

**WORKSHOP ON PROMOTING PARLIAMENT AND EXECUTIVE  
RESPONSIVENESS TO CONSTITUENTS' NEEDS AS GOOD  
GOVERNANCE PRACTICES**

**TOPIC: CHALLENGES FACED BY PARLIAMENT AND THE  
EXECUTIVE IN RESPONDING TO SERVICE DELIVERY  
AND PROVISION**

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## **A: THE UNDERSTANDING:**

- (i) This topic is designed to highlight selected areas in which both Parliament and the Executive may consider favorably, to enable them to attain the desired efficiency in the delivery of services [on which to be judged]. From it, one may be in some position to identify where Lesotho stands, among other democracies.
- (ii) Under the constitutional principle of separation of powers, the Lesotho Parliament and the Executive have their respective but interdependent/complementary roles in matters of governance. Parliament; specifically:
- Allocates funds to the Executive to govern and deliver services.
  - Legislates to enable Government to govern – Laws are instruments of policies of Government.
  - Oversees the Executive in its delivery of services to hold it to account for its actions.
  - In its representation role, debates issues of public interest.
  - May unmake a Government through a Motion of no confidence.
  - May influence Government policies through private Motions by members.
- (iii) Every Parliament is elected on the basis of a campaign manifesto which appeared more convincing to the electorate. It is policies of a ruling political party that are to be implemented by the sitting Government and Parliament. **The opposition has a critical role of persuasion through other points of view.** Understanding of the concept of Loyal opposition remains a major challenge for the purpose of delivery of services.
- (iv) An individual member's view is as important as the collective views of formations in Parliament. Opposing views have to be tolerated along with the need to respect the views of the majority. Expression of opposition or withholding of one's vote on a matter during proceedings in the House/Committee is more democratic than leaving the House as a form of protest.

## **B : ESSENTIALS FOR EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY**

(i) Both Parliament and the Executive work towards the same purpose/end as servants of the nation:

- Both work in the public interest
- Have to be conscious that public interest is NEVER constant – hence need for frequent/regular elections. Sitting Government and Parliament have to be adaptable to changing situations e.g. it may be expedient to buy back a service that was earlier privatized.
- Have to work in both the short term and long term simultaneously - through **systems and work plans**. These are capable of withstanding the test of time better than rhetoric and good intentions. Successful organizations are systems dependent and not personality dependent.
- Parliamentary democracy is an importation into the administration of Basotho. Both Parliament and the Executive have to learn from good/best performers :
  - Democracy is dynamic and continues to evolve.
  - Existence of Local Area Development Fund could promote working together of MPs, District Authorities, Councilors and Chiefs.
  - Consultative meetings could develop good rapport/harmony of a plural House, minimize confrontational debates in the House and build bridges between Ministers and MPs (the opposition).

(ii) Parliament and the Executive have to be organized for their constitutional roles:

**The Executive:**

- Gazettement of Ministries and Portfolios only demonstrates areas where the Executive wishes to do well and be judged. These, however, only express mandates.
- The foregoing has to be augmented with clear policies and systems to indicate the processes/relationships as to who does what, how, where etc. Lack of one is likely to lead to conflicts or lack of follow-up.
- Adequate resourcing is of vital importance: both human and financial. This is not possible if work plans are either unavailable

or unclear e.g., how decentralization is to unfold has to be clearly spelled out with time frames.

- The Executive has to have an effective mechanism of monitoring itself, for example, through a system of tracking resolutions of Parliament: a functioning Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs could be a catalyst in whipping other Ministries in issues of Parliament. It could serve as a conveyor belt between Parliament and the Executive.

### **Parliament:**

- Individual members and all MPs have to know and be familiar with Government outlook and policies. Even members of the opposition, first have to know, to be able to explain policies of the sitting government to be able to critique them.
- It has to have oversight skills and competencies to effectively hold the Government to account – else government will escape accountability to Parliament.
- Skill has to be augmented with suitable mechanisms within Parliament. An oversight committee should have the power to sanction Ministries it oversees.
- Parliament has to be confident/robust enough not to be dominated by the Executive. While a House or Parliament may not determine the caliber of its back benchers, it could have a fall back option of a competent secretariat.
- Rules and procedures could prescribe for constituency work for MPs. This could expose those Members who remember their constituents only on the eve of the next election.

### **C: THE OFTEN LESS CONSIDERED IMPEDIMENTS TO EFFECTIVE SERVICE DELIVERY:**

Lesotho Parliament is lately counted among those which at times do not take their complete constitutional five-year-term or for defections while in Parliament becoming a culture etc.

These clumsy features render time to be a very scarce resource for both Parliament and the Executive. Considerable amount of time is utilized in challenging election

results irrespective of previously declared transparency of the IEC. Considerable amount of time is utilized to address court processes and disputes. All render the parliamentary system unstable and service delivery becomes a casualty as a declared Government refocuses its attention to defend its legitimacy.

Absence of/or inadequate regulation of political parties could be another bottleneck to effective service delivery. Without systems and declared procedures, personal ambitions will continue to dominate political activity in people's hunger to ascent to political power. Need for changes to electoral models and forms of Election Management Authority will continue to be the excuses associated with challenging election results. Regulation of political party activity could be the answer, probably leading to even fewer parties for the less than 2000 000 citizens. Politicking would be more for service delivery than struggle for power by individuals.

## **CONCLUSION**

The challenges which this topic wishes to identify are ultimately the basis for the success of the Vision 2020 wish for the principles of good governance to be anchored, in Lesotho, with an efficient public service as one of its pillars. Both parliament and the Executive are servants of the Basotho nation.

Expectations of the nation for service delivery continually grow. Learning about the best modes and options of service delivery will continue to be of value to public institutions and the public they serve. Evidence of new systems and approach to service delivery has to be seen and to work.

Engagement of the media is another potential to be tapped for effective service delivery. Both Parliament and the Executive have an obligation to find wisdom in befriending the media. In turn, the media has to extend its hand. This calls for a deliberate effort of all camps.

