

THE MAKING OF THE LESOTHO NATIONAL POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY (PRS)

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Preface

This consultancy was commissioned by the British Department for International Development (DFID), Lesotho Field Management Office as a contribution to a body of knowledge to the poverty reduction strategy processes. PRSP process has proved that, the intensity of the exercise does not depend on the size of a country, rather the driving principles of promoting participation, ensuring inclusiveness, being broad based, developing partnership, focussing on results, being driven and owned by the country. The experiences from most countries suggest that no country has ever come out the PRSP the same way it started. Although the content and outcomes have differed from country to country, there is agreement across the board that the PRSP processes have provoked a new thinking amongst participating national stakeholders.

Being central in the preparation of the PRSP, I can vouch that Lesotho shares this experience. DFID made a decision to fund this report because many times, people never remember to document the story that explains the process once the ultimate goal has been achieved. The making of PRSP in Lesotho has opened a range of opportunities that, not capturing what happened would have been a shame.

The authors of this report asked me to write the preface because of my role in this process. I came in middle and ran with them till the end. From my experience elsewhere, I consider Lesotho PRSP process the most extensive in the world. The consultations covered over 50% of the country and at least one person out of every one hundred was consulted. No other PRSP posts such record and this is remarkable!

This report brings to life the emotions, the tensions and the learning that PRSP generated. It exposes the strengths and weaknesses embedded in the systems and social fabrics of the Basotho society. Finally, it provides an objective critique of the PRSP process and the somewhat unreasonably demands this process puts on countries with limited resources.

It has been along walk to the final product, but one that is well deserving for Lesotho. Although the time taken is one of the longest, it is my understanding that learning and internalising the lessons has been taking place at the same time. Government officials, who normally operate vertically, have begun to consult more horizontally. If this is sustained, we are likely to begin seeing major improvements in future planning and targeting of resources towards poverty reduction. As one of the Principal Secretaries in the Government put it PRSP should be ... **“ Morero oa ho fenya sekhobo sa bofuma Lesotho ”**

Like the current national initiative of Fighting HIV/AIDS out of Lesotho, poverty MUST be equally fought to restore the confidence of the poor people in Lesotho and provide an opportunity for them to live a decent and dignified life.

Readers of this report will need to read the PRSP document to capture the picture in total and to enhance their comprehension. I personally, find it hugely informative and fairly objective. I hope that this report will be found useful and will assist the readers' gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the Lesotho Poverty Reduction Strategy.

Khotso ! Pula !! Nala !!!

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Acknowledgements and Disclaimer

We, Simon K. Phafane (Mr), Mahen Sumner (Mrs) and Potlako Ntšekhe-Nzima (Ms), Khalapa Development Agency Consultants, wish to acknowledge our sincere appreciation to all different interviewees whose contributions made this report possible. Those deserving this gratitude were members of the communities we visited in Butha-Buthe, Leribe, Berea, Maseru, Mafeteng and Mohale's Hoek, Government Officials, Principal Chiefs, Chiefs, Parliamentarians and Community Leaders, Leaders of the Civil Society Groups, Private Sector Representatives, Selected Convenors of different groups involved in the making of the Lesotho PRSP. We thank them for their responses, which have enriched our knowledge and understanding of the process.

We particularly want to express our deep sense of appreciation to the Donor Representatives who were so kind with their valuable time and gave us very useful comments that assisted us to write this Report. Lastly, but certainly not least, our deep gratitude goes to the Department for International Development (DFID) who commissioned this report and for the opportunity afforded to Khalapa Development Agency to undertake the assignment. We particularly wish to acknowledge contributions made by the staff members based in the Maseru British High Commission, in particular James Atema, Diana Webster, and Tlelima Phakisi who were patient enough with us and made critical comments on our several drafts, provided professional commentaries and undertook a second level editing for accuracy of the facts we have presented.

The views presented in this report are those of the authors and not of the Department for International Development (DFID) or any other organisation that was interviewed. The authors of this report take full responsibility of the views presented in this report. The contents of the report, the conclusions and recommendations, are, therefore, the responsibility of the authors of this report alone.

We dedicate this Report on the "Making of the Lesotho Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper" to the people of Lesotho, in particular those who live in poverty and with HIV/AIDS, and hope that the PRSP shall be used to effectively address their needs.

Likhomo Tseo Basotho!!!

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List of Acronyms

APCBP	Agricultural Policy and Capacity Building Project
ASIP	Agriculture Sector Investment Programme
BIZNET	Business Network of Lesotho
BOS	Bureau of Statistics
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CSPRF	Civil Society Poverty Reduction Forum
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DS	District Secretary
GOL	Government Of Lesotho
HIPC	Heavily Indebted and Poor Countries
IDA	Development Association
IMF	International Monetary Fund
I-PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper
LCCI	Lesotho Chamber of Commerce and Industry
LCN	Lesotho Council of Non-Governmental Organizations
LGA	Logical Framework Analysis
MDP	Ministry of Development Planning
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NV	National Vision 2020
PFGF	Poverty reduction growth Facility
PFP	Policy Framework Paper
PMG	Poverty Monitoring Group
PPA	Participatory Poverty Assessments
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategic Paper
PRSTF	Poverty Reduction Strategies Trust Fund
PS	Principal Secretary
SWG	Sector Working Groups
TWG	Technical Working Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WB	World Bank

Executive Summary

The Making of the National Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper was the first national effort in Lesotho and the report to capture the story of the process of making the PRSP by those who participated in it, is also the first experience. The decision to write this report was influenced by the fact that many a time, people forget what process they went through to develop a product like the PRSP once they have realised the outcome. This report reminds us that, while the PRSP, the final product- was important, but it would not help future processes since it is focused on the content outputs and not the process. The sheer volume of information we received manifested the importance of the process. At times, we were so perplexed by just how much people still remembered as we discussed with them. No doubt, readers will find a number of flaws in this report and some may even not agree with some sections of it. If this happens, then this report will have achieved its purpose. The authors have no intention of making an impression that they have captured everything perfectly, but wish to demonstrate the enormous energy, commitment and time Lesotho and her partners spent in over 36 months.

Analysis and Approach

The method of approach to the writing of the story was based primarily on field interviews of selected facilitators who managed the consultation process both in the districts. and in the central government in Maseru, the private sector and civil society organisations, and on secondary literature on poverty available in Lesotho. The authors used questionnaires and direct interviewing to generate information from stakeholders. The basic framework of the story was structured from the history of the country. This was necessary in order to provide a deeper understanding of the growth of poverty in Lesotho. For an important exercise like this, the genesis of poverty in Lesotho needed to be understood critically, to remind policy makers that, poverty in Lesotho is both structural and physical. Structural because systems aimed to deliver services to the people have failed to do so over the last three decades Lesotho has been independent.

The authors start with a premise that poverty in Lesotho cannot be understood properly if it is not linked to issues of governance and the way the country has been managed or the way its resources have been managed. An analysis of the political economy from the pre-colonial era of Moshoeshoe I and through to the period of the independent Lesotho of today, is meant to be a platform for this understanding. In this analysis, distinct differences in governance between the various eras of the Kingdom and the role-played by the state in the economy have been shown. The degree to which the state dominated or has dominated the socio-economic processes and thereby crowded other stakeholders out of that active participation has been explained. The verdict the report gives is that, the state tended to dominate the market place and therefore, largely influenced how resources were utilised and controlled. That static approach, tended to suppress the growth of the private sector. Basic resources like land and human labour were not managed efficiently and used effectively to optimise production of public goods.

In terms of land resource, the report points out the limitation of this asset as a means of production, firstly due the insufficiency of it, thus only 9% of land is arable coupled with poor management practice and secondly, the loss of most of the arable land during the external aggression from the Boer Trekkers.

As regards the country's geographical location within the Republic of South Africa where "when the Republic of South Africa sneezes Lesotho catches the cold". Although the relationship with South Africa has largely been fruitful, this however remains short term and not strategic in nature. An example of this includes tens of thousands of Basotho mineworkers and industrial employees who went there for work received high income that resulted in high remittances and customs revenues back home. This has since began to reverse with major retrenchments of Basotho miners from South Africa.

Other factors that have exacerbated the situation of poverty include, HIV/AIDS which is overtaken other causes of death. It is estimated that 31% of Basotho are infected with this virus. The fact that, most of the infected are between the ages of 15-49, poses a major threat to the productivity of the country. The level of dependency has dramatically risen and the number of orphans is estimated at 10% of the population of the youth in the country.

Organisation of the Report

This report is arranged in Seven Chapters with Conclusions and Recommendations. Chapter One is dedicated to providing a brief introduction on the origins of the PRSP approach, and a short response to why Lesotho bought into the approach. It also covers description of Lesotho, its location, topography, population growth rate and distribution. It also gives brief political and economic history and attempts to identify origins of poverty by searching through the different regimes starting from a brief analysis of the pre-colonial era, the colonial period through to the period of independent Lesotho. It further discusses changing scenarios in South Africa, particularly the demise of the apartheid regime and subsequent developments there with their impact on Lesotho. Those were found to have shaken Lesotho such that it had to embark on a paradigm shift in terms of managing its economy.

Chapter Two deals with the planning for consultations that include the establishment of institutional structures to undertake the PRSP process forward. In establishing such institutions, Government based itself on principles that underpin the PRSP process, which include: *participation, inclusiveness, broad based, results oriented, partnership, country driven and ownership*. The report highlights the crucial support from her partners in development, namely the UNDP, DFID and DCI. Seven of such institutional structures were created to facilitate the making of the country's PRSP. Those included: Technical Working Group (TWG), the PRSP Secretariat, Poverty Monitoring Sub-Group, Consultation Sub-Group, Eleven Sector Working Groups, Thematic Groups and PRSP Core Group. Each of the groups' functions have been critically analysed.

Chapter Three is about the participation of Stakeholders in the Lesotho PRSP Process. It analyses the role of **primary stakeholders who were the communities** and the public at large and **secondary** stakeholders' who were government officials, civil society organisation, the private sector and, most importantly, parliamentarians and development partners whose active participation was key in the making of the PRSP in Lesotho. Thus, the strength of the Lesotho PRSP rested on the support and active participation of all the stakeholders and the Lesotho partners in Development.

In Chapter Four, the report analyses the drafting of the PRSP at the Mohale Lodge where the zero-zero draft was produced. This is the stage that saw the relations between stakeholders, making it possible for state and non-state actors to interact and share ideas and knowledge. The Mohale Experience was the first planning exercise that changed the way government does business.

One of critical factors that the Chapter analyses, is the Consultants and the 'Consultancy Mania' evidenced by their role throughout the PRSP making process where, it is demonstrated that, they were not properly utilised in the PRSP process.

Chapter Five deals with what worked in the process of making the PRSP and identifies participatory community consultations which clearly indicated Government's commitment to ensure that views and concerns of the Basotho on poverty issues were exposed and represented in the Strategy. The process also allowed for a common platform from which stakeholders' contributions were taken on board; linkages between the stakeholders, especially those working within the same sectors, were established; participation of minorities was catered for and support from development partners was obtained.

Chapter Six records about 'what did work. This is presented as 'tensions and threats' that were experienced in the process. The report recognises that an exercise of that magnitude could not go without some disappointments, tensions and threats. These tensions and

threats, ranged from the administrative and skills shortcomings of civil servants, the on-going mistrust between the civil service players and the private sector players; the dispute between the PRSP Secretariat and the NGO consortium that resulted in the LCN and government quickly intervening to redeem the situation; the PRSP running concurrently with the National Vision; the merging of the PRSP Secretariats with that of the Vision under the leadership of the PRSP Director and then the de-merger. Other issues were the erratic participation of representatives of various groups in the process and the poor participation of Parliamentarians.

Conclusions

There is no doubt this was a huge exercise whose overall outcome should help to build a platform for transforming the thinking and the way of doing business in Lesotho. Shortcomings aside, it could be argued that the Lesotho PRSP process was a success and has introduced new concepts both in the state and non-state sectors. The only danger that the PRSP poses is, the enormous expectations raised amongst the Basotho people. The question that will remain unanswered at least at this time is... "Will the Government and its Development Partners fulfil their promises?"

In this Report, we have attempted to give an historical genesis of poverty within the changing social, economic and political scenarios in Lesotho and in the region and, we have shown several and varied attempts to fight poverty by various regimes with support from the country's development partners. Our conclusion is that, while the process was obviously not at all perfect, major steps have been taken which demonstrate clearly a shift towards tackling the problems of poverty in Lesotho. The challenge that now faces the country is how to consolidate and institutionalise this process of consultations, collaborations and genuine dialogue with stakeholders. Governments in the developing world are known for jumping on bandwagons like PRSPs just because they feel that, this is what the Western rich countries want to see before they can open their wallets. Our view is that, if Lesotho acts in this way, a big opportunity to change the lives of its citizens will be lost. Our hope is that, the traditional saying that goes 'Muso ha o tate' meaning government is never in a hurry will disappear with this approach. Accountability to Basotho should increase, and more transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in the use of public resources will begin to be seen.

As it has been said over and over by all stakeholders, Lesotho's record in implementing programmes is very poor. The institutional response is very weak and so the advocates of PRSP must understand that, the country has never lacked good plans or even good planning. What it has lacked is good implementation. The government systems must be radically changed to become responsive to demand driven initiatives. Such change can only be initiated from the top where leadership must be from the front. For this to happen, the authorities should encourage innovation and creativity and allow people to take risks while trying new packages for change. It is only when people are free to choose answers to difficult issues that effective solutions can be found.

Many Basotho to whom we talked, saw the PRSP as a hope for a new beginning. All Basotho should treat procrastination with contempt, and people in authority who make decisions should make them in line with government's policies even if the decisions may sometimes be wrong. It should be noted that a bad decision is better than none.

For the readers of this report, we apologise if there are parts where we may have exaggerated a situation. Our main purpose is to ensure that the Lesotho story of the PRSP is not lost. If some of our interpretation is not correct, we request all, to understand that this was not the intention. The report simply hopes that the lessons learned in this process will become living memories in the lives of the Basotho so that mistakes of YESTERDAY shall not be repeated TOMORROW!

