutrition and all its forms

Global evidence shows that reductions in stunting and other forms of malnutrition can be achieved through proven nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive interventions within the context of a conducive enabling environment. Nutrition-specific interventions are actions that address the immediate determinants of nutrition status in terms of inadequate diet and disease burden. These interventions have a direct impact on the prevention and treatment of undernutrition, during the 1,000 days covering pregnancy and the child's first two years⁵⁷.

Nutrition-sensitive interventions incorporate explicit nutritional goals and actions and address the underlying causes of undernutrition in terms of health access, food security, maternal and child care practices, water and sanitation⁵⁸. These interventions draw on complementary sectors such as agriculture, health, social protection, early child development, education, water and sanitation services⁵⁹. Enabling environment initiatives to address the basic determinants of nutrition status such as poverty, governance, income, and equity. These take the form of laws, regulations, policies, investments in economic growth, and improvements in governance capacity⁶⁰.

The next section provides an analysis of the various types of nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive interventions as well as those that improve the enabling environment in Lesotho. Focusing on the progress in their implementation, the analysis also identifies existing gaps or challenges in the implementation of these interventions. **Table 10** reflects the GoL's key nutrition priorities that are in place to reverse poor nutrition outcomes.

⁵⁷ UNICEF (2013) on "Improving child nutrition- the achievable imperative for global progress.

⁵⁸ Haddad *et al.*, 2015: The Global Nutrition Report 2014: Actions and Accountability to Accelerate the World's progress on Nutrition, The Journal of Nutrition-Issues and Opinions, American Society for Nutrition (ASN)..

⁵⁹ Ruel, M., H. Alderman, and Maternal and Child Nutrition Study Group. (2013). "Nutrition-sensitive Interventions and Programmes: How can They Help to Accelerate Progress in Improving Maternal and Child Nutrition?" Lancet 382(9891): 536-551.

⁶⁰ Haddad *et al.*, 2015: The Global Nutrition Report 2014: Actions and Accountability to Accelerate the World's progress on Nutrition, The Journal of Nutrition-Issues and Opinions, American Society for Nutrition (ASN).

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Table 10: Nutrition Priority Areas in Lesotho

Nutrition Intervention	Lead Agency/Ministry
Nutrition Specific Interventions	
Promotion of optimal Maternal, Infant and Young Child Feeding	MoH
Feeding programmes (Moderate acute and chronic malnutrition)	MoH
Micronutrients supplementation / deworming	MoH
Control of non-communicable nutrition related diseases	MoH
Nutrition support for TB and HIV and AIDS care and treatment programmes.	MoH
Nutrition Sensitive Programming	
Staple food fortification	MTI
Enactment of food standards	MTI
Climate Change Sensitive Agriculture and Food Security Technologies	MAFS
Mother and Child Health (incl. HIV)	MoH
Water and Sanitation	MoW
Food and Nutrition School curriculum	MoET
Early Childhood Development and School Feeding programme	MoET
Social Protection programmes, targeted at nutritionally vulnerable groups	MoSD
Supportive Environment for Nutrition Programme implementation	
Budget and Coordination Framework	FNCO
Training and Capacity Building on Nutrition	FNCO
Enactment and monitoring of the maternity leave for public and private sector	MoL&E
Enactment of the Code for marketing Breastmilk Substitutes	MTI
Nutrition Information Systems and Action Oriented Research	FNCO
Cross-Sectoral Nutrition Action Plan Monitoring Framework	FNCO
Source: Food and Nutrition policy (2017) and the Cross-Sectoral Nutrition Action Plan (CSNAP) April-May 2014.	

The Nutrition sensitive interventions targeted at maternal and child health outcomes; school feeding interventions and other Disaster Management Interventions targeted at Vulnerable groups affected by natural hazards (disasters) are other priority areas for Lesotho. In all the districts the MoH has revitalised the waiting mother's homes where pregnant women are accommodated and provided with nutritious meals while awaiting delivery; provision of Antenatal Care (ANC) at all health facilities with mother baby packs, which contain micronutrient supplements (Ferrous sulphate, Folic acid and Vitamin A); Infant and young child feeding curriculum and guidelines are available in all the health facilities to guide child feeding and care practices. Some of the hospitals are implementing components of the ten steps to successful breastfeeding initiative. It has not been feasible to declare any of the hospitals "Baby Friendly" as the requirements and process to achieve the criterion are tedious and demanding. However, some of the health facilities have systemic and operational challenges including reliable electricity and water and therefore do not efficiently provide the essential services including delivery of babies.

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The Positive Deviance Initiative⁶¹, a behavioral change nutrition programme targeting child bearing women, grandmothers and men to change their behaviour and attitudes towards nutrition and health activities was implemented by key nutrition ministries, NGOs and UN agencies. This initiative was initially implemented in districts that were experiencing a relatively high prevalence of chronic malnutrition levels; Berea, Thaba-Tseka, Mokhotlong and Qacha's Nek and later scaled up in Mafeteng and Maseru Districts. The initiative was very successful in those communities that embraced it to improve nutritional status amongst their children through improving child health seeking behavior, child caring practices and the provision of food ingredients from their own households for food preparation demonstrations. Where this approach was adopted, men's perceptions on nutrition and health issues have changed.

Integrated Maternal and Child Health Programme is housed within the Family Health in the MoH and supported by UN agencies, Non-Governmental Organizations and Development Partners. Specifically, the component overseen by the nutrition programme focuses: on prevention and management of acute malnutrition; nutrition surveillance; nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and complementary feeding and clinical nutrition services. In addition, there is a water, sanitation and hygiene education programmes under the MoH whilst Ministry of Water, within the Rural Water Supply focuses on the hardware for water access and sanitation. Collectively these programmes appear to be functional and instrumental in reversing poor nutrition outcomes, but gaps and implementation challenges prevail.

Directorate for Disease Control in MoH is responsible for the primary health care component of the non-communicable nutrition programme which includes defining relevant policies, health education, screening and referrals for clinical management for hypertension, diabetes, cancer and obesity. The Directorate also contribute technical expertise when the Clinical Services define the clinical management protocols and guidelines. The Dietetics Department of the MoH is another weak area, which is meant to work closely with the clinical teams in managing the inpatient cases and running outpatient clinics within the Public and Private sector. However, this is another programme which needs to be strengthened, as it lacks a clear mandate, management protocols, and guidelines and is also thinly staffed with a presence at the Headquarters and none in the peripheral health facilities. To date there is inadequate population-based information to inform the magnitude of non-communicable nutrition disorders in Lesotho.

