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Mafeteng water crisis: Patients stranded

... DMA and WASCO acknowledged for response efforts



Raleting Dam - Picture Courtesy WASCO

Staff Reporter

Mafeteng is grappling with a severe water shortage, with the District Medical Officer, Dr. Mpho Seleke, reporting that patients at Mafeteng Hospital are at times unable to access water for basic needs like medication administration and bathing.

Seleke was quick to note that the Disaster Management Authority (DMA) and the Water and Sewerage Company (WASCO) have been attempting to alleviate the situation by supplying water to the hospital via tankers.

"We appreciate the efforts of DMA and WASCO for

bringing water with tankers," he acknowledged in an interview with Newsday yesterday.

"When the water supply depletes, and while these organisations scramble to source more, our patients are left without water for drinking, medication, or bathing," Seleke stated, highlighting the severity of the crisis.

He further stressed the sanitation challenges this poses.

"Maintaining hospital hygiene becomes nearly impossible under these conditions, and we all know how critical cleanliness is in a healthcare setting."

Seleke elaborated that the water crisis affects not just those admitted but also outpatients who need water while waiting for consultations.

"Even companions of patients require water, and our staff, especially those who are not Mafeteng residents, as they lack local water contingency plans," he remarked.

"The situation is dire, but we must acknowledge the assistance from DMA and WASCO."

He pointed out that among the 18 health centres in the district, including the main hospital, only the hospital and the clinic at Lehcop do not have access to boreholes.

The water crisis has drawn the attention of Prime Minister Ntsokoane Samuel Matekane, who visited the district on Wednesday to see the parched reality for himself.

Earlier this month, WASCO released a statement acknowledging the severe water scarcity currently affecting Mafeteng and said it was taking urgent action to address the water crisis.

"The Water and Sewerage Company (WASCO) acknowledges the severe water scarcity currently affecting Mafeteng, which has disrupted daily life and strained businesses and essential services," WASCO said.

It indicated that this crisis directly resulted from unpredictable weather patterns linked to climate change, including prolonged droughts and extreme heat waves, compounded by the siltation of the Rasebala Dam, the town's primary water source.

WASCO's caretaker Chief Executive Seboko, expressed deep concern over the situation.

"We are acutely aware of the hardships faced by the Mafeteng community and businesses due to the ongoing water scarcity. As your service provider, we are fully committed to implementing effective measures to alleviate the crisis and ensure that Mafeteng residents and businesses receive the water they desperately need," Seboko said.

According to WASCO, the Rasebala Dam, commissioned in 1993 and upgraded in 2012 to meet growing demand, has suffered significant siltation, reducing its storage capacity to just 15 percent.

The town's water treatment plant, designed to produce 3.3 Mega Liters per day (ML/D), currently delivers only 1.8 ML/D, well below the town's demand.

"Additional challenges include dwindling water levels in supplementary dams, Luma and Raleting, which were commissioned during a severe drought in 2015 as temporary relief measures," WASCO said.

Last month, Advocate Fusi Sehapi, on behalf of Mafeteng residents, and the rights group, the Advocates for the Supremacy of the Constitution (SECTION 2), urged authorities to address the crisis.

In a letter to Health Minister Selibe Mochoborane and Natural Resources Minister Mhloni Moleko, Sehapi reminding them of the government's obligation to provide water.

SECTION 2 issued a statement on December 31, 2024, confirming severe water shortages in Mafeteng and calling on Moleko to declare a water emergency within 14 days. He has not declared an emergency and the 14-day period has lapsed.

"Compliance with legal regulations governing water resource management is crucial for maintaining the rule of law and safeguarding citizens' rights," SECTION 2 said.

The organisation pledged solidarity with Mafeteng residents and demanded transparency in water management practices. Failure to address the crisis, it warned, would lead to legal action against WASCO and the government.



Relebohile Makhetha

In a strongly-worded rebuke, Magistrate Nkhetho Molapo this week expressed frustration over the handling of cases brought to court before investigations are complete, a practice he said undermines the efficiency and credibility of the judiciary.

The magistrate's remarks came during proceedings involving Mamolefe Macheli and Retšelisitsoe Macheli, both residents of Quthing, who stand accused of conspiring to murder an individual on August 21, 2024.

The case, however, has been repeatedly postponed due to incomplete investigations and complications related to some of the accused reportedly residing in South Africa.

Molapo postponed the case to February 4, but not before delivering a scathing critique of police investigators for what he described as incompetence and negligence.

He emphasised that the judiciary is unfairly shouldering the blame for delays that are largely the result of shoddy police work.

"This issue of incomplete investigations being presented in court is damaging the judiciary's rep-

utation. People blame the courts for delays, not realising that cases are often stalled because the police have failed to complete their investigations," Molapo said.

He further criticised investigators for disregarding the need for thorough and timely case preparation.

Lesotho's judiciary is grappling with a significant backlog of cases, which legal experts attribute to systemic inefficiencies, including delayed investigations. This has left hundreds of cases unresolved, while accused individuals often remain unpunished, creating a perception of lawlessness.

Observers have noted that this failure to finalise cases is emboldening criminal elements, as many believe they can commit crimes without facing timely consequences. Meanwhile, victims and their families are left in limbo, awaiting justice that often feels out of reach.

Molapo called on law enforcement agencies to prioritise professional training for investigators and adopt a more meticulous approach to case handling.

"Incomplete investigations should not be rushed to court under any circumstances. Proper case preparation is essential for a fair trial and the swift

'Incompetent' police investigators berated

administration of justice," he added.

Complicating matters further is the transnational nature of some cases, such as the current one, where suspects reportedly reside in South Africa. This adds an additional layer of difficulty for investigators, who must navigate international protocols to apprehend suspects and gather evidence.

Molapo urged the relevant authorities to improve collaboration with their South African counterparts to expedite cross-border cases. He highlighted the need for a framework that ensures effective cooperation in criminal investigations and prosecutions involving suspects in neighbouring countries.

This criticism comes against a backdrop of the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) being notorious for violence, brutality, and misconduct. In September 2019, then-High Court Judge Sakoane Sakoane, now Chief Justice, compared the LMPS to the Gestapo and South African apartheid police, noting their ruthless behaviour.

Gestapo was Nazi Germany's infamous political police force. It ruthlessly, according to reports, eliminated opposition to the Nazis within Germany and its occupied territories and, in partnership with the Sicherheitsdienst, was responsible for the roundup of Jews throughout Europe for deportation to extermination camps.

"It is a matter of shame that the applicant (Kabelo Ratia) had been tortured and forced to eat his faeces

by the Matela police and nothing was done to bring them to book, this type of conduct bespeaks of the most despicable, sadistic behaviour and savagery to which men and women in uniform have stooped, contrary to their oath under the Police Service Act no 7 of 1998," Sakoane said in 2019.

Ratia was allegedly tortured in police cells until he soiled himself and then was reportedly forced to eat his own faeces by police. He had been arrested for alleged theft.

"The police have reached the worst of police brutality even surpassing the Gestapo and apartheid police, this record must not be allowed to remain in the annals of the history of the Lesotho Police Service," said Sakoane in a judgment which criticised prosecution and magistrate 'Makopano Rantšo for how they handled Ratia's case when they remanded him in custody despite reports that he was tortured.

Sakoane suggested that the officers implicated in Ratia's torture should be removed from the police service.

He said: "This despicable conduct completely destroys the image of the police as a service and constitutes a negation of humanity and a spit in the face of the values of our constitution."

He added: "It is not a mere disciplinary offence but a serious crime, a police officer who engages in such conduct is nothing but a criminal in uniform. He/she must be rooted out without much ado and face the full might of the law."

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Explosive revelations at giant cannabis firm

- **Local director exposes shady practices**
- **Millions in revenue for government lost**

In a dramatic showdown during the Social Cluster Portfolio Committee meeting this week, Morama Holdings, a leading cannabis company in Lesotho, was thrown into disarray as local shareholder and director, Moelo Ramahlele, unleashed a scathing critique against the firm's executives.

The meeting, charged with tension, painted a dark portrait of non-compliance and deceit.

Lee-Anne Jacobs, the firm's Chief Operations Officer, told the committee that the company invested M2,500,000 to purchase at least 12 fields.

Jacobs added that to date, investors have contributed M100 million to the company, which currently employs 43 unskilled workers, 20 part-time staff, and four managers.

She claimed that since starting operations in 2019, Morama Holdings had only executed one export in June 2024.

However, Moeleo Ramahlele, a local shareholder and a board member, contested this, asserting that she had signed multiple export permits for both international and domestic shipments, suggesting a cover-up of the company's true export activities.

Scott Henson, the CEO of Morama Holdings, defended the singular export claim and explained that the company has not distributed dividends due to the lack of profit, having only one export to show.

Despite this, Henson projected billions in future revenue, fuelled by heightened demand, particularly from Germany, which is looking to double its cannabis imports. The committee meeting also shed light on

a staggering M6 million revenue loss for Lesotho due to cannabis companies failing to renew their licenses.

This was disclosed by Mokhothu Makhalan-yane, Chairman of the Social Cluster Portfolio Committee, during a confrontation with representatives from the Ministry of Health and Morama Holdings.

The nation had expected to rake in over M6 million (specifically, M6,750,000) from license renewals for the 24 operational cannabis companies in 2023, but only managed to collect M750,000.

"Out of the 24 companies operating, only two complied with renewing their license. This revenue was intended to address deficiencies within the Ministry of Health," Makhalan-yane stated.

He further noted that apart from license fees, the government expects to generate revenue through dividends and taxes.

"This year, we are starting with Morama Holdings to ensure compliance, and this process will extend to all companies," he added.

However, Ramahlele challenged the ministry's portrayal of the company as having a good compliance record, exposing what she described as a questionable adherence to local laws.

She detailed a litany of grievances, ranging from opaque hiring, governance issues to lack of transparency.

"When we started, 99 percent of the workers were not local and lacked proper documentation, despite there being local skills available. Moreover, we have management staff employed by the company in Lesotho but not residing here. They should have documenta-



Mokhothu Makhalan-yane, Chairman of the Social Cluster Portfolio Committee

tion proving they work in Lesotho and be taxed accordingly, but this isn't happening since they're not living in the country," she said.

She further criticised the governance structure.

"There's a board for Agri-BioMed, the foreign partner, and a separate one for Morama Holdings, which includes local shareholders. The problem is that Agri-BioMed makes decisions and imposes them on Morama Holdings, often to the dissatisfaction of local shareholders," she said.

Ramahlele also highlighted the lack of transparency in hiring management stating that no advertisements were issued for management positions.

"Shareholders are only made aware once someone has already joined the company," she said.

She added: "The core issue is our lack of access to operational information at Morama Holdings. We can't even agree or dispute dividend proposals because all relevant data is processed in South Africa and sent directly to its final destination in Lesotho without informing the shareholders. We don't have access to this information, not even what's reported to the Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL)."

Lesotho stands out as one of the few African nations exporting cannabis to international markets, including Australia, Portugal, Canada, and South Africa.

Cannabis cash crop explodes internationally

... While Lesotho's cancer patients suffer in silence

Ntsoaki Motaung

Faced with an inquiry from the National Assembly's Social Cluster Committee Chairman, Makhalan-yane Mokhothu, about the export of cannabis while domestic patients, including those with cancer, lack access, the Ministry of Health delegation seemed visibly uncomfortable.

Leading the ministry's delegation before the committee was Dr Lucy Mapota, Director of Clinical Services, alongside Director of Pharmaceuticals, Germina Mphoso, and Legal Officer 'Masello Sello.

Mphoso explained that since the cannabis industry began operating in 2019, the country has seen indirect medical benefits. She noted that businesses are now exporting cannabis to other countries, with the government expecting to collect a 1.5 percent tax on these transactions.

Mphoso explained that since the cannabis industry began operating in 2019, the country has seen indirect medical benefits. She noted that businesses are now exporting cannabis to other countries, with the government expecting to collect a 1.5 percent tax on these transactions.

"However, we have not yet realised direct medicinal benefits for our citizens. We are still working on establishing a regulatory authority to manage this process," she said.