Recommendations

The volume of information that this report generated was too overwhelming for us to do justice in this section. In most cases some of the recommendations are subsumed in the specific chapters. In view of the fact that the making of a PRSP will be revisited after every three years of implementation, what appears here is what we consider generic and important to be highlighted. These are:

1. That the link between communities and the Central Government through active communication between the PRSP Secretariat and District offices, (as was the case during the consultations), is reconnected and kept alive. Regular dialogue/discussions and feedbacks on on-going activities relating to poverty reduction for communities will ensure, less scepticism when officials visit communities for future national exercises such as the PRSP.
2. The PRSP process has revealed the degree of weakness in the private sector's ability to come together and engage effectively with government on national issues. Since they must, of necessity, stay on the bandwagon, the private sector must be encouraged and supported to organise themselves so that they continue to provide the much needed input to policy making processes in Lesotho. Without them playing an active role, the economy may not grow fast enough to reduce poverty in Lesotho.
3. There is the need to have national debates about the broad policy direction/s that government may want to pursue, either to address general issues pertaining to the economic and social dimensions of poverty which would allow for a holistic approach to the development of PRSP, or specific issues pertaining to specific strategies etc. There is, therefore, a need for continuous, open and robust discussion by all stakeholders, before and during development of any national exercises such as the PRSP, or after each phase of implementation. What we understand now is that Lesotho has embarked on a long but dynamic process of developing her economy for the better.
4. Whilst we acknowledge that the multi-stakeholder institutional structures developed for the PRSP process were far from being perfect, they will need to be strengthened so that they continue to collaborate, particularly during the implementation stage. They can play crucial roles in facilitating the PRS implementation, its monitoring and evaluation. There is a need, therefore, to devise some formal and joint mechanism to institutionalise active participation of key stakeholders to ensure and deepen ownership of the PRSP processes now and in the future.
5. In future, clear reporting and accountability mechanisms should be put in place within the Secretariat and all the Working Groups, which would also allow for constant briefing and updating measures to all stakeholders, and to also ensure that timeframes are adhered to in making such policy documents.
6. Consideration should be made to have equitable and proportional representation of all stakeholders in working groups to allow for parity in the presentation of views, influencing decisions and to ensure equitable ownership of the process.
7. The process should not be taken as an isolated process but as a national goal and tool to continue multiple stakeholder participation in national issues. Mechanisms should be set up to initiate a genuine dialogue platform between all stakeholders with clear action plans regarding the planning and implementation of the poverty reduction strategies. There should therefore be clear action plans with implementation strategies and monitoring and evaluation tools of the programme.

The challenge for Lesotho is whether this participatory turn is going to shift from the traditionally top down approach to a more participatory form of decision-making and policy planning.

8. A national think-tank, which will involve all stakeholders, should be established. This group will be assigned to discuss national issues relating to the PRS before and after implementation. Stakeholders should take such exercises more seriously and assign properly qualified people with the necessary specialised skills and expertise such that they spend minimum time on the process. Chiefs and Parliamentarians should work together and collaborate on mobilising their constituencies to debate national issues especially during the PRS implementation period.
9. Use should be made of modern technology to access and transfer information promptly between all stakeholders. The number and frequency of physical meetings will be reduced and savings on stationary, time and other resources will be made. Using this mode of communication will facilitate sharing of relevant information between stakeholders frequently and efficiently at all times. For example there is abundant relevant information on PRSP on the Internet, which accessed, would invariably cut down on travelling time to visit other countries by officials for experience and guidance.
10. Lesotho has been over researched and the public is getting weary of not participating in the implementation of their reported concerns. The **'Voice of the People'** document should, therefore, be further edited and developed to capture more information that can be used as a guide for other similar exercises. It should also be translated into Sesotho and distributed to communities. Indeed, some of the views and expectations of the communities will remain valid for some years to come. Only incremental information may be required in the future.

CHAPTER 1

The Making of a National Poverty Reduction Strategy: An insurmountable Task!

1.0 Introduction

After many years of enormous transfers of resources from the northern rich countries to the southern poor countries, the World Summit for Social Development of 1995 in Denmark-Copenhagen, unanimously agreed that very little impact had been achieved in terms of reducing poverty world wide, but more so in developing economies. More and more people in the southern hemisphere were increasingly falling in the vicious cycle of poverty with no food to eat, no shelter, no proper medical care and no freedom. Of all the regions, Africa was the most affected with over 50% of its population living in abject poverty. Consequently, the Copenhagen Summit resolved to change the way development had been approached from top down (trickle down theory) to the bottom up and participatory approach championed by Robert Chambers 'development theory advocates' comprising largely civic activists and civil society organisations such as Oxfam, Action Aid etc. Being one of the countries in this league Lesotho bought into this new agenda.

The purpose of this report is to tell objectively the story of Lesotho in the making of its national poverty strategy paper. The intention is to capture the detailed emotions, hoops and hurdles the country went through to produce its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). This is important since many times events like this take place with no one recording the story and, since a PRSP making is an ongoing process that will continue being repeated over time, we end up repeating the same mistakes or re-inventing the wheel. Recording of this process, therefore, is critical as it will provide a basis for future processes and serve to reduce time and save resources that would have to be spent otherwise.

1.1 Did Lesotho Need a Poverty Reduction Strategy?

As discussed in Chapter Two of this report, this question was asked to a cross section of Basotho to provoke as many answers as it would for questions. Indeed, there were interviewees within and without government that strongly felt that Lesotho did not need to engage in the PRSP exercise because PRSP was for countries who were Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC). That group further argued that since independence Lesotho had always planned to reduce poverty and hence they did not see anything new in the new approach.

On the other side, PRSP advocates argued that, if indeed Lesotho had planned for poverty reduction in the past, why then were Basotho getting poorer and poorer? That group was convinced that something must have been wrong with the way the country planned and spent its resources. With very high rates of economic growth in the 1970s-1990s, the group argued that poverty should have been eradicated. The big question this group raised was: what happened? It was in that light that the Government signed off on the resolution of the World Summit Social Development in Copenhagen, to engage a different strategy (The Poverty Reduction Strategy) in order to fight poverty meaningfully.

Faced with increasing numbers of poor people, high levels of unemployment, increasing prevalence in HIV/AIDS cases and declining economy and, coupled with tough lending conditionalities from the International Financing Institutions (IFS), the Government resolved to prepare a National Poverty Reduction Strategy. Consequently, in 1999, the Government of Lesotho initiated an inclusive process - involving all stakeholders, private sector, civil society, development partners and all government ministries in countrywide poverty talks.

The authors of this report have chosen to approach this story from a historical perspective to show how Basotho have travelled this road for the last 38 years from the land of plenty to a nation of many poor people.

1.2 Lesotho: The Country



The Kingdom of Lesotho is a small mountainous country with elevations above sea level ranging from 5,000 to over 11,000 feet. Due to this high altitude Lesotho is sometimes referred to as the **“Kingdom in the Sky”**. The country lies outside the tropics in the Southern Hemisphere and is surrounded by the Republic of South Africa. It has a land area of 11,716 square miles (**about 33 000 Kms**) with four distinct ecological zones, which are: the lowlands of the western plateau, the foothills, the Senqu (Orange River) valleys and the mountains. The Country now has less than nine percent of arable land in total, with the mountain region covering three quarters of the land with even a lower percentage of arable land.

At independence in 1966 the population was 0.97 million and, with annual growth rates of 2.97% rising to 2.63% by 1976 and followed by a decrease to 2.1% in 1986, it grew to 1.96 million in 1996. With the growth rate of 2.1% since 1996, the population is estimated to be 2.2 million in 2003. The distribution of this population within Lesotho, namely: 49% being male and 51% female is very significant and furthermore, the distribution of the country's population according to the ecological zones is even more significant with the lowlands carrying 55.5%; the foothills 16.5%; the mountains 21.3% and the Senqu River Valley 6.9% people¹. These statistics, among other things, show that within a period of less than four decades, Lesotho's population has more than doubled. Of significant importance, however, is

¹ Bureau of Statistics Population Report 2001

the period between 1966 and 1996 (30 years of independence) where the population more than doubled from 0.97 million to 1.96 million people.

1.3 Political History and Economy of Lesotho

Lesotho's political economy has been shaped by its socio-political history, its location within one economically powerful country –the Republic of South Africa-, its topography and, more importantly, the general social, political and economic developments that have taken place within and around the Southern African Sub-Region. These developments can only be seen and appreciated if they are traced through the long turbulent history of the Kingdom. Starting from the pre-colonial period to the colonial era and to the present democratic Lesotho, there are significant landmarks that each has their story to tell. As will be demonstrated in the next paragraphs-1.4.1-. 1.4.1.6 there are useful corner stones in the history of Lesotho that have direct or indirect relations to the current levels of Lesotho's economic performance and the levels of poverty.

1.3.1 Where did Poverty Come from in Lesotho?

Lesotho current state of poverty can be traced to its history. In this section, the report attempts to demonstrate the historical connection of poverty while underpinning the contribution of each era of governance to the current state of poverty in the country. The sections that follow make an attempt to vindicate this argument.

1.3.2 The Pre-colonial Lesotho

The tiny unitary mountain Kingdom emerged to become famous, from the ashes of the 'tumultuous sequence of trans-territorial invasions' of the 18th Century in the southern part of Africa. The Founder of the small Kingdom, Moshoeshoe the Great remains fondly remembered not only by Basotho, but also by several historians for his statesmanship, diplomacy and 'benevolent democratic principles'. Moshoeshoe fought wars for the sole purpose of bringing 'peace and prosperity' to his people.

During his period (1786-1870), the driving force for unity among societies in the war torn region, was mobilisation of people by their chiefs for the purpose of acquiring more land in order to increase and intensify agricultural and livestock production to ensure food security, physical security and to protect them from enemies. Given the fierce struggles for land and protection of their assets, chiefs like Moshoeshoe I, had to mobilise loyal supporters who would be ready to go to war to defend what they felt was rightly theirs. Mobilising larger groups and consolidating control over them was therefore very essential.

The means by which that consolidation was cemented through equitable reallocation of accumulated wealth in order to attract more supporters and to ensure their loyalty. Moshoeshoe I is reported to have been a grand master at these strategies. Because of this approach, Moshoeshoe I ensured that every one of his subjects had enough to eat and drink. Abject poverty as the one experienced in the present Lesotho, was a rare commodity, enough food was available for all in the country.

Moshoeshoe I valued agricultural land, as he knew that it formed the main productive base for Basotho socio-economic and political prosperity. Success in cultivation and the raising of livestock was a sure way of having food for all in all situations. The Basotho history testifies that, long before the country was a protectorate, Basotho had developed some excellent traditional technology in agriculture and livestock production. They practiced intercropping, organic farming, small-scale irrigation, crop rotation and pasture rotation. These measures optimised output and facilitated the production of surpluses that were either stored for rainy days or exchanged for other essentials with other regions. Basotho inherited a valuable legacy of land, peace and prosperity from Moshoeshoe I that had to be jealously protected and maintained by themselves. This legacy is unfortunately disappearing at an alarming rate.

1.3.3 The Colonial Era

Under the rule of Moshoeshoe, Lesotho was the only country that was never conquered. On the advice of the Protestant Missionaries, Moshoeshoe¹ invited the British to protect his country and people. This was when he was under threat attack from the Boers. He invited Queen Victoria of Great Britain to protect his Kingdom. His famous and celebrated analogy: **“protect me, my blanket (the country) and its lice’ (the people)”** is still fondly remembered today in Lesotho. The coming in of the British protection to Moshoeshoe, the country and his people, brought with it, some stability and peace for Basotho who were then great farmers and used to produce surplus grain and livestock for the new and emerging market in the booming mining sector in South Africa.

That trade brought prosperity to Lesotho with its economy that grew stronger and stronger. However, that prosperity was short-lived. Just before his demise in 1870, the peace and stability began to crumble when a new war between Basotho and Boer Trekkers for land started. Using some crude fighting tactics and putting immense pressure on the aging Moshoeshoe before he died and later on his sons, the Boers eventually conquered large parts of the Basotho Kingdom and took over most of the arable land. When the colonial boundaries were finally fixed in Berlin in 1890, Basotho were left with current landmass that was clearly insufficient for production. That limited land was to be put under tremendous pressure from over-cultivation, over-stocking and grazing with serious degradation due also to increasing population. This could be regarded as the genesis of abject poverty in Lesotho since the Basotho did not have any other productive industry apart from agriculture. Loss of land meant loss of wealth for Basotho.

1.3.4 Lesotho’s Survival in the Belly of South Africa

The loss of land and wealth, the increasing population and increasing demand for food forced the Basotho to seek alternative means of livelihood. The emerging mining industry in South Africa and the country’s geographic location within the belly of South Africa influenced its new social and economic survival to a very large extent. That influence began as far back as the time when the mining sector was established in Kimberly in the 1870s. With the growth of infrastructure and towns, the demand for labour force rose rapidly² to supply the growing and expanding economy. Thus, with the declining economy based on agriculture, South Africa became an alternative source of livelihood for many able-bodied men and women from the Kingdom.

Although a few Basotho engaged in craftwork producing some items for sale, such as pottery, weaving, manufacture of leather goods and wooden implements etc, those were not developed further because they were to be replaced by imported European goods of similar nature but of better quality. In order to purchase those imported goods, the Basotho needed money that could only be found from employment in the mines in South Africa. That was the origin of the migrant labour system. While it could be argued that migrant labour was not a bad thing for Lesotho, it however extracted the able bodied Basotho from the economy, leaving the domestic front with very limited manpower to develop the country. It also made Basotho dependent on South Africa in terms of remittances. From the social angle, migrant labour also separated families leading to many female-headed households in Lesotho who, among other things, had no legal right to asset ownership.