The key policy document for addressing malnutrition is the Lesotho Food and Nutrition Policy (2017). In addition to the nutrition policy there are other nutrition health related policies that address aspects of nutrition security for vulnerable groups. For instance, the HIV National Strategic Plan (2012 -16) integrates key components that promotes nutrition treatment, care and support for people with HIV and TB. There are some policies and strategies that integrate nutrition at different levels such as National Health Strategy for Adolescents and Young People 2015 – 2020, Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development (IECCD) Policy and National Strategic Plan for IECCD 2013/14 – 2017/2018. The National Strategic Plan for IECCD focuses on insuring that children from preconception to 5 years of age will be healthy, well-nourished and achieve their potential in all developmental areas. The School Feeding Policy 2015 focuses on reduction of chronic and

⁶¹ Positive Deviance (PD) is an approach to behavioural and social change based on the observation that in any community there are people whose uncommon but successful behaviours or strategies enable them to find better solutions to a problem than their peers, despite facing similar challenges and having no extra resources or knowledge than their peers. These individuals are referred to as positive deviants. The concept first appeared in nutrition research in the 1970s. Researchers observed that despite the poverty in a community, some poor families had well-nourished children. Some suggested using information gathered from these outliers to plan nutrition programs.

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acute malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies through provision of meals in primary schools and ECCD centres. While the nutrition policy intents are commendable, they do not provide for specific projects to be implemented to achieve better nutrition outcomes. For example, there are outstanding clauses in the maternity leave for mothers working in the public and private sectors and the “Code of marketing of breastmilk substitutes” and the food standards that still need to be enforced.

Lesotho, demonstrated its commitment and leadership in addressing malnutrition through joining the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement in July 2014, and its launch together with the Cost of Hunger Study in Lesotho in October 2016. This validates a clear commitment to scaling up nutrition as part of its efforts to achieve global, continental and national goals. A key challenge is that many stakeholders within the realm of nutrition-sensitive actions are yet to fully take on board nutrition actions.

To date the national nutrition programmes do not have a reliable information management system to inform effective planning and continuous monitoring of the programmes. This is despite the availability of raw information such as data on birth registrations and on the growth of under-five children collected through all health facilities and by community Village Health workers. It has not been possible to consolidate and compile data due to inadequate staffing and transport facilities. Attempts are underway by the MoH and its implementing partners to integrate/strengthen the nutrition surveillance within the Health Management Information System as part of the Health DHIS2. The absence of reliable information stored in appropriate formats has made assessing the impact of implementation of nutrition interventions difficult. In the absence of electronic growth monitoring and or nutrition surveillance programme, the assessment of nutrition status relies on the periodic population-based studies to inform the impact and trends of nutritional status, which unfortunately give only periodic information.

Another challenge is that of funding constraints. The GoL direct spending on nutrition programmes is relatively small given the intensity of malnutrition in the country. Spending on nutrition specific interventions for example, increased by 31% between 2014/15 and 2015/16, while the overall spending on nutrition in general increased by 2.12%, which is not good enough. In fact, at district level, several stakeholders were not including nutrition programmes in their planning processes and were not aware of their significance in addressing malnutrition challenges.

3.4 Pillar 3: All Food Systems are Sustainable

The National Early Warning System is one of the comprehensive systems established to enhance capacity of government and development partners to take prompt and appropriate actions to deal with disasters and emerging food shortages. Disaster Management Authority (DMA) is the lead agency for managing covariate shocks and is central to the effective coordination of government-led emergency response and yet lacks both human and technical capacity to deliver on its mandate. The system suffers from many implementation inefficiencies often causing delays in relief assistance.

The GoL with support from WFP and World Bank established an Early Warning and Information Management System housed in Disaster Management Authority (DMA) in 2015, to allow timely sharing of early warning information from

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central to community level and vice versa. This establishment of the system was followed by sensitization workshops for different stakeholders and partners conducted at national, district and village levels through the District and Village Disaster Management teams. These trainings focused on overall roles and responsibilities of different offices in the functioning of the system. Although not yet functional, the system will provide timely data to permit better response to shocks.

Furthermore, Lesotho has diverse interventions for addressing global environmental changes including climate change, changes in ecosystems due to loss of biodiversity, land degradation and stresses on food producing systems. The downside of these efforts is the lack of coherence and poor implementation of these policies. For example, while the National Forest Policy 2008 and Range Management Policy 2014 promote the preservation of natural heritage of trees and shrubs by rural people there is no coherent conservation policy and strategy in place. Consequently, the establishment of the Sehlabathebe National Park and now UNESCO Heritage site has not received serious national attention. Further, a 1977 proposal to establish three (3) herbaria in the country as units of a National Herbarium (Hoener, 1977⁶²) has not materialized. In addition, the proposal of a National Botanic Garden made by Machan, 1980⁶³ is yet to be implemented.

Soil conservation has been central to livelihoods with a mix of implementation modalities involving government and communities. The conservation measures aimed at addressing soil degradation and erosion have included tree planting, gully control, crop management advice, regulation of pastures and use of indigenous reeds and thatching grass. Other public investments have included the Land Use Planning (1981-1989), Forestry Training and Development (1981-1991), Farm Improvement with Soil Conservation (1985-1989), Production Through Conservation Program (1981-1996), Soil and Water Conservation and Agro-forestry Program.

In parallel with this, there was increased emphasis on the watershed management approaches which have also taken a renewed emphasis in current conservation engagements of the Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation including the integrated catchment initiatives in the Department of Water Affairs. Grazing management policies to address wetland and watershed degradation have also been enacted and implemented which include rotational grazing.

Livestock production in Lesotho is founded on open rangeland systems managed by local authorities as a commons property regime. Thus, the Range Management Policy 2014 is the foundation for management of the rangelands commons. The Policy provides a basis for stabilizing livestock-based livelihoods especially the wool and mohair agro-industry. The management and protection of this ecosystem is critical for food and nutrition security hence the need to refine and sharpen policy initiatives for protection and conservation of the rangelands. The current grazing management laws and regulations last amended in the 1980s are dated and must be revised and enforced. The RMA/MRA with grazing associations has been developed, piloted and implemented without a policy and legal framework for many decades. It has arguably been the best innovation on range resource management in Lesotho but has been hampered by lack of controlling legislation.

⁶² Hoener 1977. Cited by Leipzig 1996.

⁶³ Machan 1980. Cited by Leipzig 1996.

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It has been clear for many years now that soil erosion and rangeland degradation have reduced the productivity of rangelands, yet Lesotho has never had an explicit Feed Policy to supplement the declining quality of rangelands. The explicit absence of feed policy is a serious gap in the National Action Plan for Food Security (NAPFS) 2007-2017, Range Management Policy and Draft Livestock Policy of 2016. The Draft Animal Health and Welfare Draft Bill of 2016 also talks to the control of importation rather than production and promotion of animal feeds. In addition, the traditional policy of Maboella has fallen apart in most of the communities due to loss of power of the local authority of chiefs and a somewhat controversial role of local community councils.

