

## **MEDIA OVERVIEW**

### **HOW LANTERNS CHANGE LIVES – WHY LESOTHO LOST OUT**

#### **Overview**

In 2018, Frazer Solar signed an agreement with the Prime Minister's Office and the Government of Lesotho to develop a transformational solar energy project with financing from the German government.

The project pledged to deliver up to 40,000 solar water heating systems, 20MW of solar photovoltaic capacity, and 1 million LED lights. With these interventions alone, the Kingdom of Lesotho would have benefitted from more than 4 billion Maloti (over \$280 million USD) over and above the project costs in positive net cash flows. This is a project that would have made the country money over its lifespan.

#### **Changing Lives**

But Frazer Solar's project also offered everyday transformation for ordinary Basotho through the provision of 350,000 solar lanterns for people nationwide. Every single non-electrified household in Lesotho was set to receive a lantern free of charge, benefitting some 1.4 million people, about 60% of Lesotho's population.

This would have meant the complete elimination of candles and paraffin as a light source for all Basotho. In addition, the solar lanterns have an inbuilt phone charger, so phones could also be charged for free. This offered a clear and substantial improvement in the standard of living across the country. Clean free electric lighting would have improved the air quality inside homes as well as enabled families to see at night, bringing with it many other social-economic benefits such as allowing children to study in the evenings and prevent injuries and sickness from paraffin fumes and fires. Candles and paraffin have a detrimental impact on air quality adversely affecting respiratory systems and eyesite, all of which can be permanently avoided by switching to solar lanterns.

The lanterns are very bright, 40 times brighter than paraffin and last up to 100 hours on a single day's charge. With an ultra long-life battery (that can be replaced) the lanterns will provide a long-term benefit for all recipients.

#### **African Leadership**

This initiative would also mean that Lesotho would have been the first country in Africa to achieve the World Bank's Lighting Global target. The World Bank's Lighting Global target states that "600 million people, mostly in Africa, do not have access to electricity and use polluting, expensive and dangerous fuels such as kerosene and batteries for their lighting needs." In one fell swoop, Lesotho would have leapfrogged all other countries in Africa and eliminated kerosene and candles as a source of lighting for the entire country.

Former Prime Minister Thomas Thabane and Former Finance Minister Dr Moeketsi Majoro were both excited by the lantern prospects. Dr Majoro saw for himself the benefits of the lanterns as he was given one by Frazer Solar to use at his home. He reported back to Frazer Solar that his guards were using it in their guardhouse as the existing light was broken and that they loved it. Yet despite this, the project only did not proceed because of him.

The Frazer Solar project offered significant benefits to the energy security of Lesotho via the mainstream solar and energy efficiency products, but also a dramatic improvement to the everyday lives of ordinary Basotho via these lanterns.

### Statement

A spokesperson for FSG said:

“Our hearts broke when we read in recent media reports that villagers had to walk 2km just to charge their phones. If Dr Majoro had only done as instructed by the former Prime Minister and proceeded with our project, every single non-electrified house in Lesotho would now have clean, bright and free light.

Our Solar lanterns would also have improved indoor air quality meaning no more damage to people’s respiratory systems and eyesight. But none of these benefits have been realized.

Solely due to Dr Majoro’s complacency, 1.4 million Basotho have missed out on this life changing and life improving technology. It is a tragedy of immense proportions, and Basotho are paying a heavy price for Dr Majoro’s actions.

We chose to provide some solar lanterns for villagers to use so they could see for themselves if the solar lanterns benefitted them or not. Their testimony speaks for itself. These innocent people are the victims of the decisions their political leaders make.”

ENDS.

### Images



The image shows a yellow Frazer Solar lantern on a metal stand next to a solar panel. The lantern has a yellow globe and a black frame. The solar panel is black with a grid of cells. The background is yellow with the Frazer Solar logo at the top left.

- Up to 100 hours of light from 1 charge
- Brighter than 40 paraffin lamps
- 3 brightness settings
- Inbuilt mobile phone charger (USB link)
- 5-year warranty
- 5-meter charging cable
- 360-degree ambient wide-angle spread
- Metal stand