

## SPEECH OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL COMMISSION AT THE LAUNCH OF RESULTS CENTRE AT 'MANTHABISENG CONVENTION CENTRE

In the world of democratic elections, there are laws and regulations emanating from international and regional standards and principles which in the eyes of democracy call for periodic elections (a signpost of democracy), which is about 4 to 5 years in different countries. This applies to all types of elections; presidential, national assembly, Local government and referendum elections which in our case they are three. Lesotho has held National Assembly elections in 2022, and has now held Local Government election which was held on the 29th of September 2023 after one-year extension; it was supposed to be held in October 2022 but legally extended to 2023 by the parliament of Lesotho with the advice of the Attorney General. The first local government election was held in 2005, the second in 2011, the third was held in 2017 and the 2023 is the fourth.

Ladies and gentlemen

It is my utmost pleasure, to express the Independent Electoral Commission's vote of thanks to all Basotho citizens who participated in this election that we will be announcing its results today. In democracy participation is very key, it is the hall mark of elections as it is to any development. The Commission is proud to announce the following achievements as its outstanding milestones in the preparation of the recent Local Government election. For voter registration, the Commission bought 105 gadgets for registration of new applicants. On polling day, the voters register had a total population of 1 388 053 which are (770 178) males and (617 875) females. Notably in line with the Local Government Elections Act the following stakeholders were engaged political parties, civil society organisations, media houses together with MISA Lesotho representatives, regular radio stations callers, candidates, chiefs and security agencies. Massive voter education campaigns were conducted through use of temporary voter educators, 16 radio stations, 3 newspapers, 6 NGOs, employed various platforms of social media (Facebook, WhatsApp Call Centre number to its Facebook page, Instagram, and revamped its website by posting a series of voter information and educational materials, used TV and radio infomercials) to strengthen its efforts of voter information. About 300,000 voters have been reached with information.

In this year's local government elections 44 political parties participated while 7 opted not to take part. There are currently 51 political parties registered with the Commission. There were 2 110 independent candidates that participated in this election, the youngest participant being a 21 year old man. It is of paramount importance to note that the Commission has implemented its obligation of facilitating advance voting for the first time in the Local Government elections ever since introduction of this kind of election. At this juncture, the Commission wishes to remind Basotho that Local Government elections' model is First Past the Post and Special Seats for women and Lesotho is demarcated into local councils (76) and divided into Electoral Divisions (950); it uses two ballot papers (candidate and party ballots). Allocation of seats is done at council level by the Returning Officers not at results centre as is the case with national assembly elections. The Commission will only verify and announce what Returning Officers have done.

Honourable leaders, Ladies and Gentlemen, allow me at this point to invite you to this special official election results announcement that comprise winners from Electoral Divisions and seats of parties from councils as announced by Returning Officers. The Commission is therefore very pleased to give and publicise to you the overall election results from 950 EDs noting that fresh elections will be held in 5 EDs at a later date and 76 Councils conveying the winners only. We are truly proud of all election participants; IEC staff who made this election a reality, electoral contestants from political parties and independent candidates as well as voters who are primary participants. You are now welcome to celebrate your victory as the Commission gives convey good news (your achievements) to you.

Today marks a very great day to all of us. With this I now declare the results centre and announcement of results launched.



Khotso! Pula! Nala!

