

STATEMENT BY THE KINGDOM OF LESOTHO

Agenda Item: Accelerating the FAO Green Cities Initiative

28th Session of Committee on Forestry - COFO 28

FAO Headquarters, Rome

30 September 2026

Delivered by: Director of Forestry

Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lesotho aligns with the Africa Group statement.

Chair!

Our capital Maseru was designed to carry 200,000 people but Today, it holds more than 517,000 people. Like many cities in developing countries, Maseru is growing fast, and with heavy pressure on land, water, and trees.

The main question of interest under Green Cities Initiative since 2023, have always been: How can, through forestry make cities more liveable, more food secure, and more resilient?

Our answers are built on three pillars:

- 1. Policy coherence and strong governance**
- 2. Innovation and finance**
- 3. Harmonised Forestry – agriculture – environment nexus**

Chair,

Allow me to report some positive results made by Lesotho in the last 4 years:

1. Policy: Maseru City Council adopted first ever Maseru Green City Action Plan 2025-2030 with FAO support which was integrated into urban master plan
2. 340,000 trees planted in Maseru urban and peri-urban - 20% ornamentals along roads; 15% fruit trees, 30% shade and indigenous trees; 35% still in our urban forests and parks. Green cover in Maseru increased from 4.2% to 6.8% in the last 4 years
3. Urban agriculture: 1,200 households now have home gardens linked to urban forestry - 30% increase in vegetable intake.
4. working with communities and other groups of people to ensure that they understand the current and future significance of green cities.

Chair,

the critical challenges facing Lesotho and many other countries in relation to green cities include but not limited to:

the complication of communal tenure which is high in the urban areas where diverse groups of people leave and have different interests? This is the result of high migration where many people are moving to urban and peri urban areas and convert green spaces into Gray infrastructure.

Therefore, Lesotho request:

FAO to support implementation of our green city initiatives under the concept of **'Lesotho's green recovery initiative'** which aims to plan more than 450,000 trees.

2. Calls for GEF, GCF and other development partners to support for green city initiatives in LDCs and mountain countries
3. Proposes establishment of a SADC Regional green city Learning Network to share lessons among Southern African countries.

Finally, Chair, we endorse the recommendations in this document and look forward to strengthened FAO work on green city initiative program.

Khotso! I thank you.