She emphasised the importance of setting up a regulatory framework to oversee clinical trials, especially for cancer treatment, highlighting that cannabis could offer a more effective pain management option than the chemical narcotics currently available, with fewer side effects.

Mphoso further elaborated that cannabis has potential applications for conditions like epilepsy and arthritis, particularly for pain management, but precise dosing is essential.



Germina Mphoso Director Pharmaceutical Before Social Cluster Committee on Wednesday.

Mokhothu challenged Mphoso for more precision, asking for exact figures in terms of kilograms or milliliters exported and how these exports have benefited the country specifically in the areas she mentioned.

He questioned: "We know that over 600 individuals are diagnosed with cancer each year and need treatment in Bloemfontein. What benefits are these patients receiving from our domestic medicine production?"

Mphoso responded candidly, stating: "Currently, there are no direct benefits. The benefits are indirect, and I do not have specific export data. However, we are exporting to countries like Australia, Portugal, Canada, and South Africa."

Specialists have pointed out a significant increase in cancer treatment costs.

In 2015, Lesotho reportedly spent at least M145,000 per cancer patient for

treatment. By 2023, this cost had reportedly escalated to M220,000 per patient.

Dr Kabelo Mputsoe, a Clinical and Radiation Oncologist, has previously shared alarming statistics on the rise of cancer in Lesotho, with 625 cases reported in 2023 and 750 new cases in 2024.

"All types of cancers are present in Lesotho, but the most common are cervical, breast, and prostate cancer," she noted.

Eight years on: No closure in Mochochoko's murder case

Kabelo Masoabi

Almost eight years have passed since the brutal murder of Pastor Mavis Mochochoko, a 75-year-old respected community leader, in her Mohalalitoe home in Maseru in October 2017.

Her family continues to seek justice and closure for this unresolved tragedy.

Mpho Mochochoko, the pastor's daughter, voiced her frustration with the investigation's slow pace, saying they are left wondering if the case will ever be resolved or if it has simply been forgotten.

Despite some leads, according to Mpho, no arrests have been made, leaving the family in the dark.

She claims that the police's Crime Investigation Division (CID) has failed to keep the family updated about the progress of the investigation.

"It is disappointing to learn that the CID officers who were originally assigned to this case have since retired. Since then, we have been left in the dark regarding any developments. Earlier this month, we visited the CID office for an update and were shocked to find that no one was actively working on the case. Perhaps it has been classified as a cold case," she stated.

"I smell a rat here. Other high-profile murder investigations in this country seem to be resolved much faster. Why is this one taking so long?" she questioned.

A police report indicates that the well-known reverend and founder of the Ministry of Insured Salvation, who ran an orphanage for over 30 years, was strangled to death by her attackers, who also stole her car.

Additionally, more than M14,000 in cash was taken. Following the discovery of her body, police promptly launched an investigation and appealed to the public for information that would lead to the arrest of the suspects, but their pleas went unanswered.



Slayed Pastor Mavis Mochochoko

On the day she was murdered, Mpho explained that her mother had collected payments amounting to M14,000 from tenants renting her flats in Thabong and Mohalalitoe in Maseru. It is believed she was attacked the very night she had that money, with the bag containing it left empty. Her stolen car, along with the cash, has never been recovered. "It pains us a lot to know that her killer is freely walking the streets while no one is doing anything about it," she complained.

On Wednesday, Police Deputy Spokesperson Inspector 'Mareabetsoe Mofoka emphasised that it was inappropriate for the department not to share relevant information with the victim's family.

Mofoka said: "When an officer retires, the responsibilities are properly handed over to other officers. If what the family's claim is true, they should reach out to the police complaints office for further action. They have a right to know about the progress of the case and the investigating officer."

Mofoka also clarified that a homicide case

cannot be classified as cold in Lesotho, which means this case is still under active investigation. A cold case is typically defined as an unsolved criminal investigation that has ceased being pursued due to a lack of evidence.

According to a police report, the attackers likely entered Pastor Mochochoko's home through a bedroom window. Her body was discovered on the floor of her bedroom by her grandchildren, who had come to visit that Sunday morning before heading to church.

Initially unaware of the situation, the grandchildren tried to wake her, but when she didn't respond, they called a relative, a son-in-law, for help.

The son-in-law found her lifeless and, not wanting to frighten the children, told them to go to church as he arranged to take their grandmother to the hospital, claiming she was unwell. However, upon further examination, both he and her daughter noticed the gruesome signs of foul play and immediately called the police.

Police Spokesperson, Senior Superinten-

dent Mpiti Mopeli, back then confirmed that they were treating the case as one of murder and armed robbery, stating: "We are aware that Pastor Mochochoko's car, a silver Cambria with registration number F5828, was stolen along with the keys to her other vehicle and the gate."

The murder of Pastor Mochochoko, a defenceless elderly woman, sent shockwaves throughout the nation and drew responses from both the public and high-ranking government officials. The then-police minister, 'Mampho Mokhele, urged law enforcement to rigorously pursue those who prey on the elderly, asserting: "It's time to combat violence against the elderly with formidable force."

Mokhele expressed her outrage during a visit to Pastor Mochochoko's home to offer condolences. She was perplexed as to why the suspects would kill Mochochoko when they could have simply stolen her car and left her unharmed.

This crime isn't isolated.

In October 2020, Reverend Father Pule Mahlaku of the Roman Catholic Church was robbed at gunpoint near Ha Buasono in Bera, where he endured brutal treatment from his assailants, who burned him with electrical wires and suffocated him with a cloth before making away with an undisclosed amount of church money.

"After enduring torture, the robbers, who were wearing masks like those used for skiing, made off with the church money I had in my possession before fleeing in my car," he recounted pointing out that his vehicle was later discovered abandoned outside Ha Buasono.

Father Mahlaku founded St Cecilia Orphanage, a non-governmental organisation established in 2009 to address the growing number of orphans resulting from the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The children's home regularly receives donations from both local and international supporters to help meet the needs of the orphans.

Just a few weeks prior to the incident, the then-first lady, Masekoalana Majoro, along with other sponsors, had provided food parcels and face masks to the centre. In 2017, Standard Bank Lesotho donated M200,000 to support the home's ongoing operations.

Plastic levy introduction to curb environmental pollution

Seabata Mahao

The Ministry of Environment and Forestry has introduced the Environment (Plastic Levy) Regulations, 2022, as part of efforts to tackle the growing issue of plastic pollution in Lesotho.

Under these regulations, a plastic levy will be charged on plastic shopping bags, with proceeds directed towards environmental sustainability initiatives.

Speaking at the recent signing ceremony of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Ministry of Environment and the Revenue Services Lesotho (RSL), Advocate Limpho Sekete from the ministry revealed that registered suppliers of plastic shopping bags will collect a levy of 90 lisente (M0.90) per bag from customers at points of sale.

The levy is payable to the RSL, and aligns with national revenue collection laws.

"No person shall import, manufacture, sell or provide a plastic bag whose thickness is below 25-35 microns or import, manufacture, sell, provide or use a flimsy plastic bag. A person who contravenes sub regulation (1) commits an offence and on conviction is liable to a fine not less than Five Thousand Maloti but not exceeding Fifty Thousand Maloti or imprisonment for a period not less than two years but not exceeding Twenty years or both," Sekete said.

On her part, RSL's Commissioner General,

'Mathabo Mokoko, described the partnership as a milestone in addressing the pressing issue of plastic pollution, which has severe consequences for ecosystems and public health.

"This gathering is testament to the commitment we are making to address this issue. The introduction of the plastic levy is one of the key strategies designed to reduce plastic waste, incentivise recycling, and promote more sustainable alternatives. I commend the Government of Lesotho and the Ministry of Environment and Forestry for taking this bold step forward.

"We are formalising our collaboration in the collection of the plastic levy, we are taking an important step towards environmental sustainability. This initiative is not just a financial mechanism, it is a shared commitment to fostering a culture of environmental responsibility. The revenue generated from this levy, will play a critical role in funding programmes aimed at reducing plastic waste, encouraging recycling, and supporting innovative solutions that align with our national sustainability goals," Mokoko said.

She further indicated that RSL fully recognises the challenges ahead. Implementing a new levy requires careful planning, robust systems, and, most importantly, the cooperation of all stakeholders. With the guidance of relevant legal frameworks, RSL is committed to ensuring effective and efficient collection

of the plastic levy, utilising its resources and personnel.

"Additionally, we will implement measures to ensure that plastic product imports are properly declared, adhering to the necessary protocols. We are also committed to transparency, efficiency, and fairness throughout this process. Our team is working closely with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry in creating awareness and educating the public about this initiative."

"It is important to emphasise the value of collaboration in making this effort a success. The positive impact of initiatives like this one depends on the active participation of businesses, communities, and individuals. Together, we can raise awareness about the harmful impact of plastic waste and the crucial role the levy will play in fostering change," Mokoko explained.

Mokoko urged businesses to comply fully with the regulation governing the plastic levy as that will be reinforcing their collective commitment to environmental stewardship and demonstrate the shared responsibility in safeguarding the future.

Mokoko also emphasised the importance of transparency and cooperation in implementing the levy, highlighting that RSL will work closely with the Ministry of Environment to educate the public and ensure compliance.

Letsema Adontši, the Minister of Environment and Forestry noted that cabinet approved the plastic levy and other environmental regulations in December 2024.

"As the government, we are deeply concerned about environmental pollution, and we are taking all necessary measures to address this issue and bring land pollution under control," he said

He emphasised that the government is deeply committed to combating land pollution through initiatives such as the "Operation Keep Lesotho Clean" campaign and the development of an Integrated Solid Waste Management Strategy.

The Minister also mentioned the establishment of an Environmental Crime Unit within the Lesotho Mounted Police Service, tasked with enforcing environmental laws and raising public awareness. Additionally, he highlighted the environmental hazards posed by disposable diapers and used tires, underscoring the need for further regulations to address these issues.

Proceeds from the plastic levy will be deposited into the Environment Fund, which will finance programs to clean the environment, control pollution, educate the public, and train regulatory personnel. The fund will also support youth sensitisation initiatives and other activities deemed necessary under the Environment Act, 2008.

Refurbished courts rekindle hope against child abuse



Relebohile Makhetha

The judiciary, in partnership with the European Union (EU), World Vision, and UNICEF, under the Citizens Voice Addressing Violence Against Children (CVAVAC) Project, has unveiled five rehabilitated children's courts in Maseru, Leribe, Berea, Mohale's Hoek, and Thaba-Tseka.

The launch was hailed as a significant step towards creating a child-friendly justice system in Lesotho.

Speaking at the launch in Maseru this week, Chief Justice Sakoane Sakoane emphasised the critical role of children's courts in safeguarding and serving the nation's children.

He underscored the importance of ensuring the refurbished courts are used exclusively for cases involving children, even when adults are implicated in offences against minors.

The Chief Justice further stressed the need for corrective measures and counselling for problematic children to prevent them from

being in conflict with the law.

Chief Justice Sakoane also expressed deep concern over the alarming rise in sexual offenses against children, with victims reported to be as young as six months old. He emphasised that the new facilities would not only provide a conducive environment for children but also help deliver harsher sentences for perpetrators.

In a reflective moment, the Chief Justice expressed envy for the specialized facilities now available in children's courts, noting the lack of similar amenities in his own High Court, which also serves vulnerable groups such as the elderly and disabled. He called for continued investment in the justice system to ensure better outcomes for all.

On her part, the EU Ambassador to Lesotho Paula Amadei, described the launch as a milestone in addressing violence against children and ensuring their access to justice. She emphasized that the refurbished courts would improve service delivery and protect the rights of the most vulnerable.

UNICEF Country Representative Dr Bob Muchabaiwa echoed these sentiments, calling the refurbished courts "symbols of hope." He emphasized the legal and moral obligation to ensure the safety of children and provide a justice system that reflects their developmental needs.

World Vision Lesotho's National Director, James Chifwelu, called the project a milestone in upholding children's rights. "Through child-friendly courts, children can have their rights fulfilled without further torment. However, more efforts are needed to protect children from harm and violence," he remarked.

