

INFORMATION SESSION ON LESOTHO
21 November 2012, Palais des Nations, Room XXV

Opening remarks by the Deputy Secretary-General of UNCTAD

AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Your Excellency Temeki Phoenix Tsolo, Minister of Trade and Industry,
Cooperatives and Marketing of Lesotho
Distinguished Delegates,
Ms. Karla Robin Hershey, UN Resident Coordinator in Lesotho,
Ms. Alka Bhatia, Head of Strategy and Policy Coordination Unit, UNDP
Lesotho
Dear colleagues,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you to this lunch-time information session on poverty reduction through trade in Lesotho.

Few countries in the world rely on trade as much as Lesotho to create jobs, to diversify the economy, and above all, to reduce poverty. The main development challenges of Lesotho revolve around trade: firstly, because Lesotho is a small, landlocked LDC. Secondly, because of the importance of income generated by exports of goods and services and by customs duties. Thirdly, because of the key role of manufacturing activities such as garments and apparel, leather, as well as farm products that are being developed and traded in regional and global value chains. Finally, because new forms of trade earnings are increasingly important for Lesotho: tourism, supply of water to South Africa, and remittances from Lesotho's workers abroad. All these traditional and new areas of economic activity related to trade will push Lesotho towards a structural transformation of the economy in the next few years.

Excellency,

The main objective of this brief session is to provide you with an opportunity to present the main features and the main challenges of trade policy in Lesotho today, and to highlight the successful interagency coordination that has served to provide targeted support in this area.

The interagency coordination that has now been well established in Lesotho for many years brings together the expertise of several UN agencies within the overall UN assistance plan, which in turn is fully aligned with the national development strategy. For example, due to this coordination, the assistance provided under the Enhanced Integrated Framework and the new Diagnostic Trade Integration Study (DTIS) are now being integrated within the broader UN assistance plan for the period 2013-2017.

It is worth recalling that one of the main tasks of the UN Cluster on Trade and Productive Capacity is to ensure, at all levels and all stages, that in all the LDCs, the Enhanced Integrated Framework process and the actions grounded in the Diagnostic Trade Integration Study are coordinated with the assistance delivered by the UN agencies in related areas. This will allow the formulation and implementation of Tier 1 and 2 projects to be done within a comprehensive vision so as to avoid duplication and to ensure synergies among individual projects.

Allow me to take this opportunity to sincerely thank all the UN agencies involved in this collective effort for their team spirit in Lesotho and in many other countries. The case of Lesotho demonstrates that interagency coordination in the area of trade and related matters can work and can deliver. It also demonstrates that - when acting together to combine our expertise - we can add value by enlarging the scope, the impact and the efficiency of our assistance. I would like to bring the

attention of donors to this successful case of interagency coordination, which was requested of the UN system, but which now requires to be matched by financial coordination and support from donors.

Excellency,

UNCTAD is proud to have an excellent dialogue with the policymakers of Lesotho that started more than 15 years ago. This dialogue is being translated into concrete assistance projects in key areas such as the formulation of trade policy, the negotiation and utilization of trade preferences at the regional and global levels, support to the trade negotiating capacity, investment promotion, competition law and policy, science and technology policy, and since last year, the interface between trade and gender.

Recently, UNCTAD also received strong support from the Government of Lesotho, when Ambassador Anthony Maruping played a crucial role as Chair of our Trade and Development Board during the preparatory process of the Ministerial Conference of UNCTAD XIII. The successful negotiation of the Doha Mandate was in no small part due to his skillful leadership.

I would like to give the floor to his Excellency the Minister of Trade of Lesotho. We will then have a presentation by Ms Alka Bhatia, Country Director of UNDP in Lesotho, and the floor will be open to questions and comments. Finally, I will be pleased to leave to Ms Karla Robin Hershey the task of closing this session.

Thank you very much.