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IMF sounds alarm on Lesotho's economic woes

... It highlights high unemployment, widespread poverty, and stagnant growth



Staff Reporter

Lesotho's economy faces significant challenges, including high unemployment, widespread poverty, and sluggish growth, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In a statement released this week, the IMF highlighted additional risks such as global economic shocks, extreme weather events, fluctuating commodity prices, and uncertain revenue from the Southern African Customs Union (SACU).

"Against this backdrop, the IMF Directors welcomed Lesotho's commitment to strengthening policy frameworks, supported by the Fund's capacity development as needed," the statement said.

This followed the IMF Executive Board's conclusion of its annual Article IV consultation with Lesotho, a process that involves assessing the country's economic health and

policy measures.

During the consultation, the IMF emphasised the need for fiscal prudence to safeguard Lesotho's foreign exchange reserves, sustain the currency peg to the South African Rand, and preserve debt sustainability.

"Containing the public wage bill, improving spending efficiency, and prioritising social programs for the most vulnerable remain critical," the IMF stressed.

The IMF also advised Lesotho to leverage its increased water royalties by establishing a well-governed savings framework, anchored by a credible fiscal rule, to build financial buffers and support long-term development goals.

In addition, the IMF called for strengthened public financial management (PFM). This includes the passage of PFM-related legislation, better budget processes, and improved internal controls and financial reporting.

The Directors highlighted the importance of enhancing public investment efficiency through a prioritized capital project pipeline and improved project management capacity.

Monetary policy, the IMF advised, should focus on maintaining price stability and safeguarding the currency peg. While inflation has slowed, the IMF urged authorities to monitor price trends closely and remain ready to adjust monetary policy if inflationary pressures resurface.

On financial sector stability, the IMF noted that while Lesotho's financial sector remains stable, continued monitoring of risks, particularly from the nonbank financial sector, is necessary.

The Directors recommended updating the national financial inclusion strategy to improve financial intermediation and support private sector growth.

The IMF further encouraged structural reforms aimed at catalysing inclusive, job-rich growth by improving the business environment, strengthening governance, and reducing corruption risks.

"We applaud the authorities' commitment to improving data quality and timeliness to support informed policymaking," the statement added.

Lesotho's economic growth picked up modestly to 2.2 percent for the 12 months ending in March 2024, up from 1.6 percent the previous year. This was largely driven by accelerated construction under the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP).

However, the IMF noted that unemployment remains high, and exports from the diamond and textile sectors have been sluggish. Additionally, the country faces food-security concerns following an exceptionally dry sea-

son.

Inflation rose to 6.5 percent in June 2024, up from 4.5 percent a year earlier, although it has eased from a peak of 8.2 percent in January 2024. The IMF attributed the increase to external factors that are expected to fade over time.

The fiscal situation has improved, with Lesotho posting a fiscal surplus of 6.1 percent of GDP for the fiscal year ending March 2024. Higher-than-expected SACU transfers (10.4 percent of GDP) were used to reduce arrears and rebuild central bank deposits, rather than increasing the public wage bill as had been done in the past.

The Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) maintained its policy rate at 7.75 percent, in line with South Africa's rates, to support the Loti's peg to the Rand. Private sector credit growth increased to 12.5 percent in FY2023/24, driven largely by construction, while nonperforming loans decreased to 3.8 percent of total loans by the fourth quarter of 2023.

Looking ahead, the IMF projects economic growth to peak at 2.7 percent in FY2024/25, with inflation expected to ease gradually. Another year of elevated SACU transfers will bolster fiscal and external balances, but these transfers are expected to decrease significantly starting in FY2025/26.

The IMF noted that higher water royalties will help offset the shortfall, and the fiscal balance is projected to remain in surplus over the medium term.

"The authorities are encouraged to continue their prudent fiscal approach, ensuring that additional revenues are saved wisely and spent strategically, while pushing forward with reforms to support private sector-led growth," the IMF said.

'Uninspired' high school sponsees worry authorities

Ntsoaki Motaung

The Ministry of Education has expressed concern that many secondary and high school learners benefiting from government education grants seem indifferent to their educational duties.

Since the government covers the cost, these students and their families do not value the opportunity to stay in school.

Letibe District Education Inspector, Setenane Phakoana reported that many students who receive funding often show little interest in their studies, perform poorly, and ultimately drop out.

"While the government's initiative to keep these children in school is commendable, it is disheartening to see some individuals fail to appreciate this effort. Some parents even indirectly discourage their children from pursuing their education," Phakoana said.

He emphasised that parents must motivate their children to attend school.

Phakoana's comments emerged during a



Principal Rantuba High School 'Maletsatsi Marumo.

media tour in Letibe District, where the Ministry of Gender, Youth, and Social Development (MGYSD) reviewed the administration of grants under the Basic Education Strengthening Program (BESP).

Funded by the World Bank and led by the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), BESP aims to ensure that all children under



Stephen Ramollo

18 stay in school, aligning with Sustainable Development Goal 4, which focuses on universal access to quality education.

As part of the program, students in grades 8 and 9 who already receive government grants through the Child Grants Programme (GCP) are given a one-time uniform supplement of M1500 to encourage them to remain

in school. The second phase of this initiative also extends uniform support to learners receiving government aid for school fees.

Phakoana urged parents, especially those from impoverished backgrounds, to embrace the government's efforts as an opportunity to improve their children's future through education.

Principal 'Maletsatsi Marumo of Rantuba High School echoed these concerns. She noted that, among the 55 students at her school who receive government assistance, only a few are genuinely committed to their education.

"Many recipients of government grants seem indifferent to their schooling, as if they do not care because the funding does not come from their own families," Marumo told this publication during the ministry's recent visit to her school.

Marumo acknowledged the government's efforts to make education accessible to all children, regardless of their family background, and expressed gratitude to the ministry for their support.

The uniform funds are part of BESP's first component, which also includes forming and expanding youth and Math and Science clubs. The project, set to conclude in 2025, initially targeted around 9,000 learners but may be extended.

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Powering down to power up

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project tunnel system and 'Muela Hydropower Station will be shut down from **OCTOBER 2024, TO MARCH 2025** for essential maintenance operations. During this time, water transfer in the tunnels will stop, and the station will not generate electricity.

Lesotho faces drought risk



Lehlohonolo Motsoari

Lesotho is bracing for yet another season of unpredictable weather as forecasts predict below-normal rainfall and above-average temperatures for large parts of the country from October 2024 to March 2025.

According to a press statement by the Lesotho Meteorological Services (LMS) on Wednesday, reviewing the October 2023 to June 2024 season, the previous period was marked by inconsistent rainfall patterns and extreme weather, with severe implications for the environment, agriculture, and rural communities.

The 2023/2024 rainy season began in mid-October, with October to December bringing mostly normal to above-normal rainfall.

However, a significant drop in rainfall was recorded during the main rainfall period from December to February, a critical time for agriculture.

“High temperatures were observed during the first week of October and towards the end of November,” Minister of Environment and Forestry, Letsema Adontši the statement noted.

The situation worsened from January to March 2024, with “relatively dry conditions” and scorching heat, particularly in February and March.

Looking ahead, the weather outlook for the upcoming months paints a bleak picture.

The majority of the country is expected to experience below-normal rainfall from October to December 2024, with only the southwestern and extreme northern regions forecast to receive normal to above-normal rainfall during this period.

Despite the poor start to the rainy season, predictions for November 2024 to January 2025 indicate “above normal rainfall conditions” across much of the country.

However, the overall trend points

to fluctuating weather patterns, with certain regions facing drought risks while others may see excessive rainfall. December 2024 to February 2025 is expected to bring “a wetter likelihood of above normal rains,” while January to March 2025 will see mostly normal to above-normal rainfall, except for the eastern parts, which are predicted to receive below-normal rainfall.

As temperatures continue to rise, the country is also bracing for the onset of flash floods, thunderstorms, hailstorms, and strong winds, which are common during the summer season.

“It is important to note that during the summer season, flash floods, thunderstorms, hailstorms, and strong winds are dominant and may lead to damage to property and crops,” Adontši warned.

The delayed start of the rainy season, anticipated from the second week of November 2024, adds to the growing concerns for the country’s rangelands and agricultural output.

The prolonged dry conditions have already led to increased incidents of wildfires, which have devastated communities.

“We have encountered direct impacts of wildfires to different community members this year, including the burning of livestock, people, houses, crop fields, electricity poles, and at least one car,” Adontši revealed.

He also highlighted the detrimental environmental effects of “unprescribed burning” during these dry periods, which exacerbates soil erosion and wetland degradation, reducing water availability in streams, wells, and dams.

It also contributes to climate change by releasing stored carbon into the atmosphere. “Rangelands face a major concern of unprescribed burning,” he warned, calling for immediate action to prevent further damage.

“I, therefore, make an urgent plea to those burning the rangelands to stop immediately,” the minister concluded, underscoring the severity of the crisis as Lesotho faces another challenging weather season.

Funeral parlour moves to counter “scheming” competitors

Seabata Mahao

Lesotho Funeral Services (LFS) has embarked on a customer data validation exercise in a bid to combat an emerging scam from rival funeral parlours.

Addressing journalists this week, LFS said the move, which began in August this year, was intended to help maintain accurate and up-to-date customer records, to enable the automation of support processes to improve customer service.

To facilitate the validation process, LFS’s General Manager of Marketing and Sales, Moeketsi Pakisi urged all LFS clients to verify their personal information by visiting the nearest LFS branch or using the company’s WhatsApp line before the end of October.

“We urge customers to visit the nearest LFS branches with their National Identity Document (ID) in case a client is the main member, Identity Documents of their dependents, Birth Certificates of minors where dependents are children below 18 years, policy number, and cellphone number,” Pakisi said.

“LFS has improved its communications channels to reach out to its clients who are living in remote areas. Such clients can just send these documents to our new WhatsApp number, 62100012. The closing date for the required information is October 31, 2024” he added.

