

**SPEECH BY THE HONOURABLE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

**AT THE LAUNCH OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION POLICY**

**AT**

**AVANI**

**DATE: 11TH JANUARY, 2019**

**YOUR MAJESTY KING LETSIE III**

**THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE PRIME MINISTER**

**PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE**

**SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**PRESIDENT OF THE COURT OF APPEAL**

**HER LADYSHIP ACTING CHIEF JUSTICE**

**HONORABLE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER**

**HIS MAJESTY’S CABINET**

**OFFICIAL LEADER OF OPPOSITION**

**DEPUTY MINISTERS OF EDUCATION**

* **DEPUTY MINISTER OF EDUCATION – HIGHER EDUCATION – HON. MOTHEPU MAHAPA**
* **DEPUTY MINISTER OF EDUCATION – BASIC EDUCATION – HON. ‘MAPHOKA MOTOBOLI**

**HONORABLE JUDGES OF THE HIGH COURT**

**YOUR EXCELLENCIES, REPRESENTATIVES OF DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND ORGANISATIONS**

**PRINCIPAL CHIEF OF THABA-BOSIU – CHIEF KHOABANE THEKO**

**LEADERS OF THE POLITICAL PARTIES**

**MEMBERS OF THE SENATE**

**THE GOVERNMENT SECRETARY**

**PRINCIPAL SECRETARIES OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & TRAINING**

**CHAIRPERSONS OF THE COMMISSIONS**

**HEADS OF CHURCHES**

**SENIOR OFFICIALS OF THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & TRAINING**

**HEADS OF PROGRAMMES – ESPECIALLY HEADS OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMMES IN LESOTHO**

**LADIES AND GENTLEMEN**

1. I wish to start my remarks by outlining a few important points about the significant role played by Non-Formal Education in society. Non-Formal Education (NFE) or out-of-school education as a long standing phenomenon, plays a very important role in terms of providing access to education to members of communities who may have been left out of the formal education system due to various reasons such as lack of school fees, young men who left for mining jobs at a very early age, child marriages and herding of cattle of young boys among others.
2. It is through Non-Formal Education that members of communities can empower themselves in terms of general civilization. In civilized societies, people are able to read and write and can therefore cultivate additional knowledge - a practice called lifelong learning – on their own instead of being fed information which can sometimes be misleading such as issues around politics and human rights.Furthermore, this out-of-school education, is not always only academic but technical and vocational. It therefore goes without a saying that learners are given an opportunity to develop skills that will help them to self-employ and or seek employment where such skills are required.
3. Ladies and gentlemen, may I please emphasize that the issue of skills development is very vital and augurs well with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy, 2009 which advocates for Job Readiness at the end of Basic Education.
4. I have just outlined just a handful of reasons why Non-formal Education is relevant in our lives. May I now move to talk about the importance of enacting a policy of Non-Formal Education. Before I do that, let me acknowledge the background which management of the Lesotho Distance Teaching Centre has provided us - that for the longest period, as back as around 1974, Non-Formal Education has been prevalent in this country with very fruitful results. I have also been reliably informed that for the longest period, this initiative has operated in a project form with so many challenges. I wish to acknowledge that background and commend the pioneers for the job well done.
5. We are now in the era of reforms and the advent of a Non-Formal Education Policy would not have come at an opportune time. It is only natural that development programmes should from time to time be reviewed and strengthened. It is my unequivocal understanding that this policy is meant to strengthen the Non-Formal Education Programme and to that effect I will again highlight a few areas:
6. The policy directs that there should be more regulation and management of Non-Formal Education institutions and organisations. This includes amongst others, legal and or official registration of such entities regulated by the guidelines to that effect. Maybe we will stop running after the so called mushroom schools in our country because it has been evident that it is difficult for them to register due to the conditions set for the formal education system.
7. The policy advocates for cooperation and inherent consultation among NFE stake-holders on issues such as learning materials development and pool funding activities.
8. The policy directs that there has to be an establishment of NFE Department. The department is envisaged to be an overall overseer of NFE activities and as such, all of the above key policy issues and those mentioned by speakers before myself, should be the responsibility of the department. Carefully note, Ladies and Gentlemen, that the department shall afford the LDTC the adequate time to refocus efforts on how to expand the programme in terms of subjects and courses as a precursor to finally establish an Open College and eventually the Open University of Lesotho which is a long overdue objective.
9. Ladies and gentlemen, it was never in my plans to make a long speech today, but for a commendable maiden initiative as this, you cannot avoid going on and on, please bear with me. May I take this opportunity to invite all members of society in their different formations: NFE stakeholders, the chiefs, villagers and everyone else, to extend a warm welcome to the ministry teams as they will – from this day onwards – disperse across the country to disseminate this policy. We all should be happy that the policy which was approved by cabinet on the 25th October, 2018 is now in place, now the challenge is implementation. I promise those who are responsible to do so my utmost support.
10. As I conclude this brief note, may I now take an opportunity to thank our development partners, particularly UNICEF, who is our biggest supporter, and the World Bank for funding review and finalization and the partial implementation of this policy. We are indeed grateful for your support and hope that our partnership for the social wellbeing of this country should grow from strength to strength now that we have a policy directive.
11. It is now my singular honour to officially declare the Non-Formal Education Policy operational.

**KHOTSO PULA NALA**