

Newsday

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MZANSI YOUNG FARMERS INDABA
1-2 APRIL 2025
POWERED BY FOOD FOR MZANSI

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 rona

Date: 1-2 April 2025

Venue: Lavender Kontrei Market,
Pretoria North, Gauteng.



Hypocrisy at DCEO exposed



Staff Reporters

The Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO), Lesotho's guardian against graft, stands accused of wallowing in the very privileges it was founded to uproot.

Established in 1999 under the Prevention of Corruption and Economic Offences Act No. 5, the DCEO was tasked with a mission to dismantle corruption and economic crimes strangling the public and private sectors.

However, 26 years later, Newsday has uncovered a festering scandal that suggests DCEO's own ranks are not above the trough.

Reliable sources reveal that senior DCEO officials, Director of Administration Tlalu Sehlabaka, Director of Investigations Advocate Sefako Seema, Director of Public Education on Corruption Litelu Joseph Ramokhoru, and Chief Investigations Officer Thabiso Silas Thibeli, are indulging in privileges conspicuously absent from their contracts, access to government vehicles for personal joyrides.

This alleged misuse of state resources contradicts a directive from the Government Secretary (GS), which specified that such perks are only reserved for designated government officers, an elite club these directors evidently gatecrashed without invitation.

While only the Director General (DG) is contractually entitled to a state-funded vehicle, complete with fuel and maintenance, these directors are allegedly chauffeuring their families around town and beyond Lesotho's borders, treating DCEO wheels as their private fleet.

Sources whisper of errands run not for justice, but for domestic convenience, groceries fetched, children ferried, all on the taxpayer's dime.

This issue has raised serious concerns, particularly in light of a recent government memo instructing chief accounting officers to withdraw government vehicles from public officers, limiting their use to special cases of necessity.

However, it appears that DCEO has ignored this directive, allowing certain officials to operate as though they are above the rules.

Newsday sent a list of questions to DCEO last week regarding these allegations. The agency responded this week, stating that its newly appointed Director General, Advocate Matso Sello, is still acquainting himself with the issues and is, therefore, unable to provide answers at this time.

The alleged misuse of state resources at DCEO is not limited to vehicles.

Newsday has also received information regarding Mohau Mokhochane, a DCEO employee, who was allocated a government house when the agency was still under full government control.

While a few other employees, including Thibeli, were also given similar accommodations at the time, DCEO has since transitioned into an independent state institution.

This raises serious questions about Mokhochane's continued use of a government-owned house but some sources told Newsday that the institution was semi-autonomous and its employees were hired by the Public Service Commission.

Adding to the controversy, sources claim Mokhochane owns a private residence in Katlehong, where he resides with his family, yet continues to use the government house, not as a home, but as a shelter for his dairy cattle.

Newsday last week sent a formal request for responses to DCEO regarding the following questions:

1. Can the DCEO confirm whether directors and managers, including Mr. Sehlabaka, Mr. Seema, Mr. Ramokhoru, and Mr. Thibeli, have been using govern-

ment motor vehicles despite their contracts not stipulating such privileges?

2. If so, under what authority or policy are these employees allowed to use state resources in contradiction to the directive issued by the Government Secretary?
3. Are there any internal or government-issued policies that exempt DCEO officials from adhering to the Government Secretary's directive on the use of government vehicles?
4. Has DCEO conducted any internal investigations or audits into the alleged personal use of government vehicles by these officials, including travel outside Lesotho and family errands? If so, what were the findings?
5. The information we have suggests that only the Director General is entitled to a personal government vehicle with fuel and maintenance benefits. Can DCEO confirm if this is correct?
6. Regarding Mr. Mohau Mokhochane, can DCEO clarify on what basis he has continued to occupy a government house, given that he reportedly owns a private home in Katlehong?
7. Is DCEO aware that the government house allocated to Mr. Mokhochane is allegedly being used to house his shepherd and as a shelter for his livestock? If so, what action, if any, has been taken to address this?
8. Following the recent government memo instructing chief accounting officers to withdraw vehicles from public officers except in cases of special need, has DCEO implemented this directive? If not, why?

Ramarothole success skips villagers thirsting nearby

Ntsoaki Motaung and Seabata Mahao

Newsday on Monday descended on the Ha Ramarothole Solar PV Park in Mafeteng, a flagship renewable energy project trumpeted by the Lesotho Electricity Generation Company (LEGCO).

Launched in 2021 and handed over to the government in June 2023 with a 30-megawatt capacity and plans to scale to 80 MW, this public-private venture aimed to bolster Lesotho's energy grid, cutting reliance on costly imports from South Africa's Eskom.

It was born of ambition, a partnership between LEGCO, China Sinoma International Engineering, and TBEA Xinjiang New Energy, backed by loans to harness Lesotho's abundant sunlight.

It is part of a broader push. His Majesty King Letsie III pitched green energy to Davos elites in January this year to electrify a nation where only 50 percent of households had power by 2022, per the Department of Energy.

However, beneath the gleam of its panels lies a stark reality: the eight villages encircling this beacon of progress, Ha Liemere, Ha Lempetje, Ha Ramarothole, Makeneng, Ha Sebusi, Ha Mahali, Ha Rankapu, and Ha Qobete, are reaping little but dust.

Four of these villages, Ha Liemere, Ha Sebusi, Ha Mahali, and Ha Rankapu, languish without electricity, despite the solar park's hum in their backyard.

The other four, Ha Lempetje, Ha Ramarothole, Makeneng, and Ha Qobete, have power, but not thanks to the plant; their lights flicker via Lesotho's standard electrification, not a trickle of goodwill from LEGCO.

Worse still, Ha Ramarothole, the village hosting the project, is gripped by a water crisis so dire that residents, rationed to one weekly fetch from a communal tank, queue under the sun while a borehole gushes within the solar park's fenced oasis, water used to polish panels, not quench thirst.

"We face a desperate water shortage," Chief-tainess 'Maramarothole Ramarothole told Newsday.

"A natural spring feeds our tank, but each household gets one turn a week. That's it."

Asked how the solar park secures water to clean its arrays while her village withers, she shrugged: "Ask them when you visit."

Newsday established that there is a borehole pumping freely inside the site, a mocking pond amid a parched desert.

LEGCO's emailed responses to Newsday's questions sent by e-mail this week were a mas-

terclass in deflection.

Queried on how a socially responsible entity justifies the fact that Ha Ramarothole, which hosts a major energy project, is suffering from severe water shortages when there is a borehole within its solar energy project, which is used to clean the solar panels, LEGCO dodged: "This shows the importance of having such initiatives within those villages which is the mandate of the local authorities. Shortage of water within the communities is collective responsibility of everybody."

Asked if there are there any steps it is going to take to improve access to clean water for Ha Ramarothole, LEGCO said: "Outside the LEGCO scope."

Newsday further asked: "Does LEGCO have any plans to allocate a portion of the revenue generated by the solar park towards water infrastructure for the affected villages?"

LEGCO responded: "Revenue collected from the solar plant is going to be used to service the loan used to develop the solar plant."

Entry to the site proved elusive. Workers on-site stated that the journalists should have made prior arrangements with the head office in Maseru and that entry is only permitted on Thursdays.

However, in written responses, LEGCO said

the journalists were not denied entry but were "advised that due to security and safety reasons everyone who visits the plant must make prior arrangements to be allowed into the plant."

It added: "This has been the standard procedure followed by all sectors and the entire public being academia, schools, media houses and even members of parliament.

"Everyone is expected to make prior arrangements before being allowed entry into the solar plant and that has been the procedure which until now has been followed. This is to safeguard the public investment against any vandalism or malicious acts possible.

"Access to the project is not restricted only prior arrangements have to be made and those arrangements have to be made with the office in Maseru as the office in Mafeteng is only for technical matters and administrative issues are done in Maseru

"It has to be noted that LEGCO is an independent company has its own ways of doing things either on policy level or administrative decisions made by the management.

"This prior arrangement is not only required from Journalist but as indicated above it is expected from everybody who visits the site. LEGCO is liable for its own security."

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Govt changes stance on Royal succession

- **But stops short of full reform**
- **hints at a potential end to male-only inheritance by reviewing its long-standing reservation to Article 2 of CEDAW**

Staff Reporter

The government is actively considering withdrawing its reservation on Article 2 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which addresses gender equality in succession to the throne and chieftainship.

Upon ratifying the convention, Lesotho placed a reservation on Article 2, stating: “the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho does not consider itself bound by Article 2 to the extent that it conflicts with Lesotho’s constitutional stipulations relative to succession to the Throne of the Kingdom of Lesotho and the law relating to succession to

is reviewing the possibility of removing this reservation.

“In response to the Delegation’s question on this reservation, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations noted that the Government of Lesotho was actively considering the withdrawal,” the commission note in its report distributed this week.

However, Mpotjoane, according to the report, further told the commission that the constitutional reform process recently found that the people of Lesotho and key stakeholders prefer to maintain the current system, where succession follows traditional norms.

This means that while the government is officially considering withdrawal, strong traditional views on leadership may delay or prevent any actual policy change.

In September 2023, the United Nations Human Rights Committee raised concerns that several international and regional human rights instruments ratified by Lesotho have not been fully integrated into domestic law. As a result, these instruments are not fully applicable in Lesotho’s courts unless formally incorporated through legislation. Furthermore, national legislation takes precedence in cases of conflict.

The committee urged Lesotho to fully integrate international human rights instruments into domestic law and ensure that all

national legislation aligns with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Although the committee welcomed efforts to combat discrimination against women, particularly regarding land access, it remained concerned about Section 18(4)(c) of the Constitution, which allows customary law to override gender equality in areas such as inheritance, marriage, nationality, land rights, and chieftaincy.

“The State party should consider revising Section 18(4)(c) of the Constitution to ensure that its provisions are clear and unequivocal and cannot be potentially used as grounds for discrimination against women,” the committee recommended.

Section 18 of the Constitution guarantees that no law shall be discriminatory in itself or in effect. However, subsection (4)(c) creates an exception, allowing customary law to apply in matters of chieftainship, thereby upholding male primogeniture.

In Lesotho, chieftainship and succession to the throne are governed by customary law, which prohibits women from inheriting the throne. Under this system, a king is succeeded by his firstborn son.

If Section 18(4)(c) were amended, gender equality

advocates could successfully challenge the customary law, arguing that it violates the Constitution.

Should such a challenge succeed, Princess Senate, the firstborn daughter of King Letsie III and Queen ‘MasenateMohatoSeeiso, could legally succeed her father as monarch and head of state.

The King has two daughters and a son, who is the youngest child, being the designated heir under customary law.

