

# REINFORCING CREDIBILITY AND ACCEPTANCE OF ELECTORAL PROCESSES

The Role of Electoral Stakeholders and Electoral Administrations

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## **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."

# THANK YOU FOR LISTENING