In recognition of the importance of resilient livelihoods and ecological systems as a crucial first line of defence against disasters and stressors as well as a necessary condition for sustainable development, the UN supported the government in the development of a National Resilience Framework. Once implemented, it will help to mainstream disaster risk reduction and resilience in order to sustainable ecological systems, including food systems⁶⁴.

3.5 Pillar 4: Double Smallholder Productivity and Incomes

To increase agriculture productivity and incomes of small-scale producers, the GoL has put in place a mix of interventions. A universal subsidy strategy encompassing sharecropping programs, block farming initiatives and individual farming operations^{65,66,67,68} is being implemented through the MAFS. The government provides all the inputs and the mechanization for the sharecropping programs, and yields are divided between the government (70 per cent) and farmers (30 per cent). The standard subsidy parcel entails a 50 percent subsidy on seed, fertilizer and mechanical operations. On their part, the beneficiaries must commit to cultivating a certain amount of land, which is verified by local authorities and extension officers. The strategic objective of the policy is to provide food security through increased production, promote fertilizer use and protect farmers from the negative effect of international price increases. This policy permits the government to import inputs and sell them to government stores or private traders at a reduced price.

The total costs have risen from US\$ 8 million at inception of the policy to US\$ 10.6 million in 2014. Even though well-intended the subsidies do not reach farmers in rural areas who are hard hit by food insecurity, due to difficult terrain and poor distribution channels. In addition, this policy seems to contradict the development of market economy since it crowds out private sector participation in the inputs market. There is no formal monitoring and evaluation framework as the Ministry does not keep records on how much fertilizer is procured and distributed to traders who supply farmers. Consequently, there is no way of knowing how much is diverted but the net effect is that the subsidy has not boosted food supplies⁶⁹.

⁶⁴ Government of Lesotho, July 2017. Draft Lesotho National Resilience Strategic Framework and Theory of Change Resilience Framework.

⁶⁵ Smith WJ., E. Mistiaen, M. Guven and M. Morojele. 2013. A Safety Net to End Extreme Poverty. Work bank Discussion Paper No. 1409. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/>.

⁶⁶ Molatoli, T.J. and L. Xiaoyun. 2016. Development evaluation of Lesotho agricultural input subsidy policy based on rural household's food security and access to inputs: Evidence from Mophale's Hoek District. *African Journal of Agricultural Research* 11(16):1411–1420.

⁶⁷ Ratii, M.L. 2016. The welfare impact of the removal of input subsidies for crop production in Lesotho. Msc. Thesis, Stellenbosch University.

⁶⁸ African Centre for Biodiversity. 2016. Farm Input Subsidy Programs (FISPs): A benefit for, or the betrayal of, SADC's small-scale farmers? <https://acbio.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Input-Subsidies-Report-ACBio.pdf>=493.

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The importance of value chains development in ensuring food security and nutrition through stimulating increased production and job creation by way of downstream activities is well appreciated by many officials in Government. Despite this recognition, there is no policy to guide development of value chains. In 2016, the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security conducted a study on value chain analysis for the basic three products- Broiler, eggs, pig meat production and vegetable and fruits (i.e. potato, tomato and spinach, peach and apple) production⁷⁰. This study basically identified where interventions will lead to improvements in the production systems in the targeted districts particularly with respect to expansion of small scale production into commercial production. However, the recommendations of that study are yet to be implemented.

Lesotho's agriculture and agribusiness sector generally faces huge risk and uncertainty which often affects food production and food security. When viewed from the broader perspective of both strategic and operational risks, the total risk that agribusiness and farmers in the country face is much more complex and more pervasive than is often perceived. A taxonomy of the broader dimensions of risk that they face include: production risk (weather conditions, pests, diseases and technological change), ecological risks (production, climate change, management of natural resources such as water), market risks (output and input price variability, relationships with the food chain with respect to quality, safety, new products) and finally regulatory or institutional risk (agriculture policies, food safety and environmental regulations). However, the market has not yet designed and developed appropriate instruments to help farmers and agribusinesses manage both production and market risks.

The private sector participation in risk sharing is marginal. It provides little capital and remains inert with respect to technology choices. Whether this is because farming in the country in its present state is treated by GoL as just one of the many "marginal livelihoods strategies" available to poor farmers rather than a business it remains unclear. But it is noted that farmers themselves have been subordinated as the welfare recipients. Their ranks are dominated by small-scale sharecroppers and small-scale landholders, which are organized only at the household level. Indeed because of their low education level, farmers have become passive recipients of technical assistance, beneficiaries of public sector subsidized inputs and price takers in the market-which are especially volatile due to their small scale and isolation from other markets. Current associations except wool and mohair association are generally weak and do not have adequate lobbying and advocacy skills.

Lesotho's agriculture sector faces serious constraints in terms of financial support. There is lack of short-term, medium term and long-term finance for agricultural sector and this has constrained farmers' access to improved inputs on which increased productivity is largely depended. Poor households particularly in the rural areas have been denied access to credit opportunities offered by the commercial banks for on-farm investments and off farm income generation due to lack to registered collateral. Commercial bank's credit extension to agricultural sector has averaged 1 per cent or less of total credit provided by the financial institutions (i.e. banks) in the past five years. The Central Bank of Lesotho (2011), notes that while credit to the private sector has been increasing over the past five years, credit extension to the agriculture subsector remains constant or even experiences a decline in some years.

⁷⁰ Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (2016), "Lesotho Smallholder Agricultural Development Project (SADP) draft Value Chains for Horticulture", Maseru 100, Lesotho. And see SADP draft value chains for Broiler, Pig meat and egg production.

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The GoL enacted several financial sector laws and regulations and other reforms that were meant to create conducive environment to stimulate financial sector intermediation in the country and assist in financing agriculture production for food security. Yet intermediation has remained skewed away from agricultural sector due to many factors including lack of bankable proposals and lack of registered collateral by famers. These laws and regulations include: Financial sector regulations of 2014, Collateral Registry of 2015 and the Financial Sector Act of 2014. However, several development partners (i.e. FAO, IFAD and World Bank) have provided financial assistance under several projects and programmes targeted at small-holder farmers over the past decade.