In May 2012, the High Court of Lesotho, sitting as the Constitutional Court, ruled in *Masupha v The Senior Resident Magistrate for the Subordinate Court of Berea & Others* that Section 10 of the Chieftainship Act No. 10 of 1968, which denies all daughters the right to inherit chieftainship, is constitutional.

The case was brought by Senate Masupha, the firstborn child of the late Principal Chief GabasheaneMasupha and Chieftainess-MasenateGabasheaneMasupha. She argued that Section 10 of the Chieftainship Act violated her constitutional right to equality and freedom from discrimination.

However, the court ruled that male primogeniture in chieftainship succession was not unconstitutional discrimination but rather a form of differentiation within an inherently undemocratic institution. The court also noted that chieftainship is exclusive, not only barring daughters but also illegitimate sons and second-born sons.

The judgment referenced Justice SandileNgcobo’s concurrence in the South African case of *Bhe& Others v Magistrate, Khayelitsha*, which upheld male primogeniture as a system designed to preserve family unity and ensure certainty in succession. The court found this rationale even more relevant to Lesotho, given its strong cultural homogeneity.

As a result, the court concluded that the male primogeniture rule was reasonable, justifiable, and consistent with Lesotho’s constitutional protections of customary law.

The ruling affirmed that the Chieftainship Act is a legitimate re-statement of customary law and is not in conflict with the Constitution.



AU presses Lesotho to unlock social rights

Staff Reporter

The African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights has called on Lesotho to amend its Constitution to ensure that social and economic rights are enforceable in line with the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights.

The Commission also urged the country to expedite judicial reforms to tackle the backlog of cases and address the acute shortage of judges in the Labour Court and Labour Appeal Court.

These recommendations are detailed in a 33-page report following a promotion mission to Lesotho led by Commissioner Ourveena Geereesha Topsy-Sonoo and Commissioner Dr. Litha Musymi-Ogana.

The report, published this week, follows a five-day visit to Lesotho from January 29 to February 2, 2024, during which the delega-

tion met with government officials, intergovernmental representatives, and civil society organisations (CSOs).

The mission, conducted under Article 45(1) of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and Rule 76(1) of the Commission’s Rules of Procedure, aimed to promote human and peoples’ rights among States Parties of the African Charter. The visit was led by Commissioner Topsy-Sonoo, the country rapporteur for Lesotho.

The delegation noted that it did not meet Chief Justice Sakoane Sakoane or any representative from the judiciary, despite such engagements being a regular part of the Commission’s missions.

“Regardless, during its meeting with civil society organisations (CSOs), the Delegation was informed that only one judge was assigned to the Labour Court, while the La-

bour Appeal Court had no judges assigned,” the report stated.

“The Delegation was also informed that there was a backlog of cases, with a number of cases dating as far back as 2017. The Delegation took note of the fact that the national reform process included reform of the judiciary; however, as with other reforms, the proposed reforms of the judiciary were stalled pending adoption of the Omnibus bill,” it added.

The Commission also highlighted that social and economic rights are not justiciable in Lesotho’s courts, as outlined in Chapter III of the Constitution.

Specifically, it said, social and economic rights were not recognised as rights, but rather as principles of state policy, “which rendered them unenforceable by Courts of law”.

Chapter III outlines principles of state policy, including equality and justice, protection of health, provision for education, opportunity to work, just and favourable conditions of work, and protection of workers’ rights and interests.

They also include the protection of victims of crime, the protection of children and young persons, rehabilitation, training and social resettlement of disabled persons, economic opportunities, participation in cultural activities, and protection of the environment.

However, Section 25 of the Constitution states that these principles, while part of Lesotho’s public policy, are not enforceable by any court. Instead, they serve as a guide for government authorities and depend on the country’s economic capacity and development to be realized progressively through legislation or other means.

Lesotho leads as Tshiamiso pays out M2 Billion



Tshiamiso Trust pays first R2billion

Staff Reporter

Four years after its launch, the Tshiamiso Trust has crossed a historic threshold, disbursing over R2 billion to ex-gold miners and their families afflicted by silicosis and work-related tuberculosis (TB). Announced yesterday, this payout, the largest ever by a compensation body in the mining sector, has reached over 21,200 families across southern Africa, with Lesotho leading at 40 percent of claims (R802 million for 8,851 recipients) and South Africa's Eastern Cape following at 27 percent (R531 million for 5,571 claimants). Born from a landmark 2018 settlement between six major gold mining companies—Anglo American, AngloGold Ashanti, Gold Fields, Harmony, Sibanye-Stillwater, and African Rainbow Minerals—the Tshiamiso Trust was established in 2020 to compensate workers sickened by decades of dust-choked labour in South Africa's gold mines. A R5 billion fund, it targets up to 100,000 eligible claimants from South Africa, Lesotho, Mozambique, Eswatini, Botswana,

Zimbabwe, and Malawi, addressing a legacy of occupational disease that has claimed countless lives since the early 20th century. "This groundbreaking achievement represents a positive impact on more than 21,200 families, and marks the largest payout ever made by a compensation organisation in this sector," read the statement. Dr. Munyadziwa Kwinda, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Tshiamiso Trust, expressed his gratitude. "This milestone is a collective victory. It is through the remarkable collaboration of all our stakeholders that we have accomplished something unprecedented. Together, we are making a real difference in the lives of those who have suffered due to the working conditions they endured," Kwinda said. "A special thank you goes to the Trust Ambassadors who worked tirelessly beyond the call of duty to make this milestone possible." In addition to reaching the R2 billion payout threshold, the trust said it has made several significant strides in enhancing its service offerings and expanding its geographical reach in the past quarter. Key de-

velopments include expanding Benefit Medical Examinations (BMEs), Zimbabwe pilot success, and Malawi engagement. "BME services are now available in Botswana, extending Trust services to claimants across South Africa, Lesotho, Mozambique, Eswatini, and Botswana," it said. "A successful pilot project in Zimbabwe paves the way for the official launch of claim lodgement and BME services, bringing vital services closer to those in need. Progress in discussions with the Malawian government will enable future service provision, broadening the Trust's reach," it added. It also mentioned that an amendment to the Trust Deed now accepts Medical Certificate of Cause of Death in the Notice of Death, simplifying the claims process for dependents and resolving challenges related to natural causes stated on death certificates. Also, benefits have been adjusted in line

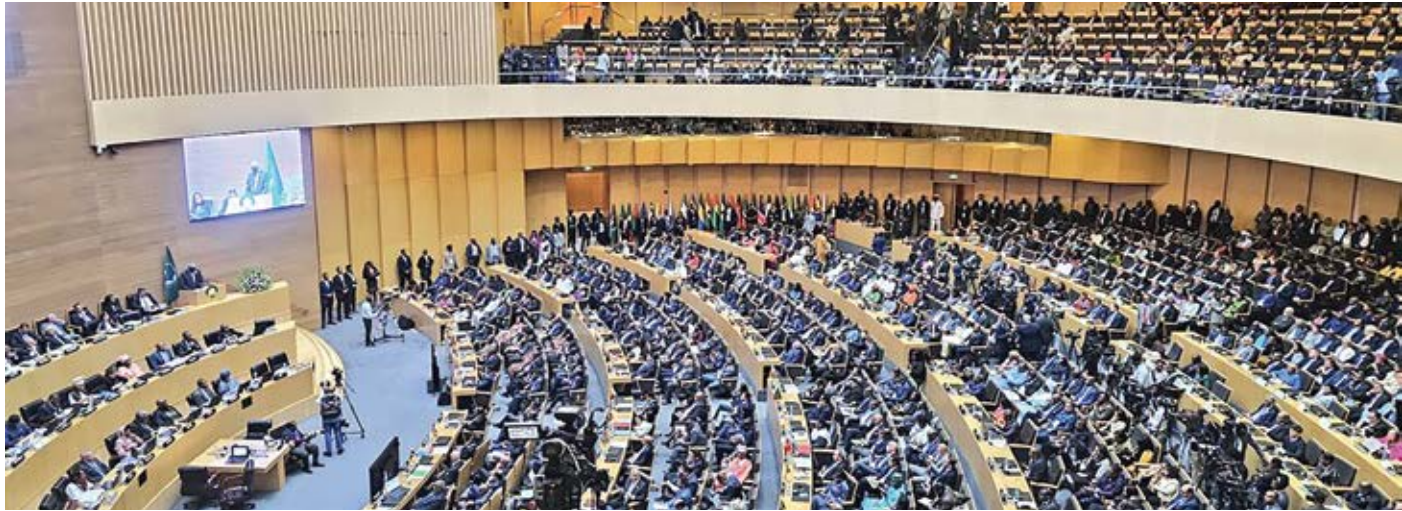
with the Consumer Price Index (CPI), safeguarding the economic value of compensation against inflation and claimants now have 120 days to dispute claim outcomes, ensuring ample time for claimants to log a dispute. Despite these significant advancements, the trust acknowledged that challenges remain. Notably, the delays in certification process is complicated by factors such as missing documentation, contact issues, and trust deed interpretation. "Thousands of claims remain stalled due to the unavailability of essential documentation needed for certification. Many claimants are unreachable using the contact information they provided, which prevents claim updates and scheduling of BMEs," the trust said. It added: "Claims using NIOH post-mortem/Autopsy reports to determine the primary cause of death, claims using ODMWA certificates as evidence of compensable disease and lung function impairment, as well as claims for living mineworkers who had TB previously." With four years remaining to fulfill their mandate, Tshiamiso said they are focused on overcoming these obstacles and ensuring that every eligible individual receives their due compensation. "We remain committed to transparency, efficiency, and the continued collaboration with our stakeholders. Our efforts will not waver until we reach as many Settling Claimants as is reasonably possible," Kwinda said.



Landmark pact to end violence against women

Ntsoaki Motaung

In a seismic win for gender justice, the African Union (AU) summit held recently in Addis Ababa, adopted the Convention on Ending Violence Against Women and Girls, a pact to dismantle a scourge blighting millions across the continent. Born from a 2023 draft by AU Heads of State and reaffirmed in 2024, the convention, finalised at the 38th Ordinary Session, targets the root causes of violence, from Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) to sexual slavery in conflict zones, aiming to fortify laws and shift cultures steeped in patriarchy. Janet Ramatoulie Sallah-Njie, Special Rapporteur on the Rights of Women in Africa, called it "a historic milestone in our fight for equality and dignity." She hailed its passage as a testament to unity and advocacy, urging swift ratification: "This isn't just words, it is a call to build real protections, support systems, and laws so no woman or girl lives in fear, but in freedom." The convention builds on the 2003 Maputo Protocol, which 44 AU states have ratified, mandating action against discrimination and violence under Articles 2, 3, 4, 5, and 26. It confronts a grim reality: violence; physical, sexual, psychological, or economic, stalks women and girls across homes, schools, workplaces, pris-



ons, and war zones. Early forced marriages, workplace harassment, and online abuse thrive amid patriarchal power imbalances, reinforced by unequal resources and social norms. The AU notes that 36 percent of African women face intimate partner violence, per 2021 UN data, with FGM affecting 200 million globally, mostly in Africa. The pact demands a unified state response, stronger legal frameworks, root-cause interventions, and inclusivity for marginalised groups like rural women or conflict survivors. "The persistence of violence against wom-

en and girls is largely driven by entrenched gender power relations rooted in patriarchal systems. These systems are characterised by male dominance, an unequal distribution of resources, and power imbalances, all of which are reinforced by social norms and institutions that sustain gender inequality," AU said in a statement. The Convention complements existing treaties: the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, the Maputo Protocol, and UN frameworks like CEDAW and the Declaration on Violence Against Women.

