



# Convention on the Rights of the Child

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Committee on the Rights of the Child

## Combined third to seventh periodic reports submitted by Lesotho under article 44 of the Convention, due in 2024\*

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\* The present document is being issued without formal editing.



## List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADH	Adolescent Health
AIDS	Acquired immuno-deficiency syndrome
ART	Anti-retroviral treatment
BOS	Bureau of Statistics
CGP	Child Grant Programme
CGPU	Child and Gender Protection Unit
CPWA	Children's Protection and Welfare Act
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DCPT	District Child Protection Team
DHS	Demographic and Health Survey
MOSD	Ministry of Social Development
EmOC	Emergency Obstetrical Care
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FIDA	Federation of Women Lawyers in Lesotho
FPE	Free Primary Education
GBEM	Girls and Boys Education Movement
GDP	Gross domestic product
GOL	Government of Lesotho
HIV	Human immuno-deficiency virus
HPSU	Health Planning and Statistics Unit
ICHR	Inter-sectoral Committee on Human Rights
IECCD	Integrated Early Childhood Care and Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMCI	Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses
IMAAI	Integrated Management of Adult and Adolescent Illnesses
IMAM	Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
JTC	Juvenile Training Centre
LANFE	Lesotho Association for Non-Formal Education
LCGP	Lesotho Child Grants Programme
LCA	Lesotho Communications Authority
LCN	Lesotho Council of NGOs
LCS	Lesotho Correctional Service
LDTC	Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre
LMPS	Lesotho Mounted Police Services
LS	Lesotho
LSC	Lesotho Save the Child

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MOET	Ministry of Education and Training
MOFDP	Ministry of Finance and Development Planning
MOGYSR	Ministry of Gender, Youth, Sports, and Recreation
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOSD	Ministry of Social Development
MOJL	Ministry of Justice and Law
MLCAHR	Ministry of Law, Constitutional Affairs, and Human Rights
MOLE	Ministry of Labour and Employment
MOLGC	Ministry of Local Government and Chieftainship
NCDC	National Curriculum Development Centre
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NOCC	National Orphans and Vulnerable Children Co-ordinating Committee
OVC	Orphans and vulnerable children
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief
PMTCT	Prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV
PSC	Public Service Commission
PSS	Psychosocial Support
RMs	Referral Mechanisms
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
SRH	Sexual and Reproductive Health
SGBV	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
TB	Tuberculosis
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization

## Introduction

1. The Government of Lesotho signed and ratified the CRC in 1990 and 1992 respectively. Part of the State Party's obligations is the submission of periodic reports to the African Union and UN Committee on the Rights of the Child meant to indicate progress towards implementation of the CRC. In fulfilment of these obligations, the Government of Lesotho (GoL) submitted and tabled for the first time a report that covered period 1990–1997. Since then, a follow-up report was not submitted until the second one which covered 1998–2016. This report was submitted in August 2017.

2. As per the stipulated procedure, the State Party received a request to respond to a "List of Issues" from the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child and submitted its responses in February 2018. This is a process meant to complement and clarify certain sections of the Report.

3. On 1 June 2018, the UNCRC Committee adopted Concluding Observations on the State Party periodic report. The GOL, with financial support of UNICEF engaged a consultant to assist with compiling a report on the implementation of the Recommendations from the UNCRC Committee. This Report was due in 2019.

## Objective

4. The objective of the assignment is to compile a report on the implementation of Concluding Observations of the UN CRC.

## Methodology

5. The approach followed for undertaking the assignment took three phases, namely:

(a) Consultative meetings with key technical officers responsible for implementation of different components of the CPWA 2011 as it relates to the CRC e.g. within MOSD met with Child Protection Services, Legal, Bursary Administration, NISSA, and M&E;

(b) Follow-up meetings with state and non-state sectors to seek further clarifications on issues that were not clear during the first encounter;

(c) Desk review of documentation provided during the sectoral meetings and follow-up sessions;

(d) Telephone discussions with sectors that were not available due to short notice and/or officers who had travelled;

(e) Compilation of the first draft of the report and sharing it with relevant sectors/respondents and incorporating comments.

## Duration

6. The assignment took 15 working days.

## Gol's report on the implementation of the UNCRC 2018 concluding observations

### Independent monitoring (2001, para. 14)

7. In 2001, the Committee recommended the establishment of an independent monitoring body with responsibility for monitoring implementation of the CRC, in

accordance with the Paris principles, either as part of the Human Rights Commission or as a separate body, such as a children's ombudsperson.

8. The Sixth Amendment to the Constitution of 2011 established the Human Rights Commission. This was followed up with the enactment of the Human Rights Act 2016 to operationalise the Commission. The Commission is vested with competence to promote and protect human rights and specifically deal with investigations on human rights violations. The Commission will be the protector of all human rights of Lesotho citizens as well as non-citizens in its territory. Every human being regardless of age, gender, and status will benefit from the law.

9. Therefore, Lesotho does not have a specific Commission that deals with children's rights since the Commission established by the Human Rights Act will have a general human rights mandate including child rights.

10. There are regulations to the Act, namely, Human Rights Commission (Selection Process for Members) Regulations 2016, which stipulate procedures for the appointment of Commissioners.

11. The structure of the Commission has been drawn up and the Public Service Commission (PSC) has, in principle, approved it. Consultations are on-going between Ministry of Law, Constitutional Affairs and Human Rights (MLCAHR) and MOPS regarding working conditions of the Commission staff.

12. Meanwhile, the National Orphans and Vulnerable Children Coordinating Committee (NOCC), a national level structure is in place. The Principal Secretary of MOSD is the Secretariat while Local Government chairs the NOCC and it meets on a quarterly basis to deliberate on promotion and protection of the rights of children and provide leadership in the implementation of the CRC. Membership of the NOCC includes various government line ministries, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the academia and development partners. The establishment of such a body indicates the country's political commitment to placing children's issues including those of OVC high on the national development agenda.

13. The operations of the Committee are guided by various documents, which include but not limited to the 2011 OVC Situational Analysis Study and the National Strategic Plan for Vulnerable Children 2012-2017. Furthermore, the country is benefiting from the growing support of new role players such as the European Union (EU), the Global Fund, and USAID-PEPFAR etc supporting major child related projects in Lesotho. This is in addition to a multitude of small-scale interventions for the child population implemented by Civil Society Organisations (CSOs). The Committee provides a mechanism for ensuring that the sectors are regularly accountable for delivering quality services in keeping with the best interests of the child.

