

### **RAMSAR CONVENTION**

### **Ramsar National Report to COP15**

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### **Section 1: Institutional Information**

**Important note**: The responses below will be considered by the Convention on Wetlands Secretariat as the definitive list of your focal points. All individuals listed below agree that the submitted information will be used to update the information in the Secretariat's contact database and will be published on the public website here Contacts on website.

#### Name of Contracting Party

The completed National Report **must be accompanied by a letter** in the name of the Head of Administrative Authority, confirming that this is the Contracting Party's official submission of its COP15 National Report. It can be attached to this question using the "Manage documents" function (blue symbol below) Link to sample National Report Submission Letter: https://www.ramsar.org/document/national-reports-cop15-sampleletter >>> LESOTHO

You have attached the following documents to this answer. CONFIRMATION OF OFFICIAL SUBMISSION FOR COP 15.pdf - LESOTHO CONFIRMATION LETTER

#### **Designated Administrative Authority for the Convention on Wetlands**

Name of Administrative Authority >>> Ministry of Natural Resources

Head of Administrative Authority - name and title >>> Ms. RELEBOHILE LEBETA

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#### **Designated National Focal Point for the Convention on Wetlands**

Name and title >>> MRS. CHRISTINAH MANTHOFEELA MAKOAE

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#### **Designated Scientific and Technical Review Panel (STRP) National Focal Point**

Name and title >>> DR. BOTLE ESTHER MAPESHAONE

Name of organisation >>> NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LESOTHO

Mailing address >>> P.O ROMA 180, LESOTHO

Telephone >>> (+266) 22340601

Email

#### Designated Government Communication, Capacity Building, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA)Programme National Focal Point

Name and title >>> MR. MOLEFE MOKHATLA

Name of organisation >>> DEPARTMENT OF WATER AFFAIRS

Mailing address >>> P.O. BOX 772 MASERU 100 LESOTHO

Telephone >>> (+266) 22317516

Email >>> mflmokhatla42@gmail.com

#### Designated Non-Governmental Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA) Programme National Focal Point

Name and title >>> MR. THATO KONSTABLE

Name of organisation >>> Lesotho Council of Non- Governmental Organizations

Mailing address >>> Private Bag A445 Maseru 100, Lesotho

Telephone >>> (+266) 22317205/ 58081751

Email >>> aenrc@lcn.org.ls

### **Designated National Focal Point on Strengthening the Convention on Wetland's Connections through Youth**

Name and title >>> MR. MORAPELI MAKHAKHE

Name of organization >>> DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH

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Phone >>> (+266) 62098685

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# Section 2: General summary of national implementation progress and challenges

In your country, in the past triennium (i.e., since COP14 reporting)

# A. What have been the five main achievements of the implementation of the Convention since COP14?

1)

>>> Lesotho was elected to be the Chairperson of the SADC Region in RAMSAR Convention

2)

>>> In the process of declaring Let'sa la Senqu as a RAMSAR Site

3)

>>> Declaration of 49 water resources as protected areas

4)

>>> Review of the current Water Act of 2008

5)

>>> ReNOKA Programme in the Water Sector under the Department of Water Affairs has promoted sustainable wetland management and restoration

# **B.** What have been the five main challenges in implementing the Convention since COP14?

1)

>>> Climate Change impacts to the water resources

2)

>>> Limited financial and technical resources

3)

>>> Poor Policy Integration

4)

>>> Encroachment and land use management

5)

>>> Inconsistent monitoring and reporting

# C. Please outline five priorities for implementing the Convention in your country during the coming triennium (2026-2028)

1)

>>> Declaration of the water resources as protected areas

2)

>>> 2) Declaration of Let'sa la Senqu as a RAMSAR Site and other 5 more sites under review.

3)

>>> Policy integration and enforcement

4)

>>> Promotion of Citizen Science integration in school curriculum

5)

>>> Review and updating of National Wetlands Conservation Strategy and National Wetland Inventory Database

D. Does the Administrative Authority have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Convention Secretariat?

>>> Yes, there need for capacity development, financial support, regional collaboration, skills and knowledge sharing.