Another important area of intervention is that of creating genetic diversity in field crops that include maize, sorghum and wheat. As already stated, the National Seed Policy was approved in 2017 but there is no Seed Law to regulate activities in the seed sector hence the urgent need to enact a Seed Act with an official Seed Certification Scheme. The Seed Security Assessment Report of 2016, reports 67 individual seed growers producing on average 14 tons of maize seed and 11 tons of bean seed per annum under a trade name of Lehakoe Seed Company registered in May 2015 (SSA Report 2016)⁷¹. There is need to intensify the policy of using farmers as seed producers to feed into the seed banks.

The fundamental livestock feed for Lesotho is the rangeland currently guided by the Range Resources Management Policy of 2014⁷² and the Range Management Regulations previously promulgated in the 1980s. The Policy inter alia mentions the Promotion of fodder production and storage for stall feeding programs as a strategy to achieve the desired policy outputs. In the absence of raising the fodder production option as a policy initiative, commercial farmers will not realize the feasibility of practicing zero grazing to ensure monitoring of their livestock nutrition unless fodder production is escalated to the status of a commodity in the livestock value chain. The constraints to fodder growing comprise the weak land tenure rights that make it difficult for farmers to utilize more land for fodder production, scarcity of arable land leading to competition with crops and danger of theft and grazing of fodder by delinquent herd boys.

The *defacto* policy of agric-mechanization in Lesotho is based on the time-tested assumption that smallholder farmers are likely to benefit from the adoption of tractors through custom-hiring services because of the prohibitive costs of farm machinery and equipment. Thus, a range of agri-mechanization service providers are either operating parallel to and in completion to government mechanization services. Evidence shows that most operators providing machine services lacked training and use sub-standard quality of equipment although a few can offer a commercial level range and quality of services. Since the government had not made mechanization a priority in the past, the sector is currently in a developmental state, and mechanization is not widely recognized as a substantial tool for better crop productivity consequently there is no strategic policy on mechanization.

Food production and food security is undermined by dependence on rain fed agriculture by the majority of the population, Although, a number of irrigation projects have been implemented, the country does not have an irrigation policy and majority of interventions remain uni-dimensional. The MAFS promotes irrigation agriculture under smallholder farming systems based on either gravity powered sprinkler or drip irrigation systems spending as much as US\$584, 368.00. Some

⁷¹ Seed Security Assessment Report. 2016. Food and Agriculture Organization and Government of Lesotho.

⁷² Range Resources Management Policy 2014. Department of Range Management. Ministry of Forestry, Range and Soil Conservation.

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NGOs, such as World Vision, Catholic Relief Services and RSDA have also promoted smallholder irrigation systems with variable success. The cost of energy is often the most constraining factor of all followed by unsustainable cooperative ventures falling to the tragedy of the commons soon after the donors leave the scene. At the smallholder level, building of small dams, spring and roof water harvesting tanks for gravity fed and drip irrigation systems are proving to be sustainable against the cost of energy to run irrigation infrastructure. New models targeting individual initiative rather than restricting interventions to cooperative associations of convenience with no track record of performance and sustained production against the adversities of climate change. Thus, eligible beneficiaries could include individuals who have demonstrated success in the field rather than using these interventions as social safety nets.

As stated in the situational analysis, the major challenge besetting the crop production sector is the amount of prime land that is left fallow. The Land Act of 1969 was repealed by the Land Act of 1979 to improve land administration and to control indiscriminate allocations of land and provide for an elaborate organisational structure as well as tenure reforms and other innovations⁷³. However, the implementation of the Act, even in its early years, proved problematic, with lack of support and funding⁷⁴ and increasing inefficiency and corruption in land administration. Coupled with legislative and policy failures on management of environment and natural resources, the lack of a clear framework for land use planning and delayed translation of the Land policy review reports into policy and legislative frameworks mitigated against sustainable management of land⁷⁵. Consequently, few land holders, especially subsistence farmers, have incentives to undertake rehabilitation or protection works on degraded land. Even those farmers that do have secure access and tenure have trouble in accessing loans and credit because of poorly developed financial services for the rural and agricultural sector.

Additionally, the difficulty of citizens to access land through formal channels creates incentives to occupy land informally resulting in the encroachment of settlements on prime agricultural land and environmentally sensitive landscapes. In addition to challenges in terms of land use planning there are considerable barriers to delivery of effective physical planning including the need to develop spatial development frameworks and capacity to implement these. The need to address the problems of land administration in Lesotho precipitated the enactment of a new Land Act of 2010.

3.6 Institutional and Implementation Arrangements

The institutional and implementation framework for food security and nutrition is provided for in the Food and Nutrition Security Policy (2017). The Food and Nutrition Coordinating Office (FNCO), under the Prime Minister's Office has the overall mandate of coordination of food and nutrition programmes in the country. The policy however, states that FNCO will be elevated to the Secretariat (FNS). Planning, programming and implementation of food and nutrition activities will be carried out by various line ministries as summarised below:

⁷³ Leduka, C., 2004. Informal Land Delivery Processes and Access to Land For The Poor In Maseru, Lesotho. Working Paper 5, Informal Land Delivery Processes in African Cities, The University of Birmingham (UK).

⁷⁴ Mosaase, A., 1982. Lesotho's Land Policy Under the Land Act 1979 and its Implications for the Agricultural Sector: Land Policy and Agriculture in Eastern and Southern Africa (Ed. by Arntzen, JW, et al), United Nations University Press.

⁷⁵ Ramodibeli, 2000: Report of the Land Policy Review Commission.

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Ministry of Health (MoH)

The MoH's mandate is to ensure that maternal and child health and nutrition services are prioritized and implemented in the health sector. The Ministry will integrate nutrition into all its departments and divisions, projects, policies, strategies, action plans, monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security (MAFS)

The main goal of the MAFS is to combat malnutrition through food-based interventions to improve the food and nutrition security and quality of life of the population. Amongst its roles, it will strengthen the linkages between nutrition and agriculture to ensure the effective implementation of food-based prevention and management of malnutrition.

Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI)

The MoTI through the Department of Standards and Quality Assurance (DSQA) is charged with coordinating the formulation, adoption, and harmonization of food standards – guided by the Codex Alimentarius Commission in collaboration with the Environmental Health Inspectorate Unit of the MoH, MAFS, FNCO and other stakeholders – to ensure that food safety and hygiene adhere to the Lesotho Standards Institute (LSI), enacted by Parliament in July 2014.

Ministry of Small Business Development, Cooperatives and Marketing

The Ministry through the Department of Marketing shall regulate the importation and exportation of essential food items, determine market value of staple foods and ensure the marketing of food from surplus regions to deficit areas. The Ministry, in collaboration with the MAFS, shall advocate for diversification and value-addition to local agricultural products for enhanced nutritional quality.

Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy (MoLGC)

The Ministry of Local Government and Chieftaincy (MoLGC) will provide decentralized leadership for implementation of nutrition actions at community, local and district levels. It shall provide land for targeted food production, working closely with MAFS.

Ministry of Education and Training (MoET)

The Ministry of Education and Training shall ensure that nutrition education is included and effectively into the curricula of all education institutions. The Ministry shall also continue with the implementation of the school feeding programmes, in line with the 2015 School Feeding Policy.

Ministry of Social Development (MoSD)

The long-term goal of the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) is to “improve the quality of life of all Basotho through interventions that address poverty, deprivation, vulnerability and inequality in a comprehensive and holistic manner.

Ministry of Water (MoW)

The MoW, through Rural Water and Sanitation Departments, implements two distinct programmes to eliminate open defecation: a latrine subsidy programme and a community-led total sanitation programme.

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Ministry of Finance

The Ministry of Finance in its budgetary allocations, management and monitoring of government funds, in accordance with the financial management system, shall augment financing to nutrition.

Ministry of Development Planning

The Ministry of Development Planning shall provide the overall national strategic direction. The aim shall be to ensure economic growth, infrastructure development, enhanced skills base, innovation and technology adoption for accelerated growth, improvement of health to combat HIV and AIDS and reduce vulnerability, reversal of environment degradation and adaption to climate change, building of effective institutions and promotion of peace and democratic governance.

Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports and Recreation (MoGYSR)

The Ministry shall advance gender equity and equality, as well as the enhancement of sporting excellence and the integration of youth in the country's socio-economic and political development. The MoGYSR shall ensure that development efforts have an equal impact on both genders.

Ministry of Communications, Science and Technology (MCST)

The Ministry has the responsibility and is well placed to communicate and mobilize communities for nutrition.

Ministry of labour and Employment

Industries play a major role in the economy of the country; women dominate the labour force in this sector. Through advocacy and the tripartite governance structure (Government, Employers, Workers) the Ministry shall among other things institute regulations and laws that provide an enabling environment for the women to meet their role of caregivers in the feeding and care of their children.

The Disaster Management Authority (DMA)

The Disaster Management Authority shall manage disasters, risks and similar emergencies in the country through various multi-sectoral and multidisciplinary structures as well as integrate nutrition into its disaster management clusters and early warning systems.

The National AIDS Commission

The National AIDS Commission shall coordinate all national response initiatives on HIV and AIDS treatment, care and support through committees established at all administrative levels. The Commission shall ensure that nutrition is an integral part of HIV and AIDS plans, programmes and projects throughout the continuum of prevention, treatment, care and support.

NGOs/ Civil Society

The NGOs/ Civil Society in Lesotho have a limited presence and present CRS, World Vision, Action AID, Red Cross and the local NGOs among others shall be the watchdog, complement the Government efforts in the implementation of nutrition specific and nutrition sensitive interventions, and advocate for as well as support accountability for nutrition.

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Academia

The academic institutions shall train food and nutrition professionals at diploma and degree level and as a subject for those trained in health. The Academics shall support the nutrition interventions through undertaking research

Business/Private Sector

The private sector in Lesotho shall play a major role in improving nutrition. Businesses involved in food fortification, distribution, and the business outlets that serve the end user shall integrate nutrition into their business plans and support nutrition.

UN agencies

UN agencies (WFP, FAO, WHO, UNICEF, UNAIDS, IFAD, UNDP, WB and IOM) present in Lesotho (together with their partners) shall be engaged in the following activities, amongst others:

- Advocacy for nutrition.
- Provision of services and facilities for implementation of nutrition specific and sensitive programmes.
- Provision of technical and financial support for improvement of nutrition.
- Capacity development for nutrition.
- Provision of support and technical assistance in development and review of policies, strategic plans and guidelines.

3.7 Key Strategic Gaps and Challenges

3.7.1 Weak enforcement of policies

While the country has a relatively developed enabling policy environment for food and nutrition security programming, the implementation of these policies, strategies and plans remains problematic. Most policies are not incentive-based and Laws to enhance food and nutrition security remain in draft form. Take for example the Social Protection Bill, Labour Bill and the Food Standards Bill. As such, the current policies and investment levels in smallholder agriculture are deemed inadequate to alleviate the underlying causes of food and nutrition insecurity, including poverty and malnutrition. To implement good policies and programmes that bring change will require effective public institutions and serious commitment by senior policy makers, and government. Such efforts may require acknowledging food and nutrition as an essential human right that must be incorporated explicitly in the constitution. The weak implementation of policies and programmes is due to the absence of implementation frameworks and regulations and this is the major underlying constraint.

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3.7.2 Coordination and implementation challenges

As it has been reiterated, multi-sectoral coordination is essential to address food security and nutrition challenges and achieve zero hunger. The major limiting factor has been the ad-hoc and uncoordinated manner in which policies and programmes have been implemented. While the FNCO is mandated with coordinating food and nutrition programmes in the country it lacks the capacity for coordination. There are also many structural, financial and technical challenges that stifle the operation of FNCO. These include lack of coordinating skills and management skills, lack of communication facilities, such as Internet connectivity, telephones, computers, etc. Furthermore, FNCO operates within a meagre budget and depends on donor support to carry out its mandate.

FNCO has operated for a long time without any clear strategic plan for food and nutrition which has also hampered its performance. FNCO seem to have failed to provide strategic direction on food and nutrition to both GoL and Development Partners. This has led to development partners and NGOs sometimes providing homogenous food baskets for the Vulnerable Groups in society and designing their interventions without assistance from FNCO. In some instances, development partners have had to carry the burden of identifying vulnerable groups in society and even undertaking their own research in order to facilitate their operations in the country. The office does not possess any clear monitoring and evaluation framework for food and nutrition programmes proposed.

There is also been poor inter-ministerial/departmental coordination. Inter-ministerial and inter-departmental coordination has been difficult to establish and maintain. Key decision committees have been affected by constant changes in the staff representing their departments, resulting in a critical lack of continuity.

3.7.3 Weak decentralization process

Poor linkage between the headquarters (Maseru) and the field was identified as a major constraint to effective implementation of programmes. In part, this results in poor supervision of programme implementation by field offices and contracted service providers. Ultimately, accountability of various offices becomes very weak. This is worsened by the absence of clear monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place. The reporting channels are also not clear at district level. Hence at this level, there is a clear lack of strategic guidance and leadership in the areas of policy issues, program design and delivery, resource mobilization and allocation, strategic partnership between NGOs, development partners, and communities.

