**THE SPEECH ON NISSA FOR THE RIGHT HONOURABLE, THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE KINDOM OF LESOTHO, HONOURABLE DR. MOEKETSI MOJORO**

**‘’The National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA); Towards Building a Shock Responsive Social Protection System in Lesotho’’**

The Government of Lesotho (GoL) identified as a priority the need to increase the efficiency and coverage of social protection programmes, to improve the institutional coordination, to harmonize legal frameworks, and to consolidate social assistance programmes[[1]](#footnote-1). In this framework, and through financial support of European Union and technical support of UNICEF, the Ministry of Social Development instituted the National Information System for Social Assistance (NISSA) in 2010. NISSA is viewed as the foundation for harmonized targeting, improved coordination and integration of management functions of social assistance programs such as delivery of payments, case management, monitoring and evaluation. NISSA therefore serves as a single national registry for all social protection programmes and serves as an integrated

system for targeting for improved efficiency and effectiveness.

NISSA adopts a census approach where each household is categorized into one of 4 poverty groups through a process of Community Based Targeting (CBT) followed by collection of households data used and application of Proxy-Means Test formula that assigns poverty score for each household. The combination of poverty group and PMT score are then used in conjunction with other eligibility criteria for targeting of poorest and most deserving households for enrolment into social assistance programs such as Child Grant Program and OVC Bursary Program. NISSA has also been used for both vertical and horizontal expansion of programs during shocks and has proved to enable faster response to shocks and through linking payments to existing program such as CGP, improved speed of delivery of payments. NISSA can therefore be used to target for all poverty targeted programs and function as an important tool for Shock Responsive Social Protection.

**Current Status of NISSA/Achievements**

NISSA currently holds a total of 331,000 households from 64 Community Councils nationally with over 1,500,000 members. The database has been used to target around 50,000 poorest households caring for orphaned and vulnerable children who are receiving CGP funds quarterly in all 64 Community Council Preparations are at an advanced stage for data collection in 12 Urban Council (including Maseru City Council) for collection of an estimated 216,000 households. This will increase the total number of households in NISSA to 540,000 by January 2012.

**Vision for NISSA and On-going Initiatives**

In 2014, Ministry of Social Development through collaboration of EU/UNICEF has developed the National Policy on Social Development (NPSD) and the National Social Protection Policy. These two frameworks documents prioritizes development of the Social Protection System that prioritizes the strengthening of NISSA as the single registry and harmonized platform for targeting and delivery of social assistance programs. The Ministry has worked tirelessly through the support of EU and UNICEF to ensure a NISSA database achieves national coverage, is of highest integrity and is institutionalized as single national registry for targeting, coordination and efficient delivery of payments to beneficiary households. Currently the Ministry of Social Development is currently engaged in NISSA Urban Expansion targeting 216,000 households to achieve national coverage.

Because of the role NISSA has played during mainly drought induced shocks through targeting and delivery of emergency assistance, the Ministry of Social Development is collaborating with Disaster Management Authority, UNICEF, FAO, WFP under an ECHO-funded project to strengthen Disaster Preparedness in Lesotho. One of the main objectives of this project is to ensure that the capacity of the Ministry to implement NISSA is enhanced for constant and sustainable updating of NISSA database as the main targeting platform for a Shock Responsive Social Protection. The Ministry is currently developing the NISSA Portal that will ensure easier and faster access of NISSA data to partners thereby improving NISSA data use.

**Challenges/Recommendations**

NISSA has been very instrumental in the development and strengthening of the National Social Protection system in Lesotho but it is faced with serious challenges that have always attempted to reduce usefulness. As the problem of coverage of NISSA is no behind us, that of old and outdated NISSA data still remains. The Ministry is working on development of a sustainable strategy for constant NISSA update to improve its usefulness for targeting even during shocks. The capacity of NISSA in terms of human resources and IT infrastructure will have to be enhanced. The Ministry prioritizes this for the current review of the Ministry’s Strategic Plan.

The support of EU/UNICEF in Social Protection and specifically for NISSA has been very instrumental for the achievements the Government of Lesotho has made. However, the Ministry should start making plans to assume full responsibility for finance these activities to ensure that the gains made are not affected when the support ends. This will ensure we find sustainable way to implement these activities with our own resources.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)