In addition to the data validation process, LFS unveiled a new toll-free number (80080012) as part of its renewed commitment to enhancing customer service. This initiative aims to make it easier and more affordable for clients to communicate with the company.

Pakisi explained that some of their customers have been victims of a scam where agents from other funeral parlours falsely claim to represent LFS. He said the agents mislead LFS customers into paying their monthly burial policy premiums to rival business accounts, lying that their LFS burial policies would remain active.

“What is alarming is that these agents tell clients that even though LFS does not receive their premiums, their policies will still be active,” Pakisi explained.

“We urge those responsible to cease this fraudulent activity, and we encourage affected clients to report such cases to the relevant authorities.”

Pakisi further debunked claims that LFS has entered into partnerships with other funeral parlours. He emphasised that these falsehoods were intended to mislead customers into paying their burial premiums to other businesses, under the assumption that LFS would still provide mortuary services.

“These practices are deceptive and harmful to our clients, as LFS cannot provide burial services to clients with lapsed policies due to non-payment.”

He pointed out that reports of fraudulent activities have surfaced in areas such as Mphorosane and Ha-Lejone, where burial societies with close ties to LFS have been targeted.

Pakisi stressed that the company operates 27 mortuaries nationwide and has no need to collaborate with businesses lacking such infrastructure.

Founded in 1969 by the late Louis Joe Sello, LFS is Lesotho’s first funeral parlour and a trailblazer in the industry. Over the past 55 years, the company has grown from a traditional family business into a prominent corporate player in the funeral industry.

Today, it operates in all 10 districts, with 55 branches and 27 mortuaries.

Female cop recounts vicious attack by motorist

Relebohile Makhetha

Woman Police Constable (P/C) Selatile testified this week before the Maseru Magistrate Court, recounting a violent attack she allegedly endured from a motorist, Molikuo Phohleli (35), while she was on duty.

The incident, which took place in May during rush hour traffic, involved Phohleli, a 4+1 cab driver from Thaba-Bosiu. Selatile claims that Phohleli assaulted her, causing injuries that led to her losing consciousness.

According to Selatile, Phohleli punched her in the face, kicked her repeatedly, and pushed her towards oncoming traffic. At one point, she alleged that Phohleli grabbed her by her police traffic reflector jacket and slammed her against a vehicle, resulting in her pass-

ing out.

“He punched me in the face with his fists and kicked me, causing me to fall. He then grabbed me by my jacket and threw me against a vehicle. After that, I don’t know what happened,” Selatile told the court.

She later woke up in the hospital with bruises on her face, a wound above her right eye, and excruciating pain throughout her body. She was discharged the same day to recover at home.

The attack reportedly began after Selatile stopped Phohleli and requested his driving documents, as he was using a prohibited route. Upon receiving the documents and finding that they are in order, she then questioned him about the traffic violation.

When she tried to speak to a passenger in the vehicle, Phohleli allegedly in-

terrupted, instructing the passenger not to cooperate and demanding the return of his documents.

When Selatile refused, Phohleli allegedly grabbed the documents, resulting in the tearing of the certificate of fitness in the process, before assaulting her.

During cross-examination, Advocate Motebo, representing Phohleli, argued that Selatile’s testimony omitted key details.

He suggested that after the certificate of fitness was torn, Selatile spoke to Phohleli in a disrespectful manner, which provoked him. Selatile denied this claim.

Motebo also pointed out discrepancies between her oral testimony and her written statement, where she stated she was unsure if she had been thrown against a truck or a wall.

AMR: Africa's emerging health crisis surpassing HIV, Malaria, and TB

Lerato Matheka

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) has become a leading cause of death across Africa, surpassing HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis (TB), a new report by the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has revealed.

AMR, which occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites no longer respond to antimicrobial drugs, has been accelerated by human behaviours such as overuse and misuse of antimicrobials in human and animal health sectors.

According to the report, antimicrobial resistance (AMR) has emerged as a leading cause of death in the African region, surpassing fatalities from malaria, HIV, and TB.

"The existential impacts of AMR are far-reaching, posing threats to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Universal Health Coverage (UHC). It represents a significant public health challenge," the report noted adding that in 2019, 4.95 million deaths globally were associated with bacterial AMR, of which 1.27 million deaths were directly attributable to AMR.

"This surpasses the burden of HIV and Malaria, revealing AMR as a leading cause of global mortality, and sub-Saharan Africa is facing the direst consequences. In addition to death and disability, AMR carries substantial economic implications at personal, national, and global levels.

In 2019, Sub-Saharan Africa experienced the highest rate of AMR burden, with 23.7 deaths per 100,000 people and

255,000 deaths attributed to AMR, surpassing mortality from Malaria and HIV/AIDS," the Africa CDC reported.

Africa CDC indicated that although AMR affects populations in both high- and low-income countries (LMICs), the Global Research on Antimicrobial Resistance (GRAM) study identified the highest burden in low-resource settings, which face the greatest burden of infectious diseases and have weaker health systems.

Africa bears a significant burden of infectious diseases, accounting for approximately 95 percent of malaria deaths, 70 percent of people living with HIV, and 25 percent of TB deaths globally.

A coordinated regional response
In response to this growing threat, African nations have adopted the AMR Global Action Plan and the African Union Framework for Antimicrobial Resistance Control 2020–2025.

While most countries in the region have developed National Action Plans (NAPs) to combat AMR, the Africa CDC report acknowledges that "...the overall response remains inadequate given the magnitude of the threat, which endangers human, animal, environmental, aquatic, and plant health."

The report points out that addressing AMR in Africa requires a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach involving the entire society.

"Sustainable access to antimicrobials, including antibiotics, vaccines, and therapeutics, is crucial, as lack of access leads to more morbidity and mortality than AMR itself. Support for the region

should focus on preventing infections, strengthening health and food systems, developing human resources, ensuring sustainable access to diagnostics and therapeutics, and investing in laboratory infrastructure to support surveillance and data generation."

Major drivers of AMR in the region include overuse and misuse of antimicrobials, environmental contamination from hospital and pharmaceutical waste, and a lack of access to quality-assured antimicrobials and diagnostics. "One in three hospitals in the region lacks clean, safe running water, and one in eight people defecate openly due to inadequate sanitation," the report highlights, underscoring the need for urgent investments in Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) programs and infection prevention measures.

The cost of inaction
AMR not only leads to higher mortality and morbidity rates but also threatens Africa's socioeconomic progress. The financial requirements for an effective AMR response in Africa are estimated to be between USD 2–6 billion annually. However, current funding levels fall short.

The report states, "The estimated annual budget for AMR NAPs is around USD 100 million, indicating a substantial funding gap that necessitates additional support from both governments and the international community."

Failing to address AMR, the Africa CDC said that could significantly impact the region's ability to achieve key Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs), including those related to poverty elimination, health for all, and Universal Health Coverage (UHC).

"AMR's impact extends beyond morbidity and mortality, threatening the achievement of Agenda 2030 goals," the report notes.

Furthermore, the World Bank anticipates that AMR could result in additional healthcare expenses of up to US\$1 trillion by 2050, with annual global GDP losses ranging between US\$1 trillion and US\$3.4 trillion by 2030.

A call to action
To mitigate the looming crisis, the Africa CDC report calls for a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach that involves the entire society.

"Addressing AMR in Africa requires a comprehensive, multi-sectoral approach involving the entire society," the report emphasises. Sustainable access to antimicrobials, including antibiotics, vaccines, and diagnostics, is essential, along with strengthened health systems and investments in laboratory infrastructure to support surveillance and data generation.

The report also stresses the importance of regional and international partnerships for resource mobilisation and technical support, emphasising multi-sectoral collaboration, integrating efforts across human health, animal health, and environmental sectors, and fostering regional and international partnerships for resource mobilisation and technical support as crucial.

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Vitality Health decentralises services to Botha Bothe

Lehlohonolo Motšoar

Having focused its operations in Maseru since its introduction in the country over the past ten years, Vitality Health will expand its services to Botha Bothe district.

The company has launched a new High Care Clinic at the Soofia International School premises in Botha Bothe, creating ten new positions for medical staff, including a doctor, nurse, paramedics, pharmacists, a driver, and a receptionist.

The facility will serve the northern region of the country, offering essential health services to the local community, as well as students and staff of Soofia International.

During the opening ceremony, the Executive Director of Vitality Health, Semethe Raleche, highlighted the pressing need for improved healthcare in Lesotho, emphasising that many Basotho face life-threatening situations due to the absence of critical emergency services.

Vitality Health is a medical insurance company that specialises in pre-hospital emergency medical risk solutions.

“Many lives are lost, or forever changed, because of the lack of lifesaving, reciprocal emergency services,” he noted.

The newly established clinic will provide a range of vital services, including emergency medical care, inter-hospital transfers, chronic illness management, clinical services, pharmaceutical support, and medical insurance. The facility is expected to start operations in 2025.

Given the geographical challenges in reaching remote areas of Lesotho, Vitality Health has formed a strategic partnership with the Lesotho Defence Force’s (LDF) Airwing to facilitate emergency services.

This partnership also includes training LDF personnel in first aid. In addition, Vitality Health has teamed up with Vodacom Lesotho to digitize its health services, ensuring faster responses to medical emergencies.

One of Vitality Health’s clients praised the organization’s impact on his family’s health care, sharing that although he initially subscribed to their services during the COVID-19 pandemic, he only recently experienced their lifesaving support.

“When I had a muscle rupture, they responded swiftly, traveling from Maseru to Botha Bothe in no time after an emergency call. They’ve also assisted with my child’s medical needs and regularly remind us of routine vaccinations,” he said.

However, despite the clinic’s success, Raleche, expressed concerns about the country’s overall preparedness for health emergencies.

“Resource limitations, shortages of essential medical supplies and equipment, and the lack of trained personnel are major obstacles in providing timely emergency medical responses,” he pointed out.