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3.7.4 Capacity constraints

Lack of skills within the civil service to implement demand-led, market-oriented development, which is the focus of the Government and development partners is uncommon. Capacity gaps generally relate to staffing and skills shortages as well as severe lack of tools and at decentralized level, no/inadequate access to information (NISSA). There is manpower as well as technical and critical skills shortages to undertake food and nutrition security activities nutritionists. For example, there is the lack of nutrition experts in the country and this compromises the data collected. Understaffing and high staff turn-over is a challenge that resonates with all government Ministries in Lesotho including Agriculture Resource Centres. This is partly due to high levels of staff turn-over thus putting a demand for continuous training of new members.

3.7.5 Insufficient/unavailability of nutrition data

The major gap here refers mainly to unavailability of data for monitoring of nutrition programming. This is against the absence of a functional nutrition surveillance or early warning system. At its best, the NSS collects, analyses and disseminates information on nutritional status on a quarterly basis; identify areas and groups at risk of malnutrition; and issue early warning to relevant stakeholders on nutrition related problems⁷⁶. Beyond transmission of data/info, there is often no trigger for preparedness/adaptation and early planning/action. There are concerns from a number of stakeholders over the quality of the nutrition surveillance. Related to this, has been the weak integration of agriculture indicators as part of routine nutrition monitoring. On the whole, there is an urgent and strong need for technical support as well as funding to upgrade the surveillance system.

3.7.6 Weak monitoring and evaluation

Without strong monitoring and evaluation frameworks linked to the project and programme objectives with solid qualitative and quantitative evaluations aspects in them, nutrition and food security will not be achieved. During the stakeholders' discussions it was found that there are places where such frameworks do not exist and where they exist, they are not followed with sincerity. In other cases, monitoring is done to satisfy work requirements not necessarily as a tool for implementation and improvement of outcomes ■

⁷⁶ Isaacson, B (2008): Scoping Study on Food Security Information; Consultancy Report.

4 CHAPTER 4: RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Introduction

BASED ON THE FOREGOING situational analysis and gaps identified in policy making and programme implementation, this chapter provides strategic recommendations needed to achieve SDG2 and zero hunger by 2030 by the GoL and its development partners. The first part deals with recommendations meant to strengthen the policy and institutional landscape. While the second part provides specific high-level recommendations on how to strengthen each zero-hunger pillar. A gender-sensitive focus in the country's responses is vital to eliminating all forms of hunger. Hence, the interventions across the zero hunger pillars should be based on sound gender analysis by assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes, in all areas and at all levels. .

4.2 Addressing the Policy and Institutional Landscape

4.2.1 Strengthen development and implementation of food security and nutrition related policies

Recommendation under this theme include on one hand the development of policies where they are gaps and on the other the strengthening of existing policies in terms of enforcement. In so doing, the following is recommended:

- Consider the review of the constitution to make food and nutrition security one of the fundamental human rights explicitly including other secondary rights which at present are left out of the constitution.
- Endorse and implement the long-outstanding decentralization policy, and its implementation mechanisms (including fiscal decentralization), to allow districts to have some autonomy in programme planning and implementation
- Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI) to expedite the processes for finalization and endorsement of the following legal documents to enhance food and nutrition security:
 - Food Quality Control and Improvement Standards. Currently the draft law on food standards and food fortification, food utilization is placed under the Ministry of Health and they have since not been passed by parliament. It is important that this law be passed urgently to allow for food fortification and standards of control in terms of food use.
- Conduct a capacity gap analysis study as a first step in determining the extent of the challenges around implementation of the various food and nutrition security related policies. This should be followed up with a capacity development plan which should be linked to a strong monitoring and evaluation system. The FNCO as a coordination body should be supported to lead this process.

4.2.2 Enhance multi-sectoral coordination and implementation

A multi-sectoral approach that systematically and comprehensively engages multiple ministries, agencies, other stakeholders (e.g., donors, civil society organizations (CSOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), academia, development partners and the private sector) is essential for the effective implementation of strategies to achieve zero hunger. Multi-sectoral programming requires that multiple stakeholders across sectors coordinate and collaborate to

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design, implement, and monitor joint solutions to address nutrition. Coordinating also allows various partners to see where they fit in a larger system and helps them clarify their own roles and how they can contribute to the problem and its solutions⁷⁷.

4.2.3 Enhance capacity for multi-sectoral coordination

The facilitation of multi-sectoral coordination requires strengthening of technical and management capacities for implementing zero hunger strategies. Key actions include:

- Strengthen capacity of coordinating bodies and other stakeholders involved in food and nutrition by building capacity both within the FNCO and other sector Ministries. FNCO should be resourced and elevated to a prominent and authoritative position to be able to implement its mandate of coordinating implementation of food and nutrition interventions. This should be within the framework of the Zero Hunger Challenge. This will also require building capacity of the office including providing them short-term training on management, coordination, programme and project design. The office should also be capacitated on monitoring and evaluation.
- Strengthen evidence-based planning, monitoring and evaluation through the development of robust resilience and food and nutrition security monitoring systems.
- Increase allocation of national budget to FNCO and the key food and nutrition security ministries through efficient distribution and use of resources for implementation of the interventions.
- Create awareness of food security and nutrition issues at the highest level of decision making. This may mean development of tools and methodologies to create a shared understanding at this level.
- Establish stronger links between Disaster Risk Management and key pillars of Zero Hunger Challenge including focusing on the Humanitarian Developmental Nexuses.

4.2.4 Develop a common Lesotho Zero Hunger Road Map

The Zero Hunger Road Map should describe what actions are required, a timeframe for action, and which key partners are required for each of the SDG 2 targets and zero hunger pillars (i.e. End Hunger, End Malnutrition, Double Agricultural Productivity and Income, Develop Sustainable Food Systems and Resilient Agricultural Practices, and Ensure Genetic Diversity). The Road Map will constitute the primary vehicle that will be used by GoL to carry out its work, and its plans and assess progress toward the most important milestones.

The Road Map will be informed by the outputs of the Lesotho Strategic Review Report that covers issues of broader livelihoods and vulnerability. It has the strength of bringing a diverse mix of stakeholders from different sectors: health, agriculture, nutrition, water and sanitation, education, environment, social protection etc. The MORALO oa PHELISO ea TLALA LESOTHO (MPT-LESOTHO) 2018-2023 currently is an important and essential component part of the Zero Hunger Road Map.

⁷⁷ Garrett and Natalicchio 2011.

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The priority actions, recommendations and resultant Lesotho Zero Hunger Road Map will make immense contributions to implementation of NSDP II; formulation and operationalization of the 2018 – 2022 Lesotho - United Nations Development Assistance Framework which will represent the collective response of United Nations agencies to national development priorities. In addition, since Lesotho is part of the targeted countries under the Regional UN Development Group Strategy of support to middle income countries in Africa⁷⁸, it will benefit from support in areas of evidence building, capacity strengthening, coordination, partnership building and capacity building.