Little wonder, therefore, that Lesotho has been referred to as a ‘poor labour reserve’ because of its ‘declining food self-sufficiency, and increasing reliance on labour migration’ and solely depending on its only neighbour. That dependency was aggravated by natural hazards like drought and untimely off-season rain, snowfalls and frosts. Bardill and Cobbe (1985), and Eldredge (1993) argue that “the years between 1884-1966 witnessed the decline of (Lesotho) from a prosperous grain granary to an impoverished...labour reserve”, a country that transformed from “a net exporter of grain at the beginning of the period to a net importer of

² John E. Bardill and James H. Cobbe (1985)

grain”³ at the close of it. This view is vindicated by the fact that the retrenchments in the mines which formed the largest part of Lesotho economy has affected the country negatively leading to the current state of abject poverty, unemployment, crime and other social ills.

1.3.5 The Independent Lesotho: The Role of the State in Service Delivery

During the different regime from the pre-colonial era to colonial rule up to independence, the hegemony of the state in the management of the economy has been prevalent. The only difference has been on the degree of dominance that has differed from that of an absolute but benevolent monarch under whose rule peace and prosperity for the nation was fundamental, to the colonial rule and the independence period. Under the era of Moshoeshoe, the unitary state existed because of external threats of wars in the region. The King and his subjects had a common goal of consolidating and protecting their Kingdom, hence the policy of equitable sharing of resources and responsibilities that underpinned that goal. Land and its resources had to be protected and sustained.

On the other hand, the colonial dualist rule left local traditional authorities with local economic control especially on matters pertaining to land allocation, use of land and management of that land. Under that form of governance, Lesotho experienced a situation where power and authority were shared between a colonial administrator (whose main interest was political stability, security from external aggression and general colonial administration) underpinned by colonial interests. The traditional monarchy was in power for local governance including management of land and the environment generally.

While that dualist governance provided a platform for the development of modern democracy, the deterioration of local governance could be traced to that system where local chiefs, although in charge of a wide range of resources, did not ensure sustainable use of land as their predecessors did. For example, it is recorded that when the colonial administration introduced contours to arrest rainwater to control storm water damages in the late 1950s, many Basotho rejected that form of technology and the chiefs did little to enforce that policy. Consequently the country continued to experience pressure from overgrazing and bad land management and usage.

That style of managing the nation’s natural resource base has been perpetuated up to the present day. It is difficult to divorce Lesotho’s state of poverty from poor governance. The state has continued dominating the economy, directing the economy of the country and squeezing out private sector. Planning systems and resource allocation have remained centrally driven and controlled by technocrats in the central government with very limited consultation with the Basotho. Development plans have remained purely conventional, and for a long time with not much serious engagement with primary stakeholders.

The dominance of the control and direction of social and economic life of the nation can be explained in many ways. Since independence, for example, and even earlier, different churches in Lesotho provided services such as education, health, agriculture and other infrastructure. To date, churches and communities own almost 80% of the schools while almost 75% of medical facilities fall within the Christian Health Association of Lesotho (CHAL) and a considerable number of agricultural initiatives are still being supported by NGOs. And yet, historically, relations between different regimes and these institutions have often been strained resulting in resources being diverted to programmes that tend to duplicate rather than complement efforts that have already been initiated.

This testifies to a lack of national consensus and synergy on many areas of national interest between the different regimes in power and the stakeholders in the country. Critics of these tensions argue that provision of both health and education services, regardless of who provides them, are in themselves neutral but essential. All that may be required would be to ensure quality of services whether provided by government or churches; it is only government that can ensure that quality by regulations. This situation has not helped to reduce poverty

³ Bardill and Cobbe (1985) and Eldredge (1993)

and instead has perpetuated tensions, unnecessary conflicts and inequality where the meagre national resources have been unfairly distributed.

It could be argued that PRSP exercise is a response by the Government of Lesotho to correct the situation and to provide a framework for public investment to reduce inequality and ultimately eradicate poverty in Lesotho.

1.4 The Changing Scenarios of South Africa and the Rude Shock of the 1990s

During the apartheid era Lesotho was seen to be a safe haven and vantage point to oversee various interests in the Republic of South Africa. This was done under the pretext that the foreign missions, companies, NGOS and individuals needed to influence change in South Africa from a close range. As a result all the donor countries including the Eastern Block countries established their missions in Maseru. Donor funding of projects as well as moral support to Lesotho were abundant. While this could be described in economic terms as a windfall there is no evidence that Lesotho used this advantage wisely. No foundation was built for the future; instead the country was blinded by huge resources that kept flowing in. Indeed, talking to some key individuals in the country, the story we get sounds like... ***“If you needed money from a donor during the apartheid era, all you did was to prepare a back of the envelope proposal and within a very short time, the money would be in the bank”***. No wonder Basotho find it very difficult to understand these days when their proposals are thrown back and forth for a long time before approval!

Lesotho failed to optimise the goodwill that existed by not addressing the fundamentals of its economy, instead it experienced more political instability caused by Basotho themselves through their destructive rivalry between and among their political organisations. A lot of energy was spent fighting each other while the foundations of the economy continued to decay. Little did Basotho realize that they were actually sitting in a falling house. The different regimes in Lesotho did not notice that they were living in a house that was being eaten by termites!

When the apartheid regime in South Africa fell in 1994, Lesotho got a rude shock. While there was celebration in Africa and Lesotho anticipated to benefit even more, instead it did not realise the expected windfall. Thirty of the 34 foreign missions in Maseru relocated the new Republic of South Africa in Pretoria in just less than one year. The only missions that remained in Maseru were the British, (but British Council relocated), the Irish, the European Union and the Chinese. The nature of Lesotho relations with the relocated missions changed and now the country began to be subjected to rigorous assessment before acquiring foreign assistance. The foreign resource inflows shrunk so abruptly and many of Lesotho friends began to distance themselves. The feeling in Lesotho between 1994 to date is that of abandonment, anger and to some extent isolation by its old friends.

While this is so, however, this situation made the country to be awakened to the reality. The economy was not as strong as it was assumed, the country was poorer than it was thought to be, and majority of people had become trapped in a spiralling poverty trap. Put it simply, the 1990s saw the country at crossroads where it had to choose the best way to address its general economic challenges and, more importantly, reduce the deepening and widening poverty among Basotho. The 1998 political disturbances worsened the situation and the escalating infection rate of HIV/AIDS began to undermine all the remedial actions made by the government. This situation called for radical changes in the way business had been done in Lesotho. Thus, the Government of Lesotho could no longer regard it as business as usual, hence the initiation of the PRSP process to provide a framework for change.

1.5 Was PRSP a Paradigm Shift or Mere ‘Bandwagomism’ in Lesotho’s Development Approach?

As mentioned above, economic planning has been a preserve for technocrats who did not do much consultation let alone encourage participation with other stakeholders in carrying out that process. In the mid 1980s, Lesotho experienced severe declines in key external sources

of revenue: receipts and remittances from Southern African Customs Union (SACU) and mining workers respectively. These developments occurred concurrently with the resulting massive unemployment both in country and in the mining sector of the RSA, all of which aggravated the already deteriorating social indicators and growing fiscal deficit, and the general economic downturn.

Prompted by these bleak economic and social developments, the Government of Lesotho agreed to embark on the structural adjustment programme (World Bank 1995) whose main aim was to reduce the fiscal deficit to avoid **“Dutch disease”** by creating a series of fiscal surpluses to absorb the flows of high import duties due to peak construction levels of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP); encourage private sector development, attract foreign investment and increase social spending in particular, health and education. (Roberts 2003). Under that programme, in the period between 1988 and 1997, the Government of Lesotho, through the Ministry of Finance prepared Policy Framework Papers (PFPs) jointly with the Bank and the IMF, which focussed more on aspects of macroeconomic management, but had no specific or explicit focus on poverty reduction as such. The two International Financial Institutions, instead of the country, drove the process of preparing the PFPs and this was, a closed process that was neither consultative nor participatory.

The PFPs were the condition for assistance to Lesotho by both the WB and the IMF. Under the programme of adjustment between 1988 and 1994, Lesotho experienced a favourable macroeconomic environment with annual growth rates averaging 8.5 percent and 6 percent of real GDP and GNP respectively. But these positive developments clearly had limited impact, if any, on household incomes as the incidence of poverty in the country persistently remained high. At this point it became clear that the adjustment programmes that had been associated with the tightening of fiscal policy, while useful, had not helped to address some of the structural challenges, particularly those that have to do with the vulnerable groups.

Inevitably a shift was required to deal with this threatening situation. Poverty reduction, which is a shift from the PFP approach, was adopted when the Government held consultations with the IMF and the WB in 1999 (Phororo 2001). PRSP is meant to provide, among other things, the basis for concessional assistance from the WB and IMF (Klugman 2001). Unlike the previous PFPs, the PRSPs are based on the principles of comprehensive development framework (Klugman 2001).

It could be argued that the acceptance of the PRSP with its principles, as laid out by the Brettonwoods Institutions was a ‘paradigm shift’ by the Lesotho Government. The Minister of Finance expressed that view when he affirmed Government’s commitment to the PRSP in his 2003/4 Budget Speech, when he stated:

“Today’s budget also marks a radical departure from the way Government has always set development priorities. Since independence thirty eight years ago, Government and the civil service have always determined priorities without consulting the people; without involving them in the design and implementation of projects and without establishing citizen oversight or appeal against arbitrary decision of public servants”.

The initiative by the Government to develop the country’s National Vision for the next 20 years further demonstrated the shift of the development approach paradigm to the setting of long-term national development objectives and strategies. When interviewed by the authors of this report, the Minister for Finance and Development Planning further confirmed that shift when he stated: -

“Government made a decision that the PRSP must be developed. We knew perfectly well that we had capacity limitations in terms of knowledge and experience in drafting such a strategy. We were clear about those shortcomings. The job had to be done so that that knowledge and experience could be built. I am interested in the final product, the content and implementation. Our partners are keen to assist us, the people of Lesotho, to fight poverty. It is important that we ourselves take this seriously and do it. It may not be

CHAPTER 2

PRSP Planning and Consultation Process

2.0 Introduction

Having sketched out the historical genesis of poverty in Lesotho and outlining some of the reasons why the Government of Lesotho adopted the PRSP approach in Chapter One, in this Chapter we explain how Lesotho undertook the PRSP process. The PRSP process, unlike the previous conventional planning process, is guided by seven overriding principles which emphasise:

- participation,
- inclusiveness,
- broad based,
- results oriented,
- partnership,
- country driven, and
- ownership.

2.1 Why are these Principles Critical for Poverty Reduction?

In the context of Lesotho, each of these principles was given a functional and practical meaning as follows:

Participation: For the Lesotho PRSP, participation meant being an active part of the process. The poor people of Lesotho were made an active part of the process during the consultations. They were asked to explain poverty in their own way, as they are the ones who are experiencing, living and consequently suffering it. Participation was meant to give them freedom of expression to tell government what they thought had gone wrong and to advise on ways based on their perspectives, for poverty reduction.

Inclusiveness: That meant opening space for all stakeholders to take an active part in the process. The PRSP involved the government, civil society and private sector and development partners. Previous planning processes, as noted earlier, have never opened up space for non-state actors to be involved in the policy formulation processes. PRSP created a landmark in the country by being fully inclusive.

Broad based: It meant that the PRSP had to be comprehensive in nature where all aspects of poverty were assessed. Using a causal effect linkage, the PRSP sought to establish the root causes of poverty; and identify and analyse the core problems and effects of poverty in order to develop appropriate strategies for intervention.

Results oriented: This meant that the PRSP had to be output/outcome oriented. The Lesotho PRSP shifted the thinking of government planners from measuring what government spends to what government buys. A comprehensive monitoring framework with indicators and targets was developed to ensure that the progress, input/output and impact could be assessed.

Partnership: It meant developing new ways of work. PRSP developed a framework through which government can work with civil society, private sector and development partners to fight poverty and to work towards developing the country as a whole.

Country Driven: This meant that leadership in the preparation of the PRSP was to be provided by Basotho. For a long time, Lesotho's planning has been dictated by conventional paradigms. Although those plans have served the country well, they were always driven externally making the country dependant on external resources. The Lesotho PRSP's

intention was to build in-country capacity to enable the country to be in control of its development.

Ownership: Because the Basotho led the whole process, it increased the sense of ownership. The Lesotho PRSP enhanced working relations amongst Basotho, helped sectors relate to each other horizontally rather than the usual silo arrangements; linked the policy makers to villages and opened up their eyes to the reality/ies. Ownership of the PRSP document ensured that community priorities formed the basis and integral part of most or all strategies.

2.2 Institutional Arrangements for PRSP Preparation

As noted earlier, when the government decided to adopt the PRSP process in 1999 as part of the requirements by the IMF and the WB to access the Poverty Reduction Growth Facility (PRGF) concessional lending facility, there was very little expertise in the country to spear head this process. Supported by development partners (mainly UNDP, DFID, DCI), the government established institutional structures to facilitate the making of the PRSP. Those structures comprised a range of committees and sub-committees charged to fulfil specific functions. The structures included:

- Technical Working Group,
- PRSP Secretariat,
- Poverty Monitoring Sub Group,
- Consultation Sub Group,
- Sector Working Groups,
- Thematic Groups, and the
- PRSP Core Group.

Those PRSP institutions were not established as a well thought out proactive plan, rather they emerged as the managers of the process and were challenged along the way. As a result, some did not have well-defined terms of reference, corroborating Arturo Israel's theory which states that " ... an institution of low specificity may find it very difficult to achieve its purpose..." The functions of each of these institutions are discussed below.