Raleche also mentioned the ongoing efforts by Vitality Health to address these challenges by investing in staff training, despite the infrastructural issues, such as poor road conditions and limited transportation in rural areas, which delay emergency services.

Raleche encouraged the community to take advantage of this new healthcare opportunity, urging individuals to prioritise their health during their lifetime instead of solely investing in funeral cover.

“Fees start as low as M193, offering an affordable way to secure your health and well-being,” he said.

BUSINESS

Another textile factory re-opens

Staff Reporter

The Minister of Trade, Industry and Business Development, Mokheithi Shelile, will today officiate the re-opening of the CGM factory in a positive development for job creation.

The firm, which had shut down of its production due to market challenges, is resuming operations following a similar re-opening of the Ever Unison Garments factory under the government’s #ReBulaLifeme campaign led by Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) in Maseru last month.

The revitalised factory is set to create new jobs across various roles, including production, quality control, and administration.

Ever Unisons’ last month opening also marked the official launch of the #ReBulaLifeme campaign, which intends to resuscitate the factories that have closed down in the aftermath of the devastating COVID-19 economic impact.

The government has previously revealed that over 16000 manufacturing sector jobs were lost in Lesotho as a result of the negative impact of the deadly pandemic. And in a bid to claw back some of the lost jobs, the government intends to re-open more firms until the end of 2024.

“From last month (August 2024) to December 2024 we will be opening factories every month

which will employ on average 300 people on lowest capacity and 1500 people on average at highest capacity,” LNDC said in a statement.

“We did a lot of groundwork from 2022 to resolve all issues that were affecting investors to open factories in Lesotho and we are also opening all those that shut down due to some challenges in Lesotho’s investment climate. Last month we opened Ever Unison in Maseru which started with 240 people and will be 1500 by December. This month we are opening CGM in Thetsane Industrial Area in Maseru which will start with 300 people and grow to 1000 by December.”

On his part, Shelile expressed joy at being able to affect job creation amid a serious unemployment challenge in the country.

“We are thrilled to reopen the CGM factory and bring new jobs and growth to Maseru. This reopening represents our commitment to ensure the private sector-led job creation; so, that workers can provide for their families. As the government, we look forward to thriving business and economic growth for our country. The Ministry and LNDC have been working tirelessly with CGM to make certain that its doors are open again,” Shelile said ahead of the official opening.

CGM Industries is a leading manufacturer of Demin apparel, with a long-standing reputation for excellence and innovation. Established in 2002, it is dedicated to delivering high-quality products while fostering a positive impact on the communities it serves.

Letshego returns with exciting promotional campaign

Seabata Mahao



The Marketing Manager and Business Partner of Letshego, Tšotetsi Seema

Letshego Lesotho, a prominent financial services provider, has launched its second annual campaign titled “**LetsGo and Win,**” aimed at offering both financial relief and a chance for customers to win substantial cash prizes.

The campaign, running until December 31, 2024, allows customers to streamline their loan repayments through consolidation, offering a M150,000 prize pool.

The innovative promotion is designed to help individuals manage their debt more efficiently by consolidating multiple loans into one manageable plan, leading to potential savings due to reduced interest rates. This initiative aligns with Letshego’s mission to provide customer-centric financial solutions and improve financial inclusion.

Motebang Moeketsi, Head of Sales, Distribution, Products, and Marketing at Letshego, highlighted the common struggle faced by many borrowers in managing multiple loans with varying interest rates.

The campaign simplifies this by allowing customers to consolidate their loans into a single repayment plan, which could ease their financial burden over time.

The Marketing Manager, Tšotetsi Seema, explained that the campaign was introduced in 2023 in response to studies showing that Basotho often manage multiple loans from various institutions, which can be overwhelming. With this promotion, Basotho can combine all their loans into one with Letshego, simplifying the process and reducing financial stress.

The campaign includes a prize-giving aspect, where customers have the chance to win cash prizes on weekly radio shows. Customers can participate in a fun audio game where they must say “stop” before the audio stops counting random cash amounts. Participants who miss the mark will still receive M500 just for playing. Additionally, a spinning wheel offers prizes up to M20,000.

Seema emphasised that Letshego is committed to promoting financial literacy and supporting its customers, with over 25 Basotho winning prizes in 2023. Letshego continues to offer innovative solutions that address the evolving needs of its customers, focusing on financial inclusion and community support.

RSL doubles down on enhancing tax compliance



Seabata Mahao

The Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL), in collaboration with the Land Administration Authority (LAA), has launched the Automatic Compliance Project (ACP), a cutting-edge initiative aimed at reducing human errors in tax compliance and enhancing efficiency in tax collection.

The project is part of RSL’s broader strategy to invest in knowledge and technology to modernise the country’s tax system.

Speaking at the launch, RSL Commissioner General, Mathabo Mokoko, described the ACP as a significant milestone in the effort to streamline and automate the tax compliance process for both businesses and individuals.

She emphasised that this initiative marks a crucial step forward, not only for RSL and LAA but also for the entire tax ecosystem in Lesotho.

“Tax compliance can often be a complex and time-consuming task, with businesses and individuals required to navigate through regulations, forms, and deadlines,” Mokoko said.

“This process frequently leads to errors and inefficiencies, which burdens taxpayers and places additional strain on tax administrators tasked with enforcement and audits.”

Mokoko explained that ACP would address these challenges by utilising advanced data analytics and artificial intelligence to simplify tax compliance. The technology will automate the collection, processing, and verification of tax information, making it easier for taxpayers to meet their obligations accurately and on time.

By automating the compliance process, RSL aims to reduce the burden on taxpayers while improving the efficiency of tax administration. This would enable RSL to better identify and address non-compliance, ensuring that all citizens contribute their fair share and fostering a more equitable tax system.

“Our ultimate goal is ambitious but clear. We want to transform tax compliance into an automatic process, where non-compliance becomes an effort in itself,” Mokoko added.

The ACP project is being implemented in phases, starting with the auto-population of PAYE (Pay As You Earn) returns for RSL, LAA, and government ministries. In this phase, referred to as the Minimum Viable Product (MVP) 1, the payroll data of these entities is automatically shared, pre-populating PAYE returns for easier submission.

Mokoko noted that while RSL and LAA have successfully integrated with the ACP solution, integration with government ministries has been delayed due to reconfiguration following the 2022 general elections. Despite this, she reaffirmed RSL’s commitment to expanding the system to include government ministries and other PAYE taxpayers in the near future.

LAA’s Director General, Mataeli Makhele Sekhantšo, highlighted the long-standing partnership between RSL and LAA, dating back to the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in 2013. In November 2023, the two authorities agreed to pilot the ACP for PAYE e-filing, and a project team was formed to lead its implementation.

“The goal of this project is to simplify the pro-

cess of filing tax returns and ensure compliance. With the ACP, taxpayers can file returns from the comfort of their homes, with pre-populated PAYE forms for ease of submission. Their role is simply to confirm, upload, and submit.”

Sekhantšo confirmed that the system is already in use, with RSL successfully retrieving PAYE files as early as August 2024.

The ACP project represents a critical step toward modernizing Lesotho’s tax system, with the potential to reduce administrative burdens, increase compliance, and create a more streamlined tax environment for all stakeholders.

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Notice in terms of section 37 of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No. 2 of 2024

ESTATE LATE THABISO RETHABILE MPHULO E139/2024

Notice is hereby given in terms of section 37 of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No. 2 of 2024 calling upon all heirs, legatees and creditors of the deceased to attend a meeting before the master of the High Court in Maseru on Tuesday 17th SEPTEMBER 2024 at 10:00 am for the purpose of:

Proposing some person/persons to be appointed by the master as Executor dative.

Dated at Maseru o this 1st day of August 2024

Master of the High Court

Magistrate Court

Old Prosecutors Office

Maseru

HEALTH



Mahlelebe champions TB awareness after conquering three-year battle

Ntsoaki Motaung

A 24-year-old Thato Mahlelebe from Mphaki, Tšitsong village in the Quthing district, has taken a bold step to become a champion for Tuberculosis (TB) awareness.

This comes after Mahlelebe completed her three-year battle with the disease, a journey that began in 2021 when she first started experiencing symptoms.

Diagnosed with TB in early 2023, Mahlelebe spent a year struggling to identify the cause of her health issues.

“It was in 2021 when I had signs of TB, but they were mild symptoms—sweating and occasional coughing—that I thought I could live with,” she recalled. “They would come and go, so I didn’t see the need to go to the clinic.”

As her condition worsened, Mahlelebe began experiencing shortness of breath, prompting her to visit a health centre where she was misdiagnosed with asthma and given medication.

Thinking she had recovered, her health seemed stable until July 2022 when she unexpectedly lost her voice. Still, Mahlelebe delayed seeking help until December 2022, when she finally visited Mphaki Health Centre.

There, she was asked to provide a sputum sample, and by January 2023, she was diagnosed with TB. “When I got the call and was told I had TB, I started treatment immediately,” she said.

For the first two weeks, Mahlelebe’s treatment progressed without issue. However, her health took a turn for the worse by the third week.

“My feet became swollen, my whole body ached, and I had to rely on my mother for almost everything—even bathing. I also became much darker in complexion,” she shared.

Despite her worsening condition, Mahlelebe often reassured her mother, downplaying her suffering to ease her worries.

Mahlelebe completed her six-month treatment in July 2023 and is now leading a healthy life. Reflecting on her illness, she



Thato Mahlelebe Quthing Mphaki

suspects her exposure to harsh chemicals while working in an orchard in Cape Town, South Africa, may have contributed to her infection.

“We worked without masks, and many of us had flu-like symptoms, but TB never crossed our minds,” she explained.

Her personal battle with TB inspired Mahlelebe to become a TB champion in her community. She now educates people about the importance of testing, TB symptoms, and the importance of treatment. “I share my experience with others, and they seem to understand because I’ve lived through it,” she said.