### **Budget allocation for implementation of the convention (2001, para. 18)**

14. The Committee previously recommended in 2001 that the State party makes every effort to increase the proportion of the budget allocated to children's rights and, in this context, to ensure the provision of appropriate human resources and that the implementation of child related policies is a priority.

15. The GOL reports that it does not yet have specific budgets for implementing the CRC. Thus, the UN Committee's concerns regarding the lack of specifically allocated resources for this purpose have not yet been attended.

16. However, there are certain aspects of child rights to which specific budgets have been allocated. For instance, within the Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), there are identifiable resources devoted to provision of education to children. The MOET receives approximately 23% of the national recurrent budget, ahead of the MOF at 13.4% and the MOSD at 3%. Within the MOSD and the Ministry of Police (MOPOL) budgets, there are specific resources allocated for Child Protection Services and the Child and Gender Protection Unit (CGPU) respectively.

17. The GOL receives technical and financial support for the formulation and implementation of CRC compliant domestic legislation, policies, and programmes from a number of developments collaborates including, UNICEF.

18. Support is also received from the EU, the Department for International Development (DFID), UN agencies, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and its affiliate programmes, Irish Aid (IA), the World Bank (WB), and GIZ (CO para. 19 & 20).

### **Dissemination, awareness raising and training (2001, para. 22)**

19. In 2001, the Committee recommended to Lesotho to pursue and strengthen its ongoing efforts to encourage professionals to remain in the State party; provision of child rights training for all relevant professional groups, including parliamentarians, judges, lawyers, chiefs, law enforcement personnel, teachers, school administrators, health professionals including psychologists, social workers, officials of central or local administration, and personnel of child-care institutions; to raise awareness of the Convention among children, parents, the media and the public at large, including in rural areas; and to raise awareness and discussion among the public with regard to economic, social and cultural rights, in the context of improved implementation of all of the Convention's provisions.

20. In 2013, MOSD produced both simplified Sesotho and English versions of the Child Protection and Welfare Act (CPWA). During the same year, both versions were extensively disseminated to all ten districts of the country and up to community level. During the dissemination process, Government realised that the Act does not adequately address emerging child protection issues such as child marriage, and the establishment of a Central Authority and Adoption Agencies to mention but a few. As a result, GoL decided to defer translation of the Act to Braille to a time after reviewing and amending this law. Translation of the Act into Braille will only be taking place upon completion of the amendment process and this will be followed by development of the Act's regulations.

21. In 2014, the Government costed selected provisions of CPWA with the purpose of providing Government with cost estimates on implementation of the Act in a phased manner. The costing report continues to be used for budgeting for child Protection issues by GOL and partners on annual basis. The CPWA 2011 is currently undergoing an amendment process in order to address the identified gaps.

22. The Child Protection Policy (previously named OVC Policy) is currently under development. Once completed, the Policy will inform the review and updating of National Strategic Plan on Vulnerable Children (NSPVC) and other documents.

23. The national efforts to sensitize stakeholders at all levels on children's issues included the following:

- (a) Translation and distribution of 'A Trolley Full of Rights' booklet);
- (b) Annual distribution of calendars and other materials incorporating messages regarding the CRC;
- (c) Publicity around UNICEF's annual state of the world's children report;
- (d) Awareness raising on children's rights through, public gatherings, community dialogues and mass media by including columns in newspapers and appearances on radio and television;
- (e) Training of young reporters to write about child rights issues;
- (f) Creation of a radio drama called "*Sello Sa Tsuonyana/Cry of a Chick*" whose conceptualization and performance involved children; and a magazine marking the 10th anniversary of the CRC.
- (g) Celebration of designated regional and international days such as the Day of an African Child (June 16), the International Day of Children's Broadcasting (November 20)

as well as the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence (November 25 to December 10);

- (h) Training of state and non-state actors on child rights;
- (i) Integration of children's rights into NGOs' programmes;
- (j) Translation and simplification of the CPWA;
- (k) Establishment of Village Child Justice Committees for restorative justice;
- (l) Development of a Braille version of the CRC and its distribution to some schools for children with hearing and visual impairment; and
- (m) Establishment of Community Council Child Protection Teams(CCCPTs).

24. NGOs also get involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of child rights programmes. They have participated in the development of this Periodic Report and have representation on the NOCC.

25. The private sector including financial institutions, mines, parastatals, support children through their corporate social responsibility endeavours which include construction of shelter and schools, prizes for national competitions in debating and in academic subjects (such as maths and science), bursaries and other forms of assistance.

### **Non-discrimination (2001, para. 26)**

26. The Committee recommended to the State party to give particular attention to ending discrimination against girls and women as far as this affects respect for the rights of children.

27. The State Party reiterates its report on non-discrimination in its First Periodic Report (CO paras. 48–60).

### **The best interests of the child (2001, para. 28)**

28. The Committee recommended in 2001 that the State party takes effective measures to encourage respect for the views of the child, particularly girls, in schools, families, and the care and judicial systems (including the magistrates), and to promote the participatory rights of children.

29. Further to submissions already made in the Second Periodic Report (CO paras. 61–69), Clause 2.9 of the Fostering and Adoption Policy of Lesotho (2012) provides for the participation of children in foster care processes by requiring the Government, through the MOSD or authorized competent and accredited foster care agencies to ensure that participation of children in such processes is guaranteed. This means that before any adoption placement is finalized, the child concerned shall be consulted in a manner appropriate to his/her age and in accordance with the evolving capacity of each child.

30. In order to institutionalise the implementation of the Convention through related national laws and policies, the GoL has adopted the following laws, institutions and policies:

- (a) Constitution of Lesotho (1993);
- (b) Children's Protection and Welfare Act, 2011;
- (c) 2014 National Multi-sectoral Child Protection Strategy;
- (d) Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act, 2011;
- (e) National OVC Action Plan 2006;
- (f) Ministry of Social Development (2012);
- (g) National OVC Coordinating Committee;
- (h) Labour Code (1992);
- (i) 1974 Marriage Act;

- (j) Penal Code (2010);
- (k) Sexual Offences Act (2003);
- (l) Education Act (2010);
- (m) National Identity Cards Act (2011);
- (n) National Strategic Plan for VC (NSPVC) 2012–2017;
- (o) Legal Capacity of Married Persons Act;
- (p) Persons with Disabilities Equity Act 2021.