E. Does the Administrative Authority have any recommendations concerning implementation assistance from the Convention's International Organization Partners (IOPs) (including ongoing partnerships and partnerships to be developed)?

>>> Yes, there is a need for international collaboration, skills and knowledge, international financial support and resource mobilization at large scale and engagement with International union for conservation of nature(IUCN) for community based conservation initiatives.

F. In accordance with paragraph 21 of Resolution XIII.18 on Gender and wetlands, please provide a short description about the balance between genders participating in wetland-related decisions, programmes and research.

>>> In terms of decision making, woman's participation in leadership roles related to wetland governance is limited but efforts are made to encourage women participation

G. On the basis of your indications above, list possible areas where change is necessary for the achievement of gender equality.

>>> Promotion of women's entry in decision-making positions

H. Please describe lessons learnt in the context of wetlands and gender equality work in your country. >>> As assigned by our culture we perceived gender equality as a norm

I. If possible, please list gender-related policies, strategies and action plans in place relevant to wetlands in your country.

>>> National Gender and Development Policy of 2003
 Lesotho National Environmental Policy of 2016
 Water Sector Gender Strategy
 NSDP II
 EU Gender Action Plan II
 Water and Sanitation Policy 2007
 Lesotho Long term Water and Sanitation Strategy 2014

J. If applicable, identify examples of strategies and actions your country is implementing to support youth participation in the implementation of the Convention's Strategic Plan or in wetlands management (Resolution XIV.12 on Strengthening Ramsar connections through youth, paragraph 21). >>> Engagement of youths in events like World Wetlands and World Water Days Engagement in Citizen Science Monitoring Consider nominating a young professional Focal Point for RAMSAR Framework

K. Please list the names of the organizations which have been consulted on or have contributed to the information provided in this report.

»» Ministry of Natural Resources - Department of Water Affairs Ministry of Gender, Sport and Recreation - Departments of Gender and Youth Ministry of Environment and Forestry- Department of Environment, Soil and Water Conservation, Range Resources Management and Meteorological Services of Lesotho Ministry of Tourism and Culture ROLL RENOKA UNFCCC NAP

# Section 3 - all goals: Indicator questions and further implementation information

In responding to each of these questions, Contracting Parties are encouraged to provide links, references/ upload documents where applicable and relevant.

#### Section 3 - Goal 1. Addressing the drivers of wetland loss and degradation

In responding to each of these questions, Contracting Parties are encouraged to provide links, references/ upload documents where applicable and relevant.

[Reference to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15]

#### Target 1

Wetland benefits are featured in national/local policy strategies and plans relating to key sectors such as water, energy, mining, agriculture, tourism, urban development, infrastructure, industry, forestry, aquaculture, fisheries at the national and local level. [Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 14]

1.1 Have any actions been taken since COP14 to integrate wetland protection, wise use and restoration, or wetland benefits, into other national strategies and planning processes, including: {1.1} *Please select only one per square.* 

a) National policy or strategy for wetland management	<ul> <li>□ Y=Not Relevant</li> <li>□ X=Unknown</li> <li>□ D=Planned</li> <li>☑ C=Partially</li> <li>□ B=No</li> <li>□ A=Yes</li> </ul>
b) Poverty eradication strategies	<ul> <li>□ Y=Not Relevant</li> <li>□ X=Unknown</li> <li>□ D=Planned</li> <li>□ C=Partially</li> <li>□ B=No</li> <li>☑ A=Yes</li> </ul>
c) Water resource management and water efficiency plans	□ Y=Not Relevant □ X=Unknown □ D=Planned □ C=Partially □ B=No ☑ A=Yes
d) Coastal and marine resource management plans	<ul> <li>☑ Y=Not Relevant</li> <li>□ X=Unknown</li> <li>□ D=Planned</li> <li>□ C=Partially</li> <li>□ B=No</li> <li>□ A=Yes</li> </ul>
e) Integrated coastal zone management plan	<ul> <li>☑ Y=Not Relevant</li> <li>□ X=Unknown</li> <li>□ D=Planned</li> <li>□ C=Partially</li> <li>□ B=No</li> <li>□ A=Yes</li> </ul>
f) National forest management plan/strategies	□ Y=Not Relevant □ X=Unknown □ D=Planned □ C=Partially □ B=No ☑ A=Yes
g) National policies or measures on agriculture	□ Y=Not Relevant □ X=Unknown □ D=Planned □ C=Partially □ B=No ☑ A=Yes

