



UNITED NATIONS NATIONS UNIES

U.N. IN ACTION

Week of 9 February 2004

Programme No. 891

Duration: 3'16"

UNDP ASSISTS LESOTHO IN FIGHTING LAND DEGRADATION

VIDEO

MOUNTAINS (11")

MOUNTAINS/LAND
DEGRADATION (15")

FARMER SHOWING LAND
DEGRADATION (8")

CHIEF HABOFANOE
LEROOTHOLI ON CAMERA (10")

FARMING LAND (16")

AUDIO

NARRATION

The scenic mountains of Lesotho, a magnet for campers and hikers. But a closer look reveals the making of an environmental disaster.

Rugged and rocky, the mountains have no trees or thick vegetation. Their ability to absorb rainwater has been severely reduced. The result is all too clear: the land is literally stripped of its fertile top surface.

Chief Habofanoe Lerotholi owns 14 acres of land. But he's gradually losing them.

HABOFANOE: (Local dialect)

"The problem here, as you see, is land degradation and soil erosion."

NARRATION

Arable land in Lesotho is limited and disappearing fast. Today, it's 9% of the country's land surface, a decline of 25% in the last three decades. As a result, the country can no longer feed itself.

ERRODED LAND (13")

Many farmers are seeing their fields disappear. Or they've simply abandoned them. The only solution is planting trees and building terraces. But it's a never-ending job and one for a younger generation.

FARMER ON-CAMERA (8")

FARMER: (Local dialect)

"I gave this piece of land to the youth group because they have the energy to build terraces, gullies and dongas and till the land."

YOUTH GROUP DIGGING
WATER RESVOIR (12")

The youth group programme started in 1996. It trains mostly unemployed young men and women in environmental management and rehabilitation activities.

YOUTH WORKING IN FIELD
(13")

The programme is supported by the government of Lesotho, the Netherlands and the United Nations Development Programme, UNDP. Joe Feeney is UNDP's Policy Team Leader in Lesotho.

JOE FEENEY ON-CAMERA
(12")

FEENEY:

"It involves mobilizing young people who are out of work and getting them through training and skills development to take part in the fight against environmental degradation."

YOUTH BUILDING TERRACE
(14")

NARRATION

Terraces protect the soil from being swept away by heavy rainfall. It's hard work. And

terraces need continuous repair.

PLANTING SEEDLINGS (13")

In addition to terraces, planting trees can also slow down erosion and preserve the soil. The youth programme has planted thousands of seedlings in the most affected areas.

YOUTH REPAIRING MOUNTAIN ROAD (17")

Erosion can also devastate the already fragile infrastructure, such as mountain roads. This one links a number of villages. Without constant repair, it's almost impossible for vehicles to travel from one village to another.

PEOPLE (17")

Land degradation is a serious challenge facing this landlocked African kingdom. National and international efforts are needed if the country is to protect its limited arable land and produce enough food for its growing population.

LOGO (20")

This report was prepared by Kamil Taha for the United Nations.