Funded by the EU, the CVAVAC Project aims to improve access to justice for children. Launched in February 2022 and set to conclude in February 2025, the project has facilitated the refurbishment of children's courts and provided critical resources, including video conferencing systems, staff training, and renovations to enhance visibility and functionality.

Botha-Bothe woman wins M200k in Econet's Baso200 campaign



Econet Telecom Lesotho's first monthly prize winner of the on-going campaign in Botha-Bothe last week

Seabata Mahao

Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL), a leading telecommunications provider in the country, has transformed the life of Botha-Bothe resident 'Makaete Grace Lefaso by awarding her a M200 000 in cash prize.

Lefaso is one of the major cash prize winners of ETL's Baso200 campaign, which celebrates Lesotho's bicentennial with life-changing prizes for its customers.

During the recent cheque handover ceremony in Botha Bothe, Puleng 'Mathabo Masoabi, the Acting General Manager of Marketing Communications and Customer Experience at ETL, expressed the company's pride in Lefaso's win.

"We are thrilled to celebrate this milestone with 'Makaete Lefaso as our first M200,000 winner in the Baso200 campaign. This initiative is part of our commitment to giving back to our customers and enriching their lives in meaningful ways," said Masoabi.

She encouraged Basotho to participate in the campaign and seize the opportunity to unlock incredible benefits and win exciting prizes.

On her part, an emotional Lefaso thanked Econet for the opportunity, stating that the prize would significantly impact her and her family.

"Winning M200,000 is a life-changing blessing. It will allow me to complete my family's projects and improve our lives. To everyone out there, this is real—join the campaign, and you could be the next lucky winner," she said.

Launched in November 2024, the Baso200 campaign is part of Econet's efforts to celebrate Lesotho's 200 years while giving back to its customers. The initiative rewards participants with a variety of prizes, aiming to deliver value to both new and existing subscribers.

The campaign offers daily prizes to the value of M2,000 in cash, and weekly Prizes at the value of M10,000 in cash or a smartphone valued at M10,000.

There are also monthly prizes valued at M200,000 in cash for four months. There is also the grand prize of a brand-new Toyota bakkie valued at over M500,000.

Participation is simple and accessible to all. New subscribers can join by purchasing Nalane bundles starting at a minimum of M10.

The bundles unlock, 200 local seconds, 200 ETL-to-ETL daily minutes, 11.3GB of data. The benefits remain valid for 200 minutes, and every additional bundle purchased increases the chances of winning in the daily, weekly, or monthly draws.

Adding a cultural touch, ETL has incorporated an appreciation prize—a specially designed ETL Basotho blanket that celebrates Lesotho's bicentennial, reinforcing the campaign's theme of community and connection.

Court orders psychiatric evaluation of assault suspect

Relebohile Makhetha

In a series of criminal cases presented before Magistrate Nkhethoa Molapo on January 23, the court addressed various grave offenses, including murder, assault, and sexual violence. Prosecutors Moeketsi Tšolo and 'Marojele Rabale led the proceedings.

Assault Case: Limpho Manyamane

Limpho Manyamane of Lithabaneng faced charges of assaulting 'Malipuo Chakacha. The prosecution alleged that on January 18, 2024, Manyamane intentionally inflicted a stab wound above Chakacha's eye using a knife.

During the proceedings, Magistrate Molapo observed that Manyamane displayed signs of mental distress. Consequently, the court ordered a psychiatric evaluation to assess his fitness to stand trial. Manyamane was also remanded in custody until February 4.

Murder Case: Teboho Ntjelo

In a separate matter Teboho Ntjelo, a 19-year-old from Semonkong Ha Mphuelane, appeared in court charged with the murder of Tšepo Tlelase. The prosecution alleged that on January 18, 2024, Ntjelo unlawfully and intentionally killed Tlelase by assaulting him with an iron stick, resulting in fatal injuries. The court remanded



Ntjelo in custody and set February 4 as the next hearing date.

Sexual Offense Case: Rantsokeli Mofammere

Rantsokeli Mofammere, 29, of Sekantšing Ha Mosalla, was charged with a sexual offense. The prosecution alleged that on January 18, at Ha Mosalla, Mofammere unlawfully and intentionally raped the victim. Acknowledging the severity of the offense, the court informed Mofammere that he would need to present compelling reasons to be considered for bail. He was remanded in custody until February 4.

Aggravated Assault and Sexual Offense: Renang Rethabile Khatleli

Renang Rethabile Khatleli faced two charges of aggravated assault and sexu-

al offense. The prosecution alleged that on January 20 in Maseru, Khatleli poured acid on the hands of Mpho Clayton, causing grievous bodily harm. On the same day, Khatleli allegedly raped Clayton. Due to the seriousness of the charges, Magistrate Molapo stressed that Khatleli must present convincing arguments to secure bail. Khatleli was remanded in custody until January 27, when the court will revisit his case.

The court emphasised the gravity of the offenses presented and reiterated the need for thorough investigations and judicial prudence in handling such cases. By remanding the accused in custody, the court aims to ensure justice is served and to uphold public safety while awaiting further developments in the respective cases.

BUSINESS

PR and Brand Network reaches key milestone

Seabata Mahao

The PR and Brand Network, a strategic communications agency known for its transformative campaigns and innovative storytelling, is this year celebrating its 10th anniversary in operation.

Originating from South Africa, the agency was founded in May 2015 by Libe Mohale, a visionary Brand Innovation and PR Strategist.

Over the past decade, it has redefined brand communication across the region. With its continued growth, The PR and Brand Network has expanded its reach, establishing branches in Lesotho and Swaziland, solidifying its position as a leader in the communications industry in Southern Africa.

Within Lesotho, its portfolio includes transformational projects for Standard Lesotho Bank (SLB), Lesotho Flour Mills, Maluti Mountain Brewery (MMB), and the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA).

Reflecting on a decade of excellence, the Founder and Managing Director Libe Mohale said the journey has been about more than building brands, but also about shaping a

creative economy in Lesotho that empowers talent and fosters innovation.

"This milestone is more than just a celebration; it's a testament to our belief in the power of creativity to drive progress. Over the past ten years, we've proven that a career in the creative industry can be both impactful and fulfilling, challenging long-held myths.

"Our journey has been about more than building brands; it's been about shaping a creative economy in Lesotho that empowers talent and fosters innovation. The future holds limitless possibilities, and we are eager to continue breaking boundaries," Mohale said in a recent statement from the company.

The statement further indicated that through its enterprise, The PR and Brand Network has left an indelible mark on the industry.

Its listed achievements include the launch of the Unayo app for Standard Lesotho Bank, the co-branding of LNIG-Hollard, and critical initiatives such as the Lesotho perception study and the certification projects for the Lesotho Standards Institution.

The agency has also spearheaded the LHDA's 10-year strategy conference, setting a benchmark for event management excel-

lence. Amid the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the team demonstrated resilience by adapting campaigns and expanding its influence across Africa.

"Passionate about elevating the creative industry, The PR and Brand Network is committed to nurturing local talent and showcasing Lesotho's potential to the world. Through initiatives that champion creativity as a viable career path, the agency has positioned itself as a beacon of possibility for aspiring professionals. By fostering a culture of innovation and collaboration, it is actively building a creative economy that benefits both the industry and the region," the company said.

As The PR and Brand Network enters its next decade, its vision remains ambitious and forward-looking. Embracing emerging technologies and exploring new frontiers, the agency is set to deepen its impact and expand its reach beyond Africa.

"Our story is just beginning," Mohale added. "We are committed to crafting narratives that not only resonate but also ignite transformation. Together with our partners and clients, we'll continue to shape a brighter, more creative future for Lesotho and beyond."



Stage set for Molao le Khoebo Bootcamp 2025

Staff Reporter

E-Legal Solutions Inc. is set to revolutionise how businesses in Lesotho interact with the legal system through the Molao le Khoebo Bootcamp 2025.

This three-day intensive training, scheduled from February 26 to 28 at the Alliance Française in Maseru, promises to be a beacon for entrepreneurs navigating the complexities of legal compliance and business operations in the evolving landscape of Lesotho.

The bootcamp will feature an impressive array of speakers, each bringing a wealth of expertise to the forefront.

Tharollo Holdings will delve into Labour Law and Human Resource Management, providing insights on creating workplaces that comply with Lesotho's labour laws, manage employee rights effectively, and retain top talent, E-Legal Solutions said in a statement this week.

It added that Legalize Daily will demystify



Managing Director of E-Legal Solutions Inc. Thapelo Donald Ntsiki

Intellectual Property Law, guiding participants through the protection of their ideas,

innovations, and brands with a focus on patents, trademarks, copyrights, and trade secrets.

Advocate Phoka Thene, according to the statement, will tackle Governance, Risk Management, and Compliance (GRC), enlightening participants on building resilient and sus-

tainable businesses.

"This session will highlight the importance of ethical decision-making, transparency, and accountability in business operations," the statement read.

Advocate Thapelo Donald Ntsiki, leading the initiative, will guide attendees through Business Law and Compliance in Lesotho.

"Learn how to navigate Lesotho's regulatory environment, draft legally sound contracts, and ensure your business complies with legal requirements to avoid costly disputes."

Participants will not only gain a deep understanding of key laws but also practical skills they can implement in their businesses immediately. The event promises networking opportunities with experts and peers, alongside access to valuable resources tailored for long-term success.

For M1500.00, attendees will enjoy three full days of expert-led training, including lunch and refreshments, and exclusive workshop materials.

"This event is perfect for business owners, entrepreneurs, managers, HR professionals, innovators, creatives, and anyone interested in understanding the intersection of law and business," emphasised the press release.

With spaces limited, potential attendees are urged to act swiftly to secure their spot.

Under the guidance of Ntsiki, Molao le Khoebo has become a pivotal educational platform in Lesotho, dedicated to simplifying complex legal concepts for the entrepreneurial community.

This bootcamp is poised to be the most impactful yet, offering a game-changing experience for all who attend.

MOLAO OA MOBU 2010 TSEBISO!!! TSEBISO!!! HO BATHO BOHLE BA AMEHANG						
Mona ho etsoa tsebisiso hore Molula-Setulo oa Lekhotla la Teropo la Berea teropong ea Teyateyaneng o fumane molaetsa o latelang malebana le mobu o neng o sebelisoa ke mofu ea latelang:						
LEBITSO LA BAFU	LETSATSI LA LEFU	SEBAKA SA MOBU	MOFUTA OA MOBU	NOMORO EA SETS'A	LEBITSO LA MOJALEFA	KHETHO EA MOJALEFA E ENTSOE KE
Rev. Thabo Welby Nkoko	11/01/2004	Ha Motjoka	Bolulo	19923-731	Thabo Welby Nkoko	Lelapa
*Matokelo Julia Nkoko	08/12/2022					
Molula Setulo oa Lekhotla la Teropo la Berea o fana ka tsebisiso ea hore lipelaello le likhanyetso tseo ebang li teng li etsoa ho mang kapa mang ea hanyetsang hore moajalefa ea boletsoeng ha se eena ea nang le litokelo mobung ona, ba li etse ka mongolo 'me li tisoa ofising ea Mongoli oa Lekhotla, BEREA URBAN COUNCIL, PRIVATE BAG 028, BEREA 200. Lipelaello le likhanyetso li finyelle pele libeke tse ts'eletseng (6) li fela ho tloha mohla letsatsi la tsebisiso ena.						

ESTATE NOTICE

Notice in terms of section 61 (b) of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No. 2 of 2024;

ESTATE LATE MAKING MARY MOKAKE E89/2025

Notice is hereby given in terms of section 61 (b) of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No.2 of 2024 calling upon all creditors of the deceased's estate within thirty-five (35) days of this publication.

The address at which the said claims can be lodged is mentioned hereunder;

**KHUBETSOANA
MASERU
(+266) 59579362**

**MONYAKE MOKAKE
(THE ADMINISTRATOR)**

HEALTH



Deadly Chinese contraceptive pill floods Lesotho's black market



Ntsoaki Motaung

The Ministry of Health has issued a stern warning against the use of a dangerous one-month Chinese contraceptive pill known as "Pilisi ea Lechaena," which has infiltrated the local black market despite being banned in Kenya a decade ago for its lethal side effects.