First proposed amid rising calls for gender equity, the convention's journey from 2023 draft to 2025 adoption marks a pivot after years of patchy progress—only half of AU states criminalize marital rape, per a 2022 AU report. Sallah-Njie insisted that the real test lies ahead: "Ratification and enforcement must follow, or this victory stays on paper." With Africa's women watching, the AU's bold step could reshape a continent—or falter if action stalls.



Newsday Courts & Police Reports

Magistrate testifies against murder suspect

Relebohile Makhetha

A magistrate has taken the stand to testify against a murder suspect in an ongoing trial within a trial before High Court Judge Tšeli-so Mokoko.

The case involves Mohlai Motseki, who stands accused of murdering Mpho Kholoana in June 2016 in Mohale's Hoek.

The court is currently determining whether a confession made by the accused should be admissible as evidence.

The defence, represented by Advocate Moeletsi, argues that the confession was obtained under duress and should therefore be excluded. Moeletsi contends that the accused was physically coerced by police officers, making his confession involuntary.

To address these claims, the court summoned Magistrate Khechane as the first witness.

In her testimony, Magistrate Khechane acknowledged that, while she may not have had extensive experience as a magistrate at the time, she was well-versed in the proper procedure for recording confessions. She emphasised that experience in such matters holds significant weight.

She informed the court that on November 2, 2016, the accused, Mohlai Motseki, voluntarily presented himself at her office, seeking to make a confession. According to her, the accused made the confession in the presence of her colleague and did so of his own free will.

She further stated that Motseki admitted to surrendering himself to the police regarding the crime he had committed, specif-

ically that he had shot Mpho Kholoana three times, purportedly in retaliation for being stabbed by the deceased.

Magistrate Khechane noted that unless there was evidence contradicting this claim, the presence of a victim shot three times in Mohale's Hoek corroborated the accused's statement.

She further asserted that she had no prior acquaintance with the accused and thus had no reason to fabricate his testimony. She categorically stated that she observed no visible signs of physical abuse or injuries on the accused that would suggest he had been assaulted.

She also affirmed that had the accused mentioned any ill-treatment or coercion, she would have recorded it accordingly. She maintained that she would never allow a confession to be made in the presence of a person whom the accused feared or under duress from the police.

However, she clarified that she was not a medical professional capable of diagnosing injuries that were not externally visible.

The second witness, Detective Lance Sergeant Mahalika, stationed at the Criminal Investigation Division (CID) office at Mohale's Hoek police post, testified that on November 1, 2016, Advocate Moeletsi personally brought Motseki to the police station, stating that his client wished to surrender, having learned that he was a wanted person.

Upon receiving the accused, the police requested to interrogate him without his lawyer present.

During the interrogation, the accused disclosed that he had previously had a conflict with the deceased while they were in South Africa. Following this altercation, he tracked Kholoana and later obtained a firearm from a friend, Leloko Raselepe, who had since ceased visiting Lesotho.

The detective stated that after obtaining this confession, he escorted the accused to court for an official confession before the magistrate. He clarified that his only role was to direct the accused to the appropriate entrance and that he did not accompany him inside.

Detective Mahalika vehemently denied the allegations of police brutality, asserting that it would have been illogical for the police to assault a suspect who had voluntarily surrendered. He acknowledged that while the accused had turned himself in six months after the incident, the voluntary nature of his surrender remained undisputed.

During cross-examination, Advocate Moeletsi stated that the accused would testify that he had been assaulted and verbally abused by the police, who allegedly ridiculed him, questioning where he had found his lawyer. The witness refuted this claim, insisting that no such mistreatment had occurred.

The defence further contended that the accused had been instructed to relay the same account to his lawyer that he had provided to the magistrate and to compose himself in a particular manner during his appearance before the magistrate.

Detective Mahalika categorically denied these assertions, swearing before the court that, as the lead investigator, he would never mistreat or coerce a suspect, particularly one who had surrendered voluntarily.

It was also alleged that the police had transported the accused to his residence, where they left him in the vehicle while they searched his home. Upon their return, they purportedly claimed to have recovered his firearm.

The detective refuted this assertion, maintaining that he had never participated in any such operation. He stated that the ac-

cused himself had admitted to shooting the deceased using a firearm belonging to Leloko Raselepe.

Advocate Moeletsi argued that if the detective was indeed present during the accused's confession before the magistrate, his presence would render the entire confession null and void.

Another witness, Detective Maoeng from Mohale's Hoek police post, corroborated Detective Mahalika's testimony. He testified that on November 1, 2016, Advocate Moeletsi had arrived at the Mohale's Hoek police station, stating that he was accompanying a person who was allegedly wanted by the police. After presenting the accused, the advocate departed, allowing the police to interrogate him without legal counsel present.

Detective Maoeng confirmed that after Motseki made his confession, the police asked him whether he would be willing to repeat his statement before the magistrate, to which he responded affirmatively, stating that taking a life did not sit well with him. Consequently, the accused was taken to the magistrate the following day.

During cross-examination, Detective Maoeng stated that, to the best of his knowledge, the accused had not been subjected to any form of physical abuse or verbal insults by the police. He further disclosed that he had been among the officers actively searching for the accused, not as a criminal suspect, but as a potential witness in a separate criminal case involving a relative of the accused.

Advocate Moeletsi informed the court that the defense intended to submit a medical report indicating that the accused had sustained injuries consistent with strangulation and physical assault. He noted that the medical examination had been conducted a day after the accused was released on bail.

Crime wave grips districts

Murder, abuse, theft cases surge

Relebohile Makhetha

Mother charged with infant's murder in Thaba-Tseka

In Thaba Tseka district, a 20-year-old woman, 'Matlhoonolofatso Mosiroe from Ha Mosiroe, Mantšonyane, appeared before the Thaba-Tseka Magistrate's Court on Monday, charged with murdering her eight-month-old son.

Reports state that on February 22, 2025, she purchased sleeping pills and gave them to the child after 9:00 PM, resulting in his death.

Authorities say her motive was tied to the child's father, who works in South Africa and allegedly provided no financial support, leading her to believe killing the child was her only option.

She remains in custody and is due back in court on March 5, 2025.

Woman sentenced for assaulting daughter

In the same district, 34-year-old 'Mapuleng Ramone from Ha-Laka faced the same court last week, charged with assaulting her nine-year-old daughter.

On February 10, 2025, she reportedly beat the child with a belt and pinched her arms, a pattern of abuse linked to leaving her children unattended for long periods while en-

gaging in reckless behaviour.

Neighbours frequently cared for the children, and upon returning, Ramone punished them for "wandering." She pleaded guilty and was sentenced to seven years in prison or a M7,000 fine.

Unable to pay, she was imprisoned.

Father accused of sexually assaulting son in Berea

In Berea district, a 36-year-old man from Berea appeared before the Berea Magistrate's Court on Monday facing charges of sexually assaulting his 10-year-old son.

Reports reveal that the child had been frequently running away from home, stating that his father threatened him and that he would rather seek help from the police. After being returned home multiple times, further investigation uncovered that the father had been sexually abusing him.

It was also discovered that the child faced difficulties even accessing the toilet. He was taken to the hospital and is currently under protective care. The child has reportedly not been attending school.

His mother is said to be living in South Africa and no longer residing with the accused.

72-year-old man caught with illegal firearm

Also in Berea, a 72-year-old grandfather from Thellaboi was arrested during the "Operation Fiela" campaign targeting illegal

firearms.

He faces charges of unlawfully possessing a 9mm firearm and two rounds of ammunition. His court appearance is pending further investigation.

Vehicle theft suspect bailed in Maseru

In Maseru Urban, a 27-year-old woman, 'Mamasaru Maqhobela from Koro-Koro, Ha Seturumane, appeared before the Maseru Magistrate's Court last week facing charges of vehicle theft.

Reports indicate that on December 23, 2024, she was found in possession of the stolen vehicle in C-Point, Maseru. The vehicle, an Isuzu D/C 4x4, had already been altered, including tampering with its identification marks.

It was initially reported stolen in Bloemfontein, South Africa, in September 2024.

The court granted her bail set at M2,000.00, which she successfully paid. She is scheduled to appear in court again on March, 17, 2025.

Teacher faces charges of student sexual abuse in Mafeteng

In Mafeteng a 38-year-old male teacher from Matholeng, working at one of the high schools in Mafeteng, is facing three charges of sexually abusing male students.

Police reports indicate that the teacher took advantage of situations where he could isolate students to fulfill his inappropriate

behaviour. These incidents reportedly took place in classrooms or teachers' offices.

The accused allegedly engaged in sexual conversations with students, inappropriately touching them, asking them to expose themselves, and at times, hugging them forcefully.

The students have reportedly experienced anxiety and fear about attending school. It was further revealed that he would dismiss other students from class to remain alone with his victims.

Two reports were filed recently after victims realised the accused had stopped coming to school, giving them the courage to come forward. They had previously feared that reporting him would make school even more difficult.

The accused will appear in court once investigations are concluded. Authorities are urging all affected students to report their experiences to the police, assuring them of their safety and protection.

Additionally, reports indicate that some teachers engage in inappropriate relationships with underage students, which is illegal and places students in vulnerable situations. Some students reportedly fear that refusing advances from teachers may affect their academic progress.

The police strongly encourage victims to report such cases and warn those involved



Newsday Business

Lesotho's poor business climate exposed

Staff Reporter

Lesotho continues to trail behind its Southern African Development Community (SADC) peers in creating a conducive environment for business set-up; a challenge the government is now prioritising to boost private sector investment.

Finance and Development Planning Minister, Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane, revealed in her recent 2025/26 budget speech that investment restrictions in Lesotho, both domestic and foreign were significantly higher than the SADC average.

The country scored 0.40 on the SADC Investment Climate Scorecard, compared to the regional average of 0.20, indicating substantial regulatory barriers, according to Matlanyane.

