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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 lihoal tse tlo tsamaea le rona

Date: 1-2 April 2025

Venue: Lavender Kontrei Market,
Pretoria North, Gauteng.

For more Information: Turn to Page 14





Staff Reporter

The High Court has directed the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) to pay over M240 million in outstanding ground rent fees and arrears to the Land Administration Authority (LAA).

This decision follows a prolonged legal battle in which the LAA sought to compel the LHDA to settle its dues for a land plot registered under its name. The case, initially launched in 2019, was concluded with a ruling by Justice 'Maseforo Mahase in 2023. However, the written judgment was only made available this week.

The LAA turned to the Land Court Division of the High Court after numerous attempts to secure payment from the LHDA had failed. According to the Land Act of 2010, ground rent is to be paid annually, but it remains unclear how many years' worth of fees remain unpaid for the disputed plot, identified as 36242-042.

While the LHDA did not dispute its debt, it argued that the case should have also involved the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission (LHWC) and the ministers responsible for water and land.

However, Justice Mahase dismissed these objections, ruling that the LHDA is an independent legal entity responsible for its own lease obligations. She further stated that no laws require the involvement of the aforementioned parties in the dispute.

"In the premises, it is the view of this Court that the said preliminary objections raised by way of a special answer should, and are accordingly dismissed with costs on an ordinary scale," Justice Mahase ruled.

The LAA had requested the High Court to order the LHDA to pay the full outstanding amount of M240,265,097.38 and cover legal costs if the application was contested. The LAA stated that the LHDA had repeatedly ignored written demands, including a final notice issued in November 2019, despite being legally obligated to make the payments.

In its defence, the LHDA raised preliminary objections, claiming that the dispute was an intra-governmental issue and that the LHWC had a direct and substantial interest in the case.

However, the court found no legal basis for this claim, emphasising that the LHWC is not listed as the leaseholder for the disputed land and thus has no obligation to pay the ground rent.

Although the LHDA did not contest its debt, it argued that the case should have included the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission (LHWC) and the ministers responsible for water and land.

However, Justice Mahase dismissed these objections, ruling that the LHDA is an independent legal entity responsible for its own lease obligations and that no laws require the involvement of the mentioned parties in the dispute.

"In the premises, it is the view of this Court that the said preliminary objections raised by way of a special answer as indicated above should, and are accordingly dismissed with costs on an ordinary scale," Justice Mahase ruled.

In the court papers, the LAA requested the High Court to order the LHDA to settle the full outstanding amount of M240 265 097.38 and to cover legal costs should the application be opposed.

The LAA stated that the LHDA had continuously ignored multiple written demands, including a final notice issued in November 2019, despite being legally obligated to make the payments.

The LHDA, in its defense, raised preliminary objections, claiming that the dispute was an intra-governmental matter and that the LHWC had a direct and substantial interest in the case.

However, the court found no legal basis for this argument, noting that the LHWC is not listed as the leaseholder for the disputed land and therefore has no obligation to pay the ground rent.

"The respondent filed an answer through which it opposes the applicant's claim. The basis upon which it opposes this application is spelt out at paragraphs 1, 2 (a), (b) and (c) of its answer filed of record. To that extend it raised preliminary objection by way of a special answer as already referred to above.

LHDA ordered to settle M240m debt

"It is to be noted that in essence, the respondent does not deny any indebtedness to the applicant in the way that the applicant alleges. It alleges that there is 'non-joinder of an entity called Lesotho Highlands Water Commission (LHWC) which is a separate and distinct entity from the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA).

"The LHDA in actual fact is a holder of lease document of number 36242-042. The Lesotho Highlands Water Commission is not at all a leaseholder of the plot in question," Justice Mahase said in her judgment.

She continued; "In its argument, counsel for the respondent has gone into great lengths to show how the said Lesotho Highlands Water Commission will be negatively impacted should judgment be granted in favour of the Lesotho Highland

Development Authority.

"Refer to paragraph ten (10) of its answer filed of record as well as to its written submissions. It alleges a material non-joinder of the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission by the Lesotho Administration Authority and argues that the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission has a, direct and substantial interest in the applicant.