4.3 Sector- Specific Recommendations

4.3.1 Improving access to adequate food all year round

At a macro-level, the GoL should strengthen procurement and audit controls, and public financial management systems to address over-pricing of goods and services. Social protection can positively impact food and nutrition security by improving dietary diversity, increasing food availability and consumption. In the case of cash transfers, it has been shown that they directly increase household disposable income that can be used to purchase better quality of food and allow households particularly women and children to access better health care and sanitation⁷⁹.

The motivation for reducing malnutrition is compelling evidence for the Government of Lesotho to seriously consider a nationwide coverage of the Child Grants and Public Assistance Programmes. The expansion should be accompanied by regular updating for targeting base during emergencies. The value of school feeding as social protection aimed at improving access to diverse nutritious foods is acknowledged. It is further recommended that the link between school feeding and smallholder productivity and incomes be strengthening through the development of agriculture value chains.

4.3.2 Ending malnutrition and all its forms

To address high stunting levels in Lesotho and micronutrient deficiencies for sustained improvements in nutritional outcomes, there is need to scale up the implementation of multi sectoral evidence based, high impact, cost effective nutrition interventions as well as the integration and linkages across multiple sectors and development programs that have indirect impacts on nutritional status. There is also need to invest in strengthening the capacity of government and communities, enabling them to make decisions on nutrition actions. The focus will be on nutrition programming, enhancing coordination, planning, budgeting, nutrition surveillance, advocacy and communication. This will assist to ensure availability of and access to services through increased demand for services and appropriate use, and to strengthen systems that sustainably improve nutrition.

There is also need to increase private sector partnerships to improve nutrition for mothers and children. Private sector is critical for investing in nutrition programs and research, contribute social marketing expertise to promote healthy

⁷⁸ UNDG- Regional United Nations Development Group (R-UNDG) Strategy of Support to Middle Income Countries in Africa.

⁷⁹ De Grout, R *et al.*, 2015: Cash Transfers and Child Nutrition: What we know and what we need to know, UNICEF.

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behaviours such as breastfeeding, dietary diversity and WASH. Government and partners can do more to create a supportive environment for improved sustainable nutrition outcomes through improving laws, policies and actions that improve nutrition. Furthermore, advocate for increased government investment for proven interventions to tackle malnutrition, thus government should commit to and fund national nutrition plans that are integrated with plans for maternal and child health. All sectors should make fighting all forms of malnutrition a priority. Lastly, strengthen systems to ensure effective monitoring, evaluation and knowledge management to improve nutrition policy and programming.

4.3.3 Building sustainable food systems

Climate change risks for Lesotho are serious and undermine efforts towards achieving sustainable food systems that will ensure zero hunger is realized. Lesotho is especially vulnerable to climate change because of dependency on rainfed agriculture. Building sustainable food systems will require the GoL to intensify land and environmental management efforts that will ensure effective forest and agroforestry management strategies that are key to climate mitigating efforts. These strategies should be local specific and address different contexts with communities driving the processes. This is to ensure they benefit from global climate funds and benefit from the carbon trading processes and many climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts. Strengthening early warning systems and generation of evidence through the Lesotho Vulnerability Assessment Committee should be supported. This means, the Early Warning Information Management System/server installed within DMA needs to be activated by addressing the capacity gaps and any other underlying institutional constraints.

4.3.4 Doubling smallholder productivity and incomes

To boost smallholder productivity and incomes, there is need to address the following strategic issues: Development of policies and legal frameworks covering livestock feed, agriculture irrigation and mechanization, rangeland management and land use policy. Alongside this is the need for reviewing the effectiveness and efficiency of policies in place- such as the universal subsidy policy. Another recommendation relates to the aggregation of smallholder farmers into upgraded value chains and establish market information centres that recognize the diversity of farmers. This should be supported by a drive towards development of feeder roads and other transport infrastructure. In addition, review and strengthening of extension services for facilitating agriculture growth is an urgent need.

4.3.5 Reducing food waste and food loss

No tangible work has been done to understand food waste and food loss in Lesotho. The main recommendation would be commissioning of a baseline survey that is meant to provide an overview of the subject. The survey should point to critical sectors that require detailed research. As the issue of methodologies is still being contested, the GoL should learn from a couple of global initiatives that are currently underway. For example, FAO has long called for “innovative thinking” to measure and cut global food loss and waste along the food chain. Other forums include the Consumer Good Forum (CGF); FAO Sustainability Pathways Forum⁸⁰ and others ■

⁸⁰ <http://www.fao.org/nr/sustainability/food-loss-and-waste/food-wastage-forum/en/> .

APPENDICES



Annex 1: Definition of terms

District Health Information System

A free and open source health management data platform used by multiple organizations and governments worldwide. DHIS2 is a development project by the Health Information Systems Program (HISP) and is used for aggregate statistical data collection, validation, analysis, management, and presentation. This data analytics and management platform is completely web-based and boasts great visualization features and the ability to create analysis from live data in seconds.

First 1000 days of life

From conception to 24 months

Food Security

“Food and nutrition security exists when all people at all times have physical, social and economic access to food, which is consumed in sufficient quantity and quality to meet their dietary needs and food preferences, and is supported by an environment of adequate sanitation, health services and care, allowing for a healthy and active life (However, in communities where cultural beliefs are entrenched, availability of services and knowledge alone are usually not enough to improve utilization of services).

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

GDP is the market value of all the goods and services produced by labor and property located in a country. GDP equals Gross National Product (GNP) minus the net inflow of labor and property incomes from abroad. GDP is one of the primary indicators used to gauge the health of a country’s economy. It represents the total dollar value of all goods and services produced over a specific period.

Hunger

Hunger is usually understood to refer to the distress associated with lack of sufficient calories. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) defines food deprivation, or undernourishment, as the consumption of too few calories to provide the minimum amount of dietary energy that everyone requires to live a healthy and productive life, given his or her sex, age, stature, and physical activity level.

Open Pollinated Varieties Seeds

In horticulture it means that the plant will produce seeds naturally. When these seeds are planted they will reliably reproduce the same plant as the parent. On the other hand, hybrid corn is the result of controlled pollination of inbred plants.

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Overweight

Weight for height of more than +2 SD of the WHO Child Growth Standards median.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2

SDG 2 aims at “Ending hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture” by 2030.