Simply put, this means that Lesotho is among the least favourable options to consider when investing if you are planning to set up your business operations within the SADC region.

"Global evidence suggests that a competitive business environment that includes a conducive legal and regulatory environment is the key driver for private sector investment.

"Lesotho scored 0.40 on the SADC Investment Climate Scorecard, compared to the 0.20 average for SADC (a lower score indicates lower restrictions on investments). Past efforts to improve the investment climate were hindered by gaps in implementation with weak coordination across the government and development partners," Matlanyane said.

The minister identified overlapping institutional mandates and limited positive spillovers from foreign investments as key issues.

In response, the government plans to enact a new investment law and complete the investment policy.

"Furthermore, there are also limited positive spillovers from existing foreign investment to local investment. To address these challenges, the government will complete investment policy and enact investment law; improve business licensing and registration, improve land markets and land administration. Access to finance is also key for improving the investment climate."

Additionally, the government will establish the



Inclusive Growth Fund to support businesses in productive sectors, specifically targeting unemployment among women and youth.

Despite the planned government efforts to improve the business climate, there remain more challenges that hinder the country's business environment from being competitive.

Regulatory and bureaucratic hurdles make Lesotho's regulatory framework less competitive than that of regional leaders such as Mauritius, South Africa, and Botswana.

Political instability, characterised by frequent changes in government, creates uncertainty for investors and disrupts long-term investment planning. Infrastructure gaps, including limited road networks, utilities, and digital infrastructure, contribute to increased business costs.

The country's small market size, with a population of just over 2 million, limits the immediate consumer base for goods and services, often necessitating a focus on export-driven businesses. A skills gap

in the workforce, compounded by high youth unemployment, impacts the availability of skilled labour.

But Lesotho has several opportunities to enhance its investment climate. Policy and regulatory reforms aimed at simplifying business registration processes, improving contract enforcement, and reducing bureaucratic red tape could significantly boost investment appeal.

Economic diversification by reducing reliance on Southern African Customs Union (SACU) revenues and expanding sectors like tourism, agriculture, and renewable energy could contribute to a more resilient economy.

Encouraging public-private partnerships (PPPs) in infrastructure and service delivery could help address investment gaps and improve efficiency.

Furthermore, strengthening institutions such as the Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) to actively promote investment opportunities and support businesses could enhance investor confidence.

Mafatle wins M200k in Econet's campaign



Seabata Mahao

Ntsie Mafatle is the latest grand prize winner of M200 000 from Econet Telecom Lesotho's (ETL) Baso200 Campaign, joining the growing list of those whose world has been changed by the telecommunications giant.

The Baso200 Campaign, launched by ETL in November 2024, is a celebration of Lesotho's bicentennial. The campaign showers Econet customers with incredible prizes while offering unmatched value to new subscribers.

Mafatle was proclaimed the big winner during a recent prize-giving ceremony held in Maseru, and he was full of joy and gratitude to ETL for making his dreams come true.

"This win means everything to me and my family it will help us achieve things we never thought possible. To anyone who is hearing about this campaign for the first time, trust me, this is real. If you are an ETL subscriber, don't hesitate to participate. You could be the next lucky winner," Mafatle said.

Speaking at the event, Ketja Nhlapo, ETL's acting General Manager of Marketing, Communications and Customer Experience, expressed his excitement for the latest winner and celebrated the ongoing success of the campaign.

"We are thrilled to congratulate Ntsie Mafatle as the second recipient of the M200 000 grand prize.

This campaign has already seen close to M900 000 in cash prizes alone being won by our valued ETL customers since its launch. This is a true testament to our commitment to rewarding loyalty and transforming lives," Nhlapo said.

He also encouraged ETL subscribers to continue participating for a chance to win even more prizes.

"There are amazing prizes still up for grabs before the campaign concludes in March. Daily prizes include M2 000 in cash, and weekly prizes offer M10 000 in cash or a smartphone. The final M200 000 monthly prize, appreciation prizes symbolising Basotho culture, and the ultimate grand prize – a brand-new Toyota GD6 – are still to be won."

"To participate, new ETL subscribers simply need to buy Nalane bundles starting from M10, which unlocks 200 local seconds, 200 ETL-to-ETL daily minutes, and 1.3GB of data. These data benefits are valid for 200 minutes, and the calling benefits last for a day. Once unlocked, subscribers qualify for daily, weekly, or monthly draws depending on additional bundle purchases," Nhlapo explained.

Nhlapo also highlighted ETL's extensive outreach through location-based activations, taking the Baso200 campaign directly to communities across the country. This on-the-ground engagement is complemented by virtual activations to ensure everyone, no matter their location, has access to the opportunity.

"By the end of the campaign, at least 3,000 Basotho will have directly benefited, making Baso200 a truly inclusive and life-changing initiative," Nhlapo added.

Alliance intensifies efforts to tackle child malnutrition

Staff Reporter

Alliance Insurance Group has called on other corporate entities to join their fight against child malnutrition in Lesotho, having been supporting Baylor Children's Clinic with fortified instant porridge for the past two years.

The group is seeking partners after realising it cannot make a meaningful impact alone, given the scale of the problem as Lesotho is said to have a staggering 36 percent malnutrition rate.

Speaking to journalists at a breakfast meeting this week, Alliance's Head of Marketing, 'Mareabetsoe Mabaleha, emphasised that malnutrition remains a significant challenge in the country especially among children.

The event was attended by representatives from the Prime Minister's office, the Ministry of Health, and Baylor Children's Hospitals, who are leading experts in the fight against malnutrition.

"Last year, we reflected on the major issues affecting the country and decided to focus our corporate social investment (CSI) on children's health in Lesotho," Mabaleha said.

"Experts confirmed that many children suffer from malnutrition caused by hunger, poor living conditions, and medical conditions requiring specific diets."

She added, "We discovered that providing the right nutrition is essential for children to adhere to medication and combat malnutrition, so we provided fortified meals containing multiple nutrients."

Alliance's meal support at Baylor has reached over 3,000 children, including pregnant teenagers, vulnerable youth, and some in correctional facilities. The fortified meal, which only requires water to prepare, contains a combination of vitamins and minerals crucial for physical development.

"Providing 3,000 packages is not enough when Lesotho has a 36 percent malnutrition rate. We want to collaborate with other corporations to support His Majesty King Letsie III in his efforts. We view this as a pandemic that will impact our future if not addressed now."

When other companies join the initiative, they won't just purchase nutritional meals but also help improve children's livelihoods by supporting the production of fresh produce and providing other necessities to combat malnutrition.

Although Alliance Insurance Group has already purchased fortified food packages for this year, they recognise that most corporations may have already finalised their annual budgets.

They are seeking pledges of interest from compa-

nies that are willing to discuss various engagement options.

"Even if they cannot join this year, we want their commitment to participate in coming years so this initiative can grow," Mabaleha added.

Among their potential partners, Alliance has earmarked the telecommunications companies, the banks, and corporations with health sector investments as part of their CSI programs.

Baylor Children's Hospitals currently serve over 2 500 children aged 4-14 years. Of these, more than 240 suffer from mild malnutrition, over 440 from moderate malnutrition, and more than 60 from severe acute malnutrition.

ESTATE NOTICE

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

ESTATE LATE 'MANTHABELENG FRANCINA THEKISO E367/2025

Notice is hereby given in terms of Section 37 of the Administration of Estates and Inheritance Act No.2 of 2024 calling upon all heirs, legatees and creditors of the deceased to attend a meeting before the Master of the High Court in Maseru on **Wednesday 25th June 2025 at 09:00 am** for the purpose of:

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

Dated at Maseru on this **25th day of February 2025**

**Master of the High Court
Magistrate Court**

**Old Prosecutor Office
Maseru**



Lesotho urged to improve maternal, infant care

Ntsoaki Motaung

The African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights has called on the government of Lesotho to prioritise maternal and infant healthcare, emphasising the need for postnatal clinics and post-abortion care services, particularly in remote areas.

This recommendation is outlined in the Report of the Promotion Mission to the Kingdom of Lesotho, compiled by Commissioner Ourveena Geereesha Topsy-Sonoo and Commissioner Dr. Litha Musymi-Ogana, who visited Lesotho from January 29 to February 2, 2024.

The report was adopted during the 81st Ordinary Session of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, held in Banjul, The Gambia, from October 17 to November 6, 2024, and published this week.

The Commission urged the government to adopt the report’s recommendations to strengthen human rights protection and promotion in the country.

Beyond maternal and infant care, the report highlights the need for increased construction of health centres in remote regions and improved outreach via mobile services to ensure equitable healthcare access.

Additionally, the Commission calls on the



women queue for maternal health services at Mokhotlong Hospital

government to intensify HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention efforts, particularly among vulnerable and at-risk populations, including men who have sex with men (MSM) and sex workers.

It recommends training healthcare workers to eliminate discrimination against these groups and fostering collaboration between the Ministry of Health and civil society organisations (CSOs) working with LGBTQ persons

and people with disabilities.

The report commends Lesotho’s commitment to eliminating HIV/AIDS by 2030, noting significant progress in tackling the epidemic.

The Minister of Health informed the delegation that 92 percent of people living with HIV (PLHIV) know their status, 97 percent of PLHIV are on treatment, and 99 percent of PLHIV on treatment are virally suppressed.

New HIV infections have also declined, with

cases dropping from 10,000 in 2017 to 4,186 in 2023. AIDS-related mortality has also reduced, from 4,342 deaths in 2021 to 3,887 in 2023.

The government currently purchases 70 percent of antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) supplied in the country.

Despite this progress, Lesotho remains heavily impacted by the HIV/AIDS epidemic, having once held the world’s second-highest prevalence rate.

Vulnerable groups, including youth, women, sex workers, textile workers, MSM, migrant workers, and persons with disabilities, continue to face heightened risks, necessitating targeted interventions.

According to the report, 85 percent of the population has access to healthcare services, but many in mountainous regions still walk over three hours to reach a clinic. The Minister of Health reaffirmed the government’s commitment to building additional health centres to ensure universal access.

The Commission’s recommendations serve as a critical roadmap for Lesotho to enhance its healthcare system, particularly for marginalised populations, as it works toward fulfilling its human rights obligations.

Funding cuts threaten HIV services for Key Affected Populations

Ntsoaki Motaung

Key Affected Populations (KAP) in the country, including sex workers, men who have sex with men, and other marginalised groups, are facing heightened challenges due to a suspension of the United States funding triggered by executive orders from President Donald Trump.

Hlomohang Letsie, Project Coordinator for the Key Affected Populations Alliance of Lesotho (KAPAL), this week warned that this funding pause exacerbates existing barriers to healthcare access for these communities.