"How that is so has not really and clearly been spelt out in so far as collection of ground rent fees by the applicant is concerned. Also, counsel for respondent does not deny that the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission is not a holder of lease number 36242-042 as is alleged by the applicant. How then is a non-holder of this lease document obligated to pay ground rent fees has come about has not been explained.

"In the lease document annexured herein, no other entity is reflected as being a lease holder other than the applicant herein."

Justice Mahase said the party which is obligated to pay ground rent fees is the actual holder of the lease, and not any other party even if such other party has dealings of some, kind with the leaseholder.

"The respondent does not even refute allegations that it has ignored, neglected and refused to honour its obligations in terms of the lease that it holds, but now when a claim for payment of the ground rent is issued, it raises for the first time the issue of the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission.

"This is untenable because the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission is not the holder of the lease in question. This I say with the greatest respect.

"If indeed the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission were obligated to so pay ground rent fees in terms of the conditions spelt

out on that lease document, the respondent should have responded to the numerous letters of demand addressed and received by it to say that in fact such correspondence should be, send to the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission instead of it ignoring such crucial correspondence.

"The respondent has not annexed any documentary proof to provide evidence that the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission is obligated to pay ground rent Fees and or that payment of such rent by the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority would adversely impact on the dealings of the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission.

She said there was no evidence indicating how the payment of ground rent fees owed to the LAA by the LHDA would impact on the LHWC, which is not a lease holder of the land in question.

"The alleged intra-governmental dispute is just a fiction of one's mind for the simple reason that each of the entities which are parties herein have legal standing in their own right. In respect of the applicant, the relevant law establishing it is the Legal Administration Authority Act No.9 of 2010, particularly section 4 (3) which stipulates that this entity is a legal entity which can sue and be sued in its own names.

"There is no iota of evidence presented by the respondent to the effect that any ministerial consultations should be sought or obtained and granted before the applicant performs its core duties as spelt out in the above shown Act, Legal Notice No. 9 of 2010.

"With the greatest respect, it is the considered view of this Court that it would be stretching and extending the duties of the Lesotho Administration Authority just too far off its circumscribed duties if it were to be accepted that the Lesotho Highlands Water Commission should have been joined and or Consulted before the Lesotho Administration Authority performs its Mandatory statutory functions and duties.

"This is because the Lesotho Administration Authority is a completely separate and independent entity in so far as issues pertaining to collection of ground rent fees are concerned. These are exclusively the functions of the Lesotho Administration Authority, and of no other entity in terms of the relevant law(s).

"In the premises, it is the view of this Court that the said preliminary objections raised by way of a special answer as indicated above should, and are accordingly dismissed with costs on an ordinary scale," Justice Mahase concluded.

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Broken promises leave former Tšepong nurses in limbo

Ntsoaki Motaung

The government's absorption of former Tšepong nurses has left these dedicated health workers in an ongoing state of uncertainty, with their futures hanging in the balance.

The nurses, who were dismissed after going on strike to demand better pay at Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital (QMMH), have seen little progress in their transition to civil service status since the government terminated Tšepong's contract in 2021.

After over 300 nurses were fired for demanding salary increases that mirrored their counterparts in other institutions, the government severed ties with the Tšepong consortium.

Officials promised that the nurses would be absorbed into the Ministry of Health and given the same benefits as civil servants. But here we are, nearly four years later, and the government's promises remain unfulfilled.

While the nurses continue to receive their monthly salaries, they remain without any official documentation to confirm their status as civil servants. This glaring omission has led to widespread anxiety among the nurses, who fear they may be denied retirement and death benefits.

Despite their dedication and years of service, these workers find themselves caught in a bureaucratic mess, with no clear path forward.

Sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, revealed that despite repeated attempts to engage with the Ministry of Health, no satisfactory resolution has been reached.

"HR has informed us that we are not entitled to benefits due to our alleged illegal employment status," the sources said. "Yet, the pension fund continues to deduct contributions

from our salaries."