The pill, according to the ministry, is not sanctioned for use in Lesotho, and lacks any safety guarantees. The ministry confirmed that the pill does not feature in their approved contraceptive lineup.

It is believed to be smuggled into the country by Chinese nationals running local businesses, who sell it alongside Basotho who advertise it on social media platforms.

Prices vary wildly from M25 to M200, highlighting the unregulated nature of its distribution.

The ministry insists on using only World Health Organisation (WHO) pre-qualified contraceptives for safety and efficacy, making the presence of this Chinese pill a significant public health concern.

The packaging, entirely in Mandarin, leaves users in the dark about its contents and potential dangers.

*Mpolokeng, one of the women who spoke to Newsday, indicated that she was drawn to using the pill because of

its easy access and affordability.

She said that although contraceptives are provided freely at government health facilities, it is often more convenient for many women, including herself, to buy the Chinese pill because they can obtain it while running errands around town.

"Going to government health facilities is not always easy because one has to dedicate time for that and risk returning empty-handed if the nearest health facility has run out of the desired contraception method," she said.

Mpolokeng was told the pill had no side effects, and therefore, she opted for it after experiencing menstrual cycle instability while using injectables. Another reason was the convenience of taking only one pill per month.

"I used the pill for a good six months and then decided to stop because I suspected it was the reason behind my significant weight gain. For three months after stopping, I did not have my periods, which worried me, but I did not report it to a health facility," she explained.

She said she did not visit a health facility because a pregnancy test was negative, assuring her that it might be the effects of the Chinese pill and that she would return to her normal routine

once the pill was out of her system.

"The fifth month came, and I got my periods back. In my entire life, I had never experienced period cramps, but that month, I experienced them for the first time, and I thought it was the end of me.

"It was not only the cramps but also huge blood clots. If I didn't know better, I would have thought I was pregnant and miscarrying," she said, adding that the situation affected not only her but also her family members who were worried about her.

Heavy blood flow that lasted more than four days prompted Mpolokeng to report the situation to a pharmacy, where she was given medication that helped her.

"I had noticed red flags about this pill, including its sale in a supermarket instead of a pharmacy, its marketing on Facebook, and its inconsistent price. I would not advise anyone to use it because its side effects can be deadly, as I learned during my heavy bleeding phase. I researched it and found that if one does not receive help when experiencing side effects, they may die," she said.

The said pill was prohibited by Kenyan authorities 10 years ago due to high levels of levonorgestrel – more than 40 times the recommended levels. Levonorgestrel is a hormonal med-

ication used in several birth control methods.

According to news reports from Kenya, their findings included that the pill can fail, leading to pregnancy while on it, and children conceived after the pill failed were found to have developed early puberty.

Health officials from Zambia have warned women against this pill, advising caution as it is unclear what they contain. Some women have reported serious side effects, including heavy bleeding.

Experts also warned that side effects are difficult to treat because the exact contents of the pills are unknown.

The pill's packaging, observed by our journalist, bears the name "Hua Run Zi Zhu," with no English translation, making it impossible for consumers to understand what they are ingesting.

Sold in pieces for M25 each, the method of smuggling remains unclear, but the Department of Family Health has labelled it as an illegal import.

Lesotho offers safer alternatives like daily pills, condoms, IUDs, injections, and implants.

The latest Lesotho Demographic Health Survey from 2024 shows a decline in unmet family planning needs from 18 percent to 13 percent, but the introduction of such hazardous products threatens this progress.

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OPINION

Book Extract

LNBS: A disgrace to journalism and country

"Everything rises and falls on leadership," John C. Maxwell. "The problems of Basotho migrants in SA are heart-breaking," Ms. Halieo Lelosa.

The Lesotho National Broadcasting Service (LNBS), a state-owned broadcasting organisation, has a demanding responsibility that ought not to be taken lightly. This responsibility includes collecting information that it prepares to broadcast as news, as well as producing other programmes of interest that are beneficial in many other ways than just news to its consumers and country.

In addition, the LNBS has the responsibility to inform and educate its clientele about any other issue of public interest, and not to mislead or confuse them by spreading disinformation, falsehood or utter rubbish - which is what it does as a matter of routine, thus leaving a consumer like me frustrated with unanswered questions. As if this is not enough, the LNBS does not seem to know what actually constitutes news or is newsworthy or relevant to its audience. As it will be demonstrated, it would appear that the LNBS has its own weird definition of what constitutes news to be broadcast.

Also disturbing is its tendency to keep on repeating for days whatever the news bulletin they may have already broadcast. For instance, a news bulletin aired the previous evening on any given date is repeated as is throughout the following day. Assuming, for instance, an incident or event occurs and is aired as news on a Thursday; the following day, which is Friday, the same incident is aired again in the present, not past tense as if it is still Thursday and the incident is taking place, yet it is Friday, and the incident may have already ended.

To reiterate for the sake of further clarity, news read today will be read again tomorrow as though it is still today, with changes in dates and times disregarded.

The 2023 Local Government Elections is an example. On September 28, 2023, a news reader, Neo Shoaepane was his name, read: "Ke se-mphete-ke-u-fete ho ea mabatoeng, batho ba il'o khetha boesa," which means, in English, "Tomorrow voters are streaming to their respective constituencies to vote." Boesa means tomorrow or tomorrow morning. Neo's boesa was Friday September 29. The following day, Friday, September 29, Neo read his "... boesa" again in the same way as he did the previous day, disregarding the fact that the incident is now past, and has to be broadcast as such, taking into account the applicable past tense.

Did Neo mean boesa as Saturday September 30, or did he slip out? No, he was deliberate enough and actually meant Friday the 29th.

On October 3, 2023, Bohlokoa Mahlbele, Neo's colleague, read: "Soon after this news bulletin at 20:00, we will receive...election results." The following day, October 4, at about 13:25, Bohlokoa repeated her "Soon ... at 8 O'clock, we will receive ... the elections results." But her today's 8 O'clock end of news was at 13:30, which she referred to as 8 O'clock, that is, yesterday's 20:00. Strange but true! Because Bohlokoa was reading the English version of the bulletin, it is indicative that this garbage is repeated even with the English versions of the news.

It should be clear that the LNBS has little respect for the way it handles its news bulletins, as well as for its consumers, regardless of the language in which the bulletin is broadcast.

Do the LNBS journalists and their news staff - news reporters, editors and readers - smoke nyaope (a SA bane drug of the townships) when preparing their bulletins, and when actually reading the bulletins, or is it me who goes out to smoke dagga, then come back to tune in for news? We cannot both be right at the same time about one and the same bizarre news bulletin; one or the other has to be downright wrong.

To the LNBS and Lesotho in general this preposterous idea appears to be normal, nothing is odd. I am concluding Lesotho in general because I am aware that no one has ever publicly lodged a complaint or query against these anomalies. Otherwise, once more, strange but true.

It could be that the LNBS and its clientele, as well as Lesotho as a whole, are following a different calendar and time calibrations to mine and the rest of the world.

As far as I can imagine, the LNBS is the only news agency that handles its news the way it does, especially as it concerns timing and dating. Having to repeat a news item or whole bulletin more than once is not a wrong or strange thing to do; neither is it unique to the LNBS; all news organisations I am aware of do likewise, but not in this LNBS's idiosyncratic way: the LNBS is repeating, without even a single new addition, the same bulletin whole over two days, and with reference to absurd timing, dating and weekdays - which presupposes Lesotho is moribund (perhaps worse) and, therefore, cannot be expected to make news in such a state.

Yes, indeed, Lesotho is in a moribund state and has been so since it was born out of its colonial slumber 58 years ago in 1966. Yet its leaders will never stop putting the blame on their colonial

masters for all manner of challenges their country has had to grapple with, which include, as we are about to see as we go on reading, economic stagnation, destitution, perennial political instability, the dysfunctional social sector, the unprecedented corruption, poverty of governance and violent crimes.

The three phenomena of poverty, perennial political instability, and corruption have become synonymous with this country.

Surely, a 58 years old media organisation such as the LNBS, a government-owned entity, should have long ago taken a leaf out of the books of its SA counterparts, its one and only immediate neighbour, whose performance is better by far even though the SABC is itself deteriorating fast under the ANC.

One wise man once said, to paraphrase him, doing the same thing many times, but expecting different results is a sign of mental derangement. The LNBS ministers as well as its officials and journalists are an example; as we will see, they are crazy out there, seriously crazy or sheer idiots as we are about to see!

Not only the news is handled in this bizarre fashion, but so are all the other programmes; they too are routinely repeated over and over again, not by popular demand, or some other special need, but because it has become the norm with the LNBS and its audience, and also because it has nothing else with which to fill in that space due to its rather lackadaisical approach to its work.

It is practically unproductive due to, I venture to suggest, its intellectual incapacity, and not because of a shortage of financial and other material resources - of which, comparatively, it has more than enough. The form and substance or content of all its programmes leave much to be desired; equally so, its announcements or advertisements - be they commercial or otherwise.

I will also, and this too is very important, demonstrate that the LNBS journalists' proficiency indices in both official mediums of communication, Sesotho and English, are lower than the basic minimum required to do translation either way, hence the garbage that will follow.

It should be clear that under Bethuele Mosisili and Thomas Thabane, the former Prime Ministers (PMs), merit was not a criterion in the selections, appointments, and promotions of the LNBS media workers as well as their officials.

I will further demonstrate that the LNBS is incapable in many other ways such as conducting ordinary interviews, let alone investigative journalistic interviews. For any of its journalists to investigate as a journalist is a minefield; it is like taking a trip or migrating to the other side of the Mediterranean Sea swimming. They just cannot conduct investigative journalism, nor even think of one.

Indeed, it would seem for the LNBS journalists, it is a no mean feat to report a speech; often a reporter will say something a speaker did not say at all, which happens every time with every other programme than just news. They either misinterpret or completely distort or say the exact opposite of what a speaker had said. The reason for this is poor cognition, language ability and listening skills, or lim-

ited translation or interpretation skills. Instances will be presented as proof of this observation.

Therefore, it should be clear that the LNBS does not understand and appreciate its onerous task properly, which fact makes it unfit for purpose. Hence this damning accusation: the LNBS is a Disgrace to Journalism, and so to the media profession and trade. Because its journalists - be the anchors, reporters or news readers and their editors - are not yet ready for their careers, yet they were appointed and are still retained in their jobs, the former US President Donald Trump (the man I would vote for and would not have hesitated to vote for again, had I been an American) would have long ago decried, if he had been the PM Lesotho, that the LNBS is not a genuine but fake media agency, and then told its workers a long time ago that they were fired, and then deservedly closed the agency.

Incidentally, despite ample and glaring evidence, no employee has ever been fired, demoted or punished anyhow for incompetence in this god-forsaken country; you can only be sanctioned for political affiliation.

Would asking where the LNBS journalists received their media work education and training, if they did at all, be not a fair question to ask, and why, for failing so dismally like they have been doing, they are still retained in their posts another? My conclusion is that they are far gone beyond redemption.

Of course, facts will be provided, living facts, to back up this uncompromising and unflattering condemnation of the organisation and its administrative and political leadership.

However, in condemning the LNBS, a caveat needs to be called for to be fair and balance the story: the LNBS has fallen flat on its face along with its political leadership, the Mosisili and the Thabanes of Lesotho, and this is the reason, as it will be shown later, that its officials are still in charge, despite their dismal performance to make even the slightest attempt at improving the agency's performance.

In addition, the LNBS may happen to be my target for now, but the fact remains that it is not the only public function failing as it does; the whole Public Service function is barely functional - fixing which will be a tall order for the likes of Samuele Matekane, an illiterate PM and a liar who, as did his predecessors, Mosisili and Thabane, ascended to the Premiership office through chicanery. Yes, he lied and cheated his way to the PM's office; therefore, as they, so does he not deserve to hold that most important public office.

This is an excerpt from the forthcoming book, *Lesotho at the Best of Times: A Cauldron of Shame and Disgrace—A Bird's-Eye View of the Period 1998 to Date*, authored by Lefu Lechesa.