Though various stakeholders, including the Ministry of Health, are working to combat TB, Mahlelebe notes that many people still lack awareness about the disease and how to protect themselves.

The Ministry’s National TB Programme recently announced that, as part of a campaign started in March, they successfully traced 937 TB patients, with 928 of them enrolled in treatment.

However, the ministry estimates that 15,000 Basotho fell ill with TB in 2022, though only 6,601 cases were identified. Dr. Llang Maama, the programme’s manager, emphasized the ongoing efforts to find the “missing” TB patients who remain undetected by the system.

Meanwhile, global efforts to end the TB epidemic are gaining momentum. During the United Nations General Assembly’s High-Level Meeting on TB, world leaders approved a Political Declaration that sets ambitious targets for the next five years.

These include reaching 90 percent of people with TB prevention and care services, using rapid testing as the primary diagnostic tool, providing social benefits to all TB patients, licensing a new TB vaccine, and closing funding gaps for TB implementation and research by 2027.

With the support of these global and national initiatives, Mahlelebe is hopeful that her work as a TB advocate will contribute to the fight against the disease in her community and beyond.

Call for speedy and impactful action in Africa’s Mpox response

The Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) has welcomed the optimistic statement of the Governing Board of the Pandemic Fund (PF), but warned it must act with agility and speed to avert a global pandemic, given the rapid continental and international movements of people.

The Pandemic Fund recently held an emergency board meeting and agreed on two main outcomes: firstly recognising the need for speed and efficiency in garnering resources for mpox, and creation of a special financing mechanism to accelerate support for outbreaks, including mpox,

Reacting to the outcome of the meeting, Africa CDC has emphasised the need for speedy, agile and impactful action in Africa against the mpox outbreak.

“Africa CDC acknowledges and profoundly appreciates the Governing Board of the Pandemic Fund (PF) continued support in strengthening pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response capacities across the continent. The two key outcomes of the statement, which deeply recognise the need for speed and efficiency in garnering resources for mpox, as well as the creation of a special financing mechanism to accelerate support for outbreaks, including mpox, demonstrate a new dawn in our global collective efforts to respond to the growing existential threats of public health emergencies,” Africa CDC said this week.

“Africa CDC, WHO, and other multilateral organizations (e.g., UNICEF, WFP, IFRC, IOM) have developed the Continental Mpox Preparedness and Response Plan (CMPRP) to address this challenge. The CMPRP operates under a unified approach — ONE Team, ONE Plan, ONE Budget, and ONE M&E framework — aiming to improve surveillance, diagnostics, and workforce capacity while strengthening public health systems and engaging communities for a more effective and harmonized response across Africa.”

The African Union organisation believes that the CMPRP presents a valuable opportunity for the Pandemic Fund Governing Board to expedite the release of funds to support countries’ preparedness and response efforts in a timely manner. It said an effective mpox response depends on swift action, which has the potential to eliminate the heart-wrenching inequalities demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, where Africa lagged significantly in accessing vaccines.

“As Africa continues to grapple with the increasing spread of mpox within countries and across borders, the Pandemic Fund must act with agility and speed to avert a global pandemic, given the rapid continental and international movements of people. The recent Pandemic Fund Governing Board’s decision to accelerate the release of the second round of funding to ensure a timely and effective mpox response while strengthening healthcare systems’ resilience is a welcome development.”

Advocacy for rare diseases: “Being heard is the first step”

Ntsoaki Motaung

Nthabeleng Ramoeli, the Chief Executive Officer of the Rare Disease Lesotho Association, emphasised that the most significant initiative for the rare disease community is to ensure their voices are heard and acknowledged.

Ramoeli made these remarks while speaking as a panellist during the World Health Assembly Resolution Webinar on rare diseases held last week.

“Just being heard can go a long way because most people with rare diseases are lying at home being told they are hypochondriacs,” she explained. She stressed that individuals with rare diseases deserve to be taken as seriously as those with pandemics, as they also require special attention.

Ramoeli pointed out that timely diagnosis is crucial for those living with rare diseases, highlighting the delays many ex-

perience.

“If people are taken seriously, they will get diagnosed in time. Currently, it can take 10 to 15 years to receive a diagnosis, and in that time, some individuals pass away without ever knowing what they were suffering from,” she said.

She also acknowledged the difficulty in addressing the topic of rare diseases, especially in situations where individuals die without a diagnosis. “It’s a tough topic to confront, but that is the reality we live with every single day, and as a community, we have to deal with it.”

Dr. Ruediger Krech, Director of Health Promotion at the World Health Organization (WHO), underscored the global scale of the issue, noting that more than 300 million people suffer from rare diseases worldwide.

Dr. Krech emphasised that behind each person is a family and a story that often involves a lengthy journey to diagnosis, which can take over seven years. “Health

systems are often not adapted to rare diseases, and there is little public health policy addressing their specific needs,” he said.

He called for greater awareness, international cooperation, and knowledge sharing to better address the needs of the rare disease community.

James Anderson, Executive Director of Global Health at the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations (IFPMA), reaffirmed the commitment of pharmaceutical associations to collaborate with WHO, patients, and clinical groups.

Anderson highlighted the importance of co-creating solutions to the challenges faced by the rare disease community and improving the understanding of the pathogenesis of these diseases.

He also stressed the need for enhancing newborn screening and utilizing diagnostic technologies, calling them critical first steps in tackling rare diseases.

LEADERS

Why brands need to be mindful of viral internet slang in their campaigns

Tanki Kotelo

In a vast world of social media, new phrases and internet slang relentlessly emerge, forcing brands to feel the need to instantly hop on the bandwagon in an attempt for relevance and relatability. However, sometimes these well-intentioned attempts focused on appealing to a perceived trend and audiences can fall flat and backfire. In an attempt to get on the gravy train of a viral moment, most campaigns often come off as in-genuine and lacking in edge as intended, failing miserably to connect with target audiences. Therefore, it is imperative for brands to navigate this very slippery slope of social media and understand fully the implications of what trends and slang mean, lest they deviate from their brand identity.

The case of 'demure': What began as a series of TikTok videos by Jools Lebron has led to date, according to Vogue Business, to a record accumulation of over 90,000 posts using the #demure hashtag on the platform as well as on Instagram, Facebook, X, and many others.

Since then, many brands and retailers of all kinds have jumped on the trend with their own further funny and innovative interpretations of the catchphrase. While this particular phrase was generally well received by audiences and users of many brands and cited for its positive implications, its adaptability, and its encouraging of cute, modest, and more 'demure' carrying of oneself, many of similar tastes usually miss the mark.

So why exactly are research and social listening important as brands delve into viral marketing? Much contrary to what is perceived by many, there is science and art behind communication, along with a set of principles that guide the profession. One of these is ensuring that as a brand you probe your audience—who they follow, what they value, how, when, and where they spend their time, etc.

Understanding this will therefore not only remind brands of their essence but will also guide the creative process of the social media campaign and the schedule for when the content is posted based on when the audience is most likely to be exposed to it and engage, along with the

platforms they are likely to use, and even perhaps if this content will require a paid or unpaid-for strategy.

An example of how some brands have dismally failed at viral internet slang includes when Pepsi tried to jump on the Black Lives Matter movement with an ill-advised ad featuring Kendall Jenner. The ad was widely criticised for appropriating the struggle of Black activists for-profit and trivialising serious social issues. Pepsi eventually pulled the ad and issued an apology, but not before the damage had been done. This serves as a stark reminder that brands should never co-opt social movements for commercial gain.

Brands need to realise that viral moments are fleeting and cannot be relied upon as long-term strategies for visibility goals, especially because social media users are savvy, vocal, and non-impassive receptors of content. Well, ahead of curating any viral content piece, brands need to ask themselves the following questions: Does this viral internet slang or marketing trend align with our brand values? Does it authentically demon-

strate the brand's values and personality? And, who is this trend targeted to, and how will it appeal to them? Might using unusual slang or engaging in a particular trend resonate with them, or will it just seem inaccessible? If these questions cannot be answered, it is clear as day that it is usually unwise to hop on the trend as it may come across as inauthentic or forced.

In a nutshell, while jumping on a viral trend can seem like a quick way to get attention, it is important to think about the potential long-term effects on the brand's reputation and image. Will the association with a certain trend still make sense a year or two down the line? If not, why even bother?

Bloom Communications is a Lesotho-based consultancy, specialising in best-in-class media-driven communications, professional writing, public relations, social media management, and marketing for individuals, corporates, and micro, small, and medium-sized brands. For feedback contact: info@bloomcommunications.co.ls

What is Really an Influencer? A Critique of the Relevance, Authenticity, and Credibility of the Growing Influencer Culture

Tanki Kotelo

The burgeoning reach and use of social media have undoubtedly changed the way brands and organisations communicate with their populace. And with the youth possessing more buying power year-on-year, many have had to find demographically applicable ways of meeting this group, ultimately birthing what is today called an influencer. But what exactly is an influencer? In an era of instant fame where ordinary people can shoot straight to celebrityhood in a flicker of an eye and where people are desperately craving gratification from their online idols, where do we draw the line between 'real' influencers and chancers? Let's explore.

So what is influencer culture? Initially, the term was coined to describe individuals with a sizeable social media presence and impact on different platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram, as well as those having the ability to sway the decisions of their followers, especially when it comes to lifestyles and financial spending. At the outset, influencers were regarded as a legitimate and respected form of opinion leadership, as those who were deemed as such had intently earned the status by consuming loads of information, scrutinising it, and then decoding it into mod-

est and digestible bits for the rest of the masses. As such, they were revered experts and trusted springs of information and advice in particular fields.

However, of late the term has drastically changed, and now anybody can be regarded as an influencer as long as they have a big platform, exemplifying the very phenomenon known as the 'cult of personality'—where the masses will often uncritically consume misinformation just because they are drawn to the source of the information and not its validity. Whereas the community was geared towards knowledge-sharing and connection or patronage, today the influencer industry is anything but that, and monetisation, bullying, and exploitation are at the centre stage. Regardless, that is no way an indication that the indus-

try is dying, as according to Influencer Marketing Hub, the global industry was worth at least \$21 billion, just that it's facing an eminent existential crisis and that those within the profession have a mammoth task and responsibility of looking in and reimagining a different trajectory.

