

## SOCIAL CLUSTER COMMITTEE TO HOLD THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE TABLING OF DISABILITY EQUITY BILL IN PARLIAMENT



**Picture: Members of Parliament posing a photo with LNFO Advocacy Team at Lesotho AVANI**

The Lesotho National Federation of Organisations of the Disabled (LNFO) held a lobbying meeting with the social cluster committee with the aim of sensitizing the members on the situation of people with disabilities in terms of access to justice, social and human rights protection including the need to pass the Disability Equity Bill.

The standing order establishing the social cluster committee empowers the committee to hold the Ministry of Social Development accountable on social issues such as implementation of the social programs and service delivery for the nation including people with disabilities.

The Social cluster has the power to call upon the Minister of Social Development in this context to account on the progress towards the enactment of the Disability Equity Bill.

It is against this background that, LNFO held the lobbying meeting with this committee on the 11 December in which it has been agreed that the Ministry of Social Development will be held accountable to present the Disability Equity Bill as soon as the Parliament reopens.

The Chairperson of the committee, Honourable Moshoeshoe Fako pledged in the presence of the self-representation of persons with disabilities that the government of Lesotho will table the Bill in parliament in collaboration with the Honourable Minister of Social Development as soon as the parliament reopens from Christmas break.

The committee pledged to investigate matters which are holding the presentation of the Bill back from the parliament and ensure its presentation in Parliament.

The Chairperson went on to apologies on behalf of the Parliament for taking so long in addressing the disability related issues including the Disability Equity Bill for so long thereby denying this marginalized group of people their rights.

LNFOOD revealed to the committee that some of the key challenges in the mainstreaming of persons with disabilities are weak coordination of disability services, non-allocation of resources for the effective implementation of National rehabilitation policy 2011, National Disability Mainstreaming Plan 2015, Social Protection strategy 2017 and serious delays in passing of the Disability Equity Bill.

LNFOOD and the committee jointly agree to hold a social dialogue on disability inclusion in February 2018 in which all the stakeholders will be invited to participate with the aim of addressing the root causes facing the meaningful inclusion of people with disabilities in Lesotho.

The committee reiterated its support to working with people with disabilities in the advocacy on the domestication of the UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities through an act of Parliament.