INTERVIEW

From Lesotho to Ohio: Rose Moremoholo's Fulbright journey

In a small developing country like Lesotho, where internet access is limited, the dream of studying in the United States often feels distant. But for Rose Moremoholo, an accomplished journalist, communications professional, wife, and mother, that dream became a reality. Against all odds, she earned a Fulbright scholarship to pursue her Master's in Communication and Development Studies, specialising in health communication. This is her story.

Nicole Tau (NT): What was your first impression of Ohio when you arrived? And how does it compare to what you imagined before leaving Lesotho?

Rose Moremoholo (RM): I imagined Ohio as a big city. I didn't realise there was both Ohio State University and Ohio University. Ohio State University is in Columbus, a big city, while Ohio University is in a small college town. When I first looked for accommodation, I was looking at expensive apartments near Ohio State University, but then I realised I should be looking at Ohio University. It was a bit of a disappointment at first because it doesn't have skyscrapers, but I learned to love the small, welcoming town. It caters to basic needs; for anything more luxurious, you have to travel. We see America through a media lens of tall buildings and traffic, but I found a humble, rural Appalachian town, which, while having high poverty statistics, is very welcoming.

NT: Being far from home can be both exciting and challenging. What has been the most difficult part of adapting to life in the US?

RM: The most difficult part is understanding American culture and knowing my limits as an outsider without family nearby. Even phone calls aren't the same as having a family present. Sometimes, I just want to express how overwhelmed I am in my native language. It's about wanting people to understand my culture and communication style, which is quite different here. So, the most difficult part was coming home to no family and experiencing culture shock, realising the differences in tolerated behaviours, communication styles, and etiquette. But you learn to navigate it.

NT: What has surprised you the most about American culture, both positively and negatively?

RM: My observations are specific to Athens County and the people here, not necessarily a universal view of American culture. Americans here say hi and tell you to have a good day. It's not just people rushing around. You become friends, but everyone respects personal space. It's an individualistic culture: you live your life, I live mine. Parents live away from their kids, sometimes for years, without interfering in their lives. This is different from my collectivist culture where we share everything and family is closely intertwined. Here, friendships have clearly defined boundaries; there's no grey area. This might be why they do better in other aspects of life. However, coming from a collectivist country, you can feel lonely and neglected. If you don't ask for help, no one will offer it. You need to be clear about your needs. They are forthcoming with their feelings, which is a positive thing. A negative thing is that at some point, you just need to fend for yourself. Back home, we rely on the community.

NT: How do you stay connected to your roots and maintain a sense of home while living abroad?

RM: I keep communication channels open with family and friends back home. I watch local productions, not just from Lesotho, but from South Africa and Africa generally, and listen to

music. I stay connected through social media and local news. I speak my language and connect with other people from Botswana, Eswatini, and South Africa. We speak our languages together, which helps with nostalgia. I also cook cultural food like steamed bread and pap (maize meal).

NT: Academic and professional growth. How does what you are learning about media and communication in the US differ from what you know or practice in Lesotho?

RM: I'm studying communications and development studies, majoring in health communication, using journalism and media as tools. Here, there are so many academic resources, research materials, textbooks, and practical resources like podcast labs and access to local media outlets. While we have these back home, here they are often freely available through the university. Here you use advanced technologies and find practical experience through internships. The US media and communication landscape is far more advanced.

NT: What has been the most eye-opening or transformative thing you've learned so far, either academically or personally?

RM: Academically, it's that you can do anything you want here because of the resources and the professors' willingness to help. They provide platforms to shine and advance. They are highly educated, published PhD holders who specialise in one area. This taught me that I can't do everything; I need to specialise. My capstone is on metaphors used in health journalism to advance maternal, women, girls, and children's health. It's about focusing and becoming an expert. I've learned the importance of confidence. You need to "blow your own trumpet" here to be seen.

NT: How has this experience reshaped your understanding of the role of journalism and fostering development?

RM: My understanding of journalism is that we have much more to do than just report. We are archivists of history and informants, but we should ensure that our information translates to change, behavioural, political, economic. We need to define our specialties. Back home, we often become jack-of-all-trades reporters, but that doesn't foster a sense of pride or expertise. We should be the go-to person for specific issues. Journalism is more than just reporting; it's about changing lives.

NT: What skills or knowledge do you think you're gaining that will be most useful when you return to Lesotho?

Rose Moremoholo: Research skills. I'm drawn to academia, which means research. I'm gaining skills to be a good professor and educator in health communication. In Lesotho, we often outsource research. Here, I'm learning how to conduct research, which is crucial for effective interventions. Research should be participatory and culturally centered, by the people, for the people. We should learn from communities, because they have valuable knowledge. This ensures sustainability even after external funding ends.

NT: Reflecting on your time so far, can you share a moment when you felt particularly proud and accomplished?

RM: I felt incredibly proud when my plane landed at JFK. It was surreal... I was in America! I felt I'd accomplished a dream. Academically, I was in a class of accomplished people, and I was part of it. I believe I was the first Mosotho in the Center for International Studies program. I feel like an ambassador for Lesotho. People ask about my long name, and that's how I share my culture. I also won first prize at the research



symposium (at the proposal stage), which was a huge moment. Receiving awards for a GPA above 3.8 also felt amazing. Despite my imposter syndrome, I felt I was breaking boundaries. It's not by my power alone; God has a role. Unlike my first degree, where I constantly doubted myself, here I'm just doing it.

NT: Have you faced any moments of self-doubt? Significant challenges during your studies? And how have you worked through them?

RM: I experience self-doubt and imposter syndrome daily. I feel undeserving. To combat this, I look back at my achievements... I have a list, a mini-CV, to remind myself of the things I've achieved. I tend to forget and doubt myself. I feel unworthy of starting projects, assignments, and presentations. I question myself even when contesting for positions. But something always proves me wrong. I constantly remind myself of my achievements to bury the doubt. If I fear I won't make it, I look at the list and think, "You've made it this far." Even if I don't achieve everything, at least I tried. It's not the end of the world if I don't perform as well as I hoped; I did it anyway.

NT: How do you navigate the balance between being a student and a representation of yourself in an international setting?

RM: I tell myself I'm just a fraction of what Lesotho offers. I'm a student, and I don't want people to assume I represent the entire country. I represent Lesotho, but there's much more to it. It's a platform for me to change mindsets. If I can inspire even one or two people to visit Lesotho or see it in a new light, that's enough. I focus on the positives, on what the country offers; peace, scenery, and good destinations. I want to share what people don't already know from negative media portrayals. As a student, my research and presentations often focus on Lesotho. I want people to know we're an independent country, not part of South Africa. I'm also active in the African Student Union (as treasurer) and the Fulbright Students Association (as secretary), and I participate in cultural exchange activities.

NT: As a woman, a wife and a mother, what unique challenges have you faced during this journey and how have you managed them?

RM: Being a woman, my life is tied to other responsibilities, like being a wife and mother. Many questioned my decision to leave my husband for two years, but I believe it empowers me to be a better wife and mother. It's a sacrifice we all make. I sacrifice being with them, and they sacrifice being with me. It's challenging seeing my son grow up without me and seeing my husband

take on both parental roles. It's painful missing milestones like birthdays. These are sacrifices for a better future. I pray my son understands why I left. We communicate every day through calls and video chats, despite the time difference. I also send gifts home to maintain the connection.

NT: Impact and future aspirations. What do you hope to bring back to Lesotho from this experience both personally and professionally?

RM: I want skills for a good job and financial security. Professionally, I want to contribute to academia, perhaps as a professor; through research and practical skills for communication students. I want to impart knowledge and transform the field. I also hope to foster collaboration between academics, professionals, and the community to find solutions to our challenges, especially in the health sector. I want to build networks and work with agencies and professionals to find the right resources. I can't do it alone; I need others with the same vision.

NT: If you were to advise a young journalist in Lesotho dreaming of studying abroad, what would you tell them about preparations and mindset?

RM: Anything is possible with 100% effort. Make your dreams known. If it's journalism, work hard, find unique stories, and build international connections. I know journalism isn't highly valued or well-paid in our country, but we need dedicated professionals with a mission. Your stories should improve lives, including your own. Find meaning in your work, but don't get exhausted. Dream big, you can study abroad. Be prepared to write, academic, professional, and personal statements. This is the most challenging part of applying for graduate scholarships. Be focused, assertive, and sure of what you want.

NT: What long-term impact do you hope to make in Lesotho's media landscape after completing your studies?

RM: My long-term impact is to establish health journalism and health communication/risk communication courses and professional training. Our current health communication is lacking. We need to focus on prevention through consistent communication, like marketing health and healthy behaviours. We need specialised health reporters because the field is dense with terminology and misinformation that can impact national health strategies. I also dream of a national communication association or research body to conduct research and provide a platform for independent researchers. Ultimately, I want to see the media landscape in our country change for the better.



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GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

REQUEST FOR CURRICULUM VITAE

NATIONAL WASH ADVISOR ON RURAL WATER AND SANITATION PROJECT Metsi-A-Lesotho Funded by the European Union – Lesotho (candidates that applied previously do not need to re-apply)

I. Position Information

Project: Rural Water and Sanitation Project - Metsi a Lesotho

Title: National WASH Advisor

Contract Type: Government system

Duration: 3 years (with possibility of extension)

Duty station (City and Country): Maseru –Department of Rural Water Supply HQs

Expected starting date: March 2025

National WASH Advisor to support the implementation of Rural WASH projects under the Metsi a Lesotho initiative. This role involves in providing high-level policy advice, strategic leadership, and technical guidance to ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of the Metsi a Lesotho project. The National WASH Advisor will work closely with the UNICEF WASH team, Government agencies, and external partners to ensure the successful delivery of WASH services in rural communities, schools, and healthcare facilities.

Job organizational context:

Under the supervision and guidance of the Principal Secretary of Ministry of Natural Resources, the National WASH Advisor will be working with officials from the Department of Rural Water Supply, focusing on the Rural WASH projects under the Metsi a Lesotho initiative. The incumbent will be based at the Department of Rural Water Supply Headquarters. The National WASH Advisor will be engaged by UNICEF and the Ministry of Natural Resources to provide high-quality advisory services and coordination support with various stakeholders, including government agencies, contractors, and community groups.

Purpose for the job:

The Metsi a Lesotho project, funded by the European Union (EU), aims to improve access to safe and sustainable water supply and sanitation services in rural areas of Lesotho. This project addresses critical challenges in the water and sanitation sector, including inadequate infrastructure, limited access to clean water, and poor sanitation practices. The project will tackle these issues by delivering inclusive WASH facilities in rural schools, healthcare facilities, and communities and by establishing and implementing a conducive decentralized framework for rural WASH. This includes capacitating local, district, and national departments responsible for water supply, school WASH, WASH in Health Care Facilities, and promotion of sanitation and hygiene education, with a focus on empowering women and persons with disabilities.

Additionally, the project supports and equips the Department of Rural Water Supply (DRWS), Ministry of Education and Training (MoET), Environmental Health Division (EHD) in Ministry of Health (MoH), District Council WASH teams, and Water Service Authorities (WSAs) to effectively use monitoring and evaluation frameworks, GIS data, and planning tools to ensure accountability, transparency, and timely reporting of physical and financial progress for WASH in communities and institutions. By enhancing water supply and sanitation services, the project contributes to better health outcomes, poverty reduction, and overall socio-economic development in rural communities.

The Government of Lesotho, with support from the EU, is committed to ensuring that all citizens, particularly those in rural areas, have access to essential water and sanitation services. The project aligns with national development goals and international commitments, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The National WASH Advisor will play a crucial role in providing high-level policy advice, strategic leadership, and technical guidance to ensure the successful implementation and sustainability of the Metsi a Lesotho project.

Key responsibilities:

The National WASH Advisor will be responsible for the following key functions:

1. Policy and Strategy Development

- **Water and Sanitation Policy Analysis:** Conduct comprehensive analysis of water and sanitation policies, frameworks, and regulations, guidelines to inform and advise on project implementation. Identify gaps and provide recommendations for areas of improvement.
- **Reformatory framework:** Provide technical support to develop/finalize the regulatory framework and by-laws related to rural WASH.
- **Strategic Planning:** Provide strategic direction for the development and implementation of project activities, ensuring alignment with national policies and EU funding requirements.