In a bizarre twist, the only meeting held with the Ministry of Health, according to the sources, was a reading of public service laws, on Ministry premises, no less, without the presence of any relevant public service representatives.

The nurses said that the lack of formal recognition of their employment has also created additional barriers in their personal and professional lives.

"We cannot get loans, and our educational pursuits are on hold," one nurse shared. "We are treated like second-class citizens at our workplaces. They call us names like 'Ba Tšepong' and refuse to give us uniforms because apparently we are not part of the budget."

Lesotho Nurses Association (LNA) Spokesperson Busa Qhala confirmed that the association has received numerous complaints from affected nurses and has engaged with the Ministry of Health in an attempt to address their concerns.

"We have been in dialogue with the Ministry, but their administrative processes have proven excessively time-consuming," Qhala explained. "In light of this, we implore the Ministry to expedite their actions as our members' well-being is suffering in the meantime."

Qhala emphasised that the primary issue revolves around the fact that these dedicated nurses will not be entitled to retirement benefits, despite pension contributions being deducted from their salaries.

Additionally, their beneficiaries will be denied death benefits in the event of their demise. Some nurses, nearing retirement, have exceeded the government's minimum age for employment. If they retire without formal employment status, they will not be eligible for any government benefits.

"Despite the lack of formal documentation, the



government has verbally acknowledged their employment," Qhala noted. "It is crucial that this matter be addressed without further delay to safeguard the future of these workers."

Matshona Libalele, Spokesperson for the Public Officers' Defined Contribution Pension Fund, explained that the Ministry of Health's Human Resources department is best positioned to answer questions regarding pension deductions from nurses' salaries.

Libalele clarified that the employer is responsible for most of the paperwork involved in enrolling employees into the fund. After completing necessary preparations, the employer submits a list of eligi-

ble employees for membership.

"The Fund itself does not collect money directly from individuals," Libalele stated. "Instead, the employer deducts a five percent contribution from the employee's salary and pays it to the Fund. The Fund has no direct access to the salaries of its members."

He also added that one requirement for pension membership is that employees must have at least 10 years left before retirement age.

'Mateboho Moseboko, the Ministry of Health's Public Relations Officer, stated that out of the more than 500 affected individuals, half have been fully integrated into the government system through a batch incorporation process.

Trump orders send shockwaves through Lesotho's health sector

Ntsoaki Motaung

Two significant executive orders from the new United States administration are reverberating through Lesotho's healthcare landscape, sparking both concern and swift strategic planning.

The directives, which affect the World Health Organisation (WHO) and U.S. global health initiatives, have prompted the Ministry of Health to evaluate the potential fallout and craft response strategies.

Health Minister, Selibe Mochoboroane, highlighted that one order directly impacts Lesotho due to the U.S. withdrawal from WHO. The U.S., a major contributor with about 18 percent of WHO's budget, has left Lesotho worried about future health funding.

"Last year, WHO funded Lesotho's health sector with M30 million. While assurances have been made that WHO will continue to support Lesotho and other nations, the extent of future funding remains unclear," Mochoboroane stated.

Another order has put a freeze on U.S. support via programs like PEPFAR and the CDC, which are crucial for managing HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis in the country.

"These programs fund around 1,500 healthcare workers through partner organisations, along with providing essential testing materials," Mochoboroane noted.

In response, Prime Minister Ntsoakoane Matekane, the Chairperson of the Social Cluster, and other key stakeholders launched a comprehensive review to mit-

igate any disruptions in healthcare services.

A primary concern was ensuring uninterrupted access to antiretroviral (ARV) medication for approximately 240,000 Basotho on treatment.

"The review revealed that the government funds 73 percent of ARV needs, with the Global Fund covering the remaining 27 percent, securing our medication supply. Additionally, we have sufficient laboratory supplies for the next five to eight months," the minister explained.

Addressing the potential salary disruptions for healthcare workers, Mochoboroane revealed that financial assessments indicate a need for M27 million to maintain current staffing levels. A task force has been set up to devise both short-term and long-term solutions.