31. Once the CPWA Amendment Bill 2021 has been enacted, the procedure to develop the Act's regulations will follow.

32. It is on record that stakeholders were consulted during the law-making process. In some cases, they were asked to share their thoughts, and some did send their inputs on the sections to be amended and inputs were received and consolidated.

33. Children are participating in the law-making process indirectly, through consultations with organisations, Government ministries working with children.

34. The Child Protection Policy is currently the only document (under MOSD) that is being worked on. It is anticipated that by the end of 2021, the Policy will be completed. Reviewing and updating of other documents will follow upon completion of the Policy. Ministry of Labour and Employment will begin the process of reviewing and updating of the Action Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour 2013 – 2017/18. Translation of Herders' guidelines 2013 into Sesotho is also in the pipeline. The development of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and Referral Mechanisms on Justice for Children (J4C) under Ministry of Justice (Probation Unit) has been finalised.

35. Since 2008, children's budget increased annually for the protection of children's rights but in different ministries and sectors for e.g. social protection (schools bursary and child grants, subventions to places of safety) that is to say 2018/19 FY 146,066,993 and 2019/2020 FY 153,551,760 increase of 7,484,767 only for MOSD, health, education etc.

36. The State party has not neglected the establishment of formal coordinating structure; consultative meetings to drive towards their statutory mandate are ongoing.

37. As for combating corruption, Lesotho has laws, regulations, and penalties for public officials. Parliament passed anti-corruption legislation in 1999 that provides criminal penalties for official corruption. The Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offenses (DCEO) is the primary anticorruption organ and investigates corruption complaints against public sector officials.

38. The Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) has been established by Prevention of Corruption and Economic Offences Act 1999. It is a body whose core business is to fight corruption and economic offences. The mandate of DCEO entails public education, prevention, and investigations. DCEO educates the public against the consequences of corruption and thereby solicits and fosters public support in the fight against corruption. The prevention aspect entails examining practices and procedures of public bodies with a view to strengthen operational systems to reduce the opportunities of corruption. DCEO is responsible for investigating complaints or allegations of corruption and economic offences. Matters that warrant prosecution are referred to the Director of Public Prosecutions.

39. The Amendment of Prevention of Corruption and Economic Offences Act of 2006 enacted the first financial disclosure laws for public officials. The disclosure form to be used has been developed and is being implemented.

40. On February 5, 2016, the government issued regulations to initiate implementation of the financial disclosure laws for public officials. The law may also be applied to private citizens if deemed necessary by the DCEO. The law prohibits direct or indirect bribery of public officials, including payments to family members of officials and political parties. While the government made significant efforts to implement the law, some officials have engaged in corrupt practices with impunity.

41. NISSA Coverage, including all the councils (urban and rural) has been completed in May 2021. The NISSA has information on children, disaggregated by all aspects mentioned, except ethnic origin because there is only one ethnicity in Lesotho.

42. The GoL has not required assistance from UNICEF on the development of child-sensitive indicators. However, the State Party indicates that through the support of Karabo-ea-Bophelo, a development partner to Government, a consultant has already been engaged to develop the indicators. The Government will be able to report on the issue in the next report.

43. The Ministry of Law, through the Human Rights Unit, worked on the establishment of the National Human Rights Commission. In 2011, the Constitution was amended to include this human rights institution and in 2016 the enabling legislation and regulations were promulgated. The structure of the Commission was approved, and positions were ready to be filled so that the Commission starts its work.

44. Civil Society Organizations instituted a case against the Government on the road leading to promulgation of the Human Rights Commission Act 2016. The parties agreed to make further engagements and the case was withdrawn on condition that parties reach a mutual agreement on the matter.

45. In 2018, the Government negotiated further with the civil society on how to reach consensus on the issues and began modalities of trying to amend the Human Rights Commission Act 2016 such that appointment of the Commissioners is not done solely by the Prime Minister thus raising issues of independence and compliance with the Paris Principles. The suggested approach was that appointments should be through a panel which would recommend to the Prime Minister for advice to the King. This process has been stalled by a Cabinet decision in April 2019 that referred such to the general reforms for the country.

46. The State Party hopes to be able to report on this in the forthcoming reports where it expects constructive engagement with the Committee around the issue of making the Commission effective, institutionally and operationally.

47. While efforts are being made to address the limited human resources capacity, the State party has collaborated with different implementing partners to train parents in communities. Through training workshops, focus groups, meetings and one-on-one sessions.

48. While efforts are being made to address the limited human resources capacity, the state party has collaborated with different implementing partners to train parents in communities.

49. The state party is holding on-going community awareness programmes on different social problems on the principles of the Convention, dissemination of information through DCPTs and establishment and training of CCCPTs. The simplified and translated versions of CPWA to be reprinted and shared with communities; a call to Action for Community leaders and Community Members which was as well translated will be re – disseminated to communities and stakeholders.

50. Community dialogues are ongoing on issues of child marriage where Her Royal Highness leads the discussions; these involve children, parents and community leaders. Ministry of Police, through the CGPU utilises media to disseminate the information.

51. Community dialogues are ongoing on issues of child marriage where Her Royal Highness leads the discussions. These initiatives involve children, parents, and community leaders. Sensitisations on combating child labour are on-going, through public gatherings and mass media platforms.

## **Harmonisation of definitions of a child**

52. As earlier indicated, the CPWA 2011 is currently undergoing an amendment process and the CPWA Amendment Bill 2021 has harmonised all child related legislations and the definition of the child. These include the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and Laws of Lerotholi.

Further, the section on Marriage Act 1974 that allows girls to marry at the age of 16 is being repealed by the CPWA Amendment Bill 2021.

53. The current CPWA Amendment Bill 2021 has taken into account elimination of all forms of discrimination against children by repealing all discriminatory clauses especially those related to girls with the exception of inheritance. The inheritance issue will be addressed during the Law Reforms process. The Persons with Disabilities Equity Act 2021 caters for children with disabilities and albinism. Within the context of MoSD not all the legislations discriminate against children, for example CPWA Section 19 declares children born out-of-the-wedlock as lawful inheritors of parental property and protects them against property dispossession upon the death of their biological mother. Other pieces of legislation aimed at protecting children from gender discrimination include the Sexual Offences Act, and the Education Act and these are all taken on board in the CPWA Amendment Bill 2021.

