# ELECTORAL SUPPORT PROJECT Highlight Report – 2nd Quarter 2015

## 1.) Overall Project status

In 2012, Lesotho held a successful national election widely deemed free and fair, that resulted in an unprecedented democratic transition of power. The 2012 elections resulted in the first-ever coalition government in the country’s history, led by Thomas Thabane’s All Basotho Congress (ABC) party with the Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) and Basotho National Party (BNP) as the two other coalition partners. However, in the latter part of 2013, intra-government fighting and inter-coalition party conflicts hindered the coalition’s ability to function. Political tensions amongst the three coalition partners increased during 2014, culminating in the prorogation of Parliament on 10 June 2014. While it was conducted through the constitutional process, it was seen by political rivals as an attempt by the Prime Minister to avoid a vote of no confidence. The situation was further exacerbated by the events which took place on August 30th, 2014 following the appointment of a new army commander the previous day, where the Lesotho army attacked the police headquarters and some police stations resulting in one fatality and a number of officers injured, as well as the official residence of the Prime Minister, the official residence of the BNP leader who was also a Cabinet Minister and the private residence of the new army Commander. The Prime Minister, BNP leader, Commissioner of Police, new army commander and other senior officials fled the country, accusing the army of attempting to stage a coup. The Prime Minister returned to Lesotho along with other Ministers and officials within a week, escorted by South African police.

Following these events, the South African Development Community (SADC) intervened and deployed an observer mission to Lesotho. South Africa, as the Chair of the SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security Cooperation, appointed Deputy President Ramaphosa as a SADC Facilitator to address the political problems that ensued and to help to restore order in Lesotho. As a result of his efforts acting on behalf of SADC, a number of agreements were signed, including the Maseru Facilitation Declaration, which stipulated that the country go for snap elections on 28 February 2015.

Upon request of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), the United Nations (UN Department for Political Affairs in cooperation with UNDP Lesotho deployed an electoral Needs Assessment Mission (NAM) from 8-17 October 2014 to assess the capacities and needs of the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) to run the agreed-upon national elections.

As a result of the NAM, UNDP Lesotho launched its Electoral Support Programme in December 2014, focusing on the key areas of voter education, public outreach, training, logistics and coordination of observer initiatives. The project was envisioned to include both short-term electoral support activities, as well as longer term enabling-environment support, with a total budget of $ 899,999 funded jointly funded by USAID and UNDP. USAID supported activities included the components of voter education and public outreach, as well as training of various stakeholders (polling officers, party representative, chiefs, NGOs).

* **2015 Targets**

The main **objective** of the Project was to support and promote the building of a conducive environment ahead of, during and after the early elections in 2015, leading to the acceptance of the results, as well as addressing longer-term structural, legislative and capacity issues to create a conducive environment for future elections. Within this objective, the Project sought to result in three **outputs**:

* + **Output 1**: Organisation and management of elections enhanced;
  + **Output 2**: Technical and institutional capacity of IEC strengthened;
  + **Output 3**: Electoral enabling environment stabilised, including mechanisms for confidence-building, regulatory framework.

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**Programme Management**

The objective of the current report is to provide a summary of UNDP support activities as part of the Electoral Support Project for the 2015 National Elections in Lesotho, this covered the electoral activities conducted from January to end of March. While the project is ongoing, the major part of the project outputs were focused on support to delivering transparent and credible elections, and the current report covers these areas. Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 reports will cover post-elections activities including conflict resolution, electoral reforms and other unanticipated events given the current political and security environment.

**2.) Quarter report**

**Output 1:** **Organisation and management of elections enhanced**

As part of the efforts to enhance the electoral processes ahead of the February 2015 National Assembly Elections, The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) jointly cooperated and provided support in training electoral training for IEC staff (among other areas). The program focused on improving public understanding of the electoral processes, in order to increase confidence in the fairness of the results, and also include training targeted at polling officers, area chiefs, political party polling agents; observers, call centre staff and journalists.

