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)