

LESOTHO NATIONAL FEDERATION OF ORGANISATIONS OF THE DISABLED (LNFOD) successfully released the open letter to the Honourable Minister of Social Development on the 10th September 2013 to all our stakeholders, development partners' people with disabilities and the public at large. For more information about the content of this letter, please refer to the Informativenews paper dated 10th September 2013.

The purpose for which the open letter was published is to demonstrate the lack of political will from the Social Development in ensuring that people with disabilities are protected by the disability specific legislation that will directly respond to the needs of people with disabilities. The act should derive its validity from the UN CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (CRPD) to which Lesotho is a signatory.

However, The Ministry of Social Development does not seem to have the intention to provide their service to people with disabilities through the disability specific law as it is international bound to do so. It is evident from the fact that, the term of reference for the engagement of the consultant who is to develop this law has been completed in April. The consultancy funding for this law was also requested from the Ministry of Finance. However, the consultancy funding which is budgeted has not been released to Social Development on reason unknown to the Ministry till to date in September.

Worst of all, the senior government officers who are involved in this issue could not resolve this matter as the Ministry of Social Development is shifting blame on the Ministry of Finance for not releasing the funds.

As a result, LNFOD was compelled to share this prevailing situation with all people who are interested in disability issues. It is also crucial to state that, LNFOD waited since April till September trying to negotiate with the senior management of Social Development on how the law can be speed up. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Social Development could not take concrete step concerning this matter, until the date when we released the open letter to the public.

The response that was given by one senior Manager of the Ministry was to the effect that, the budget for communication activities has been diverted to the development of disability specific law. This decision has been reached because the Ministry of Finance still has not yet released the funds to them.

Thanks to the Open letter, had it not been released, the situation would still be the same.

Nevertheless, LNFOD is keeping a very close eye on whether the ministry will be able to fulfil its mandate of protecting people with disabilities through the law. LNFOD is ready to take more steps to ensure that the funds will finally be released for the development of that historical unique disability legislation.

By Adv NKHASI SEFUTHI

LNFOD also urges the Honourable Minister of Social Development to address this issue for, it has not yet been resolved, despite the fact that, the process of engaging the consultant is expected to start before the 15 October 2013.