h) National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans drawn up under the CBD	<ul> <li>Y=Not Relevant</li> <li>X=Unknown</li> <li>D=Planned</li> <li>C=Partially</li> <li>B=No</li> <li>☑ A=Yes</li> </ul>
i) National policies on energy and mining	<ul> <li>☐ Y=Not Relevant</li> <li>☐ X=Unknown</li> <li>☐ D=Planned</li> <li>☐ C=Partially</li> <li>☐ B=No</li> <li>☑ A=Yes</li> </ul>
j) National policies on tourism	<ul> <li>☐ Y=Not Relevant</li> <li>☐ X=Unknown</li> <li>☐ D=Planned</li> <li>☐ C=Partially</li> <li>☐ B=No</li> <li>☑ A=Yes</li> </ul>
k) National policies on urban development	<ul> <li>☐ Y=Not Relevant</li> <li>☐ X=Unknown</li> <li>☐ D=Planned</li> <li>☐ C=Partially</li> <li>☐ B=No</li> <li>☑ A=Yes</li> </ul>
<ol> <li>National policies on infrastructure</li> </ol>	<ul> <li>Y=Not Relevant</li> <li>X=Unknown</li> <li>D=Planned</li> <li>C=Partially</li> <li>B=No</li> <li>☑ A=Yes</li> </ul>
m) National policies on industry	<ul> <li>□ Y=Not Relevant</li> <li>□ X=Unknown</li> <li>□ D=Planned</li> <li>□ C=Partially</li> <li>□ B=No</li> <li>☑ A=Yes</li> </ul>
n) National policies on aquaculture and fisheries {1.3.3}	<ul> <li>□ Y=Not Relevant</li> <li>□ X=Unknown</li> <li>□ D=Planned</li> <li>□ C=Partially</li> <li>□ B=No</li> <li>☑ A=Yes</li> </ul>
o) National plans of actions (NPAs) for pollution control and management	□ Y=Not Relevant □ X=Unknown □ D=Planned □ C=Partially □ B=No ☑ A=Yes
p) National policies on wastewater management and water quality	<ul> <li>Y=Not Relevant</li> <li>X=Unknown</li> <li>D=Planned</li> <li>C=Partially</li> <li>B=No</li> <li>☑ A=Yes</li> </ul>
q) National policies, strategies or plans on sanitation	<ul> <li>Y=Not Relevant</li> <li>X=Unknown</li> <li>D=Planned</li> <li>C=Partially</li> <li>B=No</li> <li>☑ A=Yes</li> </ul>
r) National policies, strategies or plans on food security	<ul> <li>Y=Not Relevant</li> <li>X=Unknown</li> <li>D=Planned</li> <li>C=Partially</li> <li>B=No</li> <li>☑ A=Yes</li> </ul>

1.1 Additional information >>> Need for collaboration with relevant stakeholders on issues relating to policy enforcement.

### Target 2

Water userespects wetland ecosystem needs for them to fulfil their functions and provide services at the appropriate scale inter alia at the basin level or along a coastal zone.

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 7, Sustainable Development Goal 6, Indicator 6.3.1]

2.1 Additional Information>>> There is a need for updating of the data collection system,The capacity development of the staff,Need for availability of funds

2.2 Have assessments of environmental flow been undertaken in relation to mitigation of impacts on the ecological character of wetlands?  $\{2.2\}$  $\square$  A=Yes

2.2 Additional Information

>>> Hydrological data availability

2.3 Have the designation or management of Wetlands of International Importance ("Ramsar Sites") improved the sustainable use of water (e.g. reduced drainage, reduced use of pesticides, controlled pollution etc.) in your country?