**Training of Polling Officers**

* Training-of-Trainers by IEC for 250 polling staff members was undertaken in various places across the country 21-23  January, 2015 at the following venues: Molengoane Lodge, Khotsong Lodge (Maseru District), Aloes Guest House Pitseng (Leribe District), Ka Pitseng (Berea District) Likileng Lodge (Botha Bothe District), Big P Guest House and Hillsview Guest House (Quthing District).

**Party Agents Training**

* Party agents present at the polling station on polling day required training to ensure they can perform their role effectively. As planned, training of 1,720 party agents was undertaken by the IEC in all ten (10) districts of Lesotho.

**Training of Chiefs**

Chiefs play an important role no election day as officially part of the polling stations. The programme assisted training 320 Chiefs in all districts. This included:

* Chiefs at Tsebo Outsourcing, Butha Buthe covering the districts of Mokhotlong, Malingoaneng, Makhoakhoeng, Butha Buthe, Leribe, Berea and Majara.
* Chiefs trained at Orange River Lodge, Quthing covering Quthing and Qacha’s Nek.
* Chiefs trained at Catholic Training Centre, Mafeteng covering Mafeteng, Tebang, Matelile, Mathebe.
* Chiefs trained at IEMS, Mohale’s Hoek covering Phamong, Hloahloeng, Taung, Tajane, Thaba-Ts’oeu.

**Voter Education and Public Outreach**

With very limited time to prepare for the elections, and due to the fact that they came two years ahead of time, it was vital for the IEC to raise awareness among the general public and embark on a nation-wide voter education programme. UNDP deployed a **Public Outreach Advisor** directly at the Commission, providing technical support in the designing and implementation of public awareness strategies.

With UNDP’s assistance, the IEC developed a comprehensive voter education campaign aimed at:

* 1. Coordinate civil society and NGOs to conduct voter education through grass-roots public/community level and door-to-door visits, where UNDP assistance focused on outreach targeting women, people with disabilities and youth;
  2. Implementing a mass media public outreach campaign through radio, TV, social media and newspapers, where UNDP assistance focused on working with media on key public messages and a social media campaign.

**Voter education materials**

**Design and production of electoral materials**, which were distributed by voter educators in all ten districts of Lesotho. These materials included manuals for voter educators; flipcharts, stickers, and door hangers informing about elections day. In total, **three million** **elections materials** were printed and distributed. This includes 2,000,000 leaflets in 19 different types; 538,000 booklets in 10 different types; and 265,000 posters in 5 different types. Of the total materials produced, 1.1 million (10 different types) and these included:

Voting and Counting Manuals with pictorial presentations (artwork) & illustrations and with sign language to complement administration of electoral processes; brochures on  Corrupt Practices in Voting with pictorial presentations (artwork) & illustrations; Z-fold pamphlets on the Responsibilities of Chiefs; A5 booklets on Voting Steps with pictorial presentations (artwork) & illustrations; Code of Conduct booklets in Sesotho and English and with pictorial presentations (artwork) & illustrations and with sign language to complement administration of electoral processes; pamphlets on Electoral Issues related to Human Rights and brochures on Frequently Asked Questions on the Electoral Code; brochures on Voting steps and Voting procedure; fact sheets booklet and Voter Education Manuals.