Letsie emphasised that KAP already struggle to access services at public hospitals due to stigma and discrimination.

“We are the most affected because we are already marginalised,” she said. “While government health facilities appear to function as usual, for us, the Drop-In Centres are closed.”

These specialised clinics, operated by civil society organisations (CSOs), provided tailored health services for KAP, offering a stigma-free environment. With funding cuts forcing their closure, many now face disruptions in critical care, including HIV/AIDS treatment. “Drop-In Centres were designed for KAP to access health services privately, away from the judgment often encountered at public health centres,” Letsie explained.

Unlike public facilities, which operate from 8 AM to 4 PM, times when sex workers, for example, are typically resting, these centres were open 24 hours. CSOs also delivered med-

ication directly to KAP in their communities, including on the streets at night.

“Without this, many will default on lifelong HIV medication,” she warned, highlighting the risk of rising infection rates and setbacks in Lesotho’s goal of achieving HIV epidemic control by 2030.

While no specific cases of denied access at public facilities have been reported yet, Letsie noted the daily reality for KAP:

“Each day, someone needs a refill, and there’s a new HIV infection every few days among our community. If these individuals aren’t reached, infection rates will climb.” She urged the government to prioritise programs for KAP amid the funding crisis.

The funding suspension stems from a January 2025 executive order by President Trump, imposing a 90-day freeze on most U.S. foreign aid, including programs managed by the U.S. Agency for International Development (US-AID).

This freeze halted operations of the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), a cornerstone of global HIV efforts credited with saving over 26 million lives since 2003.

In Lesotho, PEPFAR has invested over US\$860 million since 2016 to combat HIV and tuberculosis (TB), supporting the country’s progress toward the UNAIDS 95-95-95 targets (95 percent of people living with HIV knowing their status, 95 percent of those diagnosed on treatment, and 95 percent of those treated



Members of the CSOs during their press conference highlighting media about the impact of US's directive orders

achieving viral suppression).

On February 7, 2025, Trump issued a further order cutting all aid to specific countries, including South Africa, citing political grievances.

While Lesotho was not explicitly named, the broader USAID pause has disrupted PEPFAR funding across the region.

A subsequent waiver from U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio allowed limited resumption of PEPFAR’s lifesaving treatment services, but prevention programs and community-level initiatives, like those supporting Lesotho’s Drop-In Centres, remain unfunded, leaving CSOs in limbo.

Lesotho’s CSOs last week issued a statement decrying the “abrupt cancellation and suspension of financial support to critical HIV/TB

programs.”

They noted that the pause threatens to reverse gains made through PEPFAR and other U.S. initiatives, such as the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), which has contributed US\$362 million historically and US\$300 million to an ongoing compact.

“The sudden halt has negatively impacted HIV/TB service delivery at the community level, led by CSOs serving affected populations,” the statement read.

With Drop-In Centres shuttered and outreach halted, the ripple effects are already felt. Letsie and other advocates fear that without swift government intervention or alternative funding, Lesotho’s hard-won progress against HIV could unravel, disproportionately harming its most vulnerable citizens.

DCEO must lead by example

The Directorate on Corruption and Economic Offences (DCEO) was established to uphold integrity, combat corruption, and protect public resources.

It was meant to be the watchdog that ensures government officials are held accountable for misusing state assets. However, recent revelations suggest that the very institution tasked with fighting corruption may itself be guilty of the same transgressions it was created to eliminate.

Newsday's investigation has uncovered troubling allegations that certain DCEO officials are enjoying unauthorised privileges, including the use of government vehicles and housing, despite no contractual entitlement to such benefits.

Worse still, some officials allegedly use these public resources for personal errands and cross-border trips, in direct violation of a Government Secretary's directive restricting the use of state vehicles.

When asked to respond, DCEO provided a feeble excuse—claiming its new Director General, Advocate Matso Sello, is still gathering information and is unable to comment. This non-response is unacceptable. It raises the question: if DCEO cannot account for its own conduct, how can it credibly investigate corruption elsewhere?

It is deeply ironic that the agency responsible for fighting financial misconduct now finds itself entangled in allegations of resource abuse. Institutions such as DCEO must be held to the highest ethical standards, because they wield the power to investigate and prosecute others.

When that power is used selectively or hypocritically, it erodes confidence in the fight against corruption. Among the most shocking allegations is that Mr. Mohau Mokhochane, a DCEO employee, continues to occupy a government house despite allegedly owning a private residence in Katlehong.

Even more disturbing is the claim that the state property is being used as a shelter for his dairy cattle, with his shepherd residing there instead of a legitimate government tenant.

This is an outrageous misuse of public resources, and it exposes the culture of entitlement within DCEO. If these allegations are true, why has DCEO not taken any action to reclaim the house and allocate it to a public officer in need?

These revelations paint a disturbing picture. An agency that demands accountability from others while refusing to apply the same principles to itself. If DCEO officials can flout government regulations without consequences, what message does that send to other state institutions? That corruption is only a crime when committed by outsiders?

The government must launch an independent investigation into these allegations. If wrongdoing is found, those responsible must face disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal. Public servants must not be allowed to exploit state resources without consequences.

The Government Secretary's directive must be strictly enforced. If public officers—including those at DCEO—are using government vehicles without justification, those vehicles must be withdrawn immediately. Additionally, government housing must not be occupied by individuals who already own private property.

DCEO must demonstrate that it is committed to the same principles it expects from others. Reform within the agency is not just desirable—it is imperative. Corruption thrives where institutions fail to lead by example.

The saying goes: "Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones."

DCEO cannot afford to be a hypocritical institution that preaches accountability while tolerating misconduct within its own ranks. The public will not stand for it. If the anti-corruption agency cannot clean its own house, it has no moral authority to clean anyone else's.



No Comment



Kananelo Boloetse

Common Concern

Conformist Syndrome: When playing it safe becomes a life sentence

There's an old saying that "the nail that sticks out gets hammered down." It seems Basotho have taken this to heart, not just as a cautionary tale but as a way of life. Instead of disrupting the status quo, we have perfected the art of conforming, even when the status quo is visibly sinking like a cow in quicksand.

And before anyone gets their feathers ruffled, let me make one thing clear: this is not a call to arms. It's merely a mirror. What you do after looking into it? None of my business.

We live in a society where people tip-toe around opinions like they're walking on hot coals.

Social media? Oh, forget about it. Many would rather scroll in silence than be seen liking, sharing, or, heaven forbid, commenting on something that might ruffle the wrong feathers. Not because they disagree, but because they're afraid. Afraid that a potential employer might be watching. Afraid that their friend's cousin who works in government will be offended. Afraid that speaking up might brand them as troublemakers, effectively locking them out of opportunities they weren't going to get anyway.

Yes, we have convinced ourselves that silence is golden when, in reality, it is often just leaden weight dragging us down. And in this self-imposed quietude, we miss one crucial truth: playing it safe has never changed the world. Or, to borrow from Nelson Mandela, "May your choices

reflect your hopes, not your fears."

But let's be honest: most people's choices reflect their fear of rocking the boat, even when the boat is clearly leaking and heading for a waterfall.

Basotho are not alone in this, of course. The world has always had a love-hate relationship with mavericks, the ones who dare to disrupt, question, and challenge the norm. But every society needs them. Because without them, progress is just a myth we tell ourselves before going to bed in the same stagnant conditions we woke up in.

The irony is that this excessive caution often leads nowhere. The silent onlookers, the ones who meticulously avoid stepping on toes, often live their entire lives without receiving the very opportunities they sacrificed their voices for. And then what? They become old, still cautious, still waiting, still blending into the wallpaper of life.

As Basotho, we have a choice. We can continue to move like water, taking the shape of whatever container society pours us into. Or we can embrace the discomfort of speaking out, of standing firm, of refusing to accept mediocrity simply because it's easier to blend in than to push back.

There is a powerful Sesotho saying: ho shoa le mantsoe joalo ka noha; "to die with words like a snake." Imagine the agony of carrying unspoken truths to the grave. A snake has no voice, so it dies with its words. But as human beings, blessed

with the power of speech, why would we choose such a fate? Why silence ourselves when we have the ability to speak, to challenge, to shape the world with our voices?

Another Sesotho idiom warns: lefu la noha ke ho tsamaea e le ngoe; "the fate of a snake is its habit of always walking alone." This is a lesson in unity. Even if we do speak, it cannot be the voice of one or a scattered few. It must be a chorus, a groundswell of voices refusing to be ignored. Not everyone will rise, but when enough people do, their voices become impossible to silence.

History does not remember the lone whisper; it remembers the collective roar. No great movement was ever built on the courage of just one person. It was the collective defiance, the shared refusal to remain silent, that tore down oppressive systems, fueled revolutions, and forced progress. The question is not whether you have a voice, it's whether you will use it before it's too late.

As they say, "A sheep spends its entire life fearing the wolf, only to be eaten by the shepherd." So, what's the point of fear-driven silence? If playing it safe truly led to guaranteed success, then the most fearful, the most compliant, the most invisible among us would be the most successful.

But they aren't. They're just the ones with the quietest regrets. So, the mirror is here. Look into it. What you do next? That's entirely up to you.



Lesotho's corporate sector must outgrow 'Ha ho le monate le mpitse' culture

Kananelo Boloetse

There's a playful yet telling phrase: "*Ha ho le monate le mpitse*," which translates to "Call me whenever there is a party."

It is a line that captures a certain zest for life, a love for celebration that's deeply ingrained in our youth culture. And who can blame us? Events like the *Cleketseng*, the *Vodacom All White Fashion Festival*, *Letofe Lifestyle Festival*, *Econet Apica*, and the ever-popular *'Maletsunyane Braai Fest* bring vibrancy, attract tourists, and give us moments of joy in a world that often feels heavy.

Corporates like Vodacom Lesotho (VCL), Standard Lesotho Bank, Econet Telecom Lesotho (ETL), and others deserve credit for fueling these gatherings, they're a boon for the tourism sector and a chance to showcase Lesotho's unique spirit. But here's the rub: too often, it feels like our corporates are living by that line, *ha ho le monate le mpitse*, a little too literally. When it comes to sponsorships, they flock to the party, creating a stampede to attach their logos to festivals while initiatives that could truly move Lesotho forward languish in the shadows. The noise around these entertainment events is deafening, yet the silence on more impactful opportunities is equally striking. It's time we ask our corporate giants to also invest in something deeper, something that builds not just a good time, but a better future.

Lesotho has the potential to be a hub for transformative discussions on agriculture, health, and economic innovation. Other countries organise major conferences that shape policy and attract investments, South Africa has the *Mining Indaba*, Kenya hosts the *Agritech Expo*, and Rwanda has become a leader in digital health summits.