C=Partially

2.3 Additional Information

>>> The wetland education and awareness interventions are still on progress.

2.4 Have the Guidelines for allocation and management of water for maintaining ecological functions of wetlands (Resolutions VIII.1 and XII.12 ) been used/applied in decision-making processes? {2.3}

☑ A=Yes

#### 2.4 Additional Information

>>> The Guidelines for the Allocation and Management of Water to Maintain the Ecological Functions of Wetlands (Ramsar Resolutions VIII.1 and XII.12) provide a framework for integrating wetland water requirements into decision-making. These resolutions emphasize the importance of balancing human water use with the ecological needs of wetlands.

2.5 Have projects that promote and demonstrate good practice in water allocation and management for maintaining the ecological functions of wetlands been developed  $\{2.4\}$  $\square$  A=Yes

2.5 Additional Information

>>> Lesotho has been active in establishing wetlands as pilot areas to showcase sustainable allocation and management for maintaining the ecological functions of the wetlands.

2.6 Does the country use constructed wetlands/ponds as wastewater treatment technology? {2.8}  $\square$  A=Yes

#### 2.6 Additional Information

>>> Wetlands were constructed at the Lets'eng Diamonds Mine as wastewater treatment technology for the natural water resources within the locality

#### Target 3

Public and private sectors have increased their efforts to apply guidelines and good practices for the wise use of water and wetlands.

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 7, 10, 15, 16 and 18]

3.1 Has your country put in place policies, including incentives, guidelines or other instruments to encourage the private sector to apply the wise use principle and guidance (Ramsar handbooks for the wise

### use of wetlands) in activities and investments related to wetlands? {3.1} $\ensuremath{\boxtimes}$ A=Yes

#### 3.1 Additional Information

Please specify if it was applied for policy formulation or in implementation of good practice. >>> The Regeneration of Landscapes and Livelihoods, Lets'eng Diamonds Mine and other mining industries are involved.

3.2 Has the private sector undertaken any activities or actions for the conservation, wise use, and management of (a) Ramsar Sites or (b) wetlands in general? {3.2} *Please select only one per square.* 

a) Ramsar Sites	□ Y=Not relevant □ X=Unknown □ D=Planned □ C=Partially □ B=No ☑ A=Yes
b) Wetlands in general	<ul> <li>□ Y=Not relevant</li> <li>□ X=Unknown</li> <li>□ D=Planned</li> <li>□ C=Partially</li> <li>□ B=No</li> <li>☑ A=Yes</li> </ul>

#### 3.2 Additional information

>>> Letseng Diamonds Mine has controlled seepage to the natural wetlands through construction of the artificial wetlands

Wetlands in general (yes) (for example, in Semonkong there was a project called SMARTD that was working with community members to protect and conserve wetlands in that area. In Mokhotlong also, there is a community organisation, which is working on protection of wetlands, supported through GEF-Small grants. MG Health PTY Ltd, which a company that grows, cultivates and manufacture of the medical grade cannabis extracts and products has protected wetlands within their locality.

3.3 Have actions been taken to implement incentive measures which encourage the conservation and wise use of wetlands? {3.3}

☑ A=Yes

#### 3.3 Additional information

Please specify the types of incentive measures (loans, tax breaks, or others).

>>> Incentives in the form of livelihood projects. Measures that were taken include construction of animal drinking points, and this are some of the initiatives intended to remove animals from the wetlands. In the Lets'a la Letsie, the construction of the drinking points is in progress as well as an Animals Dip to prevent further pollution and to restore the damage made by the encroachment of the animals in the wetland.

3.4 Have actions been taken to remove perverse incentive measures which lead to degradation or loss of wetlands? {3.4}

☑ A=Yes

#### 3.4 Additional Information

Please specify the actions that have been taken to remove perverse incentive measures (e.g. removal of subsidies for agricultural expansion) and provide the source links or upload the source documents here. >>> Lesotho has implemented several initiatives aimed at mitigating the degradation of its wetlands, though challenges remain due to various environmental pressures and policy issues. The Integrated Catchment Management (ICM) program spearheaded by the Ministry of Natural Resources in the Water Sector is central to these efforts. This program focuses on restoring land and water systems through collaboration between government, international agencies, and local communities. It emphasizes sustainable land use, erosion control, and invasive species management, which are key drivers of wetland loss in the country. However, collaborative efforts need to be put in place including the Law enforcement.

