



UN Technology Bank and The Network of African Science Academies teamed up to support the launch of the Lesotho Academy of Science and Technology

Press release

15 March 2021, Maseru/Gebze – UN Technology Bank and The Network of African Science Academies teamed up to support the launch of **the Lesotho Academy of Science and Technology (LAST)**, which will play a critical role in advising on science, technology and innovation (STI) policy development and implementation to address socio-economic challenges and promote development in Lesotho. The LAST is an independent platform for contact and knowledge transfer among the private sector, public sector, civil society, academics, and government in the fields of science, technology, and innovation.

Since the end of 2018, UN Technology Bank has directly implemented projects and activities in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) including establishing and supporting existing academies of sciences. Academies of science promote the advancement of science and technology and provide governments with science-based policy advice.

The **Lesotho Academy of Science and Technology** will serve as the prime advisors of the government of Lesotho and the general public on matters pertaining to science, technology, and innovation. As an independent organization, the LAST will promote science and engineering and strengthen its influence in Lesotho. The major objectives of the Academy include providing linkages between academia and the industry and facilitating technological innovation and excellence in Lesotho.

Rt. Hon. Dr. Moeketsi Majoro, Prime Minister of Lesotho highlighted that “This science academy is going to adjudicate over disputes amongst the academia, in particular our local Scientists. As government, we pledge to support this academy in its cry for autonomy, how it elects its members and how it is led.”

The Academies of Science are also important sources of current and emerging leaders in science and advocates for STI, which can help connect their respective governments with research communities and reward outstanding contributors to STI.

“The key objective of the Technology Bank under this programme is to support Lesotho’s national technological efforts and support the reinforcement of partnerships across sectors and help Lesotho identify, access, adapt and deploy appropriate technologies to transform its economy and improve the livelihoods of Basotho,” said **Joshua Setipa**, Managing Director of the UN Technology Bank.

“Through the Lesotho Academy, NASAC hopes to build confidence in the lives and inspirations of the eminent scientists, who have taken the path least followed – to pursue youth towards careers in science,” emphasized Prof. **Norbert Hounkonnou**, President of Network of African Academies.

The LAST should affiliate with regional and continental academies of sciences as a reservoir of advice, strategic leadership, and expertise. African academies play an important role in supporting SDGs and Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy for Africa 2024 (STISA-2024). In the first quarter of 2021, UN Technology Bank will support launching academies in Malawi, DRC, and Chad, followed by Liberia, Niger, and Sierra Leone. The sustainability of academies of sciences is of paramount importance to the Technology Bank, and will continue supporting existing academies to enhance their strategic planning, mobilise resources and increase the awareness about academies.

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About the UN Technology Bank

The UN Technology Bank is a new global organisation, dedicated to enhancing the contribution of science, technology and innovation for sustainable development in the world's 46 least developed countries. Least developed countries are low-income countries confronting severe structural impediments to sustainable development. They are highly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks and have low levels of human assets.

The UN Technology Bank supports national and regional technological efforts in least developed countries, reinforcing partnerships across sectors and helping nations identify and use appropriate technologies to transform their economies and improve livelihoods.

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