## **General principles (arts. 2, 3, 6 and 12)**

### **Non-discrimination**

54. Further to submissions already made in the Second Periodic Report (Paras. 48–60), the CPWA stipulates that all children are equal with the principle of non-discrimination. In particular, section 6 of the CPWA provides that no child shall be discriminated against on several grounds including “custom” and “ethnic origin”, meaning that customs such as those on inheritance and access to education by women or girls have no application to children in the country. Girls are at par with boys in terms of opportunities.

55. However, the Government faces challenges in this regard. In Lesotho there is legal dualism, which means there are two systems of law operating side by side, namely customary law and Common law. None is superior to the other. Under customary law female children do not inherit their deceased parents’ estate. Only the first-born male child is an heir of the family. There is what is called written instructions. This is whereby the deceased left behind a written document which devolves his estate to a person of his choice. The principle is that these written instructions should not deprive the heir of the family/first born son more than 50% of the estate. If it does it can be challenged in court.

56. Under Common law, if the deceased died intestate his children and a surviving spouse share his 50% of the estate equally. Where he died testate the estate will be administered in accordance with a will.

### **Best interest of the child**

57. Part II of the CPWA domesticates principles of the Convention. Section 4 of the CPWA domesticates the best interest of the child principle and stresses that “the best interests of a child shall be the primary consideration for all courts, persons, including parents, institutions or other bodies in any matter concerning a child”. All policy, project, and programme documents bear the principle of the best interest of the child is the primary consideration. New programmes are developed in adherence to the principle e.g. Justice for Children and Case management Programmes.

### **Right to life**

58. The killings of children for body parts mutilation in Lesotho is not common. However, this is an area of for sensitisation which needs to be given attention.

### **Respect for the views of the child**

59. The state party has taken efforts to institutionalize the children’s parliament through adoption of the Children’s Parliament in the Cabinet Agenda. At community levels, the state

party is currently carrying community dialogues and child focus groups to empower both and ensure that their views are given due consideration in all settings.

60. In court proceedings, the respect of the views of the children is determined by the age of the child as catered for by the CPWA 2011. Section 200(3) of the CPWA requires a court, when determining an application for custody, to take the best interest of the child as the primary consideration. However, a court is enjoined by this provision to take into account the “views of the child”.

61. Further, section 37(9) of the CPWA prohibits a Children’s Court from making a care and protection order unless if first gives a child the opportunity to attend the proceedings and be heard thereat.

62. In all court proceedings regarding custody of children, the Court Intermediary/MOSD Social Worker consults with the children involved, in accordance to their age.

## Civil rights and freedoms (arts. 7, 8 and 13–17)

### Birth registration and nationality

63. As previously reported the Government has made quick progress in this regard.

64. MOHA has been tasked to fast-track registration of births as well as address existing backlog within the next 36 months. To this effect, both Government and church clinics will accommodate MOHA registration officials. Pursuant to the National Identity Act 2011, the Office of the Registrar, which is responsible for birth registration, has been moved from the MOLGC to the MOHA – National Identity and Civil Registry Office.

65. Since the last time of reporting, the MOHA collaborated with Ministry of Local Government (MLG) in addition, deployed officers to every Community Council and further deployment down to electoral divisions. In this way, every village is now covered in terms of birth, death registrations, and identity document enrolment. This has ensured that principle of universality is realized bearing in mind our country mostly mountainous and hard to reach.

66. The Government has also deployed staff at every health centre, this way MOHA collaborated with MOH and as such, every event that occurs at health centre is registered. Furthermore, MOHA collaborated with MOH during vaccination visits and clinical campaigns to enable MOHA to register all births that could have been missed before. This initiative covered children under 5 years who usually go for their respective vaccinations and those who are born in the health centres. Government has taken further measures as follows:

(a) The Government has also automated hospitals. So far three hospitals are fully automated namely, Scott Hospital in Maseru and Maluti Adventist Hospital in Berea, and Queen Mamohato Memorial Hospital in Maseru. This helps in acceleration of registration in that certificates are produced within the hospital;

(b) Elimination of fees. As part of implementation of Committee recommendations, the GoL has eliminated fees for late registration. All vital registrations are free;

(c) Enrolment of Officers on WB Capacity-building trainings. The State Party has been encouraging officers to enrol to CRVs Open Learning courses offered by the World Bank. These courses have really helped officers to understand their duties and their functions;

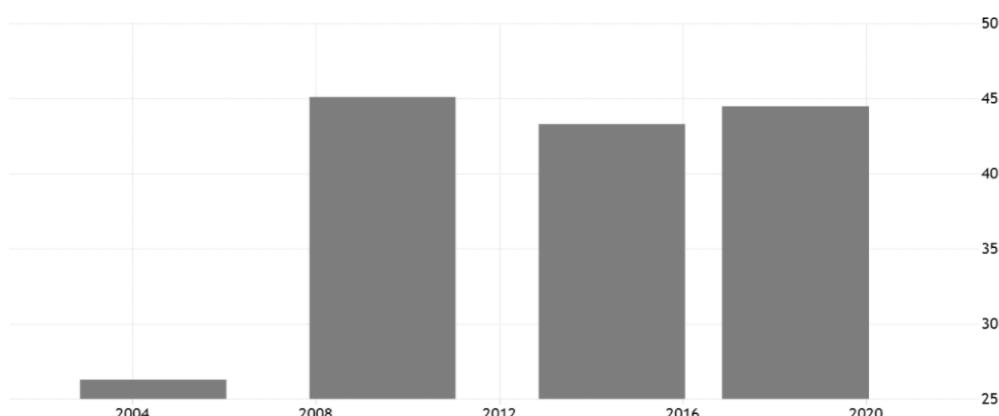
(d) Collaborations between line ministries. Collaboration between MOHA and MOLGC saw Principal Chiefs’ offices and MOH clinics used for birth registration purposes in order to increase coverage and issuance of birth certificates. MOLGC are providing office space for MOHA officials in community councils throughout the country and this process took off in 2018. Where the community councils are inaccessible, alternative registration centres are now Principal Chiefs’ offices and/or MOH and CHAL rural/urban clinics;

(e) Outreach services to residential care facilities. The MOHA carries out visits to vulnerable children care facilities where such children are registered on the same day through

arrangements with MOSD and this happens throughout the country. With the support of UNICEF and the EU, mobile registration and citizen services centres provide registration of all vital events (births, deaths, marriages, and divorces) especially for the hard-to-reach rural places. All permanent and temporary staff that conduct registration undergo a special training on vital registration tools and systems prior to being deployed to do the registration;

(f) Campaigns to promote registration. In July 2017, the government of Lesotho through the MOHA, launched a programme named “*Operation O Mang – Who are you?*” which was aimed at increasing the number of child registration in the country. The Ministry collaborated with Health and Local Government ministries and NICR officers were placed at health centres and community councils as part of government efforts to improve and increase registration in both urban and rural communities. This initiative succeeded in bringing services closer to the people.