Meanwhile, our brightest minds,

our most ambitious entrepreneurs, and our policy leaders are forced to pack their bags and travel beyond our borders to be part of these groundbreaking conversations. While others are busy hosting, we remain mere guests, outsiders looking in. Our own backyard remains barren, devoid of similar platforms.

We are battling some of the most pressing challenges of our time, food insecurity, a struggling healthcare system, and alarmingly high mortality rates. Reports suggest that suicide is on the rise, yet we see little effort from the corporate sector to tackle these crises head-on.

It is deeply concerning that a country facing severe food insecurity does not host a single large-scale annual event dedicated to agriculture. Our healthcare system is overburdened, yet we lack a flagship event where policymakers, healthcare professionals, and industry leaders gather to find solutions. Where are the nationwide suicide prevention campaigns? Where are the mental health awareness conferences?

Take water, for instance. Lesotho is known as the "Water Tower of Southern Africa," with our highlands supplying rivers and dams that sustain millions beyond our borders. It's a resource that's both a blessing and a responsibility.

Imagine an annual Lesotho Water Summit, an event that draws engineers, policymakers, environmentalists, and investors from across Africa and the world to discuss sustainability, infrastructure, and economic opportunities tied to this precious commodity. It could position Lesotho as a thought leader, create jobs, and attract investment. But right now, there's no such event. Not a whisper. Meanwhile, the festivals roll on.

This imbalance isn't just a missed opportunity, it's a misalignment of priorities. Look at Maslow's Hier-

archy of Needs, a framework that's taught in classrooms worldwide. At its base are the essentials: food, water, shelter, and safety. Only once those are secured do you climb toward self-esteem and self-actualisation, where parties and cultural expression find their place.

Lesotho's corporates seem to have flipped the pyramid upside down, pouring money into the top tier while the foundation crumbles. Hunger persists in rural areas, education systems struggle, and infrastructure lags, yet the corporate chequebooks open widest for entertainment.

Don't get me wrong, festivals matter. They boost tourism, support local businesses, and give artists a stage. The *'Maletsunyane Braai Fest*, set against the stunning backdrop of one of Africa's highest waterfalls, is a perfect example of how Lesotho can shine. But if that's all we're known for, we're selling ourselves short. Tourism alone won't lift us out of poverty or address systemic challenges like unemployment and underdevelopment. We need balance, a mix of celebration and substance.

So, what could this look like? Corporates could back an annual Education Forum, bringing together teachers, students, and experts to tackle the literacy crisis. Or they could partner with regional bodies to host a Renewable Energy Conference, leveraging Lesotho's water and solar potential. These aren't pie-in-the-sky ideas, they're practical steps that align with our resources and needs, building a legacy beyond the next party.

My criticism isn't that corporates are doing too much for entertainment, it's that they're doing too little elsewhere. Vodacom, Econet, Standard Lesotho Bank, and others have the resources and influence to shift the narrative. They can still sponsor the braais and fashion shows, but

they should also be the ones saying, "*Ha ho le monate le mpitse*," to initiatives that matter more in the long run.

Imagine the pride we'd feel if Lesotho became a hub for water innovation or a training ground for Africa's next generation of Data Scientists and Machine Learning Engineers—all because our corporates dared to dream bigger.

It's time to stop chasing the party and start building the future. Lesotho deserves more than a good time, it deserves progress. Our corporates can lead the way, if only they'd answer a different call.

Some might argue that corporates do not organise events, they invest in events that someone else has dared to start. The logic being that those who want meaningful events should take the initiative and corporates will support them if they see value. But here's the truth: There are people who are trying to organise the kinds of events mentioned here, but they have gone from pillar to post seeking sponsorship in vain.

Let us not even dare think that Basotho lack the creativity to organise such impactful events, they do. But those who hold the financial power do not give them the attention they need.

Someone else might argue that corporates only invest in events that guarantee a return on investment (ROI) and reinforce their brands. But who said that mental health conferences and economic summits cannot create ROI or build corporate brands?

Who decided that *Sunday Groove / Lifestyle Sundays* and *Pyjama Parties* are more profitable investments than a Lesotho Tech Summit or a Renewable Energy Forum? The truth is, the corporate sector is playing it safe, following the crowd rather than leading in ways that could make a long-term impact.



Government of Lesotho

LESOTHO COMPETITIVENESS AND FINANCIAL INCLUSION PROJECT (LESOTHO HORTICULTURAL INCUBATION & TRAINING CENTRE)

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR INCUBATION OF LESOTHO FRUIT FARMERS

The Lesotho government, through the World Bank financed Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion (CAFI) Project, is supporting the establishment of a Lesotho Horticultural Incubation and Training Centre (LHITC), located at Mahobong in Leribe district, with the objective of scaling and replicating existing deciduous fruit commercial orchards and attracting new investments into the horticulture sector. The pilot farms established under the first and second World Bank financed Private Sector Competitiveness and Economic Diversification projects (PSCEDP) have successfully demonstrated the commercial potential to produce deciduous fruits in Lesotho for both the domestic and export markets, and there is already significant interest from investors in commercial horticulture. However, these investments can only be realized with a coordinated effort to address land administration challenges including the availability of land parcels of adequate size for commercial scale production and adopting a transparent leasing system to achieve a credible land ownership. There is also a need for coordinated infrastructure investments in irrigation, electricity, roads, packhouses, phytosanitary inspection systems and grading, and private-public partnerships to deliver effective training and skills, and impactful extension services. It is against this background that the Government of Lesotho has established the Lesotho Horticultural Incubation and Training Centre.

The LHITC is located in an existing facility which is owned by the National University of Lesotho (NUL) and it is adjacent to the existing pilot commercial farms. The Centre will be operated in partnership with the National University of Lesotho (NUL).

The objective of LHITC is to provide support for scaling commercial horticulture farming in Lesotho, building on the experience of the current pilot commercial farms and addressing gaps in the value chain, access to suitable land, infrastructure, extension services, skills, finance, and markets while promoting climate smart agricultural practices.

The LHITC is currently incubating the first cohort of 7 deciduous fruit farmers and 2 vegetables farmers.

The CAFI Project Management Unit, now invites farmers and farmers groups to indicate their interest to participate in the second cohort of the full horticultural incubation program. Interested farmers should provide information demonstrating that they meet eligibility criteria below.

- The selection criteria will be based on the following key requirements:**
- Applicants (individual farmers or farmers groups) must have:
1. Access to suitable land of **the minimum size of 5 ha** (owned or rented), for at least a period of 30 years if rented, **with a proof of land ownership documents in the name of the Applicant.** The required acceptable documents are Form Cs, Leases or subleases (if the land is rented).
 2. The site close to a good source of quality irrigation water that will provide adequate water to irrigate an orchard of at least 5ha.

3. Access road linking the site with the main road and should be in a good condition.
4. The site that is close to electricity supply or other sustainable sources of power for irrigation and other functions of the orchard.

Note:

In the case of farmers groups, they must have proof of an existing legal entity (Cooperative or Company), or they must provide letter of intent to form a company or Cooperative signed by all group members. However, all members of the group must have Land Ownership Documents stated in (1) above. Experience in commercial farming will be an added advantage.

- Format of EOI submissions**
- The applicants should include at least the following information in their submissions to enable objective assessment of the expressions of interest:
- Applicant information including name, address, cell phone, working e-mail, website (if any), names of a Project Manager (if different from applicant).
 - Certified copies of land ownership documents.
 - Proof of acreage from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition.
 - Description of the location of the site where the orchard is intended to be established.

Further information and suitability maps can be obtained at the address below during office hours [08h00 to 16h30 local time].

Expressions of interest must be delivered in a written form, in sealed envelopes labelled **“Incubation of Lesotho Fruit Farmers”** to the address below in person or by e-mail on or before **Friday, 04th April 2025 at 16h30.** E-mail submissions should be sent to procurement@cafi.org.ls with a copy to nsupu@cafi.org.ls as a single attachment.

Managing Director
Lesotho Competitiveness and Financial Inclusion Project
1st Floor 'Matanki House
P.O. Box 747,
Maseru 100
Lesotho
Tel.: (+266) 22 315 100

NB: This call for expression of interest is open to all Basotho farmers, including those who participated in the first and second cohort pre-incubation program.

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

TO INVEST, OPERATE AND MANAGE LITHOLOANA TSA BASOTHO CANNERY AND FRESH PRODUCE MARKET CENTRE

1.0 LNDC BACKGROUND

The Lesotho National Development Corporation (LNDC) has the core mandate to "initiate, promote and facilitate the development of manufacturing and processing industries, mining, and commerce in a manner calculated to raise the level of income and employment in Lesotho." This mandate stems from the LNDC Act No. 20 of 1967, as amended by LNDC Act No. 13 of 1990 and LNDC Act No. 7 of 2000.

2.0 THE PROJECT

LNDC seeks to integrate Litholoana Tsa Basotho (the former Basotho Fruits and Vegetables Cannery) with the Maluti Fresh Produce Market through private-sector investment. This project is expected to enhance food processing, create jobs, and boost Lesotho's agricultural sector by supporting local farmers and leveraging existing market structures.

A feasibility study and business plan have been completed, and **LNDC invites proposals from qualified domestic investors to invest, operate and/or manage the integrated Fresh Produce Market Centre and Cannery.**

3.0 MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE PROJECT

The project aims to:

- Establish a sustainable and profitable fruit and vegetable processing facility.
- Create value addition for local agricultural produce.
- Enhance market access for local farmers and cooperatives.
- Facilitate regional and international exports of processed food products.
- Generate employment and contribute to economic development.

The following are the envisaged business activities of the integrated companies backed with full feasibility studies and business plan:

- a) Vegetables farming
- b) Vegetables and Fruits processing
- c) Vegetables and Fruits Canning
- d) Contract Canning of vegetables and fruits for local processors
- e) Sale and distribution of fresh produce to local and international markets
- f) Marketing and distribution to local and international markets

4.0 SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals must demonstrate the ability to do one or more of the following:

- **Invest:** Provide evidence of funding capacity (minimum M5 million Maloti) through bank statements or financing letters.
- **Invest and Operate:** Provide evidence of funding and showcase experience in agribusiness, food processing, or supply chain management.
- **Invest and Manage:** Provide evidence of funding and demonstrate experience in implementing efficient processing systems and strategies for local and international market penetration.
- **Invest, Operate and Manage:** Provide evidence of funding and showcase experience in agribusiness, food processing, or supply chain management with demonstrable experience in implementing efficient processing systems and strategies for local and international market penetration.

