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Foreword

The UNDP Country Office feels a sense of accomplishment, after a long break, in finally releasing another in this series of its flagship country-level reports, which is one of UNDP's major advocacy tools. The preparation of this *National Human Development Report (NHDR) 2006*, as some of you may recall, began late 2002, with initial inputs contributed by several researchers commissioned from both within Lesotho and South African Universities. The initial report drafting process, which involved in-country resource persons from both the UN and the Government, was subsequently stalled and ultimately halted by more pressing emerging national exigencies to which the relevant participants in the report drafting process in both UNDP and Government have had to respond.

The latter include responses to the ongoing severe food and humanitarian crises affecting six countries (including Lesotho) in the Southern Africa sub-region, beginning late 2001. These necessitated conducting several joint assessments of the food situation and related humanitarian needs, drafting series of reports based on response programmes proposed by resident UN agencies on behalf of the Lesotho Government, in support of the several Consolidated Appeals (CAPs) that the United Nations System in the sub-region issued to the international community on a semi-annual basis between mid-2002 and end-2004.

Meanwhile, during this period a consensus was emerging in the development community that the on-going humanitarian crisis was due to the nexus of chronic and deepening poverty, compounded by the effects on productive capacity of the pervasive prevalence of HIV and AIDS, as well as weakened governance capacities for service delivery. Consequently, the focus of the original NHDR was modified to ensure that the linkages among HIV, Poverty and Food Insecurity would be adequately examined in the report drafting process. Thus, when the report drafting process resumed late 2004, it became necessary to shift away from its original focus on poverty, inequality and social exclusion. The present focus of this Report is on **the nexus of HIV, poverty and food insecurity**. The completion of the resumed report drafting process was further affected by the delayed release of the results of the 2002/03 Household Budget Survey, on which relatively more recent poverty indicators were based.


Every effort has been made to use the most recent information on other socioeconomic indicators to supplement poverty indicators which are based on the 1986/87, 1994/95 and 2002/03 Household Budget Survey reports, in order to present a robust analysis of how HIV, poverty and food insecurity are mutually reinforcing one another in Lesotho, and threatening to thwart its progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The Report also presents a brief summary of the current situation regarding the status of Lesotho's progress towards its achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As most of our readers may recall, in September 2000, at the 55th United Nations General Assembly (GA) Session (the Millennium Summit) which ended the last century, the Heads of State and Governments of UN Member Countries made a commitment (the Millennium Declaration) to strengthen the environments for peace, development and human rights, and to improve the United Nations' ability to act on behalf of human priorities. The next year, at its 56th Session dubbed the "Follow Up to the

Millennium Summit”, the GA in September 2001 adopted the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). By this the World Body committed itself to eight goals to be attained by 2015. The following year, at the Monterrey International Conference on Financing Development, held in Mexico, a significant step for translating the MDGs into concrete action was taken, when the developed countries pledged to support the developing countries with increased aid resources towards the achievement of the MDGs by 2015.

It is worth noting that, as part of Lesotho’s preparations for the Millennium Declaration+5 UN Summit in September 2005, in-country review processes related to the MDGs had taken place during the period this Report was under preparation. Thus, it became opportune for the Report’s authors, who had also led the MDG-related national review process, to incorporate a summary of the findings from that review exercise in this Report. In short, this Report concludes that the impacts of the nexus of pervasive HIV, chronic structural poverty, and food insecurity in Lesotho can be addressed by pursuing the achievement of the MDGs through focusing on the critical MDG-related activities outlined in the country’s two key frameworks for addressing the ongoing humanitarian crises. These are: the Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS); and, the National HIV Strategic Framework (currently under revision).

Given the wealth of information in this Report on the current status of Lesotho’s socioeconomic indicators, the sources of its current humanitarian crises, as well as the robust analysis of the linkages among, and the mutually reinforcing nature of, these sources of the crises, this Report is very timely. I therefore wish to recommend it to all of Lesotho’s development partners, development practitioners, politicians, public servants, academics, researchers and civil society organizations, as one of the useful evidence-based advocacy tools and reference sources to employ in their individual and collective efforts to find solutions to Lesotho’s development challenges.



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We begin by recognizing the overall guidance, encouragement and direction of the UNDP Resident Representative, Mrs Hodan A. Haji -Mohamud, who took a special personal interest in ensuring the completion of a Report Project that had been bogged down by many constraints (both internal and external) before her arrival in the Lesotho Country Office. We also wish to acknowledge the coordination role of UNDP's Strategy and Policy Unit (SPU), led by the Economic Advisor, who co-chairs the Joint Government -UN MDG Working Group, whose members provided valuable comments on the draft document prior to its finalization. Ms. Liengoane Lefosa, Co-chairperson of the Joint MDG Working Group and Director of the Bureau of Statistics, provided valuable advisory support, especially with regard to data sources and quality.

The first draft of the full report was put together by the UNDP SPU from written contributions of chapter drafting teams listed in the *Team for the Preparation of the NHDR 2006*, who were contracted by UNDP to provide specific research contributions. These teams benefited from inputs provided by our counterparts in the respective sector Ministries and Departments, to each of whom we extend our gratitude. Given the long lag between the receipt of these original research inputs and the completion of the Report Project, some of these research inputs have been modified by the Report's authors.

Next, we wish to pay special tribute to all the national institutional as well as individual stakeholders who provided peer review comments on the final version of the draft document, prior to printing. In this regard, we are particularly grateful to our colleagues from Government Ministries and Departments. These include Ms. Mahlao Diaho, Ms. Liengoane Lefosa, Mr. Tšoamathe Maseribane, Mr. Pheko Mashoai, Ms. Tlaleng Matete, Mr. Lira Molapo, Ms. Linkeng Moremoholo, Mr. Pakiso Nape and Mr. Bati Ramashamole.

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While this is a UNDP publication, the findings and views expressed herein are solely those of the authors and relevant expert research consultants cited, and do not necessarily reflect the official views of UNDP or the Government of Lesotho. In this vein, the usual caveat applies, that any remaining errors or deficiencies are solely those of the authors.

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