2.2.1 The Technical Working Group (TWG)

Under the leadership of the Principal Secretary of the Ministry of Development Planning, the TWG was the overall coordinating body for the PRSP process. The group was set up in February 2000 after the government consulted with both IMF and the WB and had agreed to adopt the PRSP approach. The group comprised representatives of all ministries, civil society, and private sector and development partners. TWG membership was forty-five professionals initially at the rank of Director, Chief Economic/Senior Economic Planners and subject matter specialists' ministries. Private sector and civil society were represented by their own nominees who were mostly senior officials, while technical advisers with a range of development expertise represented development partners. The UNDP provided a macro-economist; DCI provided a Policy Adviser, UNICEF a Social Policy Adviser, EU an Economic Adviser as a Technical Coordinating Officer (TCO) to the Ministry of Development Planning, while DFID provided a Poverty Reduction Adviser.

The PRSP Secretariat, headed by the Director of Sectoral Programming with six full time staff members, set-up to service the TWG. The PRSP Secretariat was charged with implementing TWG resolutions and decisions. The TWG reported through its chair and was answerable to the Committee of Principal Secretaries chaired by the Government Secretary.

The main function of the TWG was to steer and manage the development of the Lesotho PRSP; ensure broad participation and involvement of all stakeholders;⁴ mobilise financial and

⁴ The Voice of the People-p-1

material resources; communicate progress on the formulation process to all stakeholders including the donor community; monitor the quality of work being undertaken by consultants; manage community consultations, data analysis and the drafting process; and to produce the document according to the agreed parameters and standard.

For two and half years, the TWG met on weekly basis for a record of 120 meetings. It should be noted that nowhere in the world has TWG met so many times. Whether that signified the level of commitment the country had to produce its PRSP or not, the TWG must be credited for this resilience!!!. On the down side, it should be noted that during the latter part of the PRS process, as inertia and apathy settled in, the TWG experienced serious problems with quorum. Many members especially from government could not sustain their attendance anymore, and began to send their juniors who after a while sent even more junior personnel to the meetings. Consequently, the final product of the PRS process suffered in some ministries, where senior officials lost interest, thereby making it difficult for major decisions to be made on time. It could be argued that that was one of the reasons why the Lesotho PRSP preparation process so far stands out as the longest amongst those prepared worldwide.

Other factors considered included poor communication and the absence of dedicated championship at policy level, which made it difficult for the hard working technical officials in government to move faster than they did. Furthermore, in the initial stages of the process there was no political leadership that made effective linkages with Cabinet until, during 2003 and towards the final stages of the drafting of the PRSP document. In spite of the weaknesses cited, the TWG MUST be congratulated for successfully undertaking such an ambitious exercise which has now become the foundation of a new way of doing business in Lesotho.

2.2.2 Poverty Monitoring Sub-group

One of the committees established by the TWG was the Poverty Monitoring Sub-Group. It was a technical committee formed to develop the poverty monitoring framework; establish poverty baseline in Lesotho; write the poverty diagnosis and poverty monitoring chapters of the PRSP and develop poverty monitoring master plan with indicators showing clear targets of achievement during the PRSP period. It was also tasked with the responsibility of identifying, vetting and recommending consultants appointed by TWG.

The Poverty Monitoring Sub Group met every week at UNDP Boardroom, and was to report its proposals to the TWG every week. As one of the first outputs, the group published a poverty-monitoring framework entitled: "Towards Poverty Monitoring in Lesotho". It also produced a "Poverty Reduction Master Plan"; it coordinated training of TWG members on Participatory Poverty Assessments (PPA) methods; and organized successful exposure trips to Tanzania. The group was also been the main architects of establishing a Poverty Monitoring Unit (PMU) that was intended to monitor the implementation of Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS).

However, due to unclear guidelines and rather confusing stewardship by the TWG and the PRSP Secretariat, the group did not fully participate in the community data analysis to set the parameters for poverty reduction. Furthermore, it did not fully engage in the final drafting of the PRSP. More depressing was the fact that the poverty baseline study conducted by National University of Lesotho (NUL), which was coordinated by this group, was rejected by TWG. Regarding coordination of consultancies again, the group's role got subsumed into the Secretariat, a situation that caused a lot of disquiet. Interviews with the members of this group revealed a great degree of frustration and disappointment. In short, members of the Poverty Monitoring Group felt that they were not given a conducive environment by the PRSP Secretariat to operate effectively. That maybe another reason why the preparation of the Lesotho PRSP has been regarded as the longest in the world to date.

2.2.3 Consultation Sub-Group

The second group under TWG was the Consultation Sub Group. The group was responsible for the planning and managing of the TWG action plan, consultations at community level, thematic and special interest groups. The groups generated information on poverty reduction discussions and solutions on poverty issues, and the development of appropriate strategies together with stakeholders to be included in the final PRSP.

After many months of planning to go to villages to collect views from Basotho, the group finally managed to conduct consultations country wide in April/May 2002. The group must be credited for their successful performance achieved against the backdrop of the General Elections that took place in May 2002; they successfully managed to conduct community consultations on poverty. At no time were the pitsos disrupted. Their success has been attributed to the fact that, prior to consultations, the group undertook a SWOT analysis together with Principal Chiefs, District Secretaries, the Police, the Intelligence Units, Civil Society Representatives and key government officials from the center.

A local expert, Prof. None Mokitimi, who was supported by the Head of the PRSP Secretariat and the DFID in-country Poverty Reduction Adviser, facilitated the analysis. The outcome of the SWOT analysis was a strong recommendation that community consultations could go on without fear of political ramifications.

The recommendation by the SWOT analysis was vindicated as District Secretaries, Chiefs, Civil society organizations and NGOs were mobilized to facilitate the process. Thus the choice of these facilitators enhanced the quality of consultations as, without doubt, working directly with communities was their function; they were an important link between the central government and the communities at the grassroots. They were all of one mind and purpose in the consultation process.

The feedback received by the authors of this report through interviews indicated an impressive performance of the sub group. They were said to have effectively managed to reach out to the grassroots communities and also motivated communities to voice their demands and expectations loud enough. This is manifested by the “Voice of the People 2002” Report, which was published by TWG, highlighting the views of the Basotho.

However, it is important to note that there were some shortcomings within the process. The stakeholders interviewed for this report observed that, after such successful consultations, the TWG failed to take advantage of the rapport and connections government had made with the people to establish and ensure a true people driven development process. A common concern indicated by some of the consultations sub-committee members interviewed, was that of “not being kept informed” and the “communication blackout” between them and the TWG/Secretariat after the consultations. This was regarded rather unfortunate because the group had established the framework that could be a permanent link between the central government and people at the grassroots level. It was stressed that the same structure would be used for the disseminating the PRSP implementation information as well as the dissemination of other information emanating from other national processes, such as Vision 2020. From those findings, a very strong desire and hint to revive and strengthen the link emerged.

2.2.4 Sector Working Groups (SWGs)

Clearly the processes such as the PRSP, policy formulation, decision-making and resource allocations are negotiated and conducted at the sector level. For a long time, sectors in Lesotho worked vertically as if they were in silos. Very little horizontal communication within government and with non-state actors occurred. Sectors planned technically with top down communication. Cross-referencing in Lesotho was a rare phenomenon. As a result, Government duplicated a lot of effort wasting meager resources. PRSP demanded that through SWGs government officials had to make a shift from the old way of doing government business, thus the PRSP process forced a situation where sectors began to talk to the private

sector and civil society on more equitable terms. SWGs were therefore established to support policy formulation and guide budgetary allocations that would respond to the priority of needs emanating from the community consultations⁵.

As with the TWG, SWGs comprised representatives of the selected ministries and departments, the civil society, the private sector, professional groups and other interested parties. They were a body through which key government policy makers and non-government actors participated in the PRSP at central level so as to ensure ownership of the PRSP. The SWGs were to be chaired by Principal Secretaries or by their competent nominees because of the importance of the issues and tasks which would be dealt with within such groups. SWGs either met weekly or according to the discretion of their conveners. They reported to the TWG.

Some of the critical functions of SWGs included:

- Undertaking by the technical officers of critical analysis and synthesis of information from the consultations;
- Facilitating key central stakeholders to participate fully and receive specific technical proposals presented by such participants;
- Affording the private sector and civil society the opportunity to make policy recommendations etc. for consideration by central government;
- Facilitating other national issues not captured at village levels to be raised and debated/discussed;
- Using their meetings as avenues through which key policy makers get involved in the PRSP consultation process to ensure broad-based government participation and ownership of the PRSP.

The main outcomes of SWGs were sector position papers that were to form the basis for the sectoral input into the PRSP document.

Ten Sector Working Groups and one Macroeconomic Group were established. Table 1 shows the classification of the sectors:

Table 1. Sector Working Groups.

-
1. Justice, safety, security and human rights
 2. Defence and home Affairs
 3. Health and Social Welfare
 4. Education and cultural Affairs
 5. Housing and community services
 6. Agriculture and Rural Development
 7. Tourism, Trade and Industry
 8. Natural Resources and environment
 9. Other public services
 10. Physical infrastructure & Communications.
 11. Macroeconomic Framework & Fiscal Strategy
-

According to the feedback from interviews, SWGs suffered the same fate as the TWG. They started well with tremendous interest and enthusiasm but, as time passed, attendance thinned out and some members stopped regular attendance. The reason for the irregular attendance was their preoccupation with other duties not necessarily linked to the PRSP. Thus fatigue about the PRSP process, already noted with other groups, also caught up with these groups.

Another reason why there was no motivation and interest in the PRSP was lack of a clear distinction between a PRSP and the normal National Development Plan that was popularly

⁵ TOR of the Sector Working Groups

understood within government circles. The poor quality of sector position papers provided compelling attestation to this. Some members of the TWG described some submissions from some sectors as “wish lists”, which gave no priorities and strategies for pro-poor programmes. Interviewees alleged that some sectors approached the call for the making of the PRSP with expectations that it was to draw additional resources from the donor community.

Some interviewees had strongly argued that the PRSP process was seen by SWG members, especially government officials, as a process without an end; without targets; not time-bound; not a results oriented document to be used for allocation of existing resources to reduce poverty. But they considered it a tool to use to attract aid in order to fight poverty. Thus the long and several meetings dominated by government officials created fatigue, especially among the private sector and civil society representatives, who were always constrained by time and ended up pulling out!

Finally and most importantly Principal Secretaries, who were the substantive chairs of SWGs, delegated this responsibility to their juniors who neither had decision-making powers nor the necessary clout, authority and capacity to make meaningful inputs into the sector position papers. The delay in submitting good quality sector position papers contributed more to the delay in the finalization of the Lesotho PRSP.

2.2.5 Thematic Groups (TGs)

The devil in the previous development plans was in the fact that crosscutting issues, which undermined the success of the development efforts, were never dealt with as part of the central challenges. Indeed, for a long time issues of population, environment, gender, children and youth, and later HIV/AIDs, were treated as add-ons. This anomaly was addressed during the PRSP process.

The Thematic Groups were established to ensure that all-important cross cutting issues were fully addressed, and would form part of the PRSP strategies. The Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN) was assigned to coordinate all the established eight Thematic Groups. Table 2 shows the classification of the Thematic Groups.

Table 2. Thematic Groups.

1. Children and Youth
2. HIV/AIDS
3. Gender
4. Employment opportunities
5. Environment
6. Population dynamics
7. Decentralisation and District development
8. Disability
9. Nutrition
10. Democracy and governance
11. Science and technology
12. Information technology

Each thematic group was to produce a position paper outlining the status, the policy dimensions, problem analysis and strategies in their area of focus. The position papers also proposed sectoral responsibilities, which were picked up by various sectors. Being the first time that crosscutting issues were being mainstreamed in a planning process, TGs could be said to have contributed significantly to bringing those issues to the fore.

However, like the SWGs, the Groups were confronted with similar problems of attendance. Apart from Children and Youth and HIV/AIDS, (which were led by UNICEF and LAPCA respectively), the bulk of the TGs coordinated by LCN experienced serious capacity constraints. Some of the consultants hired by LCN to write the TGs position papers produced very shoddy papers, which had to be redone.

There was an inadvertent omission, which the authors found out during the interviews, of organised labour that was not included in the TGs. Representatives who were interviewed complained bitterly that they were not included in the PRSP process. Their position was that Government as a whole failed to appreciate the role of organised labor in matters of poverty reduction. They argued that in Lesotho organised labour was seen as a bunch of troublemakers. Perhaps, if more time was devoted to sensitizing people through radio, TV and other easily accessible media about the objectives of developing a PRSP for Lesotho, that omission and misunderstanding might have been avoided. All the authors felt about the Thematic Groups was that, while those included made their contribution, there were some groups that might have been sidelined by omission.

2.2.6 The PRSP Core Team

After all consultations had taken place, in October 2002, the TWG produced a zero-zero draft in a three-week retreat at Mphahlele (see details in chapter four). After that date nothing seemed to happen. In order to kick-start the process of drafting and to assist the TWG to closely supervise the drafting process, a PRSP Core Group was established. The Group was chaired by M'e Likonelo Hlasoa from the PRSP Secretariat and comprised Ntate Simon K. Phafane representing Private Sector, Ntate Seabata Motsamai from the LCN, Ntate James Atema (DFID) and Ntate John Wayem (UNDP), Ntate Masasa (Local Government), Ntate Marite from the Ministry of Public Works and Transport and Ntate Majoro representing the Ministry of Finance and Ntate West, Economic Adviser in the Ministry of Development Planning. The group met once every week from March –June 2003.

The terms of reference for the PRSP Core Group included the overall responsibility of providing technical assistance to the Head of the combined PRSP Secretariat⁶; to facilitate and monitor the overall process of the PRSP preparation on behalf of the TWG; to supervise consultancy work to ensure quality, consistency and completeness of the PRSP document; to approve appointment of consultants on behalf of the TWG; to approve the work of consultants and be responsible for clearing their work before payments were processed and to monitor the timetable for PRSP production on behalf of TWG.

The group spearheaded the completion of the first draft of PRSP. It cannot therefore be overemphasized that without that group the Lesotho PRSP process might have stalled and could have taken more time to be brought back to the rails.