More harm than good: what is the industry getting wrong in recent times? As opposed to earlier years where influencers were about inspiration and not about aspiration, today the industry overly encourages consumerism, capitalism, and materialism, often pressuring social media users to have dissatisfaction about their lives. Ultimately leading them down a path of mental illness, self-consciousness, compulsive buying, and debt—in the chase for a sense of inclusion and comfort. Moreover, it has birthed an environment of superficiality where popularity is given merit over expertise, an apparently dangerous and irresponsible idea if the USA politics are anything to go by, for instance.

Additionally, the industry today sets unrealistic and distorted standards, far opposite from what society has always accepted to be the way of life. For instance, through their promotion of 'size zero' and 'wrinkle-free' bodies and

extravagant spending lifestyles. Again, faced with the pressure to consistently produce content for the masses and maintain a certain image or demeanour, many influencers silently suffer emotionally and mentally behind the closed doors of fame. Some usually obsess over building more following, leading to a sense of inauthenticity and a lack of personal fulfilment.

While it's crucial to remain vigilant about the pitfalls of the modern influencer landscape, in the same breath, it's important to acknowledge that, when wielded with care and responsibility, influence can be a powerful force for good. In a world where social media users are bombarded with messages from all directions, influencers have the opportunity to use their platforms to promote kindness, inclusivity, and self-acceptance, as well as to advocate for important causes.

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More focus on young people to curb HIV transmission in Gauteng

Marcia Moyana

The Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) released its key findings of the sixth South African National Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV, Prevalence, Incidence and Behaviour Survey (SABSSM VI) in Johannesburg on 29 August.

Conducted between 2022 and 2023, the survey outlined the measures that have been taken to maintain surveillance of HIV infection and behaviours in South Africa, evaluate the progress of the South African national HIV and AIDS, STI and TB Strategic Plan, and monitor HIV indicators for national and international reporting.

The household survey revealed “concerning” details about young people aged 15 to 24 years old, with early sexual debut, lack of condom usage and having unprotected sex with multiple sex partners being some of the key drivers of the HIV epidemic in those age groups.

During the release of the findings of the survey, a professor at the HSRC, Khangelani Zuma expressed his concern over the number of adolescents and young people who did not know their HIV status.

“Of 75,000 young people younger than 25 years living with HIV, very few of them are on ARVs. What is

even worse is that most do not know their status and we need to do more to focus on this group because if we do not, this pool of people will continue being an unfortunate reservoir of HIV transmissions,” said Zuma.

Up to 20 percent of Gauteng’s adolescents and youths did not know their HIV status, while 13.4 percent of those who knew their status were not on treatment. The 12.1 percent of those who were on treatment were not virally suppressed.

Boys were having sex earlier with up to 17.8 percent of them starting before the age of 15 years while girls make up 7.9 percent.

“Even though young boys start sexual debut earlier than girls, the numbers are showing, they will have sexual partners within their five-year age groups. But the unfortunate part is, among young girls, they will have partners that are five to ten years older than them.”

“We know that those relationships are very risky. Older males taking advantage of young girls and not using condoms is one of the contributing fac-

tors to higher HIV infections among young girls compared to young boys”, he explained.

Zuma was also concerned about 17.1 percent of males having reported more multiple sexual partners in the 15 to 24 years old group. Out of the over 70 percent of individuals in the province who never used condoms or sometimes used them, 32.1 percent of adolescents and youth aged 15 to 24 said they had used a condom during a recent sexual encounter compared to 19.3 percent of those aged 25 to 49 years.

Gains made but more can be done

The HIV prevalence rate in the Gauteng province saw a slight decrease from 12.1 percent in 2017 to 11.9 percent in 2022. As the third province with the lowest HIV prevalence in the country, the province had over 1.72 million people who were living with HIV in 2022 compared to 1.78 million in 2017.

Another gain that has been made in the province is the uptake of ART with an estimated 1.2 million people who are living with HIV being on treatment. This increased uptake in ART resulted in up to 79.7 percent being virally suppressed, which means that they cannot transmit the virus to others.

Out of the UNAIDS target to have

95 percent of people who are living with HIV knowing their status, 85.3 percent were aware of their status. Up to 86.5 percent out of the targeted 95 percent were on ART, and an estimated 95.2 of those who were on ART were virally suppressed, slightly exceeding the 95 percent target.

Senior Advisor for Quality Improvement with CDC South Africa, Ashely Boylan said the over 20 years of partnership between the various stakeholders was yielding results but more needed to be done to improve on the progress that has been made over the years.

“With this information, we can strengthen our programs and tailor them to people who need it most. Data is knowledge, and with knowledge comes great responsibility to respond, adapt, and improve,” she said.

She added that Gauteng was one of the first provinces that will be implementing the U=U roll-out campaign which will focus on reducing HIV transmission by promoting adherence to treatment which will result in the virus being undetectable, resulting in it being untransmittable.

The end of the AIDS epidemic is in reach, and together we are stronger, and together we can see an AIDS-free generation, Boylan added.

OPINION

The silent pandemic

Reatile Polaki

Every year on September 10, the world sets out to commemorate World Suicide Prevention Day.

More than 700,000 people die every year from suicide. To put it into perspective, if 700, 000 people died in Lesotho every year without replacement our population would be zero in about 3 years.

Of the more than 700, 000 people, most are young people between the ages of 15-29. Lesotho is not immune to this crisis, in fact, our little kingdom in the sky is fighting a losing war against suicide, with rates of about 72.4 suicides per 100, 000 people.

And this is the part where you are probably thinking “No, this cannot be” but think about it.

Every year online we say rest in peace to multiple souls lost to suicide. Most people, dare I say every young person, knows someone who

has committed or attempted suicide or knows someone who knows someone who has. Now the question remains, what are we doing to help? The answer may lie in this year’s theme for suicide prevention day. ‘Changing the narrative’.

It calls us to start having open and honest conversations on suicide and suicidal behaviour, these conversations should be held at individual, communal, and governmental levels. By having these conversations honestly and without judgment we can break down barriers, create understanding and foster a culture of support for those that need it.

Suicide is a mental health issue, if we as a nation want to talk about suicide and be honest about it, we all need to be honest as a country about our mental health and the things that affect it. Let us be honest, our current socio-economic

situation as a country is a fertile ground for stress, distress and unhappiness.

We cannot ignore the rampant crime, high unemployment rates, financial inequality, gender-based violence, corruption and all that, to just talk. For us, mental well-being and in turn suicide prevention are partly going to come from the betterment of our current situation as a country. We cannot expect someone who has lost all hope and confidence because of poverty, unemployment and exploitation to have a fighting chance at beating this silent killer.

Those things are not in the same subset.

When all that is said and done, the first thing we can do as a country is to talk about it. Remove the stigma attached to mental illness and suicide, be honest about the struggles and engage in meaningful conversations free from judgement and condescension. Check in with loved ones, let them know you are there to support them, share your story with

others, use your time and resources to learn more about suicide and use your platforms to advocate for mental health awareness. Conversations no matter how small create a ripple effect. Spread the knowledge.

Call out your representatives. Use your voice to advocate for policies and laws that support people. Advocate for laws that protect employees with mental illness or mental health challenges, laws that protect those who are going through a rough time from exploitation and abuse.

We must also call out our policy makers, to improve the standards of care in our facilities, and to adequately give resources to these facilities so they serve the public better. Use your voice to call for a change in our socioeconomic situation, we need to see employment opportunities and sustainable intervention for the high poverty that plagues us. Force your leaders to make this a priority.

If we work together, if we talk about it, we can change it.



Advertisement

EXTERNAL ADVERT: 2 X ACCOUNT MANAGER TRAINEE

Coca-Cola Beverages Lesotho has 2 exciting opportunities in our **SALES** Department. We are looking for talented individuals with relevant skills for 2 x

Account Manager Trainee roles, which will be based in **Maseru**. The successful candidates will report directly to the **Sales Manager**.

TRAINEESHIP

The trainees will be exposed to:

- Commercial aspects of the sales environment
- Customer Care
- Customer Management
- Sales & Marketing Essentials
- Merchandising Standards
- Management Essentials
- Effective Communication

KEY ATTRIBUTES AND COMPETENCIES

- Pre-determined sales/brands and market share targets
- Influence retail pricing within segments
- Maintain stock levels within segments
- Develop self towards account management opportunity
- Develop sound business relationships
- Conduct regular account reviews

- Handle Customer and Consumer queries
- Manage product quality in relation to quality standards
- Determine functional planning objectives
- Develop sound customer relationships
- Rotate across Sales, Channel Marketing and Execution functions

QUALIFICATIONS / EXPERIENCE

- Preference will be given to applicants with a completed National Diploma
- or Degree: Preferably in Marketing/Sales
- Applicants must be unemployed
- 1 to 2 years experience required
- Experienced driver with a valid driver's license will be advantageous

The advert has minimum requirements listed. Management reserves the right to use additional or relevant information as criteria for short-listing. Interested applicants, who meet the above employee specifications, should please submit their applications and CVs by email: fmorake@ccbgroup.com on or before close of business on the 20th September 2024.



Vacancy

Account Manager, Coca Cola Beverages Lesotho (CCBL)
Coca-Cola Beverages Lesotho has an exciting opportunity in our **SALES** Department. We are looking for a talented individual with relevant skills for an **Account Manager** position which will be based in **Hlotse/Leribe**. The successful candidate will report directly to the **Sales Manager**.

Key Purpose Statement

To develop, implement and maintain effective account plans thereby managing the profitable sales of CCBL products, and the development and maintenance of new business relationships and opportunities so that customer excellence, brand loyalty and profitable volume growth are achieved.

