

## **WELCOME REMARKS**

**By Lemohang Molibeli**

**Commissioner**

**Democracy and Human Rights Commission Lesotho Council of NGOs**

**Post-Elections National Dialogue in Lesotho**

**Maseru, 'Manthabiseng Convention Centre**

**18 October 2017**

Excellencies

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good Morning

It gives me great pleasure to extend to you all a very warm welcome on behalf of the Democracy and Human rights Commission and entire civil society organisations in the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho.

It is an opportune time to renew contacts and have a dialogue of mutual interest with delegates from citizens of Lesotho and members of the region who are friends of Lesotho through their personal capacity and professional.

It is gratifying to note that the agenda of the National dialogue cover a wide range of very interesting items relating to the reforms process that the country is facing.

This National Dialogue should do the following:

- Establish a new social contract between electorates and their representatives both in National Assembly and Local Government,
- Open a new page in the history of Lesotho when we are starting another 50 years of independence,
- Breaking from the past and paving the way for democratic governance founded on the rule of law, human rights and equal citizenship,
- Public participation should be part of reforms agenda as to respond to the demand for popular participation from different constituencies.

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

The process of reforms should be sustainable. We cannot go on like this, as a country which holds elections every two to three years. We need more dialogue both political and social, to find agreement on development approaches that have the best chances for improving the life opportunities of most Basotho and to finally build a social contract between citizens and government, on the basis of the expectations of citizens and the realities of governance.

As a sector we appreciate support from neighbouring countries, including regional institutions such as SADC. The support from outside should be used as a starting point for strengthening the country's relations with other countries, but also for copying from them the very best in democratic practice that fit into our culture and level of development.

I want to close by paying tribute to the brave leaders of civil society organisations, both national and regional who have been risking their lives to reach people in need under difficult and dangerous circumstances.

Today, let us change the narrative. Lets us, by and with our solidarity and generosity and compassionate leadership, bring true hope to the people of Lesotho and the region.

**KHOSTO PULA NALA!!!**