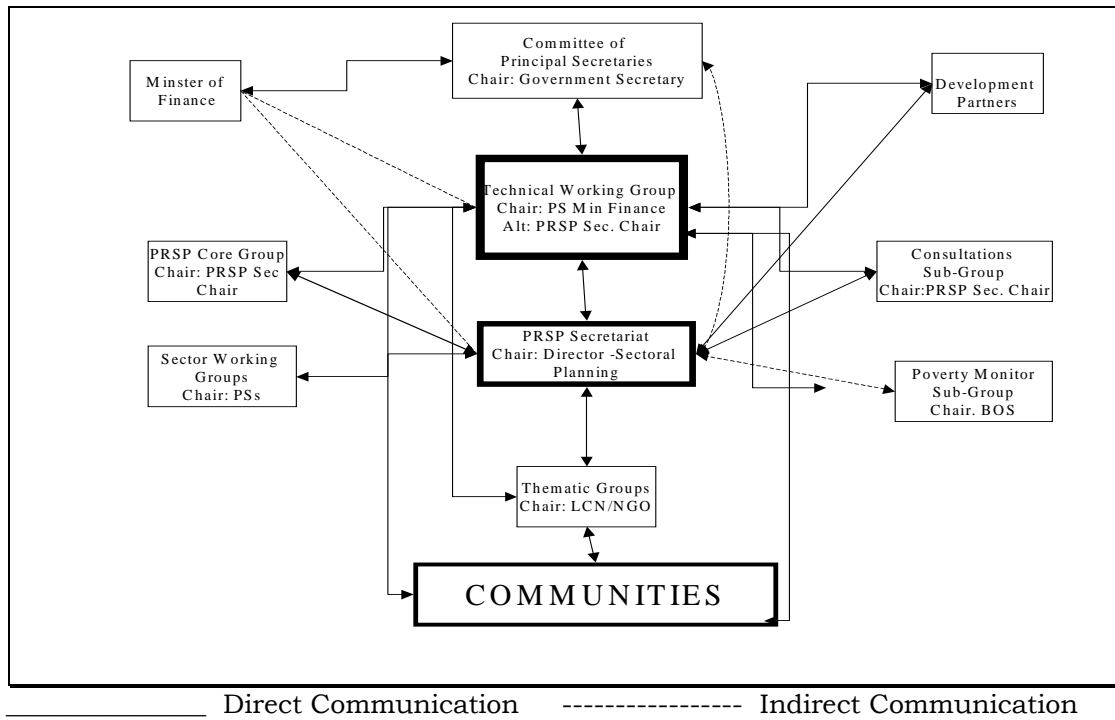
As stated earlier, 'institutions that demonstrate high specificity function more efficiently and have a high degree of delivering its purpose'. Assessed against this statement, it could be argued that the LPRSP institutional arrangements could only score 50%, and being the first time, that should be regarded a success story. However, some things could have been better than they were, had the government dedicated a fulltime highly qualified and high-ranking staff to the Secretariat.

Furthermore, the frequent staff changes in the secretariat, grossly affected the speed of PRSP preparation. Throughout the 30 months of PRSP, almost seventeen members of the working groups who had been trained left the process. The general tendency for civil service rapid staff turnover inhibits acquisition of specific expertise, kills institutional memory and affects continuity. Those staff changes demotivated the technical advisers who had to do retraining on a continuous basis.

During our interviews, an observation was made to the effect that the sluggishness of the PRSP was due to too many institutional arrangements that were put in place to develop the PRSP. Some of the institutions replicated each other's activities whilst maintaining more or less the same membership. That resulted in a confused line of reporting and coordination which gave way to apathy, tension and fatigue (see Fig. 1).

⁶ The PRSP and the Vision 2020 Secretariats were merged in November 2002 to accelerate the completion of both processes

Figure 1. PRSP Institutional Arrangements



CHAPTER 3

Participation of Stakeholders in the Lesotho PRSP Process

3.0 Introduction

The cardinal principle in the Lesotho PRSP planning process was participation of primary stakeholders who largely included the community and the poor people of Lesotho. Secondary stakeholders were the government officials, civil society organizations and private sector and, more importantly, the development partners and parliamentarians. Indeed the strength of the Lesotho PRSP can be measured by the way all stakeholders participated. In this chapter the contribution each one of them made is discussed.

3.1 The Community Consultations

3.1.1 Identification of villages for Consultation

Lesotho has 350 enumeration clusters/villages. Using scientific sample selection method, the Bureau of Statistics (BoS) selected 80 villages for consultations. The National Steering Committee managing the Vision 2020 process did not agree this number. Their argument was that it was not representative and comprehensive enough. As the PRSP is both a technical and political process, it was necessary to expand the number of villages to accommodate the needs of all stakeholders. Further discussions between the TWG and the National Vision Secretariat increased the number to 200 villages, which included the initial randomly selected 80 villages submitted by the Bureau of Statistics. The extra 120 villages were purposively identified.

Assessing the comprehensive and extensive nature of the PRSP community consultations, that stood out as the biggest contribution communities (Basotho) made in the development process of their country. For over a month, 300 PRSP facilitators engaged 20,000 Basotho in poverty talks across the country. In each district 20 villages were selected to participate in the talks. A team of six facilitators spent 3 days in each of those villages conducting poverty reduction pitsos (rallies). They carried their own food, walked on foot or used donkeys and horses (e.g. Liphaphang), in some cases they had to be airlifted by choppers to inaccessible villages in Qacha's Nek (e.g. Lebakeng).

Each District had four (4) teams of six (6) facilitators each from government, civil society, private sector and development partners joined in too. In total there were 40 groups in the country each of them spending 15 days consulting with communities, thus whopping 600 working days and 600 meetings involving 300 facilitators and 20,000 villagers across the country. They slept in villages, cooked their own food and spent long hours with communities discussing poverty issues, what was wrong in the current approach and suggesting what could be done to reverse the trend. Although it is difficult to monetise this, it should be recognised that this could be worth millions of Maloti.

The enthusiasm with which the communities took the consultations was remarkable. They came to discussions at 7.00 am everyday and did not go back home until 6.00 pm, sometimes they stayed up to 9.00 pm. To facilitators the message was clear that people were tired of being poor, they had decided that something had to be done and they were frank and told government what it should do. They too were very clear of what role they could play.

3.1.2 Traditional Leaders awakened

As part of the primary stakeholders chiefs could be said to have been the kingpins of community consultations in the PRS. Not only did they agree to call pitsos for consultations by officials, but were ready to accommodate and feed some of the officials engaged in

community consultations. They stayed long hours ensuring that poverty talks were not interfered with. They also made sure that politicians who were preparing for elections did not take advantage of the poverty pitsos. Because of the history of governance in Lesotho, chiefs tend to keep the history of villages (they were also a source of information) and their contributions on trend lines in development were invaluable.

Interviews with some of them for this report revealed that they held the PRSP consultations with high regard, although disappointed by the time it has taken the PRSP to be completed. They expressed fear that, as had been the trend with other national exercises, the PRS will not be implemented as expected by the communities, particularly so because they have not had any feedback so far.

Despite that, Chiefs still feel that the PRSP approach should be continued as it opened up the eyes of government officials. They argued that unless this approach is maintained, Basotho who seem have lost interest in hard work because of government interventions through subsidies of unsustainable projects will not change. They approved of the comprehensive nature of the poverty reduction strategy consultations. However, they wanted to be fully involved in its implementation.

3.1.3 Role of the Parliamentarians.

Parliamentarians were perhaps one of the key stakeholders who did not play a major role as they ought to have done. Although parliamentary briefings were held during the process, their role was not significant in influencing the PRSP process. Probably the timing of PRSP was the problem as Parliament had been dissolved, and politicians were more concerned with developing their own strategies to win elections.

That situation left most politicians with very little understanding of the PRSP. Interviews with some of them revealed a wide discrepancy amongst them. Indeed some Parliamentarians did not distinguish between PRSP and the usual emergency food relief and food for work programmes. If the PRSP is meant to influence the budget, and it is Parliamentarians who approve the budget through which national resources are allocated, the limited participation of Parliamentarians can only be seen as a missed opportunity.

3.1.4 Civil Society joins the Caucus

The TWG understood from the beginning that government officials did not have sufficient experience and capacity to undertake such a huge participatory process. In order to ensure that communities were genuinely involved, TWG appointed a Consortium of civil society and NGOs to manage the consultations and undertake training of government officials to be engaged in community consultations. After the invited NGOs submitted their proposal, they were advised to invite one consultancy firm so that it could assist them to analyse the data on a professional basis, and they agreed. Upon submission of their work plan and budget, the Consortium and the government did not agree on the budget and wanted the Consortium to reduce some costs. Further, while the Consortium wanted to be given a free hand to hire vehicles for that purpose, the government insisted that they had to use government-hired vehicles from Imperial Company. This brought about disagreement and the Consortium eventually pulled out.

Interviewed members of the Consortium still felt that the government position to force them to use vehicles that they would have not been in control of, was wrong. They also felt that the budget they gave of M2.5 million for the entire programme was reasonable although the government thought it was too high. The Consortium still believed, during the interview, that they could have done a very good job. Given their advantage of working closely with communities, they argued that they had a better understanding and relationships with them. Their pulling out of the consultations affected the interest of the NGO sector, and many felt completely marginalized thereafter.

3.1.5 The Lesotho Council of NGOs (LCN) Comes to the Rescue

When the Consortium collapsed, the government approached LCN and requested them to mobilize civil society to participate in the process. A meeting organized by the Principal Secretary, Ministry of Development Planning, resolved the disputes, and government and LCN issued a joint communiqué to the Nation to the effect that all civil society would participate in the consultation process through LCN. In this regard, suffice to say LCN should be congratulated for pivotal role it played to bring back civil society participation in the PRSP process when it was about to be derailed by trivial arguments.

This is a contribution the public sector ignores sometime. Civil societies have through out their grassroots community work developed a good rapport with communities, which makes it a trusted partner. Community members that were interviewed emphasized that fact that had the civil society not come back to the consultation process the results would have been different. The communities expressed the fact that they trust the civil society since they work with them all the time and see them deliver services to them.

The LCN has since continued to provide the much-needed alternative voice in the PRSP process. As a member of TWG, LCN participated in all stages of PRSP preparation. The overall view among stakeholders is that LCN rescued the consultations and added real value to the process. This has given LCN a high profile in the PRSP an opened up doors for them to engage with the state at policy level.

3.1.6 The Private Sector jumps on the Bandwagon

“Private sector jumped on the bandwagon late but got up with the debate”

The role of the private sector essentially is to run businesses profitably and grow the country's economy with government providing the conducive environment. It goes without saying therefore that government and the business sector must form a genuine partnership for the development of the country. The PRSP offered an opportunity for the private sector to use their potential to manage and facilitate the collection of the views and concerns of local entrepreneurs into the PRSP process. However, this was not the case. Participation of the private sector was initially flawed because this is a sector, which has a history of lack of organizational capacity and poor leadership with neither the motivation nor ability to engage government officials on any issues even with regard to those issues, which relate to their direct interests.

Furthermore, previous government regimes paid very little attention to the growth of the private sector. Instead, they invested a lot in parastatals that engaged in business activities, thereby crowded out the private sector for many years. As a result, the private sector has had no chance to organise and form one effective business chamber that could advocate any policy change. Instead, several business associations were formed leaving them individually weak with no influence on government. Government also found it difficult to deal with so many separate organisations coming from the same sector. Because of this state of affairs, civil servants have also developed a low opinion of members of this sector.

That notwithstanding, the emergence and active participation of Business Network of Lesotho (BIZNET-Lesotho) was a result of an initiative of some businesspersons who mobilized the private sector and documented their concerns and views about poverty in Lesotho. Prompted and supported by DFID they rounded those registered business associations and some individual companies who showed interest, and whose views and concerns on poverty in Lesotho⁷ were collected, collated and incorporated in the PRSP. The private sector since then

⁷ Input from the Private Sector into the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper Drafting Process: Views and Concerns of the Private Sector in Lesotho (January 2002)

has become an important component of PRSP. It is important to acknowledge that although the private sector got on the bandwagon late, it got up with the debate.

3.1.7 Development Partners and Donors

In Lesotho UNDP, UNICEF, DFID, DCI and EU represented development partners. The first four participated and funded the process and also provided technical advice. EU did not provide funding but participated in the TWG and provided technical advice through their Economic Adviser in the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning. World Bank joined later during the final stages of the drafting of the PRSP. They provided funds for costing and a consultant who helped in the final drafting of the PRSP.

The role played by different development partners in the process is commendable. The PRSP process benefited greatly from the experience of representatives of these partners. The interest, contribution and time spent by those partners demonstrated their genuine desire to ensure that the Lesotho PRSP was completed and was of high quality. Carefully balancing their advice, the development partners ensured that the process remained owned and controlled by nationals.

Funding of the PRSP was done through a Memorandum of Understanding that established a Poverty Fund. Contributors to the fund included the Government of Lesotho, DFID, DCI, UNDP, and UNICEF. All funds were deposited into the Poverty Fund except for those that funded activities supported by individual donors directly. The Poverty Fund was managed by the Secretariat; however, approval of expenditure was vested in the Finance Committee chaired by the Principal Secretary.

An accountant who kept track of expenditure, followed up pledges from donors, prepared monthly and quarterly financial reports and briefed the TWG on regular basis managed day-to-day operations of the Poverty Fund. Again this arrangement was the first of this kind in Lesotho and indeed it has demonstrated that development partners can jointly fund major activities like this. It helped reduce transactions costs as GoL needed to produce only one report for all donors and it also ensure that GoL did not cherry pick donors for various activities but presented a consolidated budget to donors. This fund also allowed reasonable flexibility where the TWG could change activities and introduce new ones without changing the purpose.

Chapter 4

Drafting of the PRSP

4.0 Introduction

The drafting of the PRSP began with two parallel data analysis processes. Firstly, the PRSP Secretariat put a team of 10 professionals who were facilitated by the DFID technical adviser to analyse village data and tease out sectoral priorities. This process, which was conducted at Nazareth, took ten days. The group generated 2000 village data sheets (10 from each village) that showed ranking of activities by villagers. The analysis showed that Agriculture and Food Security was considered the most important sector, followed by Housing and Community Services, Governance, Safety and Security, and Infrastructure.