2. Project Management

- **Annual planning support:** Provide support in the development of national rural WASH annual planning procedures, including setting priorities, allocating resources, and establishing timelines to ensure the successful achievement of project goals covering the integrated planning for WASH communities, WASH in Schools, and WASH in HCFs and other institutions in rural communities.
- **Coordination and Implementation:** Oversee the coordination and execution of

project activities, in particular integrated planning between DRWS, MoET and MoH-EHD, ensuring timely and efficient delivery of outputs and outcomes for the Rural WASH activities in the Metsi a Lesotho project and generally improved planning and delivery of all rural WASH actions. Coordination of the Rural WASH activities with other EU supported activities such as ReNoka and sector capacity building.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Review existing DRWS reporting formats and M&E tools and develop and implement robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress, assess impacts, and ensure accountability generally in rural WASH delivery.

3. Technical Advisory

- **Infrastructure Development:** Provide technical guidance on the design, construction, and maintenance of water supply and sanitation infrastructure and facilitate the development of common updated national guidelines and tools, standard designs and specifications for Rural WASH delivery in communities and institutions.
- **Capacity Building:** Support capacity-building initiatives in collaboration with DRWS, MoET, MoH-EHD, MoLG, and District Councils for both national and local stakeholders, including government and local government officials, community leaders, and private sector and NGO service providers, to enhance their skills and knowledge in water and sanitation implementation and management. Support the change management process in the national WASH departments as part of the devolution of WASH responsibilities to Councils. In addition, provide capacity building to DRWS and District Councils WASH offices to operationalize the Project Life Cycle and the use of planning, survey, and design tools, GIS data, M&E, data and reporting mechanisms.

4. Stakeholder Engagement

- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Foster strong relationships with key stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, community organizations, and international partners, to ensure coordinated and integrated project implementation.
- **Community Mobilization:** promote, provide guidance and facilitate government, local government, and private sector and NGO implementation partner engagement with rural communities to promote participation, ownership, and sustainability of water and sanitation services.

5. Resource Mobilization

- **Funding and Budget Management:** support the management in the rural WASH sector institutions to identify and secure additional funding opportunities to support project activities and ensure effective budget management in line with EU requirements.
- **Reporting and Documentation:** Prepare detailed reports, briefs, and documentation for stakeholders, highlighting project achievements, challenges, and lessons learned. Support the management in the rural WASH sector institutions to improve integrated progress reporting.

Education:

Minimum Bachelor's degree in Water Resources Management, Water and Environmental Engineering, Environmental Health, Public Health, or any other related field. A Master's degree will be considered an advantage.

Experience:

- Minimum of 10 years of relevant work experience in the water and sanitation sector, project management, and provision of policy advice.
- Extensive experience working in or with government at a senior level.
- Experience in capacity building and institutional development in decentralization processes
- In-depth understanding of Lesotho's water and sanitation sector.
- Proven leadership skills and ability to manage complex stakeholder environments.
- Strong policy development and strategic planning capabilities.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills.
- Strong analytical skills and attention to detail.
- Proven ability to address complex problems and manage conflicting priorities effectively.

Language Requirements:

Fluency in English is required and knowledge of a local language.

Interested candidates should submit their written applications together with certified copies of their educational certificates, and copy of National Identity Document to Human Resources Office, Ministry of Natural Resources, Bokamoso Business Suite, 2nd floor, Orpen Road, opposite Centre for Accounting Studies, Maseru Lesotho on or before **31 January, 2025 at 16:30 PM**.



VACANCY

JOB DESCRIPTION

POST TITLE	SENIOR LECTURER/ LECTURER 1
SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT	SCHOOL OF THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT (SOBE)
REPORTS TO	HEAD OF PROGRAMME - WATER & ENVIRON- MENTAL ENGINEERING

JOB SUMMARY

Under general supervision of the Head of Department/ Programme, the Lecturer I responsible for teaching and monitoring of students as well as monitoring them on industrial attachment. Conducts curriculum review, internal examination moderation, and also assists in the overall development of the programme.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The key duties of the post are as follows :-

- Teach courses under the Diploma in Water and Environmental Engineering, the Bachelor of Irrigation and Drainage Engineering, as well as other departments and programmes as necessary.
- Supervise students' projects and research.
- Prepare lessons and/or training materials, delivers lectures and/or conducts practical for 20 to 24 hours per week
- Assist the Head of Programme in the development of the Programme.
- Conduct tests and examinations for assessments and keep updated records.
- Monitor students on industrial attachment to obtain feedback on their progress.
- Participate in curriculum review to ensure industry relevance and academic quality.
- Participate in community engagement and consultancy activities.
- Assist with administrative and other duties as prescribed by the Head of Department or Representative as delegated.
- Conduct research and publish in reputable journals.
- Contribute to the internal moderation of examination papers.

JOB SPECIFICATION

EXPERIENCE AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS QUALIFICATIONS

- Master's degree in water resources engineering/ management, civil engineering majoring with water or a closely related engineering field.
- PhD in a relevant field is highly desirable.

EXPERIENCE AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

At least 2 years of professional working experience in Water or Environmental Engineering or any related fields.

Two years field experience in teaching or research work in Water Resources Engineering will be an added advantage.

Additionally, the incumbent should

- Have done courses in both surface and groundwater hydrology, and hydraulics.
- Have experience in the use of hydraulics software that includes HEC-RAS or equivalent and EPANET or equivalent, GIS (Geospatial), HEC-HMS, WMS, SWAT (Hydrological modelling) and Civil3D (draughting)
- Be able to teach
 - Groundwater Hydrology
 - Hydrology and Hydraulics
 - Irrigation Engineering and
 - Reticulation Design and Water Management

KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

- Excellent communication and presentation skills.
- Ability to inspire and mentor students and colleagues.
- Commitment to promoting sustainable water and environmental practices.
- Strong organizational and time management skills.
- Willingness to participate in outreach programs and represent the institution in professional forums.

TO APPLY:

Interested and suitably qualified candidates should hand-deliver their detailed applications to the LP Reception which is situated at the Administration 1 Building. The applications should be accompanied by: Curriculum Vitae, Certified copies of Educational Certificates and academic transcripts on or before **Friday, 7th February, 2025 at 1500hrs.**

OR email to: careers@lp.ac.ls - all application documents should be in one zipped folder and failure to adhere will lead to non-consideration of applications.

Applications should be addressed to:
The Secretary
Staff Appointments and Promotions Committee
Lerotholi Polytechnic
P.O. Box 16
Maseru 100
Lesotho
Disclaimer – only short-listed applicants will be contacted.



Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security & Nutrition

P.O. Box 24

Maseru 100

Lesotho

Tel: (+266) 22322741

Letter of Invitation

- The **Principal Secretary for Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition** now invites sealed bids from interested bidders to provide the following service: **Security Service for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition**. More details on the services are provided in the bidding document. **LOT:1 (Lesotho Agricultural College, Livestock Services and Agricultural Research) and LOT:2 (Crops, Administration, Marketing, Nutrition, Information, Field Services and DAO Maseru).**
- The technical proposal shall clearly demonstrate your understanding of the expected outputs, your proposed approach to the services involved, necessary equipment, your comments on the Scope of Work, your relevant experience, and you will be expected to provide detailed and updated curricula vitae for the proposed key personnel for carrying out the assignment. The financial proposal should clearly reflect the breakdown of your fees and all other associated costs for carrying out the assignment.
- A Service Provider will be selected in accordance with the current Government Public Procurement Regulations 2007, Public Procurement Act 2023 and the procedures described in the RFP. A firm will be selected under Quality and Cost Based Selection (QCBS) procurement method as stipulated in this Request for Proposals (RFP).
- Detailed RFP which comprises the following documents is available at the address indicated under 5 below on request for a non-refundable fee of **(M 2,000.00) Two Thousand Maloti only.**

Section 1 - Letter of Invitation

Section 2 - Information to Consultants

Section 3 - Technical Proposal - Standard Forms

Section 4 - Financial Proposal - Standard Forms

Section 5 - Terms of Reference

Section 6 - Form of Contract.

- Your sealed proposals should be submitted at the following address by **12:00 noon on February 20th, 2025 and will be opened the same day at 14:30hrs:**

Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition Headquarters, Corner Constitution and Linare Roads, P. O. Box 24, Maseru 100, Lesotho. Tel: (+266) 22322741; Attention: **Procurement Manager.**

- The submissions should be clearly marked: **"Provision of Security Service for the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition" - GOL/NCS 01/2025-26**. It is the Service Providers' responsibility to ensure that their proposals are received on or before the closing date whether posted or hand-delivered.

- The selection criteria shall take both technical quality and costs into consideration to determine the overall preferred Service Provider. Therefore, it should be noted that technical proposals will be opened first and evaluated and only those companies attaining the technical scores above the minimum pass mark will qualify for financial proposals opening and evaluation.

- Interested Service Providers from different firms may submit as an association or partnerships or joint ventures provided, they submit a letter of intent signed by all parties with a clear indication of the representative of such association or partnership or joint venture.

Procurement Manager



Kingdom of Lesotho

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY
SMALLHOLDER AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT II
MATCHING GRANTS PROGRAMMEREQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
(CONSULTING SERVICES- INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANTS SELECTION METHOD)

LOAN NO: P165228
CREDIT NO: IDA -64220 -LS
ASSIGNMENT TITLE: TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL REVIEWER
DURATION: THREE (3) MONTHS
REF NUMBER: LS-MAFS-465836-CS-INDV
DUTY STATION: MASERU

1. BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security of Lesotho, with the support of the World Bank has established within the SADP II a Matching Grants Programme (MGP) to support investment by small and medium agriculture-related businesses, farmers, farmer groups and cooperatives and rural youth seeking to increase climate resilience, raise productivity, improve commercialization and increase production and consumption of high nutrition food products.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The technical and financial review process is central to the concept of a Matching Grants Program, as it is meant to provide the technical and financial oversight during the selection of the portfolio.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES AND TASKS

Technical and financial reviewers are responsible to:

- Review in detail and evaluate the applications against the designated criteria and weighting-scoring system and procedures provided by the MGP Secretariat.
- Meet with the applicant(s) and service provider to assess their knowledge and competence and consequent ability to implement the investment.
- Complete an evaluation report for each application reviewed, using the forms provided by the MGP Secretariat.
- Assign criteria scoring and provide detailed comments when judged necessary for further consideration by the applicant, the MGP Secretariat and the MGC.
- Assign, at the end of the evaluation report/form, a level of recommendation to the application for consideration by the MGP Secretariat and MGC during the next steps of

the selection procedure.

- Support scoring and recommendations with any further detailed comments that may be judged important to be communicated to applicants.
- Submit all completed review documentation, including the evaluated application and the evaluation report/form, to the MGP Secretariat within a maximum of 10 calendar days.
- Participate, if invited to do so, in the MGC meeting to defend his/her evaluation or provide additional comments related to any of the evaluated applications in front of the MGC members.
- Declare any interest relation or other relation with the participants linked (directly or indirectly) with the application proposed for evaluation and withdraw from the evaluation for which a potential conflict of interest may arise.
- Keep the confidentiality of the evaluation from any participant or person related to the applicant of the service provider.

4. DURATION

- Contract duration is three (3) months.

5. FACILITIES TO BE PROVIDED BY THE CLIENT

- Forms to be used for evaluation of proposals
- Proposals from Beneficiaries.

6. DELIVERABLES AND FINAL OUTPUT

- Written report on the results of the evaluation including their recommendation on the proposals reviewed and scored.

7. QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE

- University degree in Agricultural economics or Degree in Agriculture.

SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE

- At least 5 years of experience in the field(s) and the specialty(ies) that are (is) priorities of the MGP and for which he/ she may be invited to play the role of the technical evaluator.
- Successful completion of a training program in the technical and financial review of investment proposals, as approved by the PMU and the MGC.
- To have successfully accomplished a few activities on the

field of his/her specialization and have a good knowledge of Lesotho agriculture sector (production, processing and marketing issues). A good knowledge of international agriculture would be desirable.

