

**REMARKS BY HONOURABLE MINISTER IN
THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER**

DR MOTLOHELOA PHOOKO

**AT THE FAREWELL CEREMONY OF NAC CHIEF
EXECUTIVE AND BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

HELD AT MASERU SUN CABANAS ON FRIDAY

13 MARCH 2009

**HIS MAJESTY, KING LETSIE III
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE PRIME MINISTER
HONOURABLE MINISTERS
YOUR EXCELLENCIES, HEADS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS
AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS TO LESOTHO
DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED
NATIONS AND OTHER COOPERATING PARTNERS
SENIOR PUBLIC SERVANTS, PRIVATE SECTOR AND CIVIL
SOCIETY SECTOR OFFICIALS HERE PRESENT
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN!!**

It is an honour and privilege that I stand before you today, yet with mixed feelings, to bid farewell to the Chief Executive of the National AIDS Commission Mr. Keketso Sefeane and to the Board of Commissioners – Dr. ‘Molotsi Monyamane, Ms Mapitso Mofammere, Rev. Joseph Thamae and Mofumahali Seitebatso Seeiso. Saying goodbye is an emotional experience, regardless of the occasion. It makes one really wonder why the word “good” was included in one word “goodbye”. Perhaps it is because parting is indeed sweet and sour.

Today is the one such time because we all knew right from day one that this time will come when we will be parting our ways and fortunately we even knew the actual dates all along. Yet it is a fact that over this period we get to know each other and shared our lives and experiences enriching each other all to our level best to achieve our common goals. Yet when that moment comes there is sourness or sorrow and we wish we could go on and ship one time backwards. However today we are gathered here to bid farewell to outgoing Chief Executive – Mr. Keketso Sefeane and our four Board of Commissioners.

We want to take this opportunity to thank you for your pioneering efforts which started this organisation in 2005 and [xxxxxxxxxx](#) it to where is today an established and well known vehicle with which Lesotho is armed to fight this epidemic and scourge. An organisation which is known in all the four corners of this country and the world at large. I am sure I speak on behalf of one organisation, one government and people of Lesotho when I say thank you and wish all of you the best and success in your future endeavours which we hope shall be in areas that will directly benefit the war against HIV/AIDS – a war we are clearly far from vanquishing.

DIRECTOR OF CEREMONIES

The Government of Lesotho is more than grateful for the contribution of each member of the Board and the Chief Executive, under whose direction this country has reached milestones in the fight against HIV and AIDS. Ideally I would have liked to list individual attributes of each one of you, which have contributed to the success that NAC has realised in its coordination efforts; but it would take me the whole night to do so. Let it suffice then to say that the commitment, diligence, passion, energy, expertise, and leadership skills you have shown have borne great fruit and are appreciated.

There are just so many landmarks that were reached under your leadership amid the tremendous challenges you faced, that one does not know where to begin or which ones to mention or not mention. You know them; we know them as well. To mention just a few though one may highlight the four national documents which guide our national response:- The National HIV and AIDS policy, the National HIV and AIDS Strategic plan, The National Coordination Framework and the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan. We have achieved the 'Three Ones Principle'.

Coordination has not been easy though because it needs support and cooperation of all stakeholders from our cooperation development partners, government ministries and departments, communities at national and district down to village level. Funds are being disbursed to implementing partners and new evidence is surfacing through research and studies being conducted that there is a meaningful slow down in the incidence of new infections. Overall, there is meaningful involvement of all those who have a stake in HIV and AIDS even though one impact is not as discernible as we would like to see it.

Hopefully the partnerships you have forged with development partners, international organisations, civil society organisations, faith based organisations, traditional doctors, the private sector and the public sector as well as the general public will not dissolve with your departure.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

This is not a day for long speeches. Allow me to say to Ntate Sefeane, when you are old and all you have left is pictures from the days when you were younger, you want to be able to look back and be able to say, "I did something good for my country in my life while

at NAC". Let me assure you that you have, and will be able to say so. Your legacy will live in NAC and in everyone whom you came across and we pay tribute to you and to the Board of Commissioners with whom you handled one mantle that guided you. Do send our deep sense of gratitude to your family especially your spouse for all the time you sacrificed away from them to selflessly drive the goals of the NAC.

It is very sad to be saying goodbye to all of you today, but at the same time we know that you leave us in good shape since we have learned a lot from you. We have been blessed to have people like you take part in the fight against HIV and AIDS in this country, which has one of the highest prevalence rates worldwide. Indeed, the struggle needed people like you, people who know what they are doing; people who have high standards, people who are always on top of things and above all people who always bear a smile no matter how difficult the situation was. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours and trust that you will continue to support all national efforts to rid Lesotho.

Farewell to you all!

Thank you.

Khotso!!!

Pula!!!

Nala!!!