Stunting

Stunting is a nutritional status index used to assess chronic malnutrition that has been developing over a period. Height-for-Age (H/A) is used to measure linear growth retardation and cumulative growth deficits. Children whose height-for-age Z-score is below minus two standard deviations (-2 SD) from the median of the reference population are considered short for their age (stunted), or chronically undernourished. Children who are below minus three standard deviations (-3 SD) are considered severely stunted.

Underweight

Underweight is a composite index of height-for-age and weight-for-height which is used to depict both acute and chronic undernutrition. Children whose weight-for-age Z-score is below minus two standard deviations (-2 SD) from the median of the reference population are classified as underweight. Children whose weight-for-age Z-score is below minus three standard deviations (-3 SD) from the median are considered severely underweight.

Wasting

Wasting is a nutritional index used to assess acute (short term) malnutrition, which uses weight and height. The condition shows recent malnutrition that could be occurring due to acute short term dietary inadequacies and effect of recent illnesses. The Weight-for-height (W/H) measurement assesses body mass in relation to body height or length and describes current nutritional status. Children whose Z-score is below minus two standard deviations (-2 SD) from the median of the reference population are considered thin (wasted), or acutely undernourished. Children whose weight-for-height Z-score is below minus three standard deviations (-3 SD) from the median of the reference population are considered severely wasted.

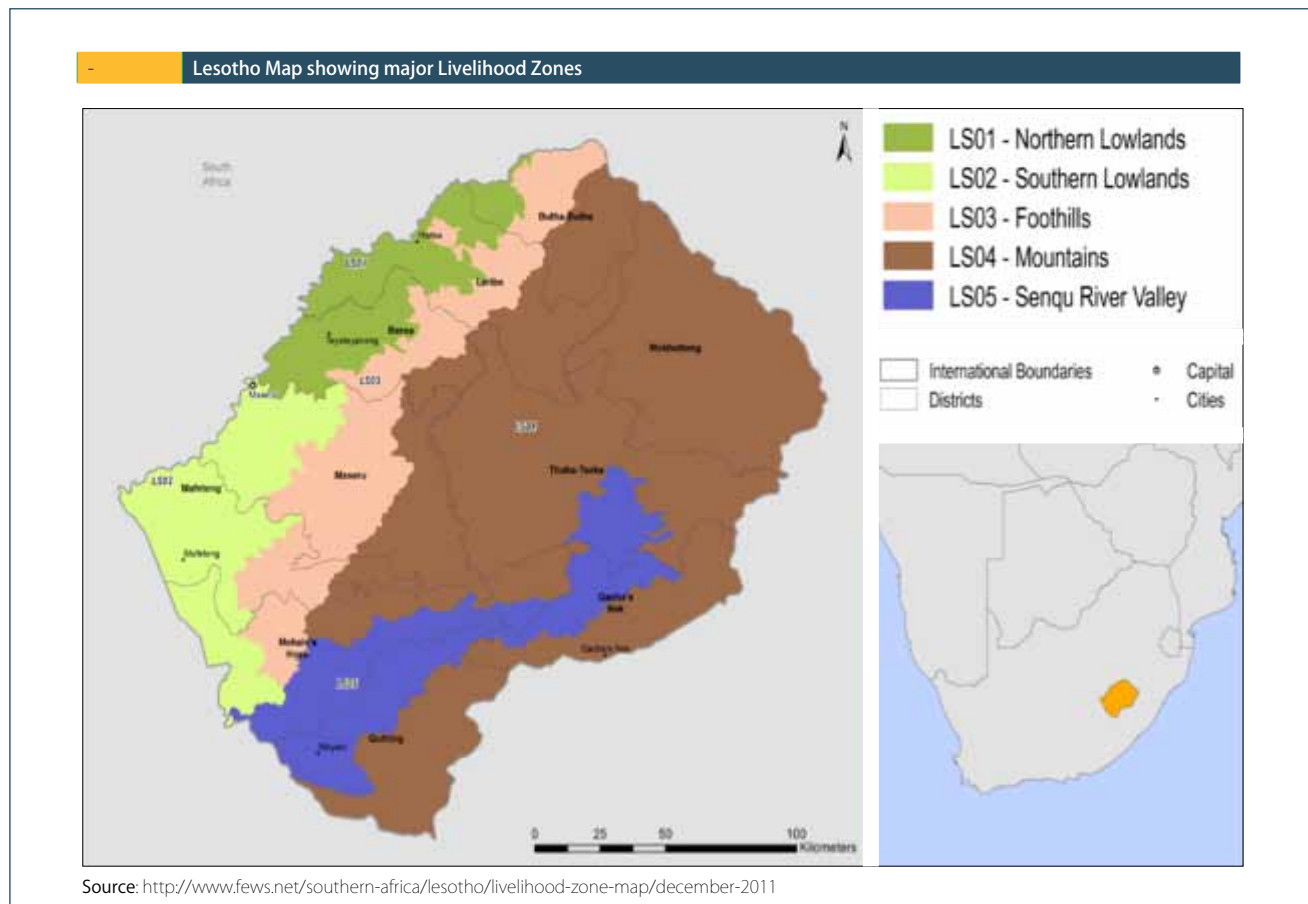
Social protection

“All public and private initiatives that provide incomes or consumption transfers to the poor, protect the vulnerable against livelihood risks, and enhances the social status and rights of the marginalized; with the overall objective of reducing the economic and social vulnerability of poor, vulnerable and marginalized groups.”

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Annex 2: Map of Lesotho and Livelihood Zones



Overview of Livelihood Zone Descriptions

Northern Lowlands

- Comprised of various parts of 3 districts of Botha-Bothe, Leribe and Berea.
- Occupy the most fertile and productive arable land – regarded as the food basket.
- Livelihoods dependent on mixed agriculture.

Southern Lowlands

- Covers the extensive area from Maseru, Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek.
- Livelihoods based on mixed agriculture.
- Population vulnerable to climate hazards, soil erosion, degradation and market related shocks.

Foothills

- Separates mountains and lowlands and mainly lies in the foothills of Maluti Mountain.
- One of the highly productive agriculture zones of the country with suitable arable land and grazing conditions for both crop and livestock.

Mountains

- Mainly in the Maluti Mountains- topography is predominantly mountainous.
- Livelihoods dependent on mixed agriculture.
- Zone vulnerable to climate hazards, livestock diseases and market related shocks.

Senqu River Valley

- Thin strip that lies along Senqu river.
- Cuts across 4 districts of Mohale's Hoek, Quthing, Qacha's Nek and Thaba-Tseka.
- Relies on mixed agriculture complemented with agriculture labour and formal employment.

Source: Lesotho Rural Livelihood Baseline Profiles Report, Disaster Management Authority (DMA), Office of the Prime Minister, January 2012.

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