



Parliament of the kingdom of lesotho
National Assembly
P.O.Box 190, Maseru 100
Office of Hon. Machesetsa Mofomobe



29/09/2025

His Excellency Thomas Hines
Ambassador of the United States of America
U.S. Embassy Maseru
P.O. Box 333
Maseru, Lesotho

Your Excellency,

RE: GOVERNANCE CONCERNS AND LESOTHO'S AGOA ELIGIBILITY

I write to you in my capacity as Leader of the Basotho National Party (BNP) and as a Member of Parliament, with the utmost respect, and in the spirit of the longstanding partnership between the United States and the Kingdom of Lesotho.

My purpose is to bring to your attention concerns that I believe are critical and crucial to Lesotho's continued eligibility under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA).

AGOA has played a vital role in supporting economic growth and job creation in Lesotho, particularly in the textile and apparel sectors, directly benefiting tens of thousands of Basotho families.

Continued access to AGOA is contingent not only on trade performance but also on compliance with internationally recognized standards of governance, human rights, and transparency.

AGOA Eligibility Principles:

The key standards for AGOA renewal include:

1. **Democratic Governance and Political Pluralism:** Respect for democracy, multiparty political systems, transparent governance, and constitutional order.
2. **Protection of Human Rights:** Observance of internationally recognized human rights, including freedom of speech, press, assembly, and religion.

3. Elimination of Barriers to U.S. Trade and Investment: Ensuring fair and nondiscriminatory treatment of U.S. businesses.

4. Combating Corruption: Demonstrated progress in preventing, investigating, and addressing bribery, misuse of public funds, and other forms of corruption.

Concerns Regarding Current Governance Practices:

Suppression of Peaceful Expression and Demonstrations: The government has unilaterally restricted citizens' right to peaceful assembly, limiting public participation in democratic processes.

Arrest and Harassment of Journalists: Of particular concern is the recent harassment and detention of a Lesotho Times journalist. Such actions compromise press freedom and inhibit the public's access to information both fundamental rights under AGOA's human rights criteria.

Corruption and Conflicts of Interest: Reports indicate that some ministers engage in business dealings with ministries they oversee, creating a perception of impunity and undermining public trust in governance.

Undermining the Rule of Law: The unlawful suspension of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), despite a Constitutional Court ruling against it, and the ongoing restriction of her access to office, highlight challenges to judicial independence and respect for legal processes.

These developments, if left unaddressed, could undermine Lesotho's eligibility under AGOA. The Basotho National Party respectfully emphasizes that the stakes are high: loss of AGOA benefits would impact employment, foreign investment, and the economic welfare of ordinary Basotho citizens.

Call for Engagement:

In light of the above, we respectfully request that the United States Government, through your esteemed office, engage with the Government of Lesotho on these matters. Constructive dialogue could help ensure that Lesotho meets AGOA standards, reinforces democratic governance, protects human rights, and preserves economic stability for our citizens.

We reiterate that our concerns are motivated by the welfare of the Basotho people and the integrity of national institutions, rather than partisan considerations. We remain committed to working with all partners, including the United States, to ensure Lesotho continues to thrive as a stable, democratic, and economically resilient nation.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mofomobe', written over a horizontal line.

Machesetsa Mofomobe (MP)

Leader of the Basotho National Party (BNP)