67. These measures perhaps help to explain the general trend of improvement in terms of completeness of birth registration that is being experienced in the country as indicated in Figure 1 below.



Source: World Bank, 2021.

## **Violence against children (arts. 19, 24 (3), 28 (2), 34, 37 (a) and 39)**

### **Corporal punishment**

68. Section 127 of the CPWA stipulates that corporal punishment and public humiliation shall not be elements of diversion. The Act further prevents Children’s Courts from imposing sentences of corporal punishment or any form of punishment that is cruel, inhumane or degrading (Section 161).

69. In order to sharpen the effect of this law, the CPWA Amendment Bill 2021 has removed the “justifiable discipline of children” as part of the amendment, making corporal punishment illegal under all circumstances.

70. Other than, the legislative and other measures already reported in the Second Periodic Report, the State Party has so not much in the area of corporal punishment. However, it is notable that the state party embarked on *Lesotho Violence against Children and Youth Survey 2018* to determine the magnitude of the problem of different kinds of abuse. Preliminary results were disseminated before the end of April 2019. The final report has been launched in September 2020 and a VACS Response Plan was also developed and is yet to be costed for implementation.

71. The findings of the Report will inform the development of documents and the design of programmes including possible further changes to the CPWA Amendment 2021). The amendment also provides the opportunity for the state party to set up a statutory complaints mechanism in schools for children to make reports safely without reprisals or victimisation.

The new law will also inform policies to be developed in the area of corporal punishment especially those designed to deal with change of mind-set in communities wherein the practice of corporal punishment is culturally entrenched.

## **Abuse, neglect and sexual exploitation and abuse**

72. As reported above, the state party embarked on Violence against Children Survey (2018) to determine the magnitude of the problem of different kinds of abuse. The findings of that Survey are crucial in terms of informing the development of documents and the design of future programmes.

73. The state party has put in place Child Helpline – 116. This platform has been in operation since 2008 to provide an opportunity for children to make reports on issues that trouble them and to receive assistance from trained personnel. It is managed by MOSD, relocated to GVT premises for security and has been upgraded with advanced IT equipment and software is in operation for 24 hours. Child Helpline is currently manned by 12 staff members, with 1 vehicle.

74. The State Party carried a costing of CPWA, which provides a guide on the establishment of centres for child victims. However, due to limited financial resources, the state party collaborates with one care facility that serves all victims of abuse for the country.

75. While the state party is putting in place measures to create a database on abuse of children and related statistics, the VACS 2018 provides some baseline values upon which the database will be launched. For instance, the VACS 2018 established that more than one in five females (21.1%) and more than one in four males (27.1%) experienced physical violence in the past 12 months (2017–2018). For nearly half of females (48.6%), the first incident was at ages 6–11, 43.7% had the first incident at ages 12–17, and 7.7% at age 5 or younger. Among males, 55.9% had the first incident at ages 6–11, 38.8% at ages 12–17, and 5.3% at age 5 or younger.

76. As for mind-set regarding violence against children established that 24.4% of females and 22.6% of males indicated it was acceptable for a husband to beat his wife under one or more circumstances; 31.7% of females and 24.5% of males endorsed one or more attitudes supportive of domestic violence and 27.4% of females and 47.0% of males endorsed traditional gender and sexual norms. These baselines will be useful in the creation of databases documenting statistics on all forms of violence going forward.

77. These findings go to show that the State Party has a huge task in terms adopting programmes to change mind-sets and attitudes towards gender-based violence.

## **Gender-based violence**

78. The VACS 2018 collected data and revealed some patterns in terms of prevalence of gender-based violence in the territory of the state party. The findings revealed that 24.1 males and 24.3 females have beliefs around domestic violence, which include that only men, not women, should decide when to have sex; If someone insults a boy or man, he should defend his reputation with force if he needs to; there are times when a woman should be beaten; women who carry condoms have sex with a lot of men; a woman should tolerate violence to keep her family together.

79. The Lesotho MICS 2018 also established that 30.8% of women age 15–49 years and 27.6% of men believe a husband is justified in beating his wife in various circumstances. More of these women are in rural areas than urban.

80. These and other statistics from both the Lesotho MICS 2018 and VACS 2018 have formed the basis upon which further surveys will be built and new government initiatives will take these into account. A particular focus of these interventions will be targeting change of attitudes and mind-set.

81. Due to the scantiness of data on GBV, the State Party commits to adopting mechanisms for systematic collection of data that will reflect the dynamics involved in implementing the Convention and progress or lack of it reported in numbers.

## **Harmful practices**

82. Further to report on harmful practices in the Second Periodic Report, the State Party is accelerating efforts to deal with harmful practices. The CPWA 2021 Amendment Bill includes a section on ending child marriages and the section will repeal all sections on marriages under customary laws and the Marriage Act of 1974. The new provision will harmonise all laws that created opportunities for facilitation of child marriages.

83. The State Party is of the view that campaigns will go a long way helping change mind-sets and attitudes towards child marriages and other forms of harmful practices. For instance, in 2017, the state party launched the *End Child Marriage by 2019 Campaign*. This is an ongoing campaign and community dialogues around the country.

84. The State Party has appointed Her Royal Highness as the champion of the campaign, using her influential role in the country.

85. Meanwhile the state party has taken efforts to establish the prevalence of child marriages in order to inform future legislative and policy frameworks. For instance, the VACS 2018 established that 38.5 females and 10.2% males have ever been married or lived with someone as if married.

86. The Lesotho MICS 2018 used a number of indicators to estimate the prevalence of child marriages in Lesotho. Most notable of these indicators is the number of children married before reaching the age of 15, which clearly establishes that a child was married as a minor. In this case the prevalence is that 1.8% females and 0.4% males fall into this category, with prevalence higher in rural than urban areas.

## **Family environment and alternative care (arts. 5, 9–11, 18 (1) and (2), 20, 21, 25 and 27 (4))**

### **Children deprived of a family environment**

87. The State Party introduced community foster care families in Motimposo and Thibella in 2018. Trainings for foster families were conducted in 2018, in partnership with SEPHEO, with Maseru piloting due to influx of children living on the streets. The plan was to roll out to other districts in 2019/20, but it could not continue due to Covid-19 that hit in early 2020.

