



LESOTHO



INTRODUCTION

Basutoland became Lesotho on independence from the United Kingdom in 1966. Constitutional government was restored in 1993 after seven years of military rule. Constitutional reforms in the late 1990s restored relative political stability.

GOVERNMENT

Chief of State

King LETSIE III

Head of Government

Prime Minister Moeketsi MAJORO

Government Type

parliamentary constitutional monarchy

Capital

Maseru

Legislature

bicameral Parliament consists of the Senate (33 seats) and the National Assembly (120 seats)

GEOGRAPHY

Area

Total: 30,355 sq km
Land: 30,355 sq km
Water: 0 sq km

Climate

temperate; cool to cold, dry winters; hot, wet summers

Natural Resources

water, agricultural and grazing land, diamonds, sand, clay, building stone

ECONOMY

Economic Overview

lower middle-income economy surrounded by South Africa; environmentally fragile and politically unstable; key infrastructure and renewable energy investments; dire poverty; urban job and income losses due to COVID-19; systemic corruption

GDP (Purchasing Power Parity) \$4.88 billion (2020 est.)

GDP per capita (Purchasing Power Parity) \$2,300 (2020 est.)

Industries - food, beverages, textiles, apparel assembly, handicrafts, construction, tourism

Agricultural products - milk, potatoes, maize, vegetables, fruit, beef, game meat, mutton, beans, wool

Exports \$900 million (2020 est.)

diamonds, clothing, apparel, low-voltage protection equipment, wheat products, footwear (2019)

partners: US 29%, Belgium 26%, South Africa 25%, Switzerland 6% (2019)

Imports \$1.96 billion (2020 est.)

refined petroleum, clothing, apparel, packaged medicines, delivery trucks, poultry meats (2019)

partners: South Africa 85%, China 5% (2019)

PEOPLE & SOCIETY

Population

2.2 million (July 2021 est.)

Population Growth

0.73% (2021 est.)

Ethnicity

Sotho 99.7%, Europeans, Asians, other 0.3%

Language

Sesotho (official) (southern Sotho), English (official), Zulu, Xhosa

Religion

Protestant 47.8% (Pentecostal 23.1%, Lesotho Evangelical 17.3%, Anglican 7.4%), Roman Catholic 39.3%, other Christian 9.1%, non-Christian 1.4%, none 2.3% (2014 est.)

Urbanization

urban population: 29.5% of total population (2021)
rate of urbanization: 2.77% annual rate of change (2020-25 est.)

Literacy

79.4% (2015)