LESOTHO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Block A, Development House
Kingsway Road
Private Bag A96
Maseru 100

TEL: 22231000 / 22312012
info@lndc.org.ls | www.lndc.org.ls

5.0 BIDDER REQUIREMENTS - Mandatory Documentation:

- Company profile.
- Certified copies of company registration certificates.
- Contactable details of at least three references.
- Valid tax clearance certificate.
- Certified copy of trader's license.
- Latest audited financial statements (balance sheet, income statement, and cash flow statement).
- Proof of past project implementation (if applicable).

6.0 INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

- **Physical Submissions:** Must be in a sealed envelope labelled "LNDC CANNERY AND FRESH PRODUCE INVESTMENT" and delivered to LNDC Reception, Level 1 Block A Development House, **by 12:00 PM on March 7th, 2025.**
- **Electronic Submissions:** Send proposals in PDF format to tenders@lndc.org.ls with the subject "LNDC CANNERY AND FRESH PRODUCE INVESTMENT" by 12:00 PM on **March 7th, 2025.**

Proposals will be opened on **March 7th, 2025, at 12:05 PM** in the Audio-Visual Room, Level 7. Attendance is encouraged but not mandatory.

A non-mandatory site visit to the facilities will take place on Friday 14th February at 9:00am and Friday 21st February at 9:00am.

7.0 NOTICE OF PRESENTATIONS

Shortlisted bidders will be invited for presentations as part of the evaluation process. Negotiations will follow for final selection. No commitments will be binding until a formal contract is signed.

Feasibility studies and business plans will be shared with shortlisted bidders upon signing a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA).

8.0 DISCLAIMER

LNDC reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal without obligation to disclose reasons. A debriefing meeting may be arranged upon request but is not automatic.

For any enquiries, or to request the full RFP document with selection criteria and Key Performance Areas, contact petlane@lndc.org.ls (Deadline for enquiries: **February 25, 2025**). The RFP is also available on our website - www.lndc.org.ls.

www.lndc.org.ls



MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE LESOTHO HIGHLANDS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (LHDA)

Background:
The LHDA is a statutory body established under the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) Order No. 23 of 1986, in line with the Treaty between the governments of Lesotho and South Africa. The LHDA operates under the oversight of the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission, to whom the Board is accountable. It is responsible for implementing, operating, and maintaining the part of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) situated in the Kingdom of Lesotho. Through the office of the Minister of Natural Resources, the Government of Lesotho, interested, suitably qualified individuals to serve as Independent and Non-Executive Directors on the Board of the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA).

REQUIREMENTS
The following mixed set of competencies, experiences, and skills are essential to strengthen the Board in executing its duties:

- Cross-cutting:**
- All Applicants must have at least five (5) years of board experience or at least ten (10) years of senior or executive management experience with exposure to board intricacies.
 - Also, a strong understanding of public sector governance, legislative requirements, and large-scale infrastructure development will be prioritised.

- Domain-specific:**
Applicants must possess proven skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience in at least one of the following domains:
- Large infrastructure planning and delivery.
 - Large infrastructure operation, maintenance, asset care, and management.
 - Audit and risk management in large organisation contexts.
 - Corporate or construction law large organisation contexts
 - Human resource development in large organisation contexts

- Environmental management and social management in relation to large-scale developments.
- All applicants must hold an internationally recognised bachelor's degree and have at least 15 years of experience relevant to the selected domain above. Registration with the appropriate professional or statutory bodies is required. Specifically, the applicant(s) for infrastructure planning, delivery, operation and maintenance, and asset care management must be registered as professional/chartered engineers with the recognised body and must possess certification in Project Management or Construction Management from a recognised body and those for audit and risk management must be registered as a Chartered Accountants (CA(SA) or CA(L)
- APPLICATION PROCESS**
Interested applicants must submit their applications in writing, including the following:
- A motivation letter (not exceeding two pages).
 - A detailed curriculum vitae, including three referees' names and contact details.
 - Certified copies of qualifications.
 - A detailed disclosure of any potential conflicts of interest concerning any LHDA activities.
- The appointment of preferred candidates will be subject to verification of qualifications, probity and reference checks, and security clearance. Applications must be submitted via email only to sec@lhwc.org.ls and addressed to the Principal Secretary, Ministry of Natural Resources, Maseru, Lesotho.
- Deadline for submission: 14th March 2025 at 16:00 hours. No late applications will be accepted.



2007/86 LDTC, Opposite Manthabiseng Convention Centre,
P. O. Box 14359,
Maseru – 100, Lesotho
Email: gemlesotho23@gmail.com

Subject: Call for Expression of Interest

The Geography and Environmental Movement (GEM) invites Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in Lesotho working on environmental issues to express their interest in joining the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and Multi-Environment Agreements (MEAs) CSO Network. This initiative seeks to jointly strengthen community driven environmental efforts, enhance policy advocacy, support innovative solutions to environmental challenges and amplify the voice of Lesotho's civil society at the national decision making platforms. Please join us if you are a **Civil Society Organisation, Community Based Organisation, Faith Based Organisation, Association, Philanthropic Organization, Activists groups and Cultural Organisations**, actively engaged in the following thematic areas:

9. Biodiversity Conservation
10. Wetland Restoration and Protection
11. Agro ecology and Indigenous Crops Promotion
12. Beekeeping for Biodiversity and Livelihoods
13. Eco-Tourism and Conservation Education
14. Wildlife Protection and Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation
15. Community-Based Rangeland Management
16. Aquaculture Development Projects
17. Reforestation and Afforestation
18. Soil Conservation & Land Restoration
19. Food Banks & Food Waste Reduction and Processing
20. Livestock and Poultry Initiatives

Fill up the form provided and send your Expression of Interest (EOI) via email to gemlesotho23@gmail.com and copy to kmalintle@gmail.com with the subject line: "Expression of Interest – GEF & MEAs CSO Network Lesotho" by 14th March 2025. For more information, please contact Lira Masemene -56677260 and Manthatisi Makhaola-58069560
Join us in # 5 year marathon to 2030! Advancing environmental sustainability for a resilient future in Lesotho!

1. Climate Change Adaptation and or Mitigation
2. Sustainable Agriculture & Food Security
3. Water Conservation & Management.
4. Ecosystem Restoration & Conservation
5. Renewable Energy Initiatives and Sustainable livelihoods
6. Waste Management & Recycling
7. Waste-to-Art and Green Enterprises
8. Circular Economy and Green Jobs Program



ADVERTORIAL

LNDC HOSTS AN INVESTOR-SECURITY MEETING

As Lesotho's Investment Promotion Agency, LNDC is mandated to drive the country's development agenda by promoting both Domestic and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Beyond attracting new investments, the Corporation is also responsible for retaining existing investors and facilitating their expansion and diversification into other sectors.

In line with this mandate, LNDC actively engages with key stakeholders to enhance Lesotho's investment climate, ensuring the country remains competitive in attracting and retaining investments. Existing investors play a crucial role in this process, as their feedback informs necessary reforms to improve the business environment.

On the 20th of February 2025, LNDC, in collaboration with the Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) and other security agencies, hosted an Investor-Security Meeting to address security concerns raised by investors. This bi-annual engagement serves as a platform for continuous improvement and dialogue between stakeholders. The primary objective of the meeting was to provide updates on the recommendations made during the previous session held on the 20th of August 2024, gather feedback from investors, identify areas for improvement, and develop new strategies to enhance investor security.

Following the previous meeting, LNDC and LMPS reported on the progress made in implementing investor recommendations. Investors acknowledged the positive developments, expressing that they feel more valued and secure in Lesotho. They commended the Government of Lesotho, through LNDC and LMPS, for its commitment to fostering a safer and more business-friendly environment. Additionally, the investor community expressed satisfaction with LNDC's ongoing efforts, not only in addressing security concerns but also in resolving other operational challenges affecting their businesses.

LESOTHO NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Block A, Development House
Kingsway Road
Private Bag A96
Maseru 100

TEL: 22231000 / 22312012
info@lndc.org.ls | www.lndc.org.ls



Reaffirming its dedication to investor safety, LMPS emphasized its commitment to ongoing collaboration with investors to ensure a secure and conducive investment environment in Lesotho.



www.lndc.org.ls

Fees	3 Months	6 Months	12 Months
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Mofana breaks new ground with Menahano art show

Fusi Hlaoli

In a bold move to reshape Lesotho’s art culture, 23-year-old Tšepo Mofana, a self-taught graphic designer, painter, and artist from Thoteng in Roma, is set to unveil his highly anticipated Menahano art show.

The Menahano Art Show will be held at Maseru West, 6 Caledon Street, Building 1, tomorrow.

More than just an exhibition, the show promises an immersive journey into Mofana’s world of creation, culture, and self-expression.

Menahano, a term meaning thought and reflection, encapsulates Mofana’s artistic evolution, a path forged through struggle, perseverance, and passion. Unlike traditional themed exhibitions, Menahano is a raw, visual narrative shaped by cultural influences and personal experiences.

“I look forward to sharing this journey with everyone and hearing their reflections on this visual narrative of art and

self-expression,” Mofana said. “The goal is to advance my career as an artist and discover more about myself through this artistic journey.”

Mofana’s rise as an artist defies the conventional career expectations in Lesotho, where fields like teaching and medicine are prioritised. “Growing up, art did not

make sense to many people around me,” he admitted.

Despite his creative instincts from a young age, he struggled to find his place in a society that undervalued artistic careers.

His journey, however, is a

testament to perseverance. “Creative careers in Lesotho are tough, but passion paves the way. Patience is key, and I believe the country is slowly changing. There’s more exposure for certain industries, and I believe the creative industry will have its peak too,” he said.

Beyond his personal success, Mofana aims to revolutionise the art scene in Lesotho, advocating for recognition and investment in local talent. He highlighted the barriers artists face, from limited resources to the absence of local art galleries and global opportunities.

“We have so many talented creatives with little access to equipment and funding,” he noted. “Our country doesn’t even qualify for some international creative grants, making it a struggle for independent artists.”

He envisions a future where Lesotho supports its artists through dedicated galleries, creative events, and industry infrastructure. “To sell your work globally, you need exposure, but without art galleries or fashion houses in the country, it’s difficult to keep up with the times,” he added.

Menahano marks Mofana’s first in-person showcase, a major leap from his previous digital displays on Facebook. Now, he invites the public to experience his work first-hand.





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

Package 2: 10 400

Includes:

-Event Entry

-Transport

-3 x nights

-50+ Exhibitions

-6 + Masterclasses

-Funding Opportunities

-Entry and Exhibition

Limited to **ONLY 5 farmers.**

NO perishable goods will be allowed

-A table on the Exhibition floor

-Transport

-3 x nights

-50+ Exhibitions

-6 + Masterclasses

-Funding Opportunities

Food is NOT included

Non-Refundable registration: M500

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Seabata Mahao

The Secretary General of the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA), Mokhlosi Mohapi, has been nominated in two categories in the Lesotho Annual Sports Awards (LASA) taking place tonight.

