**National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA)**

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***Ministry of Social Development invites your media houses to NISSA expansion and Community Based categorisation in Quthing Ha- Makoae and Ha- Machesetsa on the 19th October 2018***

*Ministry of Social Development was instituted in 2012 with the aim mission of leading and facilitating the provision of sustainable social development services that are universally accessible to all vulnerable groups in Lesotho in collaboration with other stakeholders.*

*The Ministry of Social Development is on a drive to expand the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) to cover sixty four (64) councils from the fifty eight (58). NISSA is a single registry or database that was launched in 2010, solely to help the Lesotho Government for coordination of social protection programmes, to store socio-economic data for targeting, planning and management of functions such as delivery of social payments, case management, monitoring and evaluation of Social Assistance programmes such as Child Grant Program*

*This program will help to ensure that the country has an updated database that would enhance the targeting of social protection programs aimed at reducing vulnerability of poorest of the poor households and strengthening the responsiveness of social assistance programs during shocks such as drought*.

*The seven year-old database provide updated information that would help the Government of Lesotho and development partners in targeting vulnerable people and help improve coordination of assistance programmes; hence the need to improve the efficiency of the database by ensuring it is easily accessible to social protection stakeholders and partners so that it can be used as a platform for targeting and coordination of social assistance programs.*

*NISSA will also enable the government through the Ministry of Social Development in increasing coverage of social assistance programs. The scope of work on NISSA, also aim to allow sharing of information for coordination purposes and to prevent duplication of programmes. An updated NISSA will go a long way in ensuring that areas, which were not covered previously by some development partners, due to lack of data, can also be included in their programmes.*

*Through NISSA the ministry and other stakeholders will be able to know who gets what from which program. Moreover, NISSA will also be able to monitor and evaluate its programs to be able to see if programs achieve required impact which is very important because social assistance programs should improve lives of vulnerable households benefiting from them and enable communities being assisted to eventually graduate from poverty or we need to know whether we are having more people falling into the vulnerability category and why? As the ministry, we foresee the role of NISSA expanding and playing a huge role in addressing new challenges that might arise due to lack of proper database for coordination of social assistance programmes;*

*At the end of 2017, there were 235,000 households from 58 Community Councils in the NISSA database. The Ministry of Social Development plans to collect data from 200,000 households covering 42 councils by end of 2018; which will constitute 6 new Community Councils and updating of old NISSA information from 36 Community Councils. The target is 350 thousand households*

*The Government of Lesotho has entered into a tri-partite agreement with the European Union for the support of social protection support and UNICEF providing technical assistance in order to hence the capacity.*

*As the Ministry state today, lot of changes have happened over the years, in terms of the status of families, hence the need to update the information. The overall goal is to make sure that the NISSA database achieves national coverage, and therefore enable the government to reach all vulnerable households wherever they are in order to improve the quality of life of those that are vulnerable. NISSA has been used in the past for targeting during disasters such as recent El Nino induced drought in 2016.*

*The Ministry work with all stakeholders to ensure that the role played by this important database is enhanced and stakeholders are able to take advantage of this important database for improved response to disasters.*

***The End***

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