However, when considered at sub sector level, Employment was regarded the most important intervention for poverty reduction followed by Crops Production and Livestock.

In the second analysis, the TWG commissioned Dr Stephen Turner to write the community consultation report, otherwise known as the 'Voice of the People'. The results of that report corroborated what the government analysts had found. Those two reports formed the basis for the drafting of the full PRSP at Mohale. Ideally, these two processes should have been brought together but the Lesotho PRSP was awash with such duplicities. The good thing is that eventually they two processes were brought together and proved complementary. Details of these analyses are available in the Stephen Turner's "Voice of the People" report and the Ministry of Development Planning report on the Nazareth Group.

4.1 The Mohale Experience

The Mohale experience has been described by many inside and outside government as history in the making, and a major breakthrough in the development history of Lesotho. It presented one of the most telling stages of the PRSP formulation. It brought together a large group of senior government officials, civil society, private sector representatives and development partners. For government ministries to plan together and consult horizontally, to establish the implications of the links among their various programmes, was regarded as an eye opener.

Initial planning had anticipated a group of 10-15 professionals to draft the PRSP. This proved to be difficult on two counts; first, the TWG, through the Secretariat, was anxious to ensure full government buy-in. As a result, all ministries had to be represented by either two or more officials. That may appear rather illogical, but it should be recognised that the PRSP was both a technical process as well as a political one. Traditionally, planning is usually seen as the responsibility of the Ministry of Development Planning hence line ministries have always related to planning in the context of presenting their projects and programmes for funding through the budget. Furthermore, relations between ministries have always been vertical. Very little time is spent on looking at how ministries interact horizontally and how their activities link with each other.

By involving all ministries in the analysis of data and the formulation of the PRSP, the TWG intended to provide an opportunity to senior and middle-level government officials to talk and consult each other. Ideally, these consultations were intended to minimise duplication. For example, unlike the traditional way of working, it became clear that an activity like increasing sanitation coverage in schools did not mean the Ministry of Education had to employ or hire artisans to construct toilets/latrines. Rather, it could request this service from the Ministry of public works.

The second reason was about decision-making. During community consultations most of the people from government who participated in the process tended not to be at senior level. As the PRSP was going to affect reallocation of resources and changing the way of work, the

TWG wanted to ensure that at least each ministry was represented at a fairly senior level to accelerate decision-making during the budget process. Furthermore, PRSP was also being used to improve the analytical skills of government officials and their partners.

Since Independence in 1966, the government had always planned based on a historical cost or an incremental approach, which did not promote rigour and prudence. Usually, planners would simply look at what they planned last year, what was funded and what was not and then add on an inflation percentage to produce the next year's plans. The PRSP process aimed at moving away from this by encouraging analytical planning based on objectives. It could be argued therefore; that the Lesotho PRSP was the first planning exercise that changed the way government does business.

4.1.1 Unity is Strength

Unlike the community consultations where the facilitators (who comprised largely government officials) were on the demand side, asking questions and receiving answers from community members, in Mphahlele the assignment was different. Between the 6th and 26th October 2002, 45 officials from government, civil society, private sector and development partners gathered at Mphahlele Lodge to analyse community proposals, sector and thematic position papers and tease out pro-poor strategies for the formulation of a national Poverty Reduction Strategy. This was the first time where government ministries planned together to produce a national document. It was also the first time that the Government of Lesotho worked together with civil society, private sector and development partners to produce a national policy document.

When the team left Maseru, the objective was to go and produce a PRSP within three weeks. Information available included 200 village reports, 2000 village statistical sheets, 10 district reports, the "Voice of the People" Draft Report, the Growth Opportunities and Options Report, all major Government publications, Human Development Reports, sample PRSPs from Kenya, Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Ghana, as well as the Lesotho Interim PRSP, amongst others.

4.1.2 What Happened at Mphahlele?

As a start, the team went through a "logical framework" training to equip them with analytical skills. Two specialist trainers from CARE Lesotho South Africa and DFID- Lesotho conducted the training for three days. The training covered techniques in problem analysis based on 'cause and effect' linkages, in order to establish core problems, root causes and overarching negative impacts. The method used was "zoop" based on a German model, which forces critical thinking and analysis. The model uses psychosocial pull and push approach in generating information. Each issue mentioned by the community and sectors as a problem of poverty was thoroughly analysed at sub-sectoral level. For example, analysis was done at the levels of agriculture, crops, livestock, irrigation, extension services etc. Through this method each sub-sector produced a problem tree.

From the problem tree, the teams were trained on how to convert this into an objective tree (converting the negative situation into desired outcomes), and finally the teams were trained in how to prepare logical frameworks for each sub-sector. The sector teams then embarked on analysing their sector information, which combined both village level information, sectoral and thematic information. The idea was to ensure that sectors understood well the problems identified, and that the strategies for intervention were carefully selected based on feasibility, capacity and their relative contribution to poverty.

4.1.3 Did the Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) Approach Work?

As Doug Porter et al (1992) state in their book, "Development in Practice... Paved with Good Intentions", the LFA approach had good intentions of improving the analytical capacity of the writers and ensuring that linkages across sectors were established and recognised. The LFA intended to focus the PRSP on outcomes rather than inputs, meaning that before a strategy

was included in the PRSP, the sectors were to challenge themselves as to what this would buy for the poor of Lesotho.

While the LFA worked to a large extent, it could be argued that the flaws in the PRSP drafting which continued to manifest themselves up to the last stage, started with the adoption of LFA as the framework for analysis. The underlying understanding by the LFA trainers was that the writers were people who already used LFA framework for analysis. This was not true, as clearly the majority of writers struggled for over one week to grasp the concept of LFA and how to apply it in developing sectoral strategies. As a result, the write-ups which came out of sectoral groups were disjointed and, to some extent, disconnected.

Although the intention of the Mohale Retreat was to produce the First Draft, it was not possible after three gruelling weeks to do so. The Mohale Retreat only managed to produce a Zero-Zero Draft. Although that must sound as the story of Christopher Columbus (when he thought he had reached India only to discover that he had not gone far enough), the Mohale Retreat produced a working cohesion in Government. It also provided an opportunity for Government, NGOs and the Private Sector to work together. Furthermore, the LFA introduced government to a rigorous planning approach, which made them to think horizontally just as they thought vertically, and in a critical way. Indeed, one of the sector convenors from local government confessed that... *“In my life in government, I have never seen a time when government officials have worked as hard as this!”*

4.2 Towards The Final Draft

It was a long walk to the final draft of the PRSP. The section on the Mohale Retreat has highlighted the experiences of the drafting team to produce the Zero-Zero Draft. Basically, the final draft was built on that very first version of the Lesotho PRSP. This section highlights the important activities and efforts that went into the production of the document from the first draft to the final draft.

4.2.1 Consultants and the Consultancy Mania

Throughout the process of the PRSP preparation, the role of consultants cannot be overemphasised. In retrospect, developing a PRSP for Lesotho portrayed a very high level of consultancy dependency; but it must be recognised that most of them were very poorly supervised. They received limited support, and in some cases were openly antagonised by government officials from sectors who refused or were reluctant to provide information or guidance. On many other occasions, consultants were seen as quick fixes to every problem and were brought on board to fix problems that officials should have thought through carefully. It should be further understood that generally a consultant's role is to help a client analyse available information critically, organise it logically and present it in a way, which meets the client's needs. A consultant cannot invent information that neither exists nor cannot be found.

The consultancies for the PRSP started with the Poverty Baseline Study commissioned by the TWG, and undertaken by the National University of Lesotho consultants. The report was presented, but was rejected by the TWG because it was not complete. Efforts to have that report completed proved fruitless, but the consultants were paid. Three months after the community consultations had been completed, a consultant was hired in August to produce the report. The consultant had not been involved in consultations; nor had he participated in the production of the community consultation manual or in the training of facilitators. He struggled to get complete village reports due to the fact that in some districts those reports could not be traced, as the Secretariat did not have proper data management systems. The consultant was supposed to complete that report before the Mohale PRSP drafting Retreat, but could not do so due to problems with information. Ideally, had he been involved in such activities, his work could have been made easier.

At Mohale, three consultants were engaged to help in the drafting of the full PRSP. Once more, a divergence of views amongst the PRSP Secretariat ensued. The consultants ended up

spending more time negotiating for their rates of payment rather than doing what they were hired to do. Although the intention was to produce a first draft of the PRSP, their input was derailed and they ended up having very little influence on the product, and they only managed to help in producing a zero-zero draft. Many members of TWG interviewed said that those consultants had just grasped the concept of PRSP and, had they been allowed to stay on, the PRSP would have been ready in the first quarter of 2003.

During the period between November 2002 and March 2003, nothing happened. It was not until a new group of four consultants were recruited that work on the PRSP recommenced, and they moved the zero-zero draft to the first draft. Once more, they were released before the PRSP was completed but were fully paid. Another firm of consultants was engaged to complete the comprehensive costing of the PRSP. They recommended that government should first prioritise their strategies so that they could undertake a prioritised costing. That was not done; instead a new team from Sechaba consultants was engaged. The World Bank also sent in a consultant from Australia who, together with the PRSP Technical Advisers, produced an abridged Version of the PRSP (70 pages), which then became the official version. The document consisted of an operational document of 170 pages, an executive summary, prioritised implementation matrix and monitoring indicators with targets. Annex 2 gives a detailed chronology of consultants contracted during the PRSP process.

CHAPTER 5

What Worked

5.0 Introduction

It must be remembered that, it was the first time that Lesotho ever embarked on a programme of the magnitude of the making of the PRSP; other national activities like preparations for general elections and national census are usually not, in comparison, so involving. The need for and degree of participation by all stakeholders was a concept that was new in the country. It was therefore not surprising that at the beginning of the process, neither of the stakeholders had assessed their institutional and analytical capacities demanded by the guidelines embedded in the PRSP initiative. The result was that in institutions including the public sector (civil services) had to learning as the process progressed. Some institutional mechanisms established were relevant and useful while others were not. In the following paragraphs we attempt to identify a few areas where some the arrangements worked and where things did not really work.

5.1 Participatory Community Consultations

The participatory process in Lesotho has been hailed as one of the most successful of those observed from countries which have undertaken the PRSP⁸. The extensive community consultations was clear evidence that government had changed its approach to addressing poverty issues: Government was determined that the views and concerns of the Basotho must be represented in the document. The consultations moved from zone to zone, district to district, village to village, community to community with disregard to the high undulating mountains, meandering rivers, steep slopes and deep valleys. Consequently, even though community consultations ran concurrently with other national activities, a substantial proportion of the country's population were meaningfully engaged in poverty discussions and their concerns were fully captured.

One of the main lessons learnt, was that, participation of communities ensured that the views of the Basotho especially the poor and those living in the remote rural areas were taken into account. The broad based participation also did not undermine any existing democratic processes; instead they contributed in building the consistency of support for broad development planning structures and for the improvement of the analytical capacity of all the participants. The challenge for the government is now how to maintain that level of community participation through the implementation phase of the PRSP.

5.2 Stakeholder's Contributions

It was also the first time that Central Government had taken issues to the people, and allowed for a free for all involvement with non-governmental representatives sitting at the same table and working towards a common goal: the production of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. From community consultations, to the Mohale Retreat, to the finalisation of the PRSP, stakeholders were given an opportunity to give valuable inputs into the PRSP. The PRSP consultation process has been a clear indication that various sectors of the economy can successfully collaborate for the nation's development. That process allowed for a common platform from which the civil society organizations, communities, non-governmental organizations, representatives from government and development partners engaged in discussions, shared and exchanged views on burning poverty issues. On the other hand, it has been noted that although the degree of participation of the various stakeholders in the different stages of the process was quite remarkable, the domination of the public sector was still evident. Though in all fairness, since government initiated the process, it was therefore

⁸ Lesotho and Uganda are the two countries that are reported by UNDP to have done well in involving communities and civil societies in consultations processes for their PRSPS. New York, December 2001

not surprising that they had to play a leading role. The issue is how much space did they actually give to other stakeholders.

5.3 Establishment of Linkages between the Stakeholders

One important outcome of the PRSP process was the way linkages between the stakeholders, especially those working within the same sectors, were established. Those linkages ensured that development workers were informed of each other's programs such that duplication and repetition of programmes would be avoided. In some sectors, it was also believed that the participation of the Civil Society and the private sector acted as checks to keep the public sector on its toes. Interviews confirmed that that was a welcomed outcome and it was hoped that those linkages could be maintained as a step towards creating a Public-Private-Partnership which, up until then seemed an over ambitious wish.

5.4 Participation of Minorities

The nature of the PRSP process allowed for the participation of minorities, thanks to the efforts and collaboration of the TWG, the Secretariat and UNICEF. Through the leadership and guidance of UNICEF, children's concerns and those of herd boys who have always been marginalized, were articulated and included in the document. Women, the disabled, the elderly and the rural poor were also able to engage in discussions and had the rare opportunity to voice out their perspectives.

5.5 Development Partners' Active Participation and Support

Generally Development Partners are perceived only as providers of financial resources, but in the PRSP process, they did more than that; the technical contribution given by some international organisations like DFID, DCI and UNDP was invaluable for the duration of the PRSP process. Their continuous discussions with government, the TWG, SWGs and the Secretariat and active participation in all stages of the PRSP process, kept the process in motion. That, without doubt, was crucial not only in ensuring that there was adequate funding for the process, but also for the successful completion of the PRSP.

5.6 Budget Recognition of PRSP National Priorities

As a first step of linking budgeting to planning, the Minister for Finance and Development Planning during his budget speech on 16th February demonstrated the importance the government attached to the PRSP. Although the shift in resources to PRSP national priorities is still minimal, there is a strong intention by GoL to move in this direction. The actual test on this front should be seen in the subsequent years.

