



KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND  
TRAINING

HONOURABLE 'MAMOOKHO GLADYS PHIRI

TO THE 41<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE  
UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND  
CULTURAL ORGANISATION (UNESCO)

PARIS FRANCE

NOVEMBER 2021

**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 both a pleasure and an honour for me to have this rare opportunity of delivering an address to the international community in the 41<sup>st</sup> UNESCO General Conference. His Majesty, King Letsie 111, the government, and the people of the Kingdom of Lesotho wishes all the participants in this important forum warm regards and best wishes. Mr President, it would be remiss of me not to begin by congratulating the President of the 41<sup>st</sup> General Conference and the Director General for their appointments into these important positions.

**Mr. President**

We wish to express our understanding and appreciation that the 41<sup>st</sup> Session of the General Conference takes place amidst and in the aftermath of one of the deadliest pandemics in the history of mankind. The scourge whose impact was felt globally in varying ways and degrees across all sections of society. The pandemic that hit hard in the fabrics of our societies. All this makes it a worthy exercise that as the UN family celebrates its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which was also marred by the Covid 19 crisis, we should also reflect on how we fared in the UNESCO's main mission in the member states encapsulated in the five fields of competences. It is against this backdrop that I wish to share with you how we fared in the Mountain Kingdom in relation to UNESCO's 40<sup>th</sup> Conference expectations.

**Mr. President**

To begin with, allow me to acknowledge and appreciate all the efforts UNESCO has undertaken to successfully organise this event. Similarly, I wish to express my appreciation of all the strides this organization made in this biennium despite the glaring difficulties and challenges posed by the Covid 19 pandemic. We, in the Kingdom of Lesotho wish to thank the organization heartily for both the financial and technical support it has rendered us in various projects that some are still underway as we speak. We therefore implore the organization to continue with this good work.

**Mr. President**

Lesotho has made major strides in the fields of education and science working towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG4). The Ministry of Education and Training (MOET) is currently in the process of finalizing the review of the 2009 Curriculum and Assessment Policy with the aim of aligning it with the demands of this SDG. The final draft is expected to be completed by the end of 2021. The review was executed with the intent to harmonise our policies with the SDGs and other international protocols.

**Mr President**

We acknowledge that Covid 19 did have a remarkable impact in the execution of our mandate in diverse sectors. However, optimism, perseverance and resilience played integral roles in ‘steering our ship forward.’ Despite numerous Covid 19 borne challenges we successfully attempted to ensure the continuity of teaching and learning in schools through capacity building on the use of online teaching and development of online teaching and learning materials for teachers and learners.

In the field of science, though handicapped by inadequate infrastructure such as laboratories in our schools, we are conscious of the huge potential the digital resources play to promote the STEM subjects. As such, we have forged tripartite partnerships comprising relevant government departments, non-governmental organizations and private sector to pursue the advancement of digital literacy. For instance, since 2016 we have sustained our participation in ‘Africa Code Week’

competitions which in our view is one of the Africa's largest initiatives in tech literacy for the youth. Since 2016, when we first participated in this programme, we have been annually increasing the number of youth in it. In 2019, we started what we termed the Girl Tech Conference as an annual event which is aimed at increasing the number of girls involved in technological innovations at a young age. This event show case the scientific and technological projects girls at secondary and high school levels initiate and develop. The 2021 event saw the UN Technology Bank and its Managing Director participating during the Girl Tech Conference in April during the celebration of the Girls International ICT Day. In this event, four countries participated. These were Botswana, Kenya, Ghana and Lesotho.

### **Mr President**

In pursuit of the agenda of a creative economy within the education sector, the Youth Desk has embarked on promoting climate action awareness in schools using three approaches respectively;

1. Engaging students to write essays about technology and climate change that have been compiled and published as a book called "*Love at First Click.*" Over hundred copies of this book have been printed for sale. The book can also be purchased online at Amazon as a soft copy for international readership.
2. Youth will lead in hosting the first "*Kingdom in the Sky: Green Climate Action Awards*" in the fields of Technology, Film, Fashion and Fine Arts to promote innovation and address unemployment among the youth. More than 200 youth are participating in the campaign for climate action in 7 districts and 10 schools led by 4 out of school youth groups.
3. Lastly, Act for Climate Change also led by the youth has started school based orchards in partnership with six schools. This initiative is intended to

spread to other schools in the country, especially hard to reach and rural youth in Lesotho and across the continent.

**Mr President**

Before I conclude, it will be a great injustice to the Mountain Kingdom people to fail to express their appreciation to the German Commission for UNESCO for its continued technical support through the volunteer programme that has run for several years. The programme's continuity is highly appreciated. In the same manner, we are forever thankful to the Korea National Commission through the Bridge Programme which has left us with the legacy of three community learning centres in the country in which we are implementing Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), adult literacy and vocational skills programmes. Further collaboration and assistance in projects of these nature in future will be highly appreciated.

**Mr President**

In conclusion, on behalf of the people, government and Kingdom of Lesotho, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude for all the financial and technical assistance this organisation has been rendering to our country. It is our greatest wish and understanding that the sustenance of the partnerships build within the UNESCO fraternity will go a long way in realizing the goals the body aspires to achieve.

**Khotso, Pula, Nala (Peace, Rain and Prosperity)**