Key Outputs and Accountabilities

- Identify and implemented new business opportunities
- Maintain high levels of customer service
- Review account performance and remedial actions
- Formulate and execute account plans
- Manage and maintain trade assets
- Generate orders
- Execute promotions and activations
- Manage cash and credit accounts
- Compile competitor reports
- Execute according to required CCBL standard per channel

Key Competencies & Attributes

- Good analytical and numerical ability
- Able to build positive relationships
- Ability to negotiate and close a sale
- Team player who can also work independently

- Assertive and persuasive - ability to influence
- Open to change and looking for opportunities for improvement
- Good problem-solving ability, solutions orientated and can be innovative
- Good analytical and problem-solving ability
- Responsible, conscientious and dependable
- Self-discipline and well organised
- Good planning and execution ability
- Good ability to work under pressure and handle a demanding work environment
- High energy levels and self-driven

Qualifications

- Minimum requirement: Diploma and completed sales and marketing qualification. Associate degree and bachelor's degree in Sales and Marketing, would be advantageous.

Experience

- **Minimum requirement:** 2 years relevant FMCG experience in a sales and marketing environment.
- **Experienced driver with a code 08 drivers licence**
- Expert computer literacy will be an added advantage

The advert has minimum requirements listed. Management reserves the right to use additional or relevant information as criteria for short-listing. Interested applicants, who meet the above employee specifications, should please submit their applications and CVs by email: fmorake@ccbgroup.com on or before close of business on the 20th September 2024. **CLOSING DATE: 20 September 2024**



LESOTHO BANK REPO VEHICLE TIMED ONLINE AUCTION

Online Bidding Starts: 25 Sep @ 14:00

Online Bidding Closes: 27 Sep from 14:00

Commercial Assets & Runners

'22 Faw 15.180 FL 8 Ton Truck F/C C/C
'20 Tata LPT 1518 F/C C/C
2x '19 - '18 Powerstars V3 2646S 6x4
'16 Iveco 50C15V15 F/C P/V
'14 Paramount Trailer Flatdeck Superlink
'07 Volare Marcopolo M/B
'22 Toyota Hilux 2.4 GD-6 Raider 4x4 D/C

'21 Toyota Prado VX 4.0 V6
6x '21 Toyota Landcruisers 78 4.2D S/W
'19 Toyota Corolla Quest 1.6
2x '18 - '12 Nissan Hardbody NP300 2.4i 4x4 D/C
'18 Kia Rio 1.4 Tec
'15 Toyota Rav4 2.0 GX
2x '14 Toyota Landcruisers 76 4.5D

'14 Ford Ecosport 1.0 Ecoboost Titanium
'12 Nissan Patrol 4.8 GL
'12 VW Golf Cabriolet 1.4 TSi
'10 Mitsubishi Pajero 3.2 Di
'03 Nissan Hardbody 2400i SE 4x4 D/Cab
'08 Lexus IS 250
'01 Mercedes-Benz C180 Elegance

Non Runners & Scrap

'17 Renault Captur 1.5 DCi Dynamique
'12 Toyota Hilux 2.5 D-4D S/Cab
2x '01 Mazda B2500TD4x4 Drifter S/Cabs
'00 Nissan Hardbody 3.2D 4x4 SE G85 D/Cab
Toyota Hilux 3.0 D-E 4x4 D/Cab
Toyota Hilux 2700 4x4

3x Gwm Steed 5's
Nissan Hardbody S/Cab
3x Tata Xenon DLe 4x4
Land Rover Discovery 2
Land Rover Freelander 2
Mercedes-Benz SE300

Tata Telcoline 4x4 TDi
2x Mitsubishi Colts 2800 TD
Mercedes-Benz E190 2.0
Mercedes-Benz E280
Mercedes-Benz E220

HOMELY HAVEN FURNITURE TIMED ONLINE AUCTION

Online Bidding Starts: 24 Sep @ 14:00

Online Bidding Closes: 28 Sep from 14:00

Furniture & Household Appliances

4x Dining Room Sets, 16x Dining Chairs, Dining Table, 8x Bed Sets, 2x Kitchen Schemes, 3x Brown Rattan Chairs, 2x Breakfast Stands, Kitchen Cabinet, Wardrobe, Bedroom Suite, Dressing Table, Brewing Equipment, 3x Round Coffee Tables, Dessert Bowls, Stainless Steel Drawers, 2x Washing Machines, 3x Microwaves, Chest Freezer, Rotary Oven, Ice Machine, Aluminium Induction Pot, 4x LED TV's, 2x Hisense Hi Fi's, TEC Fan, 4x Oil Heaters & 4x Vacuums, 9x Dell Optiplex 7020 Core i5 CPU's, 5x Dell Intel Core VPro's, 13x Dell Monitors, 20x Desktops, 3x HP Printers, 11x Printers, 3x Xerox WorkCentres Printers, Projector, 2x UPS's, 20x Laptops, 5x Dell Keyboards, 3x Satellite Dishes, 3x Mercury Elite 600 Pros, Paper Cutter, 4x Computer Stands, 3x Desks, 4x Office Chairs, 3x Cabinets, Filing Cabinet & 4x Wooden Bookshelves

Viewing: 23 Sep until 27 Sep from 09:00 - 16:00 | Assets located at: Plot Nr. 12281-319 Florida Industrial Ha Hoohlo Maseru

Register & Bid Online: live.lescorauctions.com

Enquiries: +266 627 83610

Conditions: Each buyer has to be registered in order to bid. A refundable registration deposit of **M5 000 (furniture) & M10 000 (vehicle)** is payable via debit or credit card or EFT. No Cash! Duty is payable at border. All offers exclude VAT & Commission. All assets will be sold subject to confirmation. T's & C's apply. This auction is held subject to reserve prices. Vendor bidding is permissible. **SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTIFICATION.**



GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO
DISTRICT COUNCIL PROCUREMENT UNIT – THABA-TSEKA

ADVERTISEMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
TENDER NO: TTDC/MoLGCPHA/4/2024-25

Thaba-Tseka District Council hereby invites proposals from locally interested registered Insurance Companies to provide the insurance cover for trucks and yellow plant for the District Council.

To bid for the proposed contracts, companies must be registered and hold relevant valid Traders' licenses and must be in compliance with tax obligations with valid Tax Clearance certificate.

The issue date for this tender is 06 September 2024, and the closing date is 18 October 2024. An (1) original and four (4) hard copies of the tender responses are to be deposited in the councils tender box situated at THABA-TSEKA DISTRICT COUNCIL OFFICE opposite EDUCATION OFFICE, NOT LATER THAN 10:00a.m. All tenders will be opened on 18

October 2024 at 10:30a.m. Sealed envelope bearing no identification of bidder must be clearly marked **PROPOSAL FOR INSURANCE COVER OF YELLOW PLANT AND TRUCKS FOR THABA-TSEKA DISTRICT COUNCIL**. Tender documents are available at the THABA-TSEKA DISTRICT COUNCIL (PROCUREMENT UNIT) at a non-refundable fee of M2, 500.00 (Two Thousand Five Hunderd Maloti only) payable at Urban Council Accounts Office.

Thaba-Tseka District Council reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids.

Any queries or concerns in relation to this document should be sent to (matse- isofmoshe@hotmail.com) contact 62870120 not later than 03/10/2024.

The National University Of Lesotho



OPPORTUNITY

The National University of Lesotho invites applications from suitably qualified candidates for the following posts:

POST NO.	POSITION	DEPARTMENT / FACULTY	DEADLINE
2290	Lecturer/Senior Lecturer	Geography and Environmental Science / Science and Technology	13th October, 2024

For full job description please refer to NUL Website: www.nul.ls or visit our HR Office at Roma for a hard copy. Please quote the post number you are applying for. For further clarifications call +266 22340247 or +266 22340601 ext 3842/3844.

In your application letter, include the names and contact details of your three (3) referees

Please combine covering letter, CV, certificates and email them as one PDF document. All applications should be emailed to thr@nul.ls and addressed to:

Director - Human Resources
National University of Lesotho
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CONTRACT LHDA NO. 1389
PROVISION OF PROFESSIONAL SERVICES FOR THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION SUPERVISION FOR THE RENOVATION AND REFURBISHMENTS OF MOHALE LODGE BLOCK C AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) requests Quotations from Consultants for the Provision of Professional Services for the Design and Construction Supervision of the Renovation and Refurbishments of Mohale Lodge Block C and Recreational Facilities.

Request for Quotations are available for collection, for a non-refundable fee of M1000, at LHDA, Procurement Offices, 7th floor, LHDA Tower Building, Kingsway Maseru from the 20 September 2024, or can be downloaded at NO COST from LHDA website, <http://www.lhda.org.ls/lhdaweb/procurement/currentTenders>.

Sealed quotations clearly marked C1389 - Provision of Professional Services for the Design and Construction Supervision of the Renovation and Refurbishments of Mohale Lodge Block C and Recreational Facilities, should be deposited at LHDA, 07th Floor, LHDA Tower Building, Kingsway; Maseru not later than 1200 hours on the 01 November 2024. The mandatory Pre-Bid Meeting and Site Visit date is scheduled for 01 October 2024 at Mohale Lodge at 10:30 AM.



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Local Individual Consultant

Job Title: Develop a guide to engage men and boys in improving Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) health outcomes and ending gender based violence (GBV)

Closing date: 25th September 2024
UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund is seeking services of an Individual Consultant to develop a guide to engage men and boys in improving Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) health outcomes and ending gender based violence (GBV)

Scope of Work

The consultant will be expected to undertake a number of interrelated activities.

First, to

1. Develop an inception report and literature review
2. Conduct stakeholder consultations with relevant organisations, community leaders, and beneficiaries
3. Develop a detailed guide on male engagement. Develop a revised implementation plan and detailed 2025 annual plan.
4. Design training modules and materials for capacity building.
5. Provide a framework for monitor-

ing and evaluation Duration and Working Schedule

This consultancy will require 45 persons days over a period of 3 months October to December 2024

The consultant should have the following:

Education:

- Masters Degree in Public health, Education, Sociology, Gender studies or any relevant field.