CHAPTER 6

What Did Not Work: Tensions and Threats!

6.0 Introduction

The process of developing a PRSP allows countries to devise and drive their own development strategies and agendas. According to the IMF, WB and the UNDP, some critical dimensions of country ownership of the PRSP process include:

- The extent to which governments are committed to the PRSP;
- Involvement of Parliamentarians in the formulation of the process;
- Early involvement of line ministries in the design of the strategy;
- The dynamics of budget negotiation within government;
- Developing PRSP in parallel with other planning documents; and
- It is vital for the Ministry of Finance to engage in the process to ensure that PRSP priorities are reflected in the budget allocations.

In the case of Lesotho all but one of the above were demonstrably available; the involvement of parliamentarians, as already stated elsewhere in this report, was limited. Thus, the limited participation of that group will not help in the implementation of the PRSP unless strenuous efforts are made immediately to fully bring them on board.

Such a huge and protracted exercise as that of making the PRSP, which was so involving in terms of volume of work and institutional complexities, called for need for effective coordination and could not be without stresses, tensions and threats. We shall now discuss some of the factors which created those stresses, tensions and threats and which surfaced during the process. Also, we shall briefly explain some efforts made by GoL and stakeholders to reduce and manage them.

6.1 Public-Private Sector Encounter

For a number of years, different ministers and senior civil servants had made public pronouncements about the need for public-private sector partnership in development. Attempts to establish 'smart partnerships' were made, but not much had been achieved in terms of facilitating actual interaction between the two sectors, as experienced during the period of the making of the PRSP.

The late coming and limited participation of the private sector demonstrated, among other things, some weakness in their organizational capacity. Had they possessed powerful institutionalised mechanisms to ensure that their views would actually be reflected in the various stages of the PRSP from the start of the process, they might have made a bigger difference. In most cases their participation was not fully recognised and appreciated by the dominating public sector, causing frustration and non-attendance and was perhaps most telling of their own public image.

While a lot was achieved in terms of concrete inputs into the PRSP process, as well as in terms of reducing the mutual suspicions between the two groups, the old mistrust between the public/ civil service players and the private sector players became evident right from the start of the process. For some months at the start, it proved to be an impediment and a threat towards making the process smoother at various stages. The threat was avoided when the private sector decided to work on their own inputs separately, which were finally submitted. Thereafter, continued contact between the two groups helped break the tensions. Supported by DFID the private sector managed to pull themselves together and developed their own position paper as an input to the PRSP. The making of the PRSP therefore, could be said to have afforded a rare but welcome opportunity to eliminate or reduce some of that mistrust.

6.2 Participation of Policy Makers

Generally, the participation of Parliamentarians and Chiefs in the PRSP process was not optimal as already mentioned elsewhere in the report. Rather than being given briefing sessions, they should have been debating issues relating to the PRSP process and its content on regular basis and at all stages. They should have lead the sensitisation and consultation processes with the communities and been able to report back to their constituencies and areas respectively, on the progress of the PRSP. At such, they would also have acted as watchdogs, ensuring that the concerns of the people were fully captured in the final document.

In some instances, the poor or erratic leadership and participation of the Principal Secretaries (who were also viewed as political representatives, in the overall deliberations) sent the wrong signal that the PRSP process was not a government priority. In fact, constant remarks that the Principal Secretaries were more interested in the National Vision 2020 than in the PRSP were made by several planners. Whether that was true or not, the perception had been created

6.3 PRSP and Other National Initiatives

As mentioned earlier, there were also threats caused by the current running of some other important national initiatives. Those were the ongoing development of the National Vision 2020, the preparations for and running of general elections, the on-going food aid distribution as a result of famine, and then the PRSP. All those important activities had to involve most of the key personalities from government, the civil society and the NGOs and the private sector who were expected to participate fully in the PRSP process. Some of the representatives became overwhelmed by the multiple activities and the time they spent outside their normal business activities and many of them simply could not deliver on time.

6.4 The Merger of the PRSP and National Vision Secretariats

In November 2002, the government merged the National Vision Secretariat and the PRSP Secretariat and put the joint secretariat under the leadership of the PRSP Director. The merger had been triggered by some perception that the PRSP process was moving faster, leaving the National Vision process behind; and yet the Vision 2020, correctly, should be the basis on which the PRSP was built. It was argued that, in the circumstances, it might be better that the two processes should run parallel, and that, to harmonise their contents, their central management and coordination would make that possible. Efficiency in resources use and performance of the Joint Secretariat was also another factor considered for the merger. So the perceived tensions and threats to the two processes were to be overcome.

The first test of the Joint Secretariat was the community consultations processes: one for the PRSP; and the other for the National Vision taking place concurrently under the coordination of the Secretariat. Thus, after the merging, the PRSP, TWG and the Consultations Sub-Committee of the National Steering Committee for the Vision process worked together in planning the consultations and how they should proceed. Regular progress reports were made to a Committee of Principal Secretaries, which was responsible for coordinating all work on the National Vision, the PRSP and the Public Sector Improvement and Reform Programme (PSIRP). The Government Secretary chaired this body.

Once consultations were over, the merging became extremely dodgy as TWG and National steering Committee for PRSP and National Vision kept pushing the two processes in different ways. Rivalry also ensued between staff of both processes and unhealthy competition. The combined secretariat started to fail in pushing the processes in a balanced manner. This created frustration and some key staff who were very enthusiastic found it difficult to push for progress and eventually were dropped off or dropped off themselves.

6.5 The De-merger of the Secretariats

The merging of the PRSP and the National Vision processes almost derailed the two processes. Soon after the merging of the two processes, government increasingly realised that the merged Secretariat was no longer delivering as envisaged. From the perspective of the Vision Steering Committee, similar observations were made. In addition, donor concern and subsequent pressure that the PRSP must be delivered was the last straw. The GoL reviewed this merger and agreed with the concerns to a large extent. What was clear is the fact that both the Vision and the PRSP were delayed, defeating the very purpose of the merger in the first instance.

All the above triggered the final demise of the merger. The Minister of Finance and Development Planning got impatient with the delay in completing the PRSP and, after reviewing the draft document, he was of the view that a lot of work had been put into the document, which only needed some refinements in part and did not see where the delay was coming from.

He believed that the PRSP was an important national document that ought to be treated as such from the onset. He attributed the delay partly to the fact that groups and consultants spent too much in trying to identify and set national priorities, which was in fact the responsibility of the Cabinet. He decided to take over the supervision and the process, and set a target date for the delivery of the document. This separated the Vision from the PRSP.

6.6 Time Management - Poverty of Government Officials

In the initial preparation stages of the PRSP, it was recognised that senior staff representatives from the government, private sector and civil society would be more involved in the drafting of the PRSP through the SWG. Unfortunately, civil servants on sector working groups were split between their regular work and the PRSP, which eventually affected the production of good quality background sectoral documents. Perhaps if the priority nature of the PRSP had been sufficiently impressed upon by the Principal Secretaries who were mandated to oversee the production of sector papers, their representatives in the various groups could have made time and managed it better for the PRSP process. That would also have ensured that PSs prioritise the PRSP process as part of their other demanding priorities, and would have allowed them to release better qualified officials to make valuable contributions and inputs into the PRSP process as a whole.

The persistent lack of time management under the leadership of government officials posed general threats to the PRSP process is not disputable. It was not only government officials who suffered from this poverty in time management, but other stakeholders like the private sector, civil society and professional groups who eventually thinned out. Most of them attributed their non-attendance or irregular attendance to two reasons: the domination of sectoral meetings by government officials who frequently disagreed on minor issues that usually derailed the meetings, and their total disregard of or lack in time management.

Table 3 indicates the time that elapsed between completion of Interim PRSPs and Full PRSPs for selected countries that produced PRSPs. Compared to these countries, Lesotho took the longest time to produce its full PRSP.

**Table 3. Time Elapsed Between Completion of I-PRSP and Full PRSPs.
Selected Countries.**

Country	I-PRSP	Full PRSP	Time Taken
Lesotho	December 2000	Pending	36 months
Benin	June 2000	March 2003	33 months
Cameroon	August 2000	August 2003	36 months
Guinea	October 2000	January 2002	15 months
Malawi	August 2000	April 2002	20 months
Zambia	June 2000	March 2002	21 months

Source: WB/IMF website (<http://www.wb.org>)

6.7 Apathy and Fatigue

During the interviews among members of the communities, there were general complaints that some members of the communities were tired of seeing government officials coming and talking to them about all kinds of issues, with many empty promises. Civil servants and some politicians were blamed for making those promises, which were never fulfilled. Their visits to villages were described as a mere waste of communities' time and waste of public funds. The threat was that some members of the communities were already beginning to show signs of loss of interest in being asked questions by researchers, be they civil servants or consultants. The fear that response to the consultations might have been negative not very useful to the PRSP process. That threat also, to our view, remains crucial.

On the part of government officials, the prolonged time taken to complete the PRSP began to result in fatigue and loss of interest. That was indicated by the way consultants were finding it more and more difficult to get the necessary information from the civil servants. During the interviews some officials did express a feeling of stress and fatigue that resulted from their involvement in several meetings of the SWGs in which they were involved.

6.8 NGO Consortium Pulling Out

Just before the consultations were to take place, a dispute between the PRSP Secretariat and the Consortium ensued over payments and transport for consultations. The NGO Consortium- a creation of TWG to help in leading the consultations process and also analyse community data was comprised of NGOs and Sechaba consultants. They insisted on being given a free hand to hire their own vehicles and also manage the consultations. This was not acceptable to the PRSP secretariat, hence they pulled out. When the Consortium pulled out, some CBOs in that sector still felt slighted as they had not been consulted before the Consortium pulled out. Clearly, the pulling out of the NGO consortium from the PRSP process left a gap in the process in terms of participation which could have negatively affected the participation of the civil society had LCN and government not moved quickly to redeem the situation. Thus, government did recognise that threat, and quickly acted to ensure that the voice of that important group of stakeholders was not completely left out. Nevertheless, during the interviews, some leaders of some of the NGOs, particularly those that are not affiliated during the interviews, still felt that it was unfair that they also had to be represented by LCN to which they were not affiliated. This threat, for the authors, remains real and alive and should be taken seriously in the future processes.

6.9 The Coordinating Mechanisms

The PRSP process was conducted through a number of structures and reporting mechanisms that were put in place. A major purpose for creating the structures was to ensure effective coordination and facilitation of the process. However, due to poorly defined terms of references, some of those structures became counterproductive and, in the end reporting lines became confused or blurred. It was also evident that there were no structured procedures in place to move the process constantly forward and according to agreed schedules.

In the first instance, the number of institutions increased as more issues arose demanding more attention. In the end, membership in the working groups created overlapped with participants being members of more than one group. Furthermore, the chairing of the groups was done mostly by the Secretariat. In other words, the Head of the Secretariat ended up chairing and coordinating more than one sub-committee including the TWG to which the Head was supposed to report. This caused a lot of confusion when it came to accountability, monitoring and reporting.

It also resulted in tension at the level of the Secretariat, as well as within the working groups due to personality conflicts caused by time and other pressures on the people working on the document. This appeared to have been lost between the Secretariat and the TWG. For

example, even though for the SWGs work plans were drawn to guide their activities from the beginning of their tenures, there seemed to have been no mechanisms to ensure that this were adhered to. As a result, the PRSP process was interrupted on several occasions without any clear explanation given.

The many key personnel changes in the preparation and development of the PRSP affected the supervision and coordination in terms of continuity. A membership change in the working groups sometimes resulted in the incoming of junior officers and low-level ministerial representation: this created serious problems of continuity, poor quality of inputs and eventually the outputs.

6.10 Lack of Experience of the TWG

Lack of or limited technical experience within the TWG with regard to the actual writing of a PRSP, posed a serious threat to the timely completion of the document. Although members of the TWG received training in participatory techniques, they had had no training in the analysis and interpretation of data collected from the community consultations, or drafting and subsequent producing the PRSP. It was a case of 'learning as you go'. This resulted in the engagement of a number of consultants, the production of many drafts and versions of the PRSP, and the delay of the final document. At times, the TWG looked like a market place where everyone's opinion was important and no opinion mattered. Discussions in TWG would sometimes focus on trivialities for hours, making it impossible to move. The TWG also did not have clear terms of reference for technical advisers who had experience and instead made them just as part of the team. While this may have been done to maintain ownership, it also wasted valuable resources that had been given to Lesotho.

Difficult as it may sound, we must state here that without the input of the consultants and the technical advisers from different partners the PRSP may have not been completed. Interviewing the EU technical advisor in GoL, he singled out the DFID technical adviser whose contributions helped to unblock things at many stages.

6.11 After Consultations Blackout

There were other areas where concerns were raised too. The common concern emanated from the interviews with officials at the district offices, was that after the community consultations there was a ***PRSP status information blackout and nothing has been given back to the communities***. Thus, that healthy relationship that had been established between the central government and the communities was not maintained. Some members of the communities who were interviewed suggested that they could have been given feedbacks about the progress being made through the media-radio and press. That did not happen frequently enough.

What this confirmed was lack of mechanisms and strategies put in place for maintaining information flow between the PRSP Secretariat on the one hand, and the Districts and their communities, on the other. It was apparent that, at the end of the community consultations, there was virtually a break in information sharing.

During the interviews an opinion was raised that regular dialogue and even participation in the drafting of the PRSP with the people who had actually collected the information, would have helped to enrich the document. The idea may not be practical and was not clearly thought through by the interviewees, but it demonstrated a real desire for continuous involvement and participation of all those who felt part and parcel of the ongoing process.

Furthermore, throughout the process, emphasis on active participation was mainly concentrated initially at grassroots/community levels and later at the technical/technocrats drafting level, resulting in compromising time needed to sensitise senior government officials and other central authorities. Although the TWG remained on top of the situation the flow of information to upper levels seem to have been erratic.

