REINFORCING CREDIBILITY AND ACCEPTANCE OF ELECTORAL PROCESSES
The Role of Electoral Stakeholders and Electoral Administrations

ELECTORAL MANAGEMENT BODIES (EMBs) AND GENDER EQUALITY
CASE STUDY: LESOTHO

PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY
COMMISSIONER ADVOCATE MAMOSEBI PHOLO
PREAMBLE

• ‘Political accountability to women begins with increasing the number of women in decision-making positions, but it cannot stop there. What is required is gender-sensitive governance reforms that will make all elected officials more effective at promoting gender equality in public policy and ensuring their implementation’. (UN Women)
INTRODUCTION

• Historically, Politics, decision-making and leadership have been a ‘no go area’ for women;
• This was backed-up by culture, tradition, religion and social set-ups;
• Women were legally barred from voting until the twentieth century.
SITUATION IN LESOTHO

• Lesotho is one of the top 10 African countries that have surpassed the expectation of the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) # 3 which is ‘Promoting gender equality and empowering women’.

• Lesotho has put in place measures to ensure equal participation of men and women in politics and these include legislative, policy and administrative measures.
SITUATION IN LESOTHO (Cont.)

• **Legislative Measures**
  ✓ Local Government Election Act, 2005;
  ✓ Legal Capacity of Married Persons, 2006;
  ✓ National Assembly Electoral Act, 2011.

• **Policy Measures**
  ✓ National Gender Policy of 2003;
  ✓ Youth Policy, 2003
  ✓ Women and girls Protection Policy of 1998
SITUATION IN LESOTHO (Cont.)

• Administrative Measures

✓ Electoral Commission of Lesotho in conjunction with the United Nations Development Program – UNDP have been running BRIDGE Gender and Elections courses for all stakeholders;
✓ In-house training for staff; and
✓ Deliberate gender balanced staff recruitment.
RECOMMENDATIONS

• EMBs must seek gender balance in their membership at all levels and create incentives for women to become election administrators;
• Develop policies on gender aimed at enhancing women’s participation in the election process;
• Train staff to be sensitive to gender issues;
RECOMMENDATION (Cont.)

• Compile and maintain sex-disaggregated statistics on the election process;
• Collaborate with civil society to advocate for mainstreaming gender in EMBs’ policies and plans;
• Develop independent monitoring mechanisms to identify and report on gender bias in the electoral process; and
• Identify qualified women to serve on election management bodies.
CONCLUSION

• To achieve the Millennium goal 3 by the year 2015, EMBs must ensure that women and men have equal opportunities to participate in politics;

• EMBs to review their legislation, policies and practices to enable women to participate meaningfully.

• As Margaret Thatcher once said, "If you want something said, ask a man...if you want something done, ask a woman."