Experience:

- demonstrable expertise in gender studies, SRH, and GBV prevention.
- Experience in developing engagement guides and conducting training.
- Strong research and analytical skills.
- Excellent communication and facilitation skills.

Procedures for Submission

- Interested local consultants should submit (by mail) their CV to mmathe@unfpa.org by 17:00 on 25 September 2024. Please include Male engagement guide consultancy in the subject line of your email.
- For Further information visit UNFPA on <http://lesotho.unfpa.org> and UNFPA.LS



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ARTS
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New Miss Lesotho, Refiloe Makoe, vows to serve with dedication



Chris Theko

In a night filled with elegance, anticipation, and national pride, 24-year-old Refiloe Makoe was crowned Miss Lesotho 2024.

The coronation, held at the prestigious Victory Hall in Maseru last Saturday, saw Makoe take the reins from her predecessor, Lerato Masila. The ceremony was graced by notable attendees, including Her Majesty Queen Masenate Mohato Seeiso and Her Royal Highness Princess Senate Seeiso, adding a regal touch to the evening.

Makoe, who had previously held the title of Miss Maseru 2022, emerged victorious after a pageant that celebrated not only beauty but also talent, intelligence, and dedication to community service. The newly crowned queen expressed her gratitude and excitement in her acceptance speech, vowing to serve her country with passion and purpose.

"I am deeply honored to hold this title and promise to use this platform to positively impact my country," Makoe stated, her voice filled with emotion. She described the win as a long-held dream finally coming true, noting that it had been a goal she had prayed and worked toward for years.

Makoe outlined her vision for her reign, focusing on empowering young Basotho through skill development, education, and self-sufficiency. Her experience as a soccer

player, a sport she credited with shaping her confidence and approach to life, will also be a key part of her mission.

"I want to use this platform to inspire, influence, support, and uplift young Basotho through different interventions that will help them unlock their fullest potential," she said, underscoring her commitment to sports as a tool for empowerment.

As Miss Lesotho 2024, Makoe received a prize package valued at M45,000, including an initial cash deposit of M2,500 sponsored by Lesotho PostBank.

Beyond the financial rewards, she was granted a coveted three-month paid internship at Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL), an opportunity that promises to provide valuable professional experience.

Other prizes included a temporary stay at Scenery Guesthouse, unlimited transport courtesy of Global Cabs, and a Huawei Nova smartphone and tablet worth M15,000.

The coronation event, organized by New Era Events, was widely hailed as a success. The evening was a glamorous affair, with dazzling performances adding to the excitement. Mabahlakoana Mosola, representing New Era Events, expressed satisfaction with how the evening unfolded. "We are happy with the

outcome and hope that all our patrons were happy too. We have met our expectations and are proud of the work we've done," she said.

However, Mosola acknowledged that growth is always part of the journey, adding: "We always know that there is room for improvement, and we look forward to what the future holds."

One of the unique twists in this year's event was the inclusion of four contestants from the past four years, who joined the eight finalists to compete for the prestigious Aloe Era Crown. It was a reminder that Miss Lesotho is not just a competition but a celebration of resilience, growth, and ongoing service.

As the crown was passed on, the outgoing Miss Lesotho, Lerato Masila, was also honored for her impactful reign. Her tenure was marked by her dedication to advocating for young women and championing various causes, leaving a legacy for Makoe to build upon.

With her newfound role, Refiloe Makoe now embarks on a journey to represent Lesotho on the national and international stage. Her reign promises to be one of ambition, grace, and a deep sense of responsibility as she steps into her role with dedication and a clear vision for the future.



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Pencil artist Uncle Donze takes a two-year hiatus to focus on education

Arts

Chris Theko

Mphohlela Ralethoko, widely known by his artistic alias Uncle Donze, has announced a two-year break from his flourishing career as a pencil artist to concentrate on his academic pursuits.

The 22-year-old self-taught artist, who rose to fame in 2021, has become a household name in the fine arts world, celebrated for his exceptional drawing skills.

Born and raised in the dusty village of Kolabata, on the eastern outskirts of Lesotho’s capital, Maseru, Uncle Donze has captured the hearts of many with his intricate pencil drawings. Despite his young age, his artistry has earned him the title of “the best pencil artist” among his peers and admirers.

In a recent interview with Newsday, Uncle Donze revealed that he is returning to school full-time after a two-year hiatus.

“After dropping out two years ago, I have finally decided to resume my studies, but in a different field,” he shared.

He has enrolled in a four-year course at University in Rwanda, which marks a significant shift in his life, as he temporarily steps back from the art world to prioritise his education.

Uncle Donze’s journey began after completing his secondary education at Methodist High School. He initially enrolled at Lerotoli Polytechnic but left to focus on his art career. During this time, he built a respected brand, leveraging social media platforms like YouTube to showcase his talent and gain

widespread recognition. Despite his decision to pause his artistic endeavours, Uncle Donze assured his fans that he would not entirely abandon his craft.

“I will try to give art my attention during school breaks and if there are any good offer requests for my work,”

“I will try to give art my attention during school breaks and if there are any good offer requests for my work”

he said, offering a glimmer of hope to those who admire his work.

Uncle Donze’s success has challenged traditional perceptions of art as a viable career path. Through his dedication and skill, he has proven that passion can indeed be transformed into a sustainable livelihood, even in fields where financial success is not always guaranteed.

As Uncle Donze embarks on this new chapter, his fans and the art community will undoubtedly await his return to the drawing board, eager to see what new inspirations his academic journey will bring to his future works.

Taking a break away from the limelight might set him back since more artists are

coming through the ranks, he has acknowledged that he may come back to find the competition tough.

“I don’t think I will be able to come back and pick up where I left off because only drawing on holidays might push back the brand and for sure there will be hot new artists so picking up where I left everything will be hard but I pray I will,” he stated.

In 2023 he managed to create a masterpiece of the Swiss tennis legend, Roger Federer who had been in Lesotho on his foundation engagements. He has also created masterpieces for the country’s Prime Minister, Sam Matekane, and the Minister of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police, Lebona Lephema.

Over the years, Uncle Donze has been able to make sales of six and 5 figures for his art pieces where one was sold for M200,000 and another M80,000. He said those have been his biggest achievements to date.

“Apart from having an art piece sold for 6 and 5 figures in 2023 which I had never



expected, another achievement was being able to organise the first ArtFair in Lesotho with the help of a close friend Jason, and all the expenses on my shoulders as there were no sponsors,” he said.

Uncle Donze mentioned that the ArtFair will not take a break as an annual event, also highlighting that the 2025 edition will be on 10 August.

“Hopefully this coming year we will have sponsors as the event had a very good attendance of around 80 people this year. This simply showed us how much our people love and have been longing for art shows which is sorely about the fine art,” he concluded.

Vibeboy drops dedication mixtape

Chris Theko

Mohale’s Hoek-born music producer and composer, Reitumetse Ratlali, better known as Vibeboy, launched his latest mixtape titled ‘FOR YOU AND HER’ on Saturday night at Tesfa Lounge in Maseru. The event drew an enthusiastic crowd of fans and music lovers eager to experience the new project.

The self-taught producer, who has steadily built a reputation in Lesotho’s music scene, described the mixtape as a dedication to the art form he loves. The 14-track collection features an impressive lineup of local talent, including T.U.R.K, Mothapo Oa Loti, Dave Stone, EMCHURCH, MACC Warlet, LU Srenk, HBK, Tono, Raymond Sea, Separola, Thandi amongst others.

The launch event was a celebration of creativity and collaboration, with the featured artists taking the stage to perform their contributions to the mixtape. The atmosphere was electric, as each performance showcased the unique styles and lyrical prowess of the musicians involved.

Vibeboy shared his vision for the mixtape,

explaining that he carefully selected each artist to create a cohesive and impactful project.

“As a DJ and producer, I wanted to bring together the best voices and sounds that would resonate with listeners,” Vibeboy said. “Hip hop has faced some tough competition lately, and I wanted to give the genre’s fans something they could really sink their teeth into.”

The mixtape’s launch comes at a time when the local hip hop scene is striving to maintain its relevance in a rapidly changing music landscape. Vibeboy’s dedication to the genre is evident in the quality and diversity of the tracks on ‘FOR YOU AND HER,’ which is already generating buzz among listeners.

“It is unfortunate that here at home, hip hop is the one genre taken for granted a lot, so we are still trying to build it up hence this heavy heated line up of hip hop acts and I am grateful that all them were eager to jump on this project,” Vibeboy said.

“What is funny is that the kind of music I produce is the kind people generally listen to that is created by South African artistes.



We are on the same wavelength with them, we just need our people to now give us a chance and rally behind such projects.”

Hip hop is really coming back to its glory days, when you look at the international standard starting with South Africa where for some time it seemed hip hop was dead because of the hype around Amapiano, now artists are putting out good music. They are working together which is something we need locally,” he added.

In an emotional tribute, Vibeboy expressed his gratitude to both his father and grandmother for making everything possible in his life and career. The mixtape’s open-

ing track, ‘Ngiyabonga’, offers listeners an intimate glimpse into his relationship with them, setting the tone for a project steeped in personal significance.

Vibeboy’s journey in the music industry began around 2015 as a rapper, but he soon realized that his true calling was in music production. In 2016, he began honing his skills on a friend’s laptop using Fruity Loops software, eventually advancing to more sophisticated tools.

His hard work and dedication have culminated in the release of ‘FOR YOU AND HER,’ his second project following the 2021 mixtape ‘Dos and Don’ts.’

SPORTS

Seabata Mahao



The senior striker of Kick4Life Ladies Football Club (FC), Puseletso Jobo

Puseletso Jobo, senior striker for Kick4Life Ladies Football Club (FC), is not only a star on the field but also an administration trainee at Kick4Life Social Enterprise.