6.12 Data Collection and Analysis

When the PRSP and the Vision 2020 consultations were merged, Vision 2020 officials had not attended the PRA training given earlier to the PRSP personnel and therefore the officials from the Vision Secretariat were not able to relate to the questionnaires effectively. Three different reporting formats, two for the PRSP and one for the Vision, were used. Because of the different formats used, some data got lost, some got mixed up and some gaps missing, some useful data were also noted.⁹

Also, at the end of the consultations, different people drafted the report from those who collected the data. In addition some of the data had to be translated from Sesotho to English or vice versa. There was a strong possibility that crucial information may have been lost in the process.

The use of so many consultants as discussed in Section 4. 2.1, also resulted in serious delays as they all had to first study the draft and possibly introduce their own individual style of writing. Because the drafting process took so long, there was a general fear that a good deal of information got lost by the time the final document was completed.

6.13 Transparency of the PRSP Process

During consultations, the PRSP process was described as having been transparent with most stakeholders involved. However, by the time it reached the drafting stage, most activities became centralised to specific structures only, particularly the PRSP Secretariat. There were no horizontal discussions between members of the Working Groups and their colleagues in the different ministries. The process was, therefore, only transparent to those officials who participated in the SWGs and the institutions to which the SWGs reported. Furthermore, because of the absence of clear reporting mechanisms discussed above, the transparency of the process diminished with time.

For the private sector and the civil society, their limited knowledge and access to the macro-economic policies of the country made it difficult for them to fully participate in the drafting exercise. Thus, the secrecy with which government business is carried out in Lesotho contributed a lot to the problem which has been compounded by lack of trust on the part of civil servants, to any person who is not from the civil service.

One of the major lessons learnt is that in an exercise of the magnitude of a PRSP, key people in the decision-making level must be adequately sensitised such that they have the full understanding of their roles and the issues at hand. It is also imperative that those in charge have the necessary specialized capacity, skills and knowledge to undertake the leadership of such a process. What was missing in Lesotho, as stated elsewhere in the report, was critical mass of knowledge, expertise and command of the process within Government.

6.14 Media Coverage

The usage of the media to cover the process as alluded to already, was very limited and used briefly at the beginning. The use of media would have improved public awareness and kept the whole nation abreast of the process at every turn. Different kinds of media especially on radio and press releases, which can be accessed by most Basotho regardless of their economic status, should be used in future to regularly brief and sensitise the public on national issues such as the making of PRSPs.

⁹ Turner and Leboela: Voice of the People 20001

Chapter 7

Conclusions and Recommendations

7.0 Conclusions

There is no doubt this was a huge exercise whose overall outcome should help to build a platform for transforming the thinking and the way of doing business in Lesotho. Shortcomings aside, it could be argued that the Lesotho PRSP process was a success and has introduced new concepts both in the state and non-state sectors. The only danger that the PRSP poses is, the enormous expectations raised amongst the Basotho people. The question that will remain unanswered at least at this time is... “Will the Government and its Development Partners fulfil their promises?”

In this Report, we have attempted to give an historical genesis of poverty within the changing social, economic and political scenarios in Lesotho and in the region and we have shown several and varied attempts to fight poverty by various regimes with support from the country’s development partners. Our conclusion is, that while this process was obviously not at all perfect, major steps have been taken which demonstrate clearly a shift towards tackling the problems of poverty in Lesotho. The challenge that now faces the country is how to consolidate and institutionalise this process of consultations, collaborations and genuine dialogue with stakeholders. Governments in the developing world are known for jumping on bandwagons like PRSPs just because they feel that, this is what the Western rich countries want to see before they can open their wallets. Our view is that, if Lesotho acts in this way, a big opportunity to change the lives of its citizens will be lost. Our hope is that, the traditional saying that goes ‘Muso ha o tate’ meaning government is never in a hurry will disappear with this approach. Accountability to Basotho should increase, and more transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in the use of public resources will begin to be seen.

As it has been said over and over by all stakeholders Lesotho’s record in implementing programmes is very poor. The institutional response is very weak and so the advocates of PRSP must understand that, the country has never lacked good plans or even good planning. What it has lacked is good implementation. The government systems must be radically changed to become responsive to demand driven initiatives. Such change can only be initiated from the top where leadership must be from the front. For this to happen, the authorities should encourage innovation and creativity and allow people to take risks while trying new packages for change. It is only when people are free to those answers to difficulty issues can be found.

Many Basotho to whom we talked, saw the PRSP as a hope for a new beginning. All Basotho should treat procrastination with contempt, and people in authority who make decisions should make them in line with government’s policies even if the decisions may sometimes be wrong. It should be noted that a bad decision is better than none.

For the readers of this report, we apologise where we may have exaggerated a situation however, our main purpose is to ensure that the Lesotho story of the PRSP is not lost. If some of our interpretation is not correct, we request all, to understand that this was not the intention. The report simply hopes that the lessons learned in this process will become living memories in the lives of the Basotho so that mistakes of YESTERDAY shall not be repeated TOMORROW!

7.1 Recommendations

The volume of information that this report generated was too overwhelming for us to do justice in this section. In most cases some of the recommendations are subsumed in the specific chapters. What appears here is what we consider generic and important to be highlighted. These are:

11. That the link between communities and the Central Government through active communication between the PRSP Secretariat and District offices, (as was the case during the consultations), is reconnected and kept alive. Regular dialogue/discussions and feedbacks on on-going activities relating to poverty reduction for communities will ensure, less scepticism when officials visit communities for future national exercises such as the PRSP.
12. The PRSP process has revealed the degree of weakness in the private sector's ability to come together and engage effectively with government on national issues. Since they must, of necessity, stay on the bandwagon, the private sector must be encouraged and supported to organise themselves so that they continue to provide the much needed input to policy making processes in Lesotho. Without them playing an active role, the economy may not grow fast enough to reduce poverty in Lesotho.
13. There is the need to have national debates about the broad policy direction/s that government may want to pursue, either to address general issues pertaining to the economic and social dimensions of poverty which would allow for a holistic approach to the development of PRSP, or specific issues pertaining to specific strategies etc. There is, therefore, a need for continuous, open and robust discussion by all stakeholders, before and during development of any national exercises such as the PRSP, or after each phase of implementation. What we understand now is that Lesotho has embarked on a long but dynamic process of developing her economy for the better.
14. Whilst we acknowledge that the multi-stakeholder institutional structures developed for the PRSP process were far from being perfect, they will need to be strengthened so that they continue to collaborate, particularly during the implementation stage. They can play crucial roles in facilitating the PRS implementation, its monitoring and evaluation. There is a need, therefore, to devise some formal and joint mechanism to institutionalise active participation of key stakeholders to ensure and deepen ownership of the PRSP processes now and in the future.
15. In future, clear reporting and accountability mechanisms should be put in place within the Secretariat and all the Working Groups, which would also allow for constant briefing and updating measures to all stakeholders, and to also ensure that timeframes are adhered to in making such policy documents.
16. Consideration should be made to have equitable and proportional representation of all stakeholders in working groups to allow for parity in the presentation of views, influencing decisions and to ensure equitable ownership of the process.
17. The process should not be taken as an isolated process but as a national goal and tool to continue multiple stakeholder participation in national issues. Mechanisms should be set up to initiate a genuine dialogue platform between all stakeholders with clear action plans regarding the planning and implementation of the poverty reduction strategies. There should therefore be clear action plans with implementation strategies and monitoring and evaluation tools of the programme.

The challenge for Lesotho is whether this participatory turn is going to shift from the traditionally top down approach to a more participatory form of decision-making and policy planning.

18. A national think-tank, which will involve all stakeholders, should be established. This group will be assigned to discuss national issues relating to the PRS before and after implementation. Stakeholders should take such exercises more seriously and assign properly qualified people with the necessary specialised skills and expertise such that they spend minimum time on the process. Chiefs and Parliamentarians should work together and collaborate on mobilising their constituencies to debate national issues especially during the PRS implementation period.

19. Use should be made of modern technology to access and transfer information promptly between all stakeholders. The number and frequency of physical meetings will be reduced and savings on stationary, time and other resources will be made. Using this mode of communication will facilitate sharing of relevant information between stakeholders frequently and efficiently at all times. For example there is abundant relevant information on PRSP on the Internet, which accessed, would invariable cut down on travelling time to visit other countries by officials for experience and guidance.
20. Lesotho has been over researched and the public is getting weary of not participating in the implementation of their reported concerns. The **‘Voice of the People’** document should, therefore, be further edited and developed to capture more information that can be used as a guide for other similar exercises. It should also be translated into Sesotho and distributed to communities. Indeed, some of the views and expectations of the communities will remain valid for some years to come. Only incremental information may be required in the future.

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Annex 1

List of People Seen and Talked to.

Name	Name of Institution	Type of Institution	District
Chief Seeiso B. Seeiso	Parliament	Senate	Maseru
Hon. Dr. D. Raditapole MP	Parliament	National Assembly	Maseru
Hon. Dr. L. Ketso MP	Parliament	National Assembly	Maseru
Hon. Dr. P. R. Phororo MP	Ministry of Agriculture	Central Government	Maseru
Hon. Morena P. Peete MP	Parliament	National Assembly	Maseru
Hon. Mr. B. Macaefa MP	Parliament	National Assembly	Maseru
Hon. Mr. B. Sekhonyana MP	Parliament	National Assembly	Maseru
Hon. Mr. K. A. Maope MP	Parliament	National Assembly	Maseru
Hon. Mr. L. Rakuane MP	Parliament	National Assembly	Maseru
Hon. Mr. T. Letsie MP	Parliament	National Assembly	Maseru
Hon. Mr. T. Thahane MP	Ministry of Finance	Central Government	Maseru
MFS Consulting	Consultancy	Private Sector	Maseru
Morena R. Letsie	Chieftainship	Local Government	Matsieng
Mr. B. Schmidt	District Planning Unit	Local Government	Mohale's Hoek
Mr. F. Hakane	Lesotho Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Private Sector	Maseru
Mr. G. West	Ministry of Finance	Central Government	Maseru
Mr. H Tolofi	WHO	Development Partner	Maseru
Mr. J. A. Wayem	UNDP	Development Partner	Maseru
Mr. J. Feeny	UNDP	Development Partner	Maseru
Mr. K. Mohapi	DS Office	Local Government	Teyateyaneng
Mr. K. Ramoorosi	Ministry of Agriculture	Local Government	Mafeteng
Mr. K.T. Marite	Ministry of Public Works	Central Government	Maseru
Mr. M. Mahao	CARE/ELRAP	NGO	Maseru
Mr. M. Masase	Ministry of Local Government	Central Government	Maseru
Mr. M. Mthethwa	District Planning Unit	Local Government	Mohale's Hoek
Mr. M. Tshabalala	LHDA	Parastatal	Maseru
Mr. N. Seboka	Lesotho Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Private Sector	Maseru
Mr. P. Mochesane	Private	Private	Maseru
Mr. S. Mac Roibin	UNICEF	Development Partners	Maseru
Mr. S. Motsamai	Lesotho Council of NGOs	NGO	Maseru

Name	Name of Institution	Type of Institution	District
Mr. T. Taolane	World Vision	NGO	Butha-Buthe
Mr. T. Damane	Ministry of Trade	Central Government	Maseru
Mr. T. Green	Sechaba Consultants	Private Sector	Maseru
Mr. T. Makeka	Association of Lesotho Employers	Private Sector	Maseru
Mrs A. Mathibeli	Ministry of Education	Central Government	Maseru
Mrs M. Mosoenyane	DS Office	Local Government	Butha-Buthe
Mrs M. Lesaoana			Maseru
Mrs M. Machai	Ministry of Planning	Central Government	Maseru
Mrs M. Makhakhe	Ministry of Health	Central Government	Maseru
Mrs M. Matabane	Ministry of Local Government	Central Government	Maseru
Mrs M. Molapo	Lesotho Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Private Sector	Maseru
Mrs M. Molumeli	Ministry of Agriculture	Central Government	Maseru
Mrs M. Morojele	Lesotho Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Private Sector	Maseru
Mrs. L.A Hlasoa	Ministry of Planning	Central Government	Maseru
Ms K. Tsumane	Ministry of Planning	Central Government	Maseru
Ms M. Mpai	Ministry of Tourism	Central Government	Maseru
Ms M. Mphutlane	Ministry of Finance	Central Government	Maseru
Ms M. Qoane	Ministry of Trade	Central Government	Maseru
Ms N. Lebona	Ministry of Finance	Central Government	Maseru
Ms P.R. Lebotsa	Ministry of Justice	Central Government	Maseru
Mr. J.A. Atema	DFIDSA-Lesotho	Development Partner	Maseru
Mr. D. Webster	DFIDSA-Lesotho	Development Partner	Maseru

Annex 2

Consultancy Mania

Consultancies	Activity	Output
1. Poverty Baseline Study	Conducted a poverty baseline study	Report Rejected.
2. Assessing existing poverty monitoring system in Lesotho	Conducted an assessment study	Towards a Poverty Monitoring System Report successfully produced
3. SWOT Analysis	To determine whether the May 20 General Elections would not interfere with the Community Consultations.	A SWOT Analysis Report produced and used
4. Production of Thematic Papers	Formation of an NGO Consortium to produce Thematic Position Papers	Reports very poor and not used.
5. Mohale Retreat Consultancies	Assist in the production of the PRSP Draft.	A Zero-Zero Draft PRSP Document Work not complete consultants discontinued due to disagreement with the Secretariat
6. Completion of Drafting and Editing the PRSP.	To improve technical quality by filling the gaps of the Zero-Zero draft.	First Draft PRSP Document. Consultants released before report is completed
7. Costing	To do a full costing of all activities in the document.	A Costing Report. Consultants did not do the prioritised costing. A new group engaged
8. Editing.	Editing of the Final Draft.	Incomplete. Consultancy terminated but consultant fully paid
9. Drafting	A final drafting of the final draft.	A Final Report.
10. Prioritising and Costing	Prioritised costing.	A Revised Costing Report.