"The government is committed to maintaining service quality, potentially by directly employing these workers if necessary," he added.

However, Mochoboroane also shared some relief, stating that PEPFAR has obtained a waiver, enabling staff involved in HIV/AIDS and TB programs to resume their roles in treatment, testing, counseling, and lab work.

This week, contract addendums are being finalised to ensure these workers can return to their posts without delay.

United States' president Donald Trump's decision to sign the executive orders affecting U.S. relations with WHO and U.S. global health programs was motivated by several factors,

reflecting both his policy priorities and ideological stances.

Trump's executive order to withdraw the U.S. from WHO cites the organisation's alleged mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic that arose out of Wuhan, China. He has criticised the organisation for its response to the outbreak, accusing it of being too slow and not independent from Chinese influence.

Trump has also long argued that the U.S. was disproportionately funding the WHO. The executive order specifically mentions "unfairly onerous payments from the United States, far out of proportion with other countries' assessed payments."

He highlighted the disparity between U.S. contributions and those of China, given their respective population sizes.

The order also claims that WHO failed to "demonstrate independence from the inappropriate political influence of WHO member states," suggesting that the organisation was not acting in the global interest but was swayed by national politics, particularly by China.

The withdrawal also aligns with Trump's "America First" policy, where he seeks to champion U.S. interests and reduce international commitments that he perceives as not benefiting the U.S. directly or disproportionately.

Trump issued another order for a 90-day pause on new foreign assistance obligations and disbursements, including

health programs like PEPFAR, to reevaluate their alignment with U.S. interests.

This reflects his broader aim to assess and potentially realign foreign aid to prioritise American interests. The freeze is also influenced by ideological shifts, including opposition to certain types of aid that Trump's administration views as ideologically driven or not essential (e.g., aid related to gender ideology, diversity, equity, and inclusion programs).

There is also an emphasis on "rooting out waste" and ensuring that every dollar spent abroad directly contributes to making America "safer, stronger, and more prosperous," as stated by administration officials.

These executive orders can be seen as part of Trump's broader strategy to retract from international commitments he views as not serving U.S. interests or as being mismanaged, realign U.S. foreign policy to focus more on domestic priorities and less on global leadership in health, which he critiqued during his campaign and first term, and challenge what he perceives as bureaucratic inefficiencies or misallocations in international aid, aiming for more direct benefits for the U.S.

This approach reflects Trump's second-term agenda to undo many of the Joe Biden administration's policies, assert U.S. sovereignty, and shift focus towards domestic issues, even if it means potentially reducing U.S. influence in global health governance and support systems.

Government to introduce agriculture insurance program

... To protect farmers against natural disasters

Kabelo Masoabi

The Smallholder Agriculture Development Project II (SADP II) is currently in the process of implementing smart input subsidies and agricultural insurance within the nation.

This effort is consistent with sub-component 2.4, which focuses on promoting smart subsidies and agricultural insurance for agricultural investment. The Government of Lesotho is undertaking the implementation of SADP II with financial backing from the World Bank, the Government of Japan, and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

According to reports from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the increasing frequency and intensity of natural disasters, such as storms, floods, droughts, and wildfires, have led to significant damage in the agricultural sector, thereby contributing to a rise in economic losses.

These escalating disaster-related losses highlight the urgent need for effective risk management strategies, particularly within agricultural systems.

As a result, agricultural insurance and input subsidy programs are advocated as mechanisms that can provide essential financial support to farmers, enabling them to manage risks more effectively and enhance productivity.

Communications Specialist Malefetsane Raliengoane has indicated that SADP II has secured additional financing from the Global Agriculture and Food Security Programme, under the oversight of the IFAD, to facilitate the execution of this initiative.

In particular, the agricultural insurance pilot project will commence in Lesotho with a focus on crop insurance at this stage. Nancy Chawawa, a Resilient Specialist consultant from the United Nations World Food



Programme (WFP), clarified that this insurance is procured by agricultural producers and subsidised by the national government to mitigate losses resulting from natural disasters affecting their crops.