Known for her goal-scoring prowess, she was the top scorer in the Lesotho Women’s Super League (WSL) during her first season with Kick4Life in 2022/23.

This outstanding achievement earned

Jobo speaks on juggling sports and employment

her the Fans’ Favourite Player award at the prestigious Ladies in a Men-Dominated Game event.

However, Jobo’s impact goes beyond the pitch. While honing her football skills, she is also acquiring valuable administrative experience, making her more employable and shaping a promising future. In a recent interview with Kick4Life’s Communications and Marketing team, Jobo shared insights into her journey.

“Growing up, I’ve always wanted to address social problems and be a catalyst for change. It’s no surprise that I find myself here today,” Jobo said.

“Being part of Kick4Life, the first football club solely focused on social change, is a blessing. Their Fit4Work & Play program has transformed me professionally, personally, and spiritually.”

Jobo graduated from the National University of Lesotho (NUL) with a bachelor’s degree in Political Science and Public Administration.

“While I learned theory in the classroom, Kick4Life gave me hands-on experience as an administrative assistant trainee, first in the Academy and now in the Social Enterprise,” she explained.

In addition to her work in administration, Jobo serves as a character develop-

ment facilitator and a life skills coach for Kick4Life’s Girls United program. This initiative empowers girls and young women with sexual and reproductive health education, knowledge of their rights, and tools to prevent and respond to gender-based violence.

“As a career-driven athlete, I aim to contribute to sports in ways that extend beyond just playing. Kick4Life has given me a taste of that dream. Through their Fit4Work & Play program, I’ve been able to achieve my academic and athletic potential,” Jobo said proudly.

Kick4Life’s Country Director, Motlatsi Nkhahle, also expressed his pride in the program’s success.

“Our goal is to develop more than just players. By instilling positive values, fostering a service-minded attitude, and promoting a growth mindset, we are delighted to support Puseletso and other Basotho youth on this transformative journey,” Nkhahle stated.

Kick4Life is committed to using sport as a vehicle for social change, empowering its participants both on and off the field. Through initiatives like Fit4Work & Play, it bridges the gap between sports and employment, helping youth like Jobo realise their full potential and build brighter futures.

Women’s football shines bright

... LDF Ladies triumph in thrilling pre-season tournament

Thabo Rakhomo

Following the Women Diski Challenge Tournament, which saw eight women’s football clubs compete at Ratjomose Sports Grounds over the weekend, the Lesotho Women’s Super League (WSL), set to kick off on October 29, is expected to be highly competitive.

The tournament featured WSL teams, including LDF Ladies, Kick4Life Women, Berea Ladies, LMPS Ladies, Lijabatho Ladies, and newly promoted Bokamoso Ladies.

Completing the fixture were Hunters Ladies and Koalepe Ladies from the lower division.

The two-day event kicked off on Saturday with Bokamoso Ladies surprising football fans by defeating LMPS Ladies 2-1 to advance to the semifinals.

In other games, LDF Ladies dominated Koalepe Ladies with a resounding 9-0 win, Berea Ladies eased past Hunters Ladies 3-0, and Kick4Life Women defeated Lijabatho Ladies 3-0 in the final match of the day.

Sunday’s semi-finals were tightly contested, with every team vying for the championship. Berea Ladies advanced after a 5-3 penalty shootout win following a 1-1 draw against Bokamoso Ladies.

The second semi-final, anticipated as the “final before the final,” lived up to expectations, ending in a 0-0 draw. LDF Ladies triumphed 5-3 on penalties over Kick4Life Women to secure their spot in the final.

In the championship match, LDF Ladies showcased their dominance by defeating Berea Ladies 3-0, lifting the tournament trophy.

The tournament left women’s football fans praising the high level of competition, with coaches expressing satisfaction with the event as a valuable pre-season preparation.

“I said at the end of last season that women’s football is growing, and the dominance of one team will soon be a thing of the past. Today, we saw how strong Kick4Life Women were against us,” said LDF Ladies coach Lengana Nkhethoa.

Kick4Life Women coach, Teboho Taki-si, had mixed emotions after his team’s penalty loss but expressed confidence in their readiness for the upcoming league season.

Individual awards were also presented: Boelo Lepheane of Kick4Life Women won the Golden Glove, ‘Mafusi Phezu-lu claimed the Golden Boot with three goals, Berea Ladies’ Lehloenya Nkhasi was named Coach of the Tournament, and Bokang Ntsane of LDF Ladies was honoured as Player of the Tournament.

With the tournament behind them, all eyes now turn to the highly anticipated new season, which promises thrilling matches.

Fixtures for 29/09/2024:

- Lijabatho vs Mphaki HS Ladies
- Thaba-Tseka Ladies vs LDF Ladies
- Berea Ladies vs Bokamoso College Ladies
- FC Stoko vs Kick4Life Women
- LMPS Ladies vs Bantu Ladies

LNIG boosts Majantja with M600K sponsorship

Seabata Mahao



Kefuoe Ramokhele, the General Manager of LNIG Hollard

The Lesotho National Insurance Group (LNIG) Hollard has announced a significant M600,000 sponsorship deal with Majantja Football Club (FC), marking a major milestone for the newly promoted Vodacom Premier League (VPL) side.

The sponsorship will be spread over three years, with LNIG Hollard providing M200,000 annually to support the club’s development and financial stability.

Majantja earned promotion to the top-flight league after winning the A Division League Southern Stream last season. The financial boost from LNIG Hollard is expected to help the team navigate the challenges of competing at the highest level.

Motolo Makepe, Assistant Coach of Majantja, expressed excitement about the sponsorship, noting that it would significantly motivate the players and technical team.

“To have a big brand like LNIG Hollard backing us is a huge morale booster, and we promise to work hard to make the most of this partnership,” said Makepe.

Kefuoe Ramokhele, General Manager of LNIG Hollard, explained that the company decided to sponsor Majantja after being approached by the club. He highlighted the importance of sports in society and the company’s commitment to supporting it.

“We were approached by Majantja for a

partnership, and we accepted their proposal because we recognize how vital sports are within our community,” Ramokhele said.

“As part of the agreement, Majantja will receive M200,000 annually for three years, and the deal is subject to renewal and improvement.”

Ramokhele also emphasized that this sponsorship is part of LNIG Hollard’s broader commitment to giving back to society.

Majantja FC President, Moeti Lekhooana, expressed gratitude for the partnership, assuring LNIG Hollard that the team would work hard to represent the sponsor well and make them proud.

“We are going to ensure that both brands, Majantja and LNIG Hollard, benefit from this partnership,” Lekhooana said.

“We believe we have built a team that will be admired by many, and we are ready to contribute to the growth of our partner, LNIG Hollard.”

Lekhooana also noted that the sponsorship would provide much-needed financial support to pay players and the technical team, helping the club focus on achieving success in the Vodacom Premier League.

The partnership between LNIG Hollard and Majantja FC highlights the growing importance of corporate sponsorship in supporting sports development in Lesotho, as teams like Majantja seek to establish themselves in the country’s top football league.

Likuena's AFCON dream diminishes

Seabata Mahao



Lesotho senior team, Likuena in Morocco

Likuena's hopes of qualifying for the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) have taken a severe blow after suffering a second consecutive defeat. The Lesotho national football team was narrowly beaten 1-0 by Morocco in their latest Group B clash, with a last-gasp goal sealing their fate. The heartbreaking moment came in the 93rd minute when Real Madrid star Brahim Diaz, introduced from the bench in the second half, scored a stoppage-time winner, breaking Likuena's resolve. Diaz, along with Morocco's captain Hakim Ziyech, was brought on to inject fresh energy into the Atlas Lions' attack, and their presence ultimately made the difference. Morocco entered the match riding high after a 4-1 victory over Gabon, while Lesotho was coming off a 3-1 loss to the Central African Republic. From the outset, Morocco dominated possession and dictated the pace of the game, but

they found it difficult to break down Likuena's stubborn defence, expertly marshalled by the captain, Sekhoane Moerane. Moerane put in a heroic performance, making several crucial saves to keep his side in contention. The first half ended goalless, with Lesotho holding firm despite Morocco's relentless pressure. In a bold tactical move, Morocco's coach Walid Regragui made four substitutions at the start of the second half, including the introduction of Ziyech and Diaz. The changes increased Morocco's attacking threat, but chances remained limited for both sides. Likuena's best opportunity came through talisman Motebang Sera, while Lehlohonolo Matsau sent a long-range effort high over the bar. As the match seemed destined for a draw, Diaz found space in the dying minutes, finally breaking through Lesotho's defence to score and se-

cure Morocco's second victory of the qualifiers. In a post-match interview, Likuena's head coach, Leslie Notši, acknowledged the difficulty of the match. "It was a tough encounter, and while we didn't get the result we wanted, I am proud of the players. They stuck to the game plan and showed great character," he said. "There's a lot we can take from this match moving forward. We have the potential to become a very competitive team." Likuena's journey back home saw the team travel from Morocco to Southern Africa, with local players and staff returning to Maseru by bus, while international-based players flew to their respective clubs. Motebang Sera and Thabo Makhele returned to their South African clubs Royal AM and Chippa United to prepare for the new PSL season. Meanwhile, Neo Mokhachane rejoined Jwaneng Galaxy ahead of their CAF

Champions League fixture against Orlando Pirates. The second loss condemned Likuena to the bottom of group B table, with zero points and a negative goal difference of -3. And despite the setback, Likuena will take lessons from this hard-fought contest as they continue their quest for AFCON qualification from their four remaining qualifier games. For Morocco, the result was less about points and more about experimentation. With their place at AFCON 2025 already secured as the host nation, the Atlas Lions used the match to test different tactical approaches and give younger players valuable international experience. Though they struggled to dominate as they had in previous matches, Morocco's ability to secure a last-minute win highlighted their resilience and determination.