- To have a good grasp of the financial management issues associated with subproject design and implementation.
- To be a well-known person, progressive and objective, have good communication skills with colleagues and partners as well as experience of multi-partner activities.
- To have experience on the projects/programs of agriculture development and contacts and international experience on technology transfer would be an advantage.

8. CLIENT ASSIGNMENT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS.

Project Director assisted by Matching Grants Manager will coordinate implementation of activities under this contract, agreeing timing of services and for acceptance and approval of the reports and for receiving and approving the Consultant's invoices for the payment.

9. The attention of interested Consultants is drawn to Section III paragraph 3.14 to

3.17 of the World Bank's Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers dated November 2020 and revised in September 2023, setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest. A consultant will be selected in accordance with selection of Individual Consultants Method set out in Procurement Regulations.

10. SUBMISSION

Expressions of interest accompanied by detailed CV must be delivered in a written form to the address below in person by **14:30hrs Harare, Pretoria time on 31st January 2025** clearly marked **"Expression of Interest for Technical and Financial Reviewers"** For further clarifications contact:

To: Project Director-SADP II
Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security
Department of Livestock Services -Moshoeshoe 11
P.O. Box 24
Maseru 100 Lesotho.

Email: procurement@sadpii.org.ls cc rkathibe@sadpii.org.ls



Fees	3 Months	6 Months	12 Months
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Subscription	M 72.00	M 156.00	M 312.00
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Delivery	M 60.00
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Names:..... **Email:**..... **No. Of Copies:**.....
Address:..... **Start date:**...../...../..... **Expiry:**...../...../
Tel:..... **Cell:**..... **Signature:**.....

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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Warren Masemola stars in Lesotho-based film: Kabelo



Warren Masemola

Pheello Mosesi

Renowned South African actor Warren Masemola takes on a lead role in the upcoming Lesotho-based film *Kabelo*, directed by Carl Houston McMillan.

The feature is an adaptation of McMillan's 2017 short film *Two Shepherds*, which starred Lebohang Ntsane and musician Morena Lera-ba. Scheduled for release later this year, filming took place in the breathtaking landscapes of Lesotho from August 2024.

A story of identity, survival, and freedom Set against the cinematic backdrop of Lesotho's mountainous highlands, *Kabelo* explores the life of a young shepherd, Kabelo, portrayed by Lebohang Ntsane. Kabelo's world takes an unexpected turn when he crosses paths with Master, played by Warren Masemola, a fugitive from South Africa.

Master deceives Kabelo, offering promises of mentorship and a new life in Johannesburg. In reality, Master's intentions are far more sinister—he seeks to exploit Kabelo for his Lesotho passport as a means of escape. The story delves into the fragile and desperate bond that forms between the two characters as they navigate themes of identity, false hope, dreams,

survival, and belonging.

"This film invites viewers to embark on a journey of self-discovery," said McMillan. "It's a universal story of an orphan chasing his dreams and struggling for validation in a world that often feels too vast and unwelcoming."

A showcase of local talent

Kabelo brings together an ensemble cast featuring local stars such as 'Mantsalla Ramakhula, Relebohile Mafisa, Mosiuoa "Scout" Gonzales, and Silas Monyatsi. With a run time of 95 minutes, the film promises to keep audiences on the edge of their seats with its emotionally gripping storyline, suspenseful plot twists, and thought-provoking themes.

Director's vision

Director Carl Houston McMillan shared his fascination with Lesotho's highlands and the shepherds who endure the harsh conditions of the remote mountains. "There's a mystical energy in the highlands of Lesotho, a gritty beauty I've always been drawn to," McMillan explained.

He highlighted how the film captures the shepherds' resilience, unique way of life, and societal challenges. "Shepherds are often stereotyped as dirty or mischievous. At its core, *Kabelo* is a story of an orphan with dreams

and ideas, unafraid to express himself despite being belittled for seeking external validation."

The screenplay took McMillan and his wife, Tara Desormeaux, two years to perfect, undergoing numerous drafts before earning the stamp of approval from Masemola.

A star-studded collaboration

Lebohang Ntsane and Warren Masemola deliver compelling performances that bring the story to life. Ntsane, who began his acting career as a child in *The Forgotten Kingdom*, continues to make strides in the industry, while Masemola, a four-time South African Film and Television Award (SAFTA) winner, brings his seasoned expertise to the role of Master.

Masemola's impressive portfolio includes critically acclaimed films such as *Five Fingers for Marseilles* and *Vaya*, as well as popular TV roles in *The River*, *Skeem Saam*, and *Tjovitjo*.

Currently in post-production, *Kabelo* is set to make its debut at international film festivals in 2025 and 2026, with plans for eventual release on a major streaming platform.

With its rich storyline, talented cast, and stunning setting, *Kabelo* is poised to captivate both local and global audiences, showcasing the depth of Lesotho's culture and the universal human struggle for identity and belonging.

Sannere launches Metšoaka Group amid star-studded government support



In a defining moment for Lesotho's music industry, rising star Sannere officially launched his brainchild, Metšoaka Group, on Tuesday evening.

The high-profile event, held in Maseru, was attended by some of Lesotho's most influential figures, including three government ministers. The event marked a pivotal step forward for local talent development and the music industry's role in driving economic growth.

Nthathi Moorosi, Minister of Information, Communication, Science, Technology and Innovation; Lebona Lephema, Minister of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs and Police; and Mokhethi Shelile, Minister of

Trade, Industry, Business Development and Tourism, all graced the occasion.

Their presence highlighted the growing recognition of the creative arts as a vital contributor to Lesotho's cultural identity and economic progress.

During their addresses, the ministers pledged their unwavering support for the arts, with a particular focus on music. Lephema emphasised the power of music to promote Lesotho's image globally.

"It is through music that the world gets to know about Lesotho, which ultimately makes our jobs easier in showcasing our country's rich culture and heritage," he said.

Shelile highlighted the importance of ini-

atives like Metšoaka Group in creating opportunities for young people.

"The creation of such entities as Metšoaka Group aligns perfectly with our mission to empower the youth by transforming their talents into sustainable livelihoods. By developing their creative abilities, we are addressing unemployment and promoting entrepreneurship among the youth," he stated.

The launch of Metšoaka Group also provided clarity on Sannere's past relationship with The Whole Time Entertainment, a label associated with the late Malome Vector. Metšoaka Group's Managing Director, Pius Kebise, addressed the rumours, explaining that while Sannere had worked closely with the label, he was never officially signed to it.

"The reality of the truth is that Sannere was never signed under The Whole Time Entertainment. At the time, he was receiving support from them, and it was purely a collaborative effort," Kebise clarified.

He further explained that alliances with established industry players were common for emerging artists, and that is why Sannere's EP, *Pha-Balimo*, was released under The Whole Time Entertainment.

Kebise went on to share the journey of Metšoaka Group, revealing that the company has been operational for a year but delayed its official launch to finalise registration with the South African Music Performance Rights Association (SAMPRO) and the Recording Industry of South Africa (RISA).

"Our priority was ensuring proper registration and compliance, but we needed to release Sannere's EP in the interim. Malome Vector's company offered support and was duly com-

pensated for their role," Kebise added.

The newly launched Metšoaka Group boasts an impressive roster of local talent, including Phoka Ea Boroa, Litšepe, Flash Cortez, Teddy DJ, and Alah DJ. The group aims to serve as a platform for nurturing and showcasing Lesotho's artistic talent and offer opportunities for growth and collaboration within the creative industry.

In addition to its talent management ambitions, Metšoaka Group is positioning itself as a key player in Lesotho's cultural and economic landscape. With a focus on professionalising the music industry, the group seeks to provide its artists with the tools and support necessary to compete locally and internationally.

The launch event was not just a celebration of Sannere's vision but also a demonstration of the potential for public and private sector collaboration. The ministers' attendance and pledges of support underscored the government's recognition of the creative arts as a driver of economic development.

Metšoaka Group's debut comes at a time when the music industry is increasingly being seen as a viable pathway for addressing youth unemployment in Lesotho. By fostering talent and providing platforms for creative expression, the group is not only contributing to the country's cultural identity but also driving tangible economic benefits.

Sannere's journey serves as an inspiring example of how determination and collaboration can pave the way for success in a competitive industry. The launch of Metšoaka Group marks the beginning of a new chapter for Lesotho's music scene, one filled with promise, potential, and a commitment to excellence.

**Re itokisetsa
Mzansi Young Farmers Indaba
e hlophisoang ke Food for Mzansi,
se ke oa salla morao. Eba karolo ea lihoai tse tlo
tsamaea le Seahlolo**

Date: 1-2 April 2025

Venue: Lavender Kontrei Market, Pretoria North, Gauteng.



Package 1: 6000

Includes:

- Event Entry
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- 6 + Masterclasses
- Funding Opportunities

Package 2: 10 400

- Entry and Exhibition
Limited to **ONLY 5 farmers.**
NO perishable goods will be allowed
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- Transport
- 3 x nights
- 6 + Masterclasses
- 50+ Exhibitions -Funding Opportunities

Food is NOT included

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1-2 APRIL 2025

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Contact details: 50920676 OR 62425157 (WhatsApp)

SPORTS

The rise of Maseru City Run

Staff Reporter

The third edition of the Maseru City Run Marathon, set for February 23, is anticipated to continue its role as a catalyst for sports tourism in Lesotho, adding to its staggering healthy lifestyle and sports development mandates.

The annual road race, which is wholly run around Lesotho's capital city, Maseru, has steadily drawn both local and international participants, amateurs and professionals contributing significantly to economic activity and promoting Lesotho as a vibrant sports destination.

Initially starting with just over 350 participants for the inaugural event in 2023, the second installment of the event in 2024 saw over 800 athletes taking part in various activities including 21.1km race, 10km race, 5km fun run, 1.6 km run for the children, and the 42.2 kilometre race which was only introduced in 2024.

The event also features an aerobics session at Maseru Club grounds and inclusivity-focused races, such as a category for people with disabilities and a tailored kids' race, making it a family-friendly affair.

This year, with over 500 participants already registered ahead of the January 31 late registration deadline, the number of attendees is expected to surpass previous records.

"We have been witnessing a steady growth over the last three years. For instance, this year we already have 82 registered international runners, and this is a huge improvement from the other past years," said Race Manager Thabo J. Tšoeute in an interview with Newsday.

"We are also seeing sponsors beginning to attach more value in Maseru City Run with new ones coming in."

Tšoeute's sentiments come in the wake of Nedbank Lesotho pumping in M100 000 in sponsorship money for the race.

Speaking on the Nedbank sponsorship, Tšoeute expressed gratitude for the bank's support, highlighting the significance of the sponsorship in enhancing the quality and visibility of the marathon.

"This sponsorship comes at a critical time as we prepare to host what we believe will be our most successful marathon yet. With Nedbank's support, we can ensure a well-organised event that leaves a lasting impact on our participants and the community at large."

Another notable race sponsor is Newsday Media, which comes on board for the second year running as a media partner.

Maseru City Run Marathon continues to serve as more than just a sporting event, as it is a platform for promoting fitness, unity,

and community spirit.

The annual event is also proving to be a significant economic accelerator through stimulating economic activity through increased demand for hospitality services, restaurants, and other local businesses.

With registration still open, both professional and amateur runners are encouraged to participate in what is shaping up to be one of Lesotho's most celebrated athletic events.

Recapping on the past 2024 race, local athletes Tšepang Mokhethi (male), who clocked in at 02:24:52 hours and Refiloe Khechane (female) who finished in 03:25:33 hours won the standard 42.2-kilometer marathon.

The 21.1km marathon was won by Tsietsi Sello in 01:08:10 hours, followed by Rebone Sello (01:08:26), and Kabelo Lesia (01:08:46) in the males race.

'Mathakane Letsie was the winner of the women's 21.1km race clocking in at 01:25:32 hours, followed by Reitumetsi Thethana (01:28:38), and Antonia Von Buttler in 01:57:34 hours.

Thabang Sekonyela won the men's 10km race in 34:00 minutes, followed by veteran marathoner, Moeketsi Mosuhli (34:46), and Senzo Fombatha in 35:00 minutes.

The female 10km race was won by Nthabiseng Letokoto in 42:42 minutes, followed by Letšela Ntebaleng (44:48), and Mphotleng Koeshe in 55:41 minutes.