#### Target 4

Invasive alien species and pathways of introduction and expansion are identified and prioritized, priority invasive alien species are controlled or eradicated, and management responses are prepared and implemented to prevent their introduction and establishment.

#### [Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Target 6]

4.1 Does your country have a national inventory of invasive alien species that currently or potentially impact the ecological character of wetlands?  $\{4.1\}$  $\square$  A=Yes

#### 4.1 Additional information

>>> Although there are a number of different invasive species including plants, birds, mammals and aquatic fauna, the most troublesome species in plants is chrysocoma ciliata.

4.2 Has your country adopted any national policies, strategies, or guidelines on invasive species control and management that are relevant for wetlands? {4.2} ☑ A=Yes

#### 4.2 Additional information

>>> Lesotho has been proactive in addressing invasive species control relevant to wetlands, but there is no comprehensive standalone national policy specifically targeting invasive species management. Instead, efforts are integrated into broader environmental and biodiversity conservation frameworks. The country is committed to meeting international goals, such as the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 15 and Global Biodiversity Framework target 6. The country is currently developing the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP) in alignment with GBF targets.

#### 4.3 Additional Information

>>> Efforts to manage invasive species are part of broader initiatives under the Integrated Catchment Management Programme, supported by the FAO and funded by the EU. This includes mapping invasive species using geospatial technologies and developing databases for monitoring vegetation health. Lesotho has made notable progress in managing invasive species that pose a high risk to wetland ecosystems. The most significant initiative involves the Khubelu Wetland Project and the Letsa-La-Letsie Ramsar Site , which addresses invasive plant species removal alongside wetland rehabilitation. Community members are engaged in manual debushing to remove invasive plants, and physical structures have been constructed to mitigate erosion and restore water tables

4.4 Has the effectiveness of wetland invasive alien species control programmes been assessed?{4.5}  $\square$  A=Yes

#### 4.4 Additional Information

>>> The efficacy of different methods used has assessed through research by academia and some were done by the Range Resources department and the Department of Water Affairs

#### Section 3 - Goal 2. Effectively conserving and managing the Ramsar Site network

In responding to each of these questions, Contracting Parties are encouraged to provide links, references/ upload documents where applicable and relevant. [Reference to Sustainable Development Goals 6, 11, 13, 14, 15]

#### Target 5

The ecological character of Ramsar Sites is maintained or restored through effective planning and integrated management

[Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 1, 3 and 5]

5.1 Have a national strategy and priorities been established for the further designation of Ramsar Sites, using the Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List?  $\{5.1\}$  $\square$  C=Partially

#### 5.1 Additional information

>>> Lesotho has not yet developed a comprehensive national strategy or established formal priorities for the designation of additional Ramsar Sites under the Strategic Framework for the Ramsar List. The country currently has one Ramsar Site, the Lets'eng-la-Letsie Wetland, designated in 2004 when it joined the Ramsar Convention, however, further initiative are under review to propose designation of the Let'sa la Senqu wetland as one of the Ramsar site . The national Administrative Authority, managed by the Ministry of Natural Resources, oversees Ramsar-related activities, but there are no recent reports indicating further designations or formal strategic priorities under the Convention's framework.