**NGO-lead voter education**

1. UNDP with USAID support contracted two local NGOs to carry out voter education; namely, the Christian Council of Lesotho (CCL) and the Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN). The latter implemented their programme in conjuncture with another NGOs; Development for Peace Education (DPE). In addition to these NGOs, the IEC had contracted five other NGOs, including women’s groups; an NGO working with disability issues; as well as an NGO targeting youth at schools and tertiary institutions.[[1]](#footnote-1) The IEC had also trained and deployed 365 of their own voter educators who, combined with the NGOs contracted by UNDP and the IEC, covered all of Lesotho’s ten districts. In total, **820 voter** educators were deployed. Through UNDP/USAID assistance, **91,119 people were reached** through NGO voter education initiatives.
2. The role of these voter educators was to reach out to the public, sensitising Basotho about the elections focusing on their rights and responsibilities. The NGOs took on different approaches to carry out this task. Some went from house-to-house; others conducted public gatherings at the village level. Some organised political debates between political candidates; others held specific sessions for herd boys or youth (focused group discussions). UNDP’s role was mainly to coordinate the voter education activities, ensuring that all districts and constituencies were well-covered; that specific population groups were targeted (women, youth, herd boys, people with disabilities), and to ensure that efforts were not duplicated. For an overview of the activities of the two NGOs contracted by UNDP, LCN/DPE and CCL, please see paragraphs below.
3. **LCN and DPE** conducted voter education activities between 4th February and 24th February 2015. Their campaign was implemented in 23 constituencies in five districts across Lesotho (Mokhotlong (1); Berea (11); Mafeteng (1); Mohale’s Hoek (8); Quthing (1); Qacha’s Nek (1)). During the campaign, LCN/DPE conducted the following activities:
   1. Provision of training of electoral educators;
   2. Conducting door-to-door voter education to deliver key messages to the public;
   3. Public gatherings;
   4. Convening political leaders’ forum;
   5. Provision of monitoring and support of the programme

Through these activities, an estimated total number of **62,119 voters** were reached by LCN/DPE. Out of this total, 41% were women; 26% were youth; 3% were herd boys; and 1% people with disabilities.

1. **CCL** carried out their voter education campaign from 13th January to 20th February 2015. The campaign was implemented across eight constituencies in eight districts.The goal of CCL’s programme was to provide voter education to marginalised groups of society, particularly women, youth, the disabled and herd boys. Among other things, the campaign aimed at encouraging citizens to actively and freely participate in the elections; to provide information on why Lesotho was going for early elections; and to inculcate the voting procedures at the voting stations. Working closely with local churches, CCL used different strategies, including workshops, public gatherings, meetings and distribution of voter education information materials, to reach the target population groups. CCL estimate that their campaign reached a total of **29,000 voters**, including 16,575 women and 1,185 herd boys.

**Monitoring and Evaluation of Voter Education activities (UNDP-supported activity)**

For the last two weeks of the voter education campaign, UNDP, on behalf of the IEC, recruited and deployed a total of **23 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Officers** whose main role was to assess the impact of the voter educator’s work in the lead-up to the elections Despite some logistical challenges in deploying these officers in the field, the exercise was overall very successful and provided the IEC with valuable lessons for future elections. It showed, among other things, that the voter education materials were well distributed to all districts and that they proved effective in reaching out to the public with simple messages. Also, the assessment indicated that public gatherings and door-to-door visits conducted by voter educators were effective in the sense that they reached a lot of people across all constituencies of countries. In total, the M&E officers conducted **1,716** monitoring missions. This included door-to-door visits (handing out questionnaires to random households to assess the impact of voter education activities), public gatherings, and post-monitoring

**Public Service Announcements** Another important means of reaching the public was through mass media. UNDP worked with a local civil society organisation, Hillside Digital Trust to support the IEC in preparing **17** **audio/visual public service announcements** (PSAs), which were broadcasted on national TV and radio stations. These PSAs included messages promoting the toll-free IEC Call Centre; a reminder from the IEC on the Election Day; and a message directed at shepherds/herd boys, encouraging this population group to vote. In addition, the IEC published elections adverts in five national newspapers, thus reaching out to very large portions of the population. Further, SMSs promoting the IEC Call Centre was sent to **1.3 million** mobile phone subscribers via Vodacom and Econet.

**Call Centre**

With UNDP support, IEC established a 24/7 toll-free **Call Centre** to which every Basotho could call and inquire about any elections related procedures and requirements. Whereas UNDP helped with the technical aspects of establishing the call centre (working closely with Vodacom Lesotho), the IEC provided the technical lead to train 24 call centre agents who for a two-month period, answered phone calls and provided customer service to thousands of Basotho. On average, the call centre handled around **1,000 phone calls per day**, peaking at more than 2,000 calls per day. Inquiries to the call centre included frequent questions on how and where to register; opening hours of polling stations; as well as many other technical and practical questions relating to the elections. As a new addition to IEC’s public outreach activities, the call centre proved an effective avenue for the public to seek information about the elections.

