



SMALL SCALE FARMERS FORUM OF LESOTHO

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DATE : 17th December 2018

TIME : 07:00am-09:30am

PLACE : MASERU AVANI HOTEL

PURPOSE : NETWORKING WITH THE PARLIAMENT ECONOMIC CLUSTER

The parliament of Lesotho has 6 portfolio committees, one of which is the most famous and is normally aired on the national television which is I. Public Accounts Committee (PAC). The other committees are as follows

2. Law and Public safety

3. Social Cluster

4. Prime Minister Ministries

5. Natural Resources and

6. Economic Cluster which takes up to 6 ministries and its chairperson is Mr. Tsoenyane Rapapa Samuel.

- Labor and employment

- Finance

- Development Planning

- Agriculture

- Trade

- Small business this are the ministries that fall under the economic cluster portfolio.

It was then a need for Esaff Lesotho to organize a meeting with the economic cluster as it is the one dealing with the monitoring of the whole agriculture sector, as it is one of the ministries that contribute to the economy of the country. Esaff Lesotho members (7males and 3 females) met with 4 of the parliament's members of the economic cluster on the above mentioned date. The objective of the meeting was for Esaff Lesotho to build a working relationship between the two parties and to see how agriculture is contributing to the growth of the economy of the country through the CAADP/MALABO Declaration.

The coordinator of Lesotho introduced the objective of the meeting and then the national chairperson began by introducing Esaff, how it was formed regional until it was introduced in Lesotho. Mrs Mamalefetsane further explained that the purpose of Esaff is to make farmers aware that they have power to influence policy makers to listen to them, they should speak in one strong voice, they should use farming methods that are not harmful to the environment and use indigenous seeds. Esaff in Lesotho is only active in 9 out of ten districts but we are still mobilizing the district. The challenge that Lesotho is facing of about 230000 people going to bed without anything to put in their stomach is very crucial that China donated rice, this came as a shock to us because the agriculture sector during the 2018/2019 national budget was allocated M123million from M327million in 2017/2018 and the same budget was talking about investing in the production of red meat, mushroom, rehabilitation of wetlands and rangelands. The question is as smallholder farmers was the person in charge of making the agriculture budget aware of this or was he/she satisfied that everyone in Lesotho is well fed? This is because the people who have got nothing to eat are not interested in all of those things that are mentioned in the budget, it does not even include smallholder farmers as it looks like it was targeting certain individuals who have money. We looked at other things that support agriculture growth in the country such as the policies and treaties e.g. CAADP/MALABO Declaration, it is now on its 10th year and in our country nothing has been done to implement it even though it signed the commitment after it was re-affirmed to Malabo Declaration. Among others the Malabo Declaration talks about the 10% allocation of the national budget to the agriculture sector which is not seen in the current agriculture budget. And if this was done agriculture was expected to contribute at least 6% on the economy of the country. The report given by the prime minister on the CAADP/MALABO Declaration earlier this year surprised us and we were not happy about it at all.



The Economic Cluster Members of Parliament

Honorable Mr. Rapapa said the government is still subsidizing the seeds even though it is in a smaller scale and in his knowledge there are some companies in the country which produce indigenous seeds, he talked about the sustainability and promotion of agriculture that is not harmful to the environment he said it is time consuming and needs a lot of people with muscles, and talking about the use of herbicides and pesticides how do we deal with the weeds in the fields he then talked about finding strategies that we can use to do farming in the conditions caused by climate change he for one lost M10 000 because of the climate change, and how do we work through the heavy soil erosion that is happening in the country.

Honorable Mr. Tello Kibane said that he is very pleased with how we approached the issue of the budget and the concern that we see the government not doing anything to help farmers who do crop farming he said they will take it further to see if anything can be done from here because the truth is most Basotho are stunting, and he said he is very happy to have met us today as this will make his work easier. . He further mentioned that the care that we seem to have as an organization of small scale farmers is so wonderful and it makes them confident when they go to the parliament and present the issues raised that the members should know that they are not

their issues but what the farmers themselves are saying out there and he is happy that we raised the fact that the way agriculture is handled in this country is not taking it anywhere and I support you on that and if we work holding hands from here this will help us achieve bigger things for the country.



PARTICIPANTS LISTENING AND
TAKING NOTES

Honorable Mr. Likopo Mahase said what we are saying about agriculture in Lesotho is very true and this was done by Basotho people who did not have any formal education or the facilities such as universities and college to get information. He said we all know that we grew up in families that used our own indigenous seeds and it was not expensive but efficient for them we should try to influence our farmers to use the seeds too, he mentioned that this type of seeds that we are using are not beneficial to us except for the companies that produces them as they are the cause of the diseases that are rising in the country such as cancer, it's a fact that we cannot ignore that a nation that is not investing in agriculture does not have a future.

Mr Motlatsi Maqelepo said even though he arrived late he has what we are talking about and this came two weeks after he was in a meeting where they were talking about the same issues and he is happy that there are people who are dealing with them that he can work with and this is going to make their work easier as they are an oversight committee and they are targeting the Ministry of Agriculture more than any other Ministry that they work with he said he is very sorry to mention that the ministry of agriculture is one of the worst performing ministries in the country. When we look at Malabo declaration we can see that agriculture is expected to contribute 6% in the GDP of the country the question is when we look at Lesotho now when what will we do with the 10% of the national budget if it is allocated to the agriculture sector? The truth is as an oversight committee and parliament members some of us we don't know anything about this things but when we have people like you to capacitate our knowledge our work becomes easier.

The present members of the parliament for economic cluster promised us that the budget 2019/2020 will not pass without them knowing the incentives of the small holder farmers, they will invite us in the making of the budget cycle. They promised that they will look at the agriculture sector in another way so as to improve it.