These Chawawa indicated at the implementation strategy meeting held at Avani Maseru on Tuesday. The meeting was attended by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Nutrition district heads, WFP representatives and other relevant stakeholders amongst others.

Chawawa said: "Agriculture insurance is important for farmers. It helps them deal with unpredictable challenges, especially with more extreme weather and climate change. Insurance provides a safety net

against financial losses, promoting stability and growth in agriculture.

"Having insurance can also help farmers secure loans. Lenders prefer to support farmers with coverage, allowing them to expand their operations and invest in new technology that improves productivity and sustainability," she continued.

"To maximise the benefits of agriculture insurance, we need to increase awareness among farmers and agricultural businesses. This means working with local partners to improve understanding of sustainable practices in climate and agriculture insurance. By combining insurance with other useful services in the agricultural value chain, we can make it more appealing and accessible,

helping farmers succeed in a changing environment."

The pilot program for the combined purchase of subsidised insurance and agricultural inputs is scheduled to operate for one year, after which an evaluation will be conducted to determine its applicability for the broader farming community.

The index-based agricultural insurance tools to be utilised for assessing risk factors include the Area Yield Index, Weather Index (estimates rainfall deficit), and Indemnity Insurance, which is a traditional form of coverage for inputs or yields.

Chawawa elucidated that the insurance coverage will be designed to be more accessible to commercial farmers, with a specific emphasis on cereal crops cultivated in open field environments.

Additionally, considerations regarding soil type and field size will be incorporated into the insurance coverage criteria.

According to Khauta Faku, an Information Technology officer at the World Food Programme (WFP), selected farmers participating in the pilot project will procure and pay for subsidised inputs and premiums through an electronic voucher system, utilising existing commercial payment platforms such as M-Pesa, EcoCash, and C-Pay.

"Payments will be made at designated agro-dealers, who will subsequently reconcile their database with the respective insurance companies. Furthermore, the government and WFP will process disaster claims for farmers through the database provided by the insurance entities," he explained.

Faku emphasised the importance of educating participating farmers about the system to ensure they are capable of securing their crops effectively. He also noted that agro-dealers should be strategically located near farming communities to facilitate easier access to necessary inputs, which must also meet quality standards.

Amongst the African countries to introduce agriculture insurance is Kenya in March 2016 to protect farmers from natural disasters. The program is subsidised by the government and targets smallholder farmers. The premium rate depends on the type of crop and the number of insured perils.

Dead illegal miners in Stilfontein to receive pauper's burials

Staff Reporter

Illegal miners who perished in Stilfontein's abandoned mine shafts, including Lesotho nationals, will be given pauper's burials if their bodies remain unclaimed, South African authorities confirmed this week.

As of this week, only five families had come forward to identify the deceased.

Since last August, a total of about 78 bodies have been recovered, according to North West MEC for Health, Sello Lehari, who provided an update during a media briefing in Rustenburg on Wednesday.

"We have retrieved 78 bodies following the rescue operation," Lehari said. "Our department has been working tirelessly with medical professionals to ensure that every step, from retrieval to postmortem examinations, has been conducted with the utmost diligence."

The bodies have been transported to different government mortuaries: 21 to Klerksdorp, 16 to Potchefstroom, and 42 to Brits.

As of Monday, January 13, 39 injured illegal miners were hospitalised. Lehari confirmed that 31 have since been discharged, while two succumbed to their injuries.

Lehari stated that a pauper's funeral will be arranged for unidentified victims once all stakeholders reach an agreement.

The miners became trapped following a nationwide crackdown on illegal mining at abandoned shafts. Many of those arrested or killed were undocumented migrants from Zimbabwe, Mozambique, and Lesotho.

In January, bodies were extracted from the disused Shaft 11 during a rescue operation led by mine rescue services.

Authorities intensified efforts to curb illegal mining in November last year, particularly at Buffelsfontein Mine in Stilfontein, where police surrounded the entrance and prevented food and water from reaching those trapped underground.

Before the rescue operation began, local community members attempted to intervene by lowering a rope into the shaft to pull some of the miners out. They also sent mes-



sages down, assuring those inside that help was on the way.

