

We would like to commend the government of Lesotho for demonstrating political commitment towards achieving the SDGs.

We also acknowledge the recommendation in the VNR for “Civil Society and NGOs to intensify public engagement and accountability through shadow reporting, civic education, and community mobilisation.”

We note that structural challenges continue to undermine the progress of SDGs in the country. These include persistent rural-urban disparities in access to quality public services, high youth unemployment and the lack of access of women to higher administrative positions and skills development, limited institutionalised mechanisms for civil society participation.

Therefore, we would like to put forward these recommendations:

1. **Establish and implement a CSO policy**, a formal, inclusive framework for civil society and youth participation in SDG planning, monitoring, and reporting.
2. **Strengthen education for decent work for marginalised groups**. Review and update the TVET and non-formal education policies to address high dropout rates and skills gaps, aligning education with labor market demands and ensure women’s access to decent work and a life of dignity.
3. **Invest in gender- transformative education** that challenges harmful gender norms, such as child marriage and gender-based violence and ensure girls can complete quality education.
4. **Expand and accelerate Gender-Responsive Budgeting** to address barriers faced by girls, boys, women and marginalized communities.
5. **Enhance Data Systems and collect** disaggregated data collection (by gender, disability, geography) and integrate civil society monitoring tools in the information systems.
6. **Generate sustainable financing for quality public education and public services by** implementing progressive taxation and supporting efforts towards convening the UN Framework Convention on Sovereign Debt.

Thank you.