Shot in the arm for LeFA academy



LeFA Exceclency Academy students at Sacred Heart High School

Seabata Mahao

Thirty-three young talents from the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) Academy in Leribe have officially embarked on their academic journey, marking a major milestone in their development as both athletes and scholars.

The Academy, catering to boys under 15 years of age, was established through a partnership between LeFA and FIFA's Talent Development Scheme (TDS), an initiative launched in 2023 to identify and nurture young football talent.

This program is a cornerstone of LeFA's vision to build a sustainable player development pipeline and create national teams that can compete at the highest levels both regionally and globally.

Recognising the importance of combining education with athletic excellence, LeFA has partnered with Sacred Heart High School in Leribe to ensure these young players receive a well-rounded education while refining their football skills.

The boys will undergo a formal orientation at Sacred Heart High School, marking the start of their academic and sporting journey.

LeFA has taken full responsibility for the students' welfare, covering all costs related to their education, including school fees, medical care, accommodation, meals, leisure wear, school uniforms, and stationery. This support system ensures that the boys can focus entirely on their development on and off the pitch.

The Academy provides a structured environment featuring top-tier coaching, modern training facilities, and a rigorous academic curriculum. This holistic approach aims to equip the students with the skills and knowledge needed to excel not only in football but also in life.

A vision for Lesotho's football future

This initiative represents a significant investment in the future of Lesotho football. By equipping these young players with the necessary resources and support, LeFA aims to develop a new generation of football stars who can compete on the international stage and inspire aspiring players across the nation.

"This program is more than just football training—it's about creating well-rounded individuals who can contribute to the growth and success of football in Lesotho," a LeFA spokesperson said.

The Academy exemplifies LeFA's commitment to fostering a sustainable legacy for football in Lesotho. The focus on education and personal development ensures that these young athletes are prepared for life beyond the game, emphasizing the importance of balancing academics with sports.

A nation awaits

As these young footballers begin this exciting chapter in their lives, there is great anticipation for the future. With FIFA's support and LeFA's dedication, this initiative not only lays the groundwork for a stronger national team but also underscores the value of education and character development in sports.

LeFA and the nation are eager to witness the potential of these young talents as they strive to become the future stars of Lesotho football and role models for generations to come.

Clubs reinforce squads with new signings

...as transfer window winds down



Lijabatho FC's newly signed player, Mohlomi Makhetha

Seabata Mahao

With less than a week until the mid-term transfer window closes, Vodacom Premier League (VPL) clubs are scrambling to finalise their squads for the second leg of the season.

A flurry of high-profile deals and strategic moves has dominated the transfer market, with several clubs strengthening their rosters to gain a competitive edge.

Record-breaking transfer: Lijabatho signs Makhetha

One of the headline transfers of the window is Lijabatho FC's acquisition of Mohlomi Makhetha from LCS FC for a record-breaking M100 000. The deal marks Makhetha as the most expensive player to be sold in Lesotho football history.

The transfer negotiations saw Lijabatho FC return to the table after LCS FC initially demanded over M200 000 for the defender. This landmark deal underscores Lijabatho's ambition to solidify their defense and make a strong push in the second leg of the season.

Linare strengthens with Sefoli

Linare FC has bolstered its squad by signing Lesotho international defender Thato Sefoli. The Likuena star parted ways with South Africa's Upington City FC, competing in the Motsepe League, due to personal reasons.

Sefoli, who had been with Upington City since 2021, joined Linare FC as a free agent on a six-month contract.

While Linare FC has not officially disclosed the full details of the deal, the club has ex-

pressed its confidence in Sefoli's ability to fortify their defense as they aim to improve their standings in the league.

Lioli's youth transformation project

Lioli FC has made significant moves in the transfer market, focusing on youth development. The club has signed an 18-year-old Mzamane FC midfielder, who has been training with the team since Monday. This move aligns with Lioli's strategy of building a squad centered on young talent for long-term sustainability.

In addition to their youth acquisitions, Lioli has loaned midfielder Mofelehetsi Moesa to Limkokwing University FC for the remainder of the season. The club also confirmed the release of Matlapeng "Song" Ncala and Siyabonga Mkhize, with the latter's contract terminated despite having 18 months remaining.

Matlama adds firepower

Matlama FC has confirmed two key signings to strengthen their attacking options. The club secured striker Teboho Pita from Machokha FC on a three-year deal and signed midfielder Katileho Sefuthi on a six-month loan from Bantu FC. These additions are expected to enhance Matlama's offensive capabilities as they gear up for the season's second leg.

Lifofane and Lijabatho bolster midfields

Lifofane FC has reinforced its midfield by signing Thabo Maphakisa from South Africa's JDR Stars FC and South African attacking midfielder Kgotlelo Kotelo, who last played for Botswana's Security Systems XI FC. The terms of their contracts remain undisclosed, but the duo is expected to bring international experience to the squad.

Meanwhile, Lijabatho FC has secured experienced midfielder Jane Tšotleho from LCS FC for an undisclosed period, further strengthening their midfield department.

Other notable transfers

Limkokwing University FC has added star player Khutlang Mokhesi from Mahlaseli FC, providing a significant boost to their squad as they aim to compete more effectively in the league.



24 JAN - 30 JAN 2025

High-flying Matlama target Bantu

Seabata Mahao

Vodacom Premier League (VPL) leaders Matlama FC will be looking to maintain their exceptional form and extend their lead at the top of the table when they face wounded fourth-placed Bantu FC on Sunday.

Tse Putsoa, as Matlama are affectionately known, have been in dominant form, winning seven consecutive matches, including their recent hard-fought 2-1 victory over LDF FC. With 36 points from 12 wins and just two losses in 14 games, Matlama are firmly in control of the league standings.

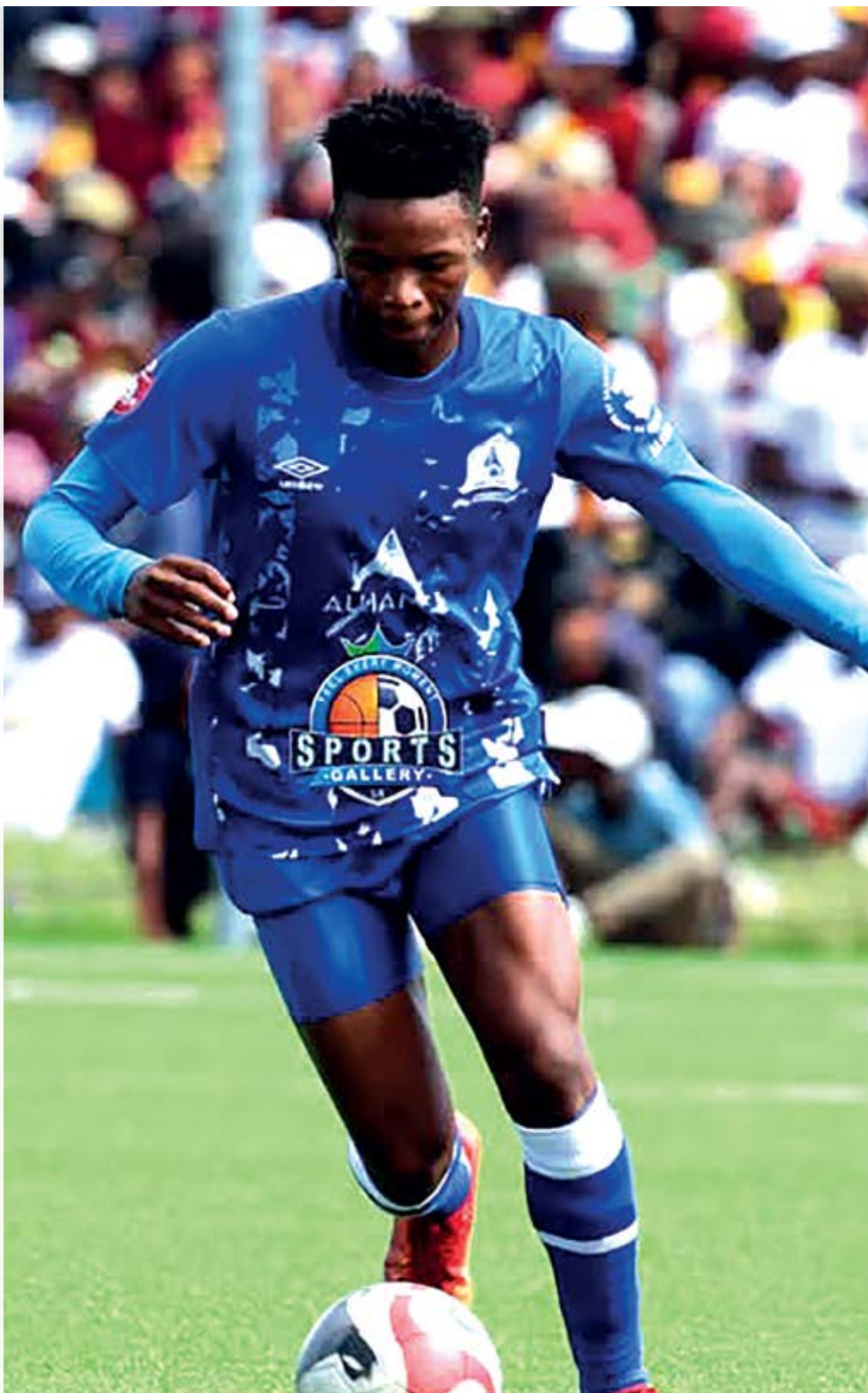
In contrast, Bantu FC are coming off a demoralizing 2-0 defeat to defending champions Lioli FC. Under the leadership of newly appointed coach Charles Manda, the Mafeteng-based side will be looking to bounce back.

However, facing a resurgent Matlama may prove to be a daunting challenge. A Matšo Matebele currently sit fourth on the log with 28 points, boasting nine wins, one draw, and three losses.

The rest of the weekend fixture will on Saturday see LU FC hosting second-placed Lioli FC at Bambatha Tšita Sports Arena, while Linare FC takes on Lijabatho FC at DIFA Maputsoe Ground.

Elsewhere, Liphakoe FC faces Lifofane FC at Ratjomose Ground, and LMPS FC will square off against LDF FC at Police Training College (PTC) Ground. All games are scheduled to kick off at 16:00 hours.

On Sunday, the action continues with Machokha FC hosting LCS FC at Ratjomose Ground at 16:00 hours. Earlier in the day, ACE Maseru FC will face Manonyane FC at Bambatha Tšita Sports Arena at 14:00 hours, and Mzamane FC will meet Majantja FC at Botha-Bothe Ground at 16:00 hours.



Last weekend's matches saw Lioli FC defeating Bantu FC 2-0 in a highly anticipated rivalry clash. Matlama FC edged past LDF FC 2-1, Linare FC secured a 2-0 win over Liphakoe FC, and LMPS FC triumphed 3-1 against LU FC.

Other results included a dominant 5-1 victory for LCS FC over Mzamane FC, Lifofane FC's 3-1 win against ACE Maseru FC, and a 1-1 draw between Lijabatho FC and Machokha FC. Manonyane FC and Majantja FC also shared points in a thrilling 2-2 draw.

At the bottom of the table, Mzamane FC and ACE Maseru FC remain in the relegation zone, with just three points each.

Meanwhile, Lesotho Football Association's (LEFA) Secretary General Mokhosi Mohapi hinted at the possibility of the VPL champions competing in next year's CAF Champions League.

Due to financial constraints, Lesotho's representatives have been absent from continental competitions since 2022, as Setsoto Stadium was barred from hosting international matches in 2021.

However, Mohapi suggested that LEFA is exploring ways to save funds through gate-takings, sponsorships, and television revenues to support the league champions' participation in the prestigious tournament.

"Let's try to save where we can. If we manage, we might include a club in next year's Champions League," Mohapi said, adding that such participation could also benefit Lesotho's national team, Likuena, in their African Nations Championship (CHAN) campaigns.

Likuena are set to face Angola later this month in the final CHAN 2025 qualifier. Should they emerge victorious, Lesotho will advance to the continental finals, which will take place in February across Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania.



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