The once-thriving mining industry, a pillar of South Africa's economy, has been shrinking for years, leaving thousands of shafts

abandoned. Despite the risks, the lure of gold continues to attract desperate miners, many of whom are undocumented and willing to risk their lives for a chance at striking it rich.

Staff Reporter

The number of Basotho facing severe food insecurity has decreased by 68,000, from 403,000 to 335,000, between May 2024 and the projected period of January-March 2025, according to the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis.

The report, published this week, highlights that the lean season, which runs from October 2024 to March 2025, coincides with this analysis period.

The improved food security situation, compared to the May 2024 assessment, is largely attributed to ongoing humanitarian support, including cash and food transfers from the government, humanitarian organisations, and the United Nations (UN) agencies.

These efforts have significantly reduced food gaps.

The report notes that while the number of food-insecure people has decreased, around 335,000 people, or 22 percent of the rural population, will still be in IPC Phase 3 (Crisis) during the January-March 2025 period.

All ten districts remain classified under this phase.

Several challenges remain during this period.

Key hazards expected include heavy rainfall, with a forecast of normal to above-normal rainfall across all districts, along with high temperatures. Declining income sources, such as lower livestock sales due to market competition and restrictions on livestock movement to South Africa, are also a concern.

Additionally, persistent high prices for

Number of food-insecure Basotho drops by 68,000

... But challenges persist, food subsidy recommended



World Vision Lesotho this week was in Likoabing, Rothe Area Programme for the 2nd round of our 3-month emergency food distribution, supporting 33 households affected by the El Niño-induced drought.

food, fuel, and electricity continue to erode the purchasing power of vulnerable households.

The report also notes that “humanitari-

an assistance has had a significant impact on food security”. For example, in Berea, 29 percent of the population received support, covering 67 percent of their caloric needs.

“In Butha-Buthe and Leribe, the assistance covered 72 percent and 65 percent of caloric needs, respectively, while in Qacha’s Nek, 27 percent of the population received aid, meeting 83% of their energy requirements.”

Despite these efforts, food access remains a key challenge for many districts, compounded by high food and non-food prices.

These factors are likely to continue limiting food access, though food availability is expected to remain stable, as markets in Lesotho are functioning well with supplies from local, regional, and international sources.

The report recommends the continuation and expansion of conditional and unconditional humanitarian assistance.

“To effectively support households facing crisis food Insecurity, it is critical to continue and expand both conditional and unconditional humanitarian assistance.”

It further recommends the reduction of food consumption gaps by improving access to food, through appropriate modalities such as food subsidy.

“The National Strategic Resilience framework should be fully operational to ensure that households diversify their livelihoods to withstand future shocks.

“Intensify Nutrition education with more emphasis of feeding practices, exclusive breastfeeding and recommended duration of breastfeeding. Immediately update the Baseline Profiles to increase relevant data sources for IPC analysis as well as incorporating new emerging issues.”

Lastly, it recommends the scaling up of anticipatory actions to mitigate the impact of anticipated hazards.

On July 12, 2024, Prime Minister Ntsoakoane Matekane declared a state of National Food Insecurity Disaster after a his-

toric drought, triggered by El Niño, led to the lowest crop yields since the 2018/19 agricultural season

According to the government, about a third of the population, approximately 700,000 people, would face hunger through March 2025. In rural areas, more than 400,000 people were expected to experience crisis levels of acute hunger through March 2025.

Vulnerability assessments predicted that an additional 296,049 people in urban areas would become food insecure. The drought had also led to severe water shortages, with wells running dry.

USAID, now suspended by the new United States president Donald Trump, said last year that climatic shocks, diseases, and socioeconomic conditions would continue to drive high levels of acute food insecurity in Lesotho.

In particular, El Niño-induced conditions, including erratic rainfall patterns and prolonged dry spells, have resulted in the lowest crop yields since 2018/19, increasing reliance on markets and depleting household food stocks prematurely.