5.2 How many Ramsar Sites have a management plan? {5.3}  $\square$  E=# Sites

»» 1

5.3 How many of the Ramsar Sites are actively implementing their management plan? {5.4}  $\square$  E=# Sites

»» 1

5.4 How many Ramsar Sites are implementing management actions outside of formal management plans? {5.5}

☑ E=# Sites

»» 1

#### 5.2 – 5.4 Additional information

>>> Currently, Lesotho has only one designated Ramsar Site, the Let'sa la Letsie Wetland, and its management is largely guided by national policies. However, information about management actions outside formal management plans is limited. According to the Ramsar Convention, all designated sites are expected to implement comprehensive management plans focused on maintaining ecological character and ensuring wise use, but in some cases, actions may also be guided by broader regional or community initiatives rather than strictly formal plans

5.5 Have all Ramsar Sites been assessed regarding the effectiveness of their management (through formal management plans where they exist or otherwise through existing actions for appropriate wetland management)? {5.6}

If "yes", please indicate the number of Ramsar Sites If "partially", please indicate the number of Ramsar Sites If "planned", please indicate the number of Ramsar Sites If C=Partially

#### 5.5 Additional information

Please provide the source links or upload the source documents here indicating the assessment tool used (e.g. Ramsar Site Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT), Resolution XII.15), and the source of the information. >>> Ramsar Site Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool not fully implemented due to lack of funding.

5.6 How many Ramsar Sites have a cross-sectoral management committee? {5.7}  $\square$  E=# Sites

»» 1

5.6 Additional information >>> The committee was established around 2010

5.7 For how many Ramsar Sites has an ecological character description been prepared (see Resolution X.15)?

☑ E=# Sites

»» 1

#### 5.7 Additional information

For example give the name and official number of the Site or Sites.

>>> Lesotho has one designated Ramsar Site, the Lets'eng-la-Letsie Wetland, and it does have an ecological character description as part of its designation under the Ramsar Convention. However, comprehensive updates to this description or additional documentation on its ecological character are not explicitly reported in recent documents

5.8 Resolution VI.13 urges Parties to give priority to providing the Secretariat with maps and completed Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) for all Sites designated for the Ramsar List, and to revise this data at least every six years. If your country has not updated its RIS as required, describe the challenges in updating RIS, particularly descriptions of ecological character.

>>> Lesotho faces challenges in updating Ramsar Information Sheets (RIS) as required by the Ramsar Convention due to limited capacity, administrative constraints and resources.

#### Target 7

Sites that are at risk of change of ecological character have threats addressed {2.6.}. [Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 3, 4 and 10] 7.1 Are mechanisms in place for the Administrative Authority to be informed of negative human-induced changes or likely changes in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites, pursuant to Article 3.2?  $\{7.1\}$   $\square$  A=Yes

#### 7.1 Additional information

If "Yes", please provide the source links or upload the source documents here describing the mechanisms established >>> In Lesotho, mechanisms are in place to inform the Administrative Authority about potential or actual changes to the ecological character of Ramsar Sites, in accordance with Article 3.2 of the Ramsar Convention. This is particularly crucial for responding to human-induced changes or negative developments such as pollution or technological interventions. These measures typically involve the establishment of monitoring systems for ecological character, which allow for early detection of any changes

7.2 Have all cases of negative human-induced change or likely change in the ecological character of Ramsar Sites been reported to the Ramsar Secretariat, pursuant to Article 3.2?  $\{7.2\}$   $\square$  B=No

#### 7.2 Additional information

If "Yes" or "Some cases", please indicate for which Ramsar Sites the Administrative Authority has **not** made Article 3.2 reports to the Secretariat >>> No Comment

#### Section 3 - Goal 3. Wisely Using All Wetlands

In responding to each of these questions, Contracting Parties are encouraged to provide links, references/ upload documents where applicable and relevant. [Reference to Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 5, 6, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15]

#### **Target 8**

National wetland inventories have been either initiated, completed or updated and disseminated and used for promoting the conservation and effective management of all wetlands [Reference to Global Biodiversity Framework Targets 1, 2, 3, 4, 6 and 21]

8.1 Does your country have a National Wetland Inventory (NWI)? {8.1}  $\square$  C=In Progress

#### 8.1 Additional information

For example, if "in progress" or "planned", by when will it be completed? >>> The Departments of Water Affairs and Range Resources Management are currently conducting a national wetland inventory, and this activity has started with the wetlands found within the LHWP catchments. If things go well, this activity will be completed in 2026/2027 financial year

8.2 If your country has an NWI, has it been updated in the last decade [2014-2024]? {8.2}  $\square$  C=In Progress