

We welcome the government's commitment to the 2030 agenda and the National Strategic Development Plan II. However, we would like to highlight that broadened community consultation, particularly including marginalized groups, is essential not only during the VNR drafting process but throughout the planning, implementation, monitoring, and review of the SDGs.

We commend the government for including a specific section in response to Leaving No One Behind in its report, with a clear reminder that human rights and the constitution set the foundation to promoting sustainable development for all. It is often the most vulnerable and marginalised groups that face discrimination. This fuels inequalities, social exclusion, and poverty. Therefore, a rights-based approach and universal social protection programmes are essential.

A mechanism including Civil Society is crucial for results, accountability, and engagement, if the government is serious about leaving no one behind. Such a mechanism is critical to help the government identify, and not overlook, key development barriers.

The Law Reform Commission and continued work of the Lesotho National Council of Women are important steps for women's struggle, resulting in fifteen women parliamentarians and five cabinet ministers for the first time in the history of Lesotho. We acknowledge this achievement and encourage continued commitment to drive further progress.

Women in Lesotho indicate that a major obstacle to development is alcohol, adversely affecting multiple SDGs, such as poverty eradication, gender equality, and economic development. Gender-based violence and the HIV/AIDS epidemic remain major challenges but we commend the government for plans to address them. We urge you to take real, systematic, and inclusive action.

We ask:

- What strategies do you have to promote awareness, education, and opportunities to contribute to the SDGs at the national level?
- How will government follow-up on engagement during the drafting of the VNR and work to create national mechanisms for civil society and marginalised groups?
- How will government comprehensively tackle alcohol as an obstacle to sustainable development in Lesotho?

Thank you