“Drought conditions have also reduced water levels in reservoirs and rivers, resulting in widespread livestock losses as of October,” said USAID. “An estimated 80 percent of Lesotho’s population depends on the agricultural sector for food and income, making households more vulnerable to climatic shocks,” USAID said.

In response to these challenges, USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) supported World Vision Lesotho in providing unconditional food assistance through cash-based transfers to vulnerable individuals across nine community councils in Mafeteng, Mohale’s Hoek, and Quthing.

These transfers, it was said, would help increase access to local markets, supporting the local economy and improving food security for drought-affected populations.

INVITATION TO BID

BID REF NO: RD/CLEANING, HYGIENE & GARDENING SERVICES-001/2025

PROJECT NAME: PROVISION OF CLEANING, HYGIENE AND GARDENING SERVICES FOR ROADS DIRECTORATE HEAD QUARTERS’ OFFICES, REGIONAL OFFICES, AND DISTRICTS’ OFFICES

1.1 The Roads Directorate intends to apply part of its budgetary allocation to fund eligible Payments under the contract for **RD/CLEANING, HYGIENE AND GARDENING SERVICES-001/2025**, towards the realization of the above cited project.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF GOODS:

PROVISION OF CLEANING, HYGIENE AND GARDENING SERVICES FOR ROADS DIRECTORATE HEAD-QUARTERS’ OFFICES, REGIONAL OFFICES AND DISTRICTS’ OFFICES.

1.2 The Roads Directorate invites sealed bids from eligible Bidders in and outside Lesotho for **Provision of Cleaning, Hygiene and Gardening Services for Roads Directorate Headquarters, Regional Offices and Districts’ Offices.**

1.3 Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from and inspect the Bid documents at the following address and office during normal working hours (08:00AM and 16:30PM); The Procurement Manager

Postal Address

Roads Directorate
P.O. Box 194
MASERU – 100
Tel: (266) 22229000/52229000
Email Address: nthakanam@rd.org.ls/mahiritonaf@rd.org.ls/marek@rd.org.ls

Physical Address

Procurement Section, Ground Floor (Room G1)
Roads Directorate
Corner Senate and Lepoqo Roads
Industrial Area (Opposite Browns Wholesalers)

A complete set of Bid Documents may be obtained by interested Bidders upon payment of non-refundable fees of **Three Thousand Maloti Only (M3000.00)** in a cash or Bankers Cheque payable to Roads Directorate, Nedbank Lesotho, Operating Revenue, Account No: 021000067633.

1.4 All Suppliers Should Submit Recent Financial Statements of 3yrs (between years 2022 to 2024). All

suppliers to the Lesotho Government are expected to be in compliance with their tax obligations. They should therefore attach copies of **valid Tax Clearance Certificates, valid copies of Traders License/Registration Certificate**, all certified at source. **A proven track record on Provision of Cleaning, Hygiene and Gardening Services is required. Please see the Submission Details in the Tender Document under Section III - Scope of Services and Performance Specifications.**

1.5 There will be a compulsory pre-bid meeting to be held at Roads Directorate offices on Thursday, 13th February 2025 at 10:00am at the Roads Directorate offices.

1.6 Prices quoted should be net inclusive of all taxes and delivery must be in Lesotho Maloti and shall remain valid for 90 days from the closing date of the Bid.

1.7 Bidding Documents must be accompanied by a **Bid Security of Five Thousand Maloti (M5,000.00)** in the form of a Bank Guarantee Letter addressed to “Roads Directorate” which must be attached.

1.9 Completed Bid documents comprising One (1) Original and Two (2) copies and One (1) Memory Stick of the Technical combined with the Financial Proposal, are to be enclosed in plain sealed envelopes bearing no identification of the Bidder and marked as follows: “Provision of Cleaning, Hygiene and Gardening Services for Roads Directorate Headquarters, Regional Offices and Districts’ Offices” must be deposited in the Bid Box at **Ground Floor, Roads Directorate, Corner Senate and Lepoqo Roads** and addressed to Roads Directorate at the above address.

Tenders have to be received on or before **12 Noon, Thursday 6th March 2025**. Late Bids will be rejected.