**Youth Outreach – Youth for Peace campaign**

UNDP and USAID also worked with Hillside Digital on another activity to design and implement an innovative programme targeting Basotho **youth**. As a demographic group, youth comprise almost 40% of the entire population. Therefore it was of great importance to reach out specifically to the young Basotho, particularly since youth generally tend to be more apathetic and disillusioned than other age groups. For this purpose, **a youth outreach campaign,** called **Youth4Peace** was designed and carried out. The Youth4Peace initiative encompassed several activities, organized around social media outreach, and a Youth4Peace concert to engage youth through voter education tied to the concert and pledge for peaceful elections. Among other things, some key outputs played a pivotal role in high visibility, including:

* **Youth anthem** entitled “Peace is our Future”, featuring some of Lesotho’s top music artists. The song was made available for free download and has so far been **downloaded almost 7,000 times**.
  + <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iq1vtbJiTws>
  + <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V3wrZBxwvdA>
* **Stand United Concert:**  a high-visibility music event on 14 February 2015, where the song was performed live by all the artists, and related performances took place. The individual artists performed separate gigs, and between the music, youth engagement speakers gave short speeches, encouraging youth to vote and keep the peace. Among the speakers was a young woman with a disability who gave a passionate speech on the importance that youth with disabilities vote. The event sought to provide electoral education on a wider scope and aimed to promote peace and unity among youth in the lead-up to the elections.

The Youth4Peace initiative was a great success, reaching thousands of young Basotho. It was a departure from more traditional voter education and public awareness raising campaigns, using innovative and very youth orientated approaches.

**Output 2: Technical and institutional capacity of IEC strengthened**

**Logistics Support**

UNDP deployed a **Logistics Specialist** at the IEC to provide technical assistance. The specialist was deployed to quickly provide the IEC with expertise knowledge on logistical management and fast-track any logistical related activity, such as procurement and distribution of sensitive elections materials, warehouse management, as well as the development of a clear logistics plan.

* The Logistics advisor and the Logistics team at IEC at the warehouse took nonstop 77 days to prepare and organize the voting materials to be ready and adequate for the Advance voting and General voting on 28th February 2015 elections. The Office of the logistics and director made extra efforts to fast track the procurement of sensitive and essential voting materials
* Logistics warehouse team sorted and packaged voting materials within that short timeframe. International and national observers have all commended the IEC on the consistency and adequacy of voting materials at voting stations.
* Voting Materials were uniformly secured from – Ballot paper productions – central warehouse at HQ to the Voting canters. Both political parties’ agent and security (Lesotho Mounted Police service) were committed to the process, hence such practices provide trust of IEC during the electoral preparations and enhanced the credibility and acceptance of the final results.
* In relation to this, UNDP provided much needed assistance to the IEC by chartering a cargo airplane from Cape Town, South Africa to transport the ballot paper from the supplier in South Africa to Lesotho.

**Observer coordination**

UNDP engaged a consultant who was attached to the IEC to provide technical assistance on coordination of accredited observers for Election Day. The work of the Elections Observer Coordination Consultant included putting in place systems for effective functioning of the Elections Observation Unit of the IEC. The consultant conducted various activities in relation to elections observation coordination, including:

* 1. Put in place a system for the accreditation of national and international observers;
  2. Facilitate accreditation of elections observers and media;
  3. Put together an election observation kit;
  4. Organise briefing sessions for national and international observers
  5. Collect interim statements of the observation mission for the IEC

In total, (excluding national observers) there were **358 regional and international observers accredited**

