



# **FORMAL STATEMENT OF THE PERSONS WITH DISABILITY ADVISORY COUNCIL (PWDAC)**

Analysis of the 2026/2027 Budget Estimates Speech  
Kingdom of Lesotho

## **1. Introduction**

The Persons with Disability Advisory Council (PWDAC) has carefully reviewed the 2026/2027 Budget Estimates Speech. This statement provides an analysis of the extent to which the national budget is inclusive of persons with disabilities and offers recommendations to strengthen disability-responsive budgeting in Lesotho.

## **2. Progress in Legal and Policy Framework**

Lesotho has made commendable progress in strengthening its legal and policy framework for persons with disabilities. Key milestones include the domestication of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), the enactment and implementation of the Persons with Disability Equity Act, the adoption of the National Disability Mainstreaming Plan, and the development of the Inclusive Education Policy aimed at integrating learners with disabilities into the mainstream education system.

These frameworks reflect a shift from a welfare based approach toward a rights-based and developmental model of disability inclusion. They recognise that disability inclusion extends beyond social grants and must encompass education, employment, governance, communication systems, infrastructure, and economic development.

## **3. Disability Grant: Progress with Limitations**

The introduction of the Disability Grant in the 2021/2022 national budget marked a historic milestone in Lesotho's social protection framework. However, to date, the grant is received by approximately 3,000 beneficiaries with disabilities nationwide.

While this represents progress, the coverage remains significantly low relative to the estimated population of persons with disabilities. Many eligible persons are required to wait for several years before enrolment, and the grant appears to operate more as a project-based intervention rather than a guaranteed social protection right.

The Council urges the Honourable Minister of Gender, Youth and Social Development to reform the implementation framework of the disability grant. The grant should be administered similarly to the Old Age Pension (Elderly Grant): treated as a right-based entitlement, paid monthly and consistently, accessible with fewer restrictive conditions, and progressively expanded to cover all eligible persons with disabilities.

#### **4. Lack of Dedicated Funding for Policy Implementation**

Despite progressive laws and policies, the 2026/2027 Budget Estimates Speech does not clearly provide ring-fenced allocations for the effective implementation of the National Disability Mainstreaming Plan, the Inclusive Education Policy, or enforcement mechanisms under the Persons with Disability Equity Act.

Without targeted financial commitments, these frameworks risk remaining aspirational rather than transformative, leading to continued exclusion.

#### **5. Disability as a Cross-Cutting Development Issue**

Disability is a cross-cutting development issue affecting employment, communication systems, and physical infrastructure. Barriers persist in accessible recruitment systems, reasonable accommodation in workplaces, sign language interpretation, accessible information formats, digital accessibility, and universal design compliance in public infrastructure.

Disability inclusion cannot be confined to the Ministry of Gender, Youth and Social Development alone. All ministries including Education, Health, Public Works, Communications, Labour, and Finance have a role to play in advancing inclusion. A whole-of-government approach is essential.

#### **6. Need for Disability-Specific Indicators and Monitoring Mechanisms**

The Budget Estimates Speech does not provide disability-disaggregated indicators, measurable inclusion targets, or structured monitoring mechanisms.

The Government is encouraged to develop disability-specific indicators across all sectors, set measurable annual targets, introduce disability budget tagging within the Ministry of Finance, and appoint and adequately resource disability focal points in all ministries to track implementation.

#### **7. Conclusion**

Lesotho has established a strong legal and policy foundation for disability inclusion. However, limited grant coverage, project-based implementation, absence of ring-fenced funding, and lack of measurable indicators undermine the transformative potential of these reforms.

The 2027/2028 fiscal cycle presents an opportunity to expand and reform the disability grant as a rights-based entitlement, allocate dedicated resources for implementation of existing policies, develop measurable disability-specific indicators, and institutionalise cross-sector accountability.

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Persons with Disability Advisory Council (PWDAC)

Kingdom of Lesotho