



KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING

HONOURABLE MOKOTO FRANCIS HLOAELE

TO THE 40<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND  
CULTURAL ORGANISATION (UNESCO)

PARIS FRANCE

NOVEMBER 2019

President of the General Conference,



The Chairperson of the General Conference,  
The Chairman of the Executive Board,  
The Director General,  
Your Excellencies and Colleagues,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honour to be accorded this opportunity of rendering my maiden speech in this great and historic 40<sup>th</sup> General Conference. I have been mandated by His Majesty King Letsie III, the Government, and the people of the Kingdom of Lesotho, to convey special warm regards and best wishes for the fruitful 40<sup>th</sup> Session of the UNESCO General Conference. I would like to congratulate you Mr President for your appointment.

Mr. President

Lesotho has made major strides in the fields of education and science, working towards the



achievement of the SDG 4. Firstly, the country has developed the Education Sector Strategic Plan for 2016-2026 that is guiding all efforts and initiatives in the mentioned fields. In the education sector for example, a number of policies in various departments have been developed in this biennium, to guide implementation of the activities geared towards the realisation of SDG 4. These include the Education Language Policy for basic, secondary and tertiary education, Non-Formal Education Policy, Inclusive Education Policy, and Early Childhood Care and Development Policy. The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) is currently in the process of reviewing the 2009 Curriculum and Assessment Policy, with the same spirit of aligning it with the demands of the SDG 4.

Mr President

Secondly, in the field of science, as the technology is advancing daily into the fourth



Industrial Revolution, we have embarked on the wave to keep up with the rest of the world.

In pursuit of this endeavor, we have forged tripartite partnerships comprising relevant government departments, non-governmental organizations, and private sector to pursue the advancement of digital literacy.

In 2016, we first participated in the “Africa Code Week” which is one of Africa’s largest initiatives in tech literacy for the youth. Since then, this has become an annual event and the number of youth participating in it has been increasing. Furthermore, this year, as part of the Participation Programme of UNESCO, we also had our first Girl Tech Talk Conference targeting mainly a girl child. This Conference resulted in the increase of the number of girls in technology, as well as harnessing the





technology awareness across the country. This event took place on International Day of Girl Child, on 11 October 2019.

Mr President

Within the Natural Sciences Field of Competence, we are very grateful to the German Government through the German Commission for UNESCO, for their financial and technical assistance in the implementation of the “Man and the Biosphere (MAB)” project, which is taking place at Tsehlanyane and Bokong Nature Reserves. This project is intended to establish the first ever globally recognised biosphere in the country. We are also grateful to the same Commission for its continued technical support through the volunteer programme that has run for several years.



The Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO is currently understaffed. The German's volunteer programme greatly fills this gap. The programme's continuity is highly appreciated. In the same manner, we are forever thankful to the Korea National Commission through the Bridge Programme that has left us with the legacy of three community-learning centres in the country, which are implementing adult literacy and vocational skills programmes. Further collaboration and assistance in the projects of this nature will be highly appreciated in the future.

Mr President



In line with the understanding of culture's contribution to the world's economic growth, Lesotho has prioritized the Creative Industry in its National Strategic Development Plan II (NSDP II). This therefore presents more opportunities and growth for the sector, which previously suffered neglect.

Lesotho is a signatory to the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and the 2005 Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions respectively. As a result, we have seen the construction of our first National Museum and Gallery, which we envision its full function in about two years.

Mr President



Lesotho has recently received funding from UNESCO, under the 2003 Convention for the promotion of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH). The project is being implemented with close collaboration with Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO and the Department of Culture.

Lesotho also received funding from UNESCO through the UNESCO Regional Office in Southern Africa and Chinhoyi University of Technology, to translate the 2003 Convention to the Sesotho language.

Further funding was for the implementation of a project on “Strengthening Sehlabathebe Community Conservation Forum”. Under the auspices of the Lesotho National Commission for UNESCO, the project is meant to enhance





community involvement in conservation and management of the Maloti Drakensberg Park World Heritage Site.

Mr President

In conclusion, on behalf of the people and the Government of Lesotho, I express my heartfelt gratitude for all the financial and technical assistance UNESCO has been rendering to my country. It is our greatest wish and understanding that collaboratively, we can achieve more. Hence, the partnership that UNESCO has forged among the member states should continue.