**Output 3: Electoral enabling environment stabilized** 

**Conflict Resolution and Management Dialogues (Mediation process by Christian Council of Lesotho)**

1. UNDP engaged a **senior technical advisor** to the **Baruti** (Church Leaders) whose main role was to support the national dialogue and mediation. Provide technical support (information, planning, techniques, coaching and mentoring) to the Baruti. UNDP remained in the background and provided discrete technical support and advice in order to ensure full national ownership of the Baruti process.
2. Among other activities, the technical advisor facilitated a one-day planning retreat in order to develop strategies for supporting a peaceful electoral process before, during and after Election Day. The technical advisor also facilitated on Negotiation Skills-Enhancement workshop for the Baruti.
3. For the elections, the Baruti began engaging in earnest with political parties at the beginning of February. UNDP provided the venue and logistics for the Baruti to facilitate **three dialogue sessions** for the political parties. These dialogues culminated in the approval and subsequent signing of the ***Electoral Pledge*** by the key political parties. A week before Election Day, the Baruti organised a National Prayer at the National Stadium, at which the Electoral Pledge was signed publically. This was an important achievement given the fragile political environment and arguably a very important milestone that ensured the peaceful conduct of the February 28 Elections and the subsequent acceptance of the results by all political parties.

**Training for High Court Judges**

With the support of UNDP , IEC held a one-day refresher training for all twelve (12) Judges on the Electoral Act and conflict management, therefore, preparing the judges for potential litigations and dispute resolution related to elections.

**Media training and Election Debates**

UNDP and USAID supported the Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) Lesotho Chapter to implement a media campaign for broader public outreach and maintaining responsible journalism with a project entitled “Broadcasting Sector Capacity Building in Peace Building Conflict Reporting in Lesotho”.

1. MISA trained **30 journalists** for a week on the role of the media in elections and how the media can contribute positively to peace building. MISA also set up a team to monitor the media throughout the elections period, and the organisation coordinated elections reporting and established a media coordination centre.
2. Election debates were aired on eleven private and public radio stations which comprised: Harvest FM, KEL FM, Mo-Afrika Radio, Mafeteng Community Radio, Motjoli FM, People’s Choice FM, Radio Lesotho, Radio Spez Nostra, Thaaha-Khube FM, Ts’enolo FM and Ultimate Radio.
3. From 27th February to 1st March, 2015, 29 journalists were deployed in the 10 districts of Lesotho with each district being covered by three (3) journalists. There were two (2) from electronic media and one (1) from print media. The journalists reported on the readiness of the electoral staff ahead of the polling day, polling day and on the outcome of the elections.
4. MISA also galvanized journalists to sign a pledge on ethical reporting on elections. The pledge was signed at the UN House where 43 journalists from various media houses committed to:

* Observe and adhere to media ethics, and make sure that all reports are Balanced; Accurate; True; Fair; Factual and Timely.
* Practice high professional standards and report information that Is well researched; Is human rights and gender-sensitive; Does not incite or glorify violence; Does not create hatred,
* Does not divide the nation according to political ideologies, clans, gender, religious belief, socio-economic status or any division that may lead to undermining of democracy and the rule of law in Lesotho.

**3. Post-Elections Activities**

Financial support CCL to facilitate the mediation process between three opposition leaders who taken refuge in South Africa and the Government of Lesotho.

## 4.) Planned Activities for 3rd Quarter 2015

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| **DESCRIPTION** |
| Conflict Resolution, political reconciliation and confidence building activities |
| Electoral Reform facilitation |

**PROJECT MANAGEMENT**

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| Project Steering Committee meeting at the end of July | | |
| Capacity Development for Project Manager | | |
| **5. Budget Status**   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Activity** | **Budget** | **Expenditure** | **Balance** | | 1. Organisation and Management of Elections | 595,000 | 540,754 | 54,246 | | 1. IEC Strengthened | 100,000 | 879 | 99,121 | | 1. Regulatory Framework | 115,000 | 40,563 | 74,437 | | 1. Project Management | 50,000 | 21,405 | 28,595 | | **Total** | **860,000** | **603,601** | **256,399** | |  |  | |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Legend** |  | **On target** |
|  |  | **Areas to watch** |
|  |  | **Areas to address** |
|  |  | **On Hold** |

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)