88. Subvention is provided to child residential care facilities and CBOs, NGOs implementing child protection activities. There is a checklist on adherence to standards for monitoring. Budget allocation for subvention is calculated based on the number of children in a care facility, and in the financial year (2021/22), it amounts to M1, 320,000.

89. The state party has already initiated the training of Social Workers on placement of children with court orders and the introduction of the HIV Sensitive case management system will ensure standard operating procedures and referral approach in all children cases. The procedure for placing children in care facilities and foster care is the same, as placement procedure is clearly stipulated in the provisions of CPWA.

90. Data in residential care is submitted on quarterly basis and informal foster care no data due to cultural aspects/ issues. Most cases, especially family fostering, are unreported due to their informal nature.

## **Adoption**

91. The CPWA Amendment has a section for the establishment of structures regarding adoptions. These structures will come into operation once the Bill is enacted into law. Positions for adoption unit are included in the MOSD structure for creation and filling.

92. The state party reiterates that adoptions are handled in terms of the 2012 Policy as well as the Guidelines and Procedures and this will be closely monitored going forward. The Procedures and Practice Guidelines are intended to create a common platform and to ensure that the highest ethical standards are practised in delivering these two forms of alternative care.

93. There is also Government Gazette Vol. 59 of 2014 in place that allows for establishment of safe houses and shelters for abused children and as a result there are currently two such shelters, namely Lesotho Child Counselling Unit (LCCU) and Beautiful Dream Society. Both shelters' operations are regulated by the Residential Care Guidelines and Standards and currently enjoy the Government's support, both receiving subvention.

94. The Case Management system has been developed with SOPs and RMs to effectively manage cases of children including adoption cases. This will quicken the adoption process in the best interest of the child involved in each case.

95. It is an established practice in the state party to hold radio and television talk-shows and public gatherings where communities are informed on different kinds of alternative care including adoption.

## **Children in prison with their mothers**

96. The practice is that children in prison with their mothers are entitled to live with their mothers until they are two years of age. The current arrangement is that inmates in other districts are transferred to Maseru after delivery if detained while pregnant or immediately after conviction if she already has a child. Upon reaching two (2) years the child is handed over to extended families and if such families are not available the child is placed in residential care facilities through the facilitation of MOSD. Moreover, the Correctional Service Act 2016 draft regulations have been developed and yet to be adopted under national reforms authority. This will address the issue of children of detained mothers. Additionally, there is an approved structure by ministry of Public Works and Transport for refurbishment of female correctional structure to incite a crèche.

97. Further, The Committee recommended that the State Party to provide nutritious food; health care; and child friendly environment for children staying with their parents in prisons. As children who attained the age of 2 years will be separated from their parents, the Committee recommends that the State Party gives psychosocial support for children. In a case where there are no extended families and the children are placed in residential care facilities, the Committee encourages the State Party to ensure that children receive education, health care, and other social welfare services. Family reunification programmes should be accompanied by psychosocial support.

98. All Correctional Service Facilities (prisons) have Departments of Health equipped with mobile clinics and staffed by qualified nurses. The facilities are also staffed with qualified nutritionists. Under the guidance of the Nutrition Departments in MOH/MOAFS and FNCO, these nutritionists provide support to the inmates on proper maternal and child feeding practices e.g., exclusive breastfeeding for 6 months and complementary feeding up to 2 years. The Procurement Unit of the Department provide supplies of complementary feeds where appropriate some of the supplies come from business communities through mobilization by the Department. Ministry of Education also provides additional feeding. Children placed at the care facilities are provided with all the essential basic needs such as education, health care services etc.

99. Through the support and guidance of the MOH, the nurse provides both the mother and child with maternal and child services such as immunization, weight taking and provision

of supplements and essential medicines for minor ailments where necessary. Any complications are referred to Government facilities e.g. hospitals.

## **Disability, basic health and welfare (arts. 6, 18 (3), 23, 24, 26, 27 (1)–(3) and 33)**

### **Children with disabilities**

100. The bill has been enacted and is referred to as Persons with Disability Equity Act 2021. Disability grant, Public Assistance (in cash) and subvention are in place to respond to the financial needs of children with disabilities.

101. The Disability Mainstreaming Plan which was revised in 2020 has catered for the rest of the points. The challenge is financial capacity to implement what has been proposed in the plan. Key result areas include the provision of inclusive education; access to inclusive public transport; provision of information and technology; sports and recreation as well as access to livelihoods. Negotiations are ongoing with stakeholders to implement the document.

102. In 2019, the National situational analysis on persons with disabilities was undertaken with intention to assess the current policies and services to determine how they can better align with UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

103. Meanwhile, Lesotho MICS 2018 established that 1.4 is the percentage of females and 0.9 is the percentage males of age 15–49 years who in the past 12 months have felt discriminated against or harassed and those who have not felt discriminated against or harassed, based on disability. In both cases the prevalence is higher in rural areas as compared to urban areas.

### **Health and health services**

104. Further to submissions on child health interventions already made in the Second Periodic Report, the Ministry of Health has a programme on Integrated Management of Acute Malnutrition (IMAM). Treatment for acute malnutrition is done at facility level; outpatient and inpatient at hospital level, while health centres provide only outpatient management. At community level, there is case finding and follow-up – Child Health Program adapted WHO Integrated Management of Neonatal, Childhood Illnesses (IMNCI) and Community IMNCI guidelines for early identification and appropriate management of diarrhoea, disease and acute respiratory infections, improving infant and young child feeding practices include breastfeeding, immunisations against preventable diseases to reduce infant and under-five child mortality.

105. The MOH is also currently developing a Reproductive, Maternal, New-born, and Care Strategy for 2018–2022 to address the currently high prevalence of infant mortality, low immunisation coverage, and access to HIV and AIDS services. The main activities include procurement of equipment and supplies to health facilities for providing maternal and child health services and extensive training of Health Care Service providers at all levels on maternal and child health issues.

106. Since the last time of reporting, Ministry of Health – Adolescent health program has developed score card to monitor friendliness of services based on the national minimum standards for adolescent friendly health services. Adolescents and young people are leading implementation of the tool and planning together with the health facility based on the strengths and identified gaps.

107. This has increased utilisation of services and change of attitude among service providers towards working with adolescents has improved. There is a Child health program that has trained village health workers on community IMNCI, conducting out –reach services for under -5.

