COALITION POLITICS IN LESOTHO

A Multi-disciplinary
Study of Coalitions and
their Implications for
Governance

Editors

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FOREWORD

Transformation Resource Centre (TRC) relentlessly demands social accountability by defending human rights and increasing accountability for good governance. It has earned itself new public confidence as part of national institutions supporting democracy. The responsibilities bestowed on these institutions are challenging as they are always intertwined with high public expectations to provide immediate relief and longer-term change to societal sufferings resulting from poor governance.

To meet this expectation, the Centre usually asks eminent scholars in the areas of social sciences and legal studies to investigate the impact of poor policy development and help strengthen social accountability. The TRC is proud that at the epicentre of efforts in conducting research to raise questions on policy decisions, it has oftentimes been Professors Hooilo 'Nyane and Motlamelle Kapa from the University of Limpopo and the National University of Lesotho, respectively. They consistently produce works of great scholarship to inform public discourse. This book is no exception.

Ever since the inception of coalition politics, we have witnessed political instability, a security crisis and collapse of three coalition governments in a period of less than seven years. With the advent of coalition governments and their concomitant dramatic and catastrophic conflicts that were likely to destroy the economy and social fabric among the citizens, we need to understand the underlying factors that perpetuate this crisis. Although this epoch (between 2012-2021) can serve as a contemporary reference point for political and economic tragedies, it gave us great lessons that must be analysed and synthesised comprehensively in the form of a book-length study dedicated to this important era in the history of the country.

This book is a collection of research contributions made by the intelligentsia and civil society organisations (CSOs) practitioners. It epitomises the best relationships the Centre has enjoyed with various sectors of society. The book is a watershed initiative in the history of partnership between academia and CSOs in their commitment and give analysis to share comparative perspectives on political dynamics in the administration of coalition governments in Lesotho.

In the series of chapters of this book, the authors have successfully managed to address thorny legal questions of coalition governments' agreements and constitutional controversies circumscribing a prime minister in the coalition government arrangement. The areas of interest that have been well traversed by scholars further involve challenges around the separation of powers between the judiciary and executive branch of government that have

been underscored as consequences of absolutism doctrine now understood in the current constitution. Some of the critical issues that have been addressed in the book are questions related to the independence of the Attorney General, elections, and electoral systems, as well as ramifications of conflicts and/or disagreements among members of coalition governments on economic development and social cohesion.

At the heart of the debate is a collapsed state or, rather, a state in crisis. Corruption in various forms such as rent-seeking, patronage and nepotism have become so corrosive. Hence, the authors suggest measures to be undertaken to activate a turnaround strategy. Structural formulae and affirmative action initiatives are also recommended in the book, suggesting constitutional changes to counteract the security crisis and gender discrimination phenomenon.

Moreover, to influence changes in legal frameworks, authors in their critique have warned National Reforms Authority (NRA) to avoid political elitism in the national reforms process and recommend introducing a gender quota system for parliamentary and ministerial posts and constituency seats in the drafting process of legal reforms.

The Centre wishes to pay homage in a special way to Dr Moletsane Monyake, who had passed on after he succumbed to Covid-19 before this publication could come into completion. He will be remembered for his contribution where he challenges the legitimacy of governments chosen by a small population of the citizenry as it has been experienced with the recent trend of declining voter turnout in Lesotho, showing disturbing levels of voter apathy in the country. His ideas on how the problem can be arrested constitute a great legacy that he left despite his younger age.

The Centre is proud to have supported such a comprehensive multi-disciplinary study of coalitions and their implications on governance; surely, it is of immense importance to Lesotho. The national reform process has been guaranteed by the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) together with other development partners who are close friends of this country. The book is an invaluable work of great scholarship that should inform the drafting of a new constitution and other pieces of legislation, which must be passed by parliament.

A particular word of thanks must be expressed to the Protestant Agency for Diakonie and Development for Bread for the World, the main funding partner of TRC, for its continuing commitment and partnership in our efforts to promote human rights, access to justice and social justice, by strengthening social accountability in Lesotho.

It will be remiss of me if I fail to extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Open Society Initiative for Southern Africa, European Union Delegation to Lesotho, United States of America Embassy (Maseru) & Canadian High Commission (Pretoria) as well as Sisters of Holy Names of Jesus and Mary for the support they have demonstrated to the Centre until today.

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