Good Governance Programme

The Good Governance Programme of the GISD is intended to entrench good governance practice within public, private and civil society organisations. From our perspective, *good governance is a <u>process of measuring how institutions (public, private and civil society) conduct their affairs</u> and <u>manage resources and guarantee the realization of human rights</u> in a manner essentially <u>free of abuse and corruption</u> and with due <u>regard for the rule of law.</u>*

Our conception of Good Governance is that it is governance that promotes **participatory, transparent, accountable, inclusive, equitable and resilient societies**. Our theory of good governance is that it should promote effectiveness and efficiency in delivery of services to the larger society. We cherish equality of opportunity among all citizens - women, youth, disadvantaged men, the disabled and those pushed to the margins of society such as rural populations.

We conceive good governance to be a pinnacle for the **rule of law**. We believe in a society where the exercise of power in a manner that is restricted to subordination to well-defined and established laws, We believe that laws that the Parliament of Lesotho makes are intended to develop norms and standards prescribed by law. We believe in leaders, institutions and societies that are accountable and subservient to law. We believe in the development of legal instruments that ensure that no one encroaches into the space of another person through application of law by courts of law as recourse mechanisms, which dispense justice equitably to all citizens through proper interpretation of the law. Rule of law ensures stability and creates a just society, where no-one arrogates unto oneself supremacy over others. Rule of law ensures the respect for the rights and freedoms of others by adjudicating where conflicts of interest arise as well as where the weaker within society are disenfranchised by those who have power - be it in the work place, family as well as in public space. The programme therefore analyses and assesses the degree to which members of society get recourse in the courts of law when they have been stepped on the toes by others. The programme therefore analyses how the legal system works and how the

courts of law dispense law to all citizens. It assesses the degree of accessibility to law by citizens.

Our conception of good governance is premised on the notion of **accountability.** Accountability denotes being subordinate and answerable to some authority by providing feedback and reporting on the conferred mandate to execute. We conceive accountability as a pillar of good governance because it demands that those who have been vested with power and authority as well as responsibility to know there is time to go back and account. The programme therefore assesses and analyses the ability of citizens to demand accountability from those who have been entrusted to deliver services to them. It assesses the extent to which institutions such as the media are able to hold the powers-that-be accountable for their actions on behalf of the citizens. It also assesses how the media builds the capacity of citizens through civic education to demand accountability and hold their leaders accountable.

Our conception of good governance hinges on **strong, autonomous and effective oversight institutions**. Oversight institutions within society hold those who hold public power accountable for their actions. They are checks-and-balances that guard against abuse of power by the executive branch, parliament and the judiciary. Oversight institutions reduce the centralisation of power vested in political, economic, faith-based, civil society and private sector organisations. Oversight institutions entrench ethical and moral conduct and practice within society. They protect the vulnerable against discrimination and abuse by others who feel they have more power and authority over them. Our conception is that good governance will be best achieved when Lesotho has strong and autonomous institutions, which executive their mandates without fear or favour, but within the bounds of their prescribed mandates. The programme therefore analyses and assesses the effectiveness of oversight institutions - boards of directors, national ombudsmen/public protectors, anti-corruption agencies, portfolio committees of parliament, human rights commissions and councils and commissions.

Our theory of good governance is also predicated on the notion of **effective national and sector development policies, which address challenges affecting society.** Government ministries and departments formulate sector policies with the intent to address a challenge that

afflicts society. For example, a gender equality and development policy is intended to address gender disparities among citizens of Lesotho. A social development policy is intended to curb socio-economic hardships and develops possibilities for adequate social security safety nets in the form of grants for the elderly, the disabled and children. The good governance programme therefore analyses and assesses the actual or potential efficacy of national or sector development policies in achieving the objectives for which they were formulated. It also assesses the degree to which citizens participated in the policies.

We are also convinced that good governance is achieved when there is **openness to innovation and change.** Our assessment of the speed and swiftness of change across the world prompts us to ponder whether institutions are able to adapt to change. The current pace if technological and social media advances has a telling on the ability of societies to adapt and adopt change. There is therefore dire need for innovation and creativity. Therefore, the programme analyses and assesses the degree of openness and adaptability to change by institutions. The programme analyses the ability of organisations to embrace the fourth industrial revolution and its counterparts - internet of things to mention just a few. It analyses the ability of governments to embrace and effectively implement e-government initiatives, e-business/e-commerce as well as e-education.

In its endeavour to effectively implement this programme, the GISD collaborates with other like-minded organisations through consultancy and contract development.