108. The expanded immunisation program is using Reaching Every Child Strategy to immunise all children including those who are in hard-to-reach areas of the country. These measures are specifically meant to address issues raised by the Committee regarding access to health services by rural children.

## **Mental health**

109. Further to the reporting on mental health in the previous report, especially the prevailing legislative and administrative measures, the Department of Mental Health is actively engaged in the process of adopting a policy around mental health. In fact, the consultant is already engaged but delays were occasioned due to COVID 19 situation as the consultant could not travel to Lesotho under the current lockdown measures in several countries.

110. Once the policy is adopted, it would facilitate costing of specific interventions to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to relevant goods, services and qualified human resources.

111. These being new measures the State Party is introducing after previous reporting, the State Party expects to implement these and report to the committee on the progress achieved at the time the next report becomes due.

## **Adolescent health**

112. The State Party wishes to report that sexual health interventions have been in place in its territory for a significant period of time. Government introduced into the schools' curricula a component called "Comprehensive Sexuality Education" which covered sexual and reproductive health issues with emphasis on HIV and AIDS at primary school level (from class 3) since 2004.

113. In 2010, Government also put in place the Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy and Strategic Plan (2010).

114. From 2014, MOET has moved to a more advanced stage by developing the *Life Skills for Sexuality Based Education Programme* in primary and secondary schools which goes beyond addressing HIV and AIDS issues but also addresses adolescent sexual reproductive health that includes issues like pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

115. Government also introduced the Reproductive Health Commodity Supply Strategic Plan, which emphasizes the provision of sexual and reproductive health information to adolescents, and the Minimum Standards and Implementation Guide for Adolescent Friendly Services (2014).

116. It is on this basis the State Party reiterates that sufficient interventions are in place to reach adolescents in and out of school with comprehensive sexuality education. Outreach programs are conducted to reach hard to reach adolescents and those who are within the catchment areas of some CHAL facilities that do not offer family planning services, civil society organisations are engaged to mobilise adolescents and young people and delivering social behavioural communication messages using peer to peer programs.

117. Adolescent health corners are established; health care workers are also trained to improve their skills in handling issues of adolescents even beyond adolescents health corners.

118. Nursing institutions are also engaged to work with schools using technology (laptops and smart phones), media platforms in the country to reach adolescent with sexual and reproductive health information including HIV and Gender based violence.

119. Health care workers are also trained to manage survivors of sexual abuse to prevent unwanted pregnancies.

120. Post exposure prophylaxis for Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) is offered at all levels of care.

## HIV/AIDS

121. In addition to the averments already made in the Second Periodic Report, the MOH has already adopted a new strategic document on HIV/AIDS covering the period between 2018–2022. Needless to state that the majority of its strategic focus was shaped by the evaluation of the previous one and consistent with Option B+ WHO Recommendations were retained while those deemed not necessary in the evaluation exercise were discarded.

122. Government approach is to conduct a review and evaluation of the new Strategy in 2022, again as an opportunity to renew its strategic approach based on findings.

## Standard of living

123. Data reflected here is based on WASH Program annual reports. Around 83 % of Health facilities have access to improved water supply. This coverage is likely to change frequently due to some interruptions caused by factors such as Climate change, which affects the sustainability of WASH services in HF, e.g. during drought situation in 2018/19 33% of the HF in 6 districts (Qacha's nek, Mohale's hoek, Mafeteng, Maseru, Thaba-Tseka, and Mokhotlong) reported lack or insufficient water supply, thus affecting quality of care. Other impacts result from shared sources between communities and health facility, whereby when there is limited supply, distribution networks to Health facilities are cut off or blocked.

124. For Sanitation in Health Care facilities 95% of Health facilities have basic sanitation. Whilst on Hygiene Proportion of HF with hand washing facilities for staff is 98% and 40% for patients, (significant improvements have been made and still ongoing in construction of hand washing facilities for patients under UN support and other implementing partners, so these might be higher than the coverage reflected here).

125. Some limitations to attaining full coverage include the following:

- (a) Limited financial support for WASH interventions in government Health Sector budget, which is prioritized around diseases, hinders implementation of interventions towards promoting WASH in both HF and communities at large;
- (b) Lack of WASH improvement tools and Policy documents;
- (c) Majority of HF sanitation infrastructure for patients do not provide basic hand hygiene services for patients.

126. For Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene in Schools (WinS), infrastructure is included during construction/ rehabilitation by MoET, while also schools and HF in rural areas are included during construction of water systems by Department of Rural Water Supply.

127. During COVID-19, the following milestones were recorded under WinS. These are:

- (a) To date, durable hand-washing stations have been installed in over 720 schools (target 800 primary and secondary schools);
- (b) So far, 67 schools with 14,149 learners have benefitted from UNICEF's rehabilitation/construction of rural water supply systems in 7 districts in Lesotho;
- (c) Water tanks distributed to 800 Schools for water harvesting.

## Education, leisure and cultural activities (arts. 28–31)

### Education, including vocational training and guidance

128. The State Party has so far not been able to provide free secondary education due to the State's economic capacity. However, as previously reported, 3 initiatives have been introduced to address this:

- (a) Firstly, secondary school students access books through a rental programme whereby, for a minimal fee, a student gets all the books at the beginning of the academic year

and returns them at the end for use by another student the following year. The books are only replaced when torn or very old;

(b) Secondly, the Government regulates fees structures for all public schools in order to avoid exorbitant fees by individual schools;

(c) Thirdly, the Government has also put in place the OVC Bursary Scheme, which provides vulnerable children with school necessities comprised of books, school fees, boarding fees, examination fees and uniform and hygiene kits. To date over 26000 children have been sponsored.

129. Regarding integration of children with special needs, and the Ministry will be piloting the combined school curriculum in 5 secondary schools by way of providing equipment to assist such children. The schools are Motsekua, Abia, St Catherine's, Mt Royal, and 'Masenate. Support will also include training of teachers to identify children with disabilities and to refer them for appropriate medical interventions.

## **Special protection measures (arts. 22, 30, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37 (b)–(d) and 38–40)**

### **Economic exploitation, including child labour**

130. As reported, the Government, through MOLE has established a Child Labour Unit, which is responsible for addressing all child labour issues in the country, in particular livestock herding, domestic work, and commercial sexual exploitation. Through the Unit, MOLE has developed Guidelines on employment of herders which guides livestock farmers. MOLE has a Programme Advisory Coordinating Committee (PACC) at national level, which oversees that labour laws of the land are adhered to. Chaired by the Labour Commissioner, the Committee meets quarterly and deliberates on all issues of child labour.