Mohapi has been nominated for both Administrator of the Year and Referee of the Year.

In the first category, Mohapi has been nominated for his role as the Secretary General of LeFA, which is the custodian of football in Lesotho.

For the Referee of the Year category, Mohapi has been nominated for his role as the Confederation of African Football (CAF) Match Commissioner for multiple international matches, including the recent Pirates vs. Al Ahly Champions League clash in December 2024.

These nominations follow the announce-

LeFA boss up for two awards



ment of the LASA 2025 edition nominees by the Lesotho Sports and Recreation Commission (LSRC).

The fourth edition of LASA is scheduled to take place this afternoon at Mojalefa Lephole Hall.

It has been five years since the last LASA ceremony, and the LSRC has decided to revive this initiative as a way to recognize sports enthusiasts in the country.

“With the return of LASA, LSRC is committed to restoring and sustaining the awards as an annual event moving forward, ensuring continued recognition and celebration of Lesotho’s sports excellence,” the LSRC stated.

Meanwhile, the Sportsman of the Year with Disability, Sportswoman of the Year with Disability, Junior Sportsman of the Year with Dis-



ability, and Junior Sportswoman of the Year with Disability categories have been disqualified due to insufficient nominations per category.

This edition will award more than one volunteer, as the category focuses more on recognising community sports initiatives rather than competition.

All eyes will be on the Sportsman of the Year award, with tight competition between Leboja Tšepe from the Chess Federation of Lesotho (CFL), Retšelisitsoe Kolobe from Lesotho Boxing Association (LeBA), and Tebello Ramakongoana from Federation of Athletics Lesotho (FAL). All three sportsmen have achieved multiple successes in their respective fields over the past year.

Other prominent categories include:

Administrator of the Year: Mokhosi Mohapi from Lesotho Football Association (LeFA), Chabeli Mohatlane from Lesotho Table Tennis Association (LeTTA), and Mphetole Mona from the Chess Federation of Lesotho (CFL).

Junior Female Sportsperson of the Year: Tebello Lesala from Lesotho Football Association (LeFA), Relebohile Bonolo from the CFL, and Ntsamaeng Tholo from LeFA.

Junior Male Sportsperson: Thabang Mokhosi from LeTTA, Lejoa Tšepe from CFL, Thabo Motsopa from Lesotho Swimmers Association (LeSA), and Leluma Mofoka from LeFA.

Sportswoman of the Year: Relebohile Bonolo Ntsielo from CFL, Rapelang Maselela from LeBA, and Lieketseng Ngatane from CFL.

Volunteer of the Year: Limpho Lehoete from Ha-Tebeli, Berea; Refiloe Matete from Ha-Kh-itsane, Mohale’s Hoek; and Retired Captain Monde Ndaba from Qoaling, Maseru.

Team of the Year: Red Skins Volleyball Club (Male) from Lesotho Volleyball Association (LVA), Lesotho Mounted Police Service (LMPS) Netball Club (Male) from Lesotho Netball Association (LNA), and Lesotho National Under-17 Girls from LeFA.

Coach of the Year: Meshack Letsoepa from LeBA, Tjamela Tjamela from LeFA, and Moseli Phera from CFL.

Referee of the Year: Souru Phatšoane, Abiel Lekulo from LNA, and Mokhosi Mohapi from LeFA.

Journalist of the Year: Thabiso Lesale from Lesotho Television, Leemisa Thuseho from Lesotho Times, and Tebello Piti from Boiketlo FM.

M200k for Bocheletsane cycling event

Kananelo Mokhele

At a press conference held at the Lesotho National Olympic Committee House in Maseru West on Wednesday, the Federation of Cycling Lesotho (FCL), together with the Sam Matekane Foundation (SMF), announced the launch of the SMF Sports Extravaganza Cycling Races 2025.

Speaking for the foundation, Baba Malephane revealed that M200 000 has been set aside for this year’s cycling activities.

The event will include five distinct race categories: the 126 km Bocheletsane Cycling Classic, a 42 km race from Mohale to Bocheletsane, BMX Freestyle, Pump Track, and a develop-



mental Criterium.

For the Bocheletsane Cycling Classic, prizes will be distributed among the top ten finishers in the men’s category, with the first-place rider

earning M10 000, second place M6 000, third place M5 000, and fourth place M4 000.

In the women’s division, the top five cyclists will receive awards, with the winner receiving M10 000, second place M6 000, third place M5 000, fourth place M4 000, and fifth place M3 000. Additional rewards will be provided in the other race segments.

The 126 km Bocheletsane Cycling Classic is set to kick off at 6:00 AM from MGC Park in Maseru, heading all the way to Bocheletsane stadium in Mantšonyane, Thaba Tseka district.

Malephane also acknowledged the FCL’s kind gesture of donating five bicycles to young cyclists in Mantšonyane, noting that the contribution would significantly support the development of local talent. All competitions are scheduled to take place on March 16.

Seabata Mahao

The incoming Lesotho National Olympic Committee (LNOC) president, Letsatsi Ntsibolane, has vowed to carry on the foundation laid by his predecessors.

Ntsibolane, who rose to the helm of the LNOC after winning the presidential race last Sunday, is also keen on working closely with the outgoing president, Tlali Rampooana.

In his acceptance speech, the former LNOC Vice President paid tribute to Rampooana, acknowledging his vast experience gained over 25 years in sports leadership. He appealed to him to remain accessible whenever guidance is needed.

“I urge all candidates to put the elections behind us and focus on working together to advance sports in the country. I would uphold the positive achievements of the outgoing committee while striving for further improvements,” Ntsibolane stated.

For his part, the outgoing LNOC President, Rampooana, congratulated newly elected President Ntsibolane and his new committee members.

Rampooana acknowledged the outcome, stating that the people have spoken and that their voice is of utmost importance.

New LNOC president relishes new challenge



LNOC Executive Committee will serve a four-year term

The LNOC’s XXIV Elective Conference, which took place during the Annual General Meeting (AGM), also ushered in a brand new Executive Committee, which will serve a four-year term.

The election was conducted by an Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), facilitated by Development for Peace Education (DPE), ensuring a transparent and fair process.

The new executive committee is as follows:

- President: Letsatsi Ntsibolane
- Vice President Administration: Ramotang Makatile
- Vice President Finance: ‘Mamotšabi Lekhabunyane
- Treasurer: Chabeli Mohatlane
- Public Relations Officer: Fetang Selialia
- Committee Members: ‘Mabokang Mdandalaza, Tšepiso Baholo, and Makara Thibinyane



Tragedy in the marathon

Seabata Mahao

The 2025 edition of Maseru City Run experienced an unfortunate anticlimax when one of its runners, Tšeliso Makana (36), collapsed mid-race before being rushed to hospital where he was later confirmed dead.

Before tragedy struck on Sunday, the event was a bustling hive of activity with fanfare and excitement as the Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso and her son, Crown Prince Lerotoli Seeiso, joined the athletics spectacle to participate in the 10 km race.

The unfortunate passing of Makana, who participated in the 21km race, has undoubtedly dampened the mood around the rapidly growing event, which attracted over 1,400 domestic and international runners, up from 800 in 2024.

"We received the sad news that Tšeliso Makana, a Mosotho adult, race No 304 aged 36 years and running a 21km distance, collapsed at Maseru West, 1.5km away from a 21km finish," a statement from Maseru City Run organisers said.

It indicated that Makana was rushed to Maseru District Hospital, where he met his demise.

The organisers said there were four ambulances on standby for any medical emergency, which were called into action at least five times, including the Makana incident.

"The event was supported by four ambu-

lances which had nine paramedics manning them. These ambulances attended to reported incidents during the race where runners were provided medical attention in different routes and distances."

The statement said details about Makana's medical emergency were still unknown following his immediate passing, but a post-mortem examination would be conducted to determine the cause of his death.

"We wish to thank the medical staff and volunteers who assisted and quickly provided medical assistance needed by the athletes. We also wish to thank Vitality Health, Maluti Mountain Cement, and Lesotho Defence Force who sponsored the event with the four ambulances and nine medical staff who attended to the health needs of the runners," the statement added.

Apart from the tragedy, this year's edition showcased a great competitive spirit throughout, especially during the 42km race. In the male category, Teboho Noosi claimed first place while Refiloe Khechane emerged as the winner in the female category.

Both top finishers received M10 000 in prize money, with the overall prize pool for the event amounting to an impressive M60 000 to be distributed among winners across various categories.

Addressing the media after the event, Tšoinyana Rapapa, the Chairperson of the

organising team, highlighted the race's dual purpose: to serve as a pre-qualification for major competitions and to promote a healthy lifestyle among the Basotho people.

"I urge all Basotho to participate in races like this as they prepare us for international competitions and improve our athletes' performance. The race's challenging terrain routes provided a unique advantage for local runners," Rapapa said.

"The presence of Her Majesty Queen 'Masenate Mohato Seeiso, added an extra layer of significance to the occasion," Rapapa added.

Rapapa mentioned that with a budget of approximately M410 000 allocated to organising the event, the success of the race stands as a testament to the collaboration between local and international stakeholders.

Furthermore, runners from around the world participated, with athletes hailing from countries such as the Philippines, South Africa, and Kenya, making the Maseru City Run 2025 a truly international event.

A total of 1,421 runners registered across various categories, including the 42km, 21km, 10km, 5km, and 1.6km, catering for athletes of all levels and ages.

Maseru City Run Results:

42km Men

1. Teboho Noosi
2. Tšeliso Matseke

3. Motšepi Thabo
4. Jobo Khatoane
5. Bokang Lisene

42km Women

1. Refiloe Khechane
2. Masoabi Tšoeu
3. 'Maneheng Raphuthing
4. Lineo Lebotha
5. Thakane Tšepe

21km Men

1. 'Mopenyane Lebelo
2. Tsietsi Sello
3. Tšepo Mathibelle

21km Women

1. Reitumetse Thetana
2. Tšooana Moshoeshoe
3. Rethabile Kanono

10km Men

1. Thabo Lebakeng
2. Malefane Ramosebetsi
3. Rethabile Khomari

10km Women

1. Matšeliso Lekarapa
2. Libuseng Sematle
3. Rapelang Maselela

The event sponsors included Maluti Mountain Cement, Nedbank, Lehakoe Club, Shared Water Systems, Basotho Car Rental, Letseng Diamond Mine, Letseka Plant Hire, KST Enterprises, Healthy By Choice, Herbalife Independent Distributors, and Newsday Media among others.



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