131. The Labour Code is also currently undergoing an amendment process. The amendment allows Labour Inspectors to do inspection in private dwellings where child labour and its worst forms are practised. The definition of "Work" is being reviewed within the context of employment relations. The ILO cut-off age for employment of 15 years remains a concern to the Government especially in relation to CPWA Amendment Bill 2021, which continue to advocate for 18 years as recognised globally per definition of a child. Therefore, there is need to harmonise the respective provisions.

132. The State Party went to the extent of making formal commitments against child labour in under the IV Global Conference on Sustained Eradication of Child Labour, held in 2017, Argentine.

133. The Government pledged thus, "Through National Institutions, the Government of Lesotho commits to take action to improve statistical databases and monitoring mechanisms to better track child labour and/or forced labour including human trafficking. The Government of Lesotho further commits to undertake evidence-based research on child labour and/or forced labour with a view to inform policy and practice particularly to address decent work deficits in the informal sector. In addition, the Government of Lesotho commits to promote awareness raising initiatives addressing child labour and/or forced labour amongst communities vulnerable to exploitation. The GOL will further revise issues of child labour and forced labour. Lastly, the GOL will strengthen law enforcement and criminal justice responses in order to rapidly enhance capacity of Judiciary and Labour Inspectors to identify, investigate and prosecute perpetrators".

134. MOLE is currently conducting a study on "Worst Forms of Child Labour". A final report is anticipated to be ready by end of November 2021. The results of the study will inform government and stakeholders on the magnitude and geographic distribution of worst forms of labour among children in the country. The study will further facilitate programme planning of interventions by government and partners.

135. The Lesotho MICS 2018 revealed child labour prevalence (Children involved in child labour are defined as children involved in economic activities above the age-specific thresholds, children involved in household chores above the age-specific thresholds, and children involved in hazardous work) as 31.9 %.<sup>1</sup> Child labour appears more prevalent in males and in rural areas. The Report also identified the main drivers of child labour pitched against family demographics thus putting the state party in a good place to deal with these challenges going forward.

### **Children in street situations**

136. The State Party is incrementally setting itself up to be able to gather or collect critical data about children welfare in general, and this includes on children on the streets.

137. The legislative and policy framework is as reported in the Second Periodic Report remains. Programs have been designed with NGOs working with children living on the streets; numbers vary as they are always on the move. All NGOs working with children living on the streets are mandated to recruit Social Workers; they are provided subvention and technical support supervision. Even programmes designed to cover reunifications and integration into communities; this is done in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Development Social Workers.

138. There is currently no data on children working on the streets. It is expected that the findings of the Rapid assessment will assist in this regard.

### **Administration of juvenile justice**

139. As previously reported, Children's Courts in Lesotho are operating in all 10 districts of the country. There are Magistrates who preside over children's cases following training on the CPWA. They adjudicate on both criminal and civil cases relating to children. Currently, 99% of the cases are of children who are victims of various forms of abuse. Section 79 of the CPWA provides for categorization by age, of child offenders who are liable for prosecution in the Children's Courts. Through the support of UNICEF and FHI 360, Children's court in Maseru was provided with CCTV Cameras and other equipment for protection of child victims and witnesses.

140. Currently there are no separate holding cells for children in police stations, safe to say one model police station in Mapoteng features such characteristic separate rooms for children. On the other hand, magistrates are not adequately equipped with victim support units.

141. There has been introduction of the "Justice for Children Programme" (J4C) Secretariat within the Probation Unit of the MOJL. The J4C is an approach which seeks to ensure that all children coming into contact with the justice authorities whether as alleged offenders, victims, witnesses or as parties to non-criminal; law procedures have access to justice systems (formal/and or informal) and are better served and protected by these systems through full application of relevant international norms and standards. It considers children who come into contact with justice systems as victims/survivors, witnesses and alleged perpetrators.

142. The J4C refers to a range of strategies, processes, and procedures aimed at taking into account the particular circumstance of a child before, during, and after judicial proceedings. This new concept was unanimously adopted after extensive discussions by member countries at an International Conference on Best Interest for Children in the Justice System in August 2016 in Kenya where Lesotho participated.

143. As for raising the age of criminal responsibility, the State Party remains engaged with this issue in view of the predicament it faces of balancing the competing interests of juvenile perpetrators of criminal acts and the victims. The prosecution has faced confrontation from victims and their representatives accusing the Government of favouring juvenile accused

<sup>1</sup> Lesotho MICS 2018, p77.

persons and disregarding victims. The State Party hopes to report on this issue in the forthcoming reports after resolving these issues through consultation at national level.

144. Probation services have been decentralized to 4 more districts with an overall coverage of ten districts. So far 43 Village Child Justice Committees have been established, trained and they are functional. Meanwhile the Ministry of Justice has approved erection of Probation Hostels in Quthing and Botha-Bothe respectively.

## **Ratification of the Optional Protocol on a communications procedure**

145. The State Party has not yet ratified the Optional Protocol on the Communications Procedure, as internal processes have not yet been concluded to pave way for the decision to ratify.

## **Ratification of international human rights instruments**

146. See below:

- (a) Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty;
- (b) Optional Protocol of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- (c) Individual complaints procedure under the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- (d) Individual complaints procedure under the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance;
- (e) Individual complaints procedure under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- (f) Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- (g) Individual complaints procedure under the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families;
- (h) Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

147. There are no recent ratifications in place since the submission of the state report.

## **Reporting obligations under the Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict and the Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography**

148. No report to date.

## **Cooperation with regional bodies**

149. The State Party has been co-operating with regional bodies such as the African Union especially through the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child through submission of periodic state party reports and feedback on the implementation of concluding observation arising from those Reports. The State Party con-currently prepared the Second Periodic State Party Report to the African Committee when it prepared this 3rd to 7th Report to the UNCRC Committee.

150. The State Party always embraces an opportunity to learn and share lessons with other countries in terms of implementation of the Convention and general welfare of children.

### **Follow-up and dissemination**

151. The dissemination of the listed documents was done through the National OVC Coordinating Committee (NOCC).

### **National mechanism for reporting and follow-up**

152. The state party accepts the recommendation and will act as advised.

### **Next report**

153. The GOL is committed to effective state party reporting and thus is making plans for the adoption of the Common Core Document, which, in terms of the simplified state party reporting procedures, will be the base document for all reports to be submitted to the UN treaty bodies.

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