Bids will be opened the same day at **14:30hrs** by the Roads Directorate’s Tender Board, in the presence of the Bidders or their representatives who choose to attend.



BUSINESS

CBL warns of economic risks amid potential foreign aid cuts



The Governor of the Central Bank of Lesotho, Dr. Maluke Letete

Seabata Mahao

The Central Bank of Lesotho (CBL) has raised concerns over the potential economic fallout following the U.S. government's decision to suspend foreign aid programs for 90 days.

The suspension affects key initiatives such as the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) Compact II and the United States Agency for International Development (US-AID) programs.

Speaking during the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting this week, CBL Governor Dr Maluke Letete emphasised the significant role of foreign aid in Lesotho's economy, particularly in the health sector.

He warned that the financing of ARVs, tuberculosis treatments, and other critical health services relies heavily on foreign aid, and if this aid is cut, the impact on the economy and public health will be severe.

"The health sector in Lesotho, in particular, the issue of (ARVs), the issue of Tuberculosis and others depends largely on the foreign aid which has financing has been good but the cut of the aid will have huge impacts on the economy but also remember that MCC project worth M6 billion so if that is also cut, it says there's going to be huge challenges for the growth," Letete said.

Beyond direct aid cuts, the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA), which provides Lesotho with preferential access to the U.S. market, is also a key concern.

"Also, remember that we have another sort

of financing project in the form of access to a market of the United States of America (USA) being African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA)," MPC emphasised.

Letete stressed that the government must proactively explore alternative financing strategies, particularly for health services, to mitigate the risks associated with potential aid reductions.

"It therefore compels the government to

find a way and sustain finance medication for the people. These issues have not been discussed at length to the highest level in terms of what scenarios can take so that if anything happens, we cannot take a hard knock from these aid cuts," MPC noted.

Meanwhile, the MPC meeting also focused on monetary policy adjustments to ensure economic stability amid growing uncertainties. Key decisions included raising the Net

International Reserves (NIR) target floor from M14.3 billion to M15.6 billion to sustain the one-to-one peg between the loti and the South African rand.

Additionally, the CBL rate was lowered by 25 basis points to 7.25 percent per annum, aligning it with domestic and regional economic conditions.

Letete highlighted that the NIR increased by M781.7 million between the previous meeting in November 2024 and the February 2025 session, mainly due to higher SACU revenue receipts. At current levels, reserves provide approximately 4.7 months of import cover, with projections indicating a stable outlook in the near term.

The global economy showed moderate growth in 2024, a trend expected to continue into 2025. However, protectionist policies in major economies remain a significant risk. For Lesotho, growth is expected to be driven by construction-related activities, although global market uncertainties may pose challenges.

Government budgetary operations recorded a deficit of 4.8 percent of GDP in November 2024, driven by a decline in revenue that outpaced expenditure reductions. Public debt rose to 56.2 percent of GDP, up from 55.7 percent in the previous quarter, reflecting disbursements for ongoing foreign-funded projects.

Domestic economic growth was estimated at 3.1 percent in November 2024, up from 1.5 percent the previous month, primarily driven by consumer spending and strong exports. Inflation declined to 3.7 percent in December 2024, down from 4.4 percent in November, largely due to falling food and fuel prices and a stronger currency.



HEALTH



12-year-old nears cancer-free future

Ntsoaki Motaung

Mohau Rakhapu, a 12-year-old from Ha Sari-ele, Bongalla, in Mafeteng, is on the cusp of a milestone few thought possible when he was first diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia (ALL) in December 2021.

Mohau's journey began with a simple symptom - sores on his lips - which escalated into a life-threatening situation when he collapsed at school. That moment changed everything.

His path to recovery has been anything but straightforward, involving multiple hospitals, from local clinics to specialised treatment in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

A life-changing diagnosis

Mohau spent his early years under the loving care of his grandmother. His mother had to leave for South Africa to find work, hoping to give him a better future. Though he was always a slender boy, something changed in December 2021, his health began to decline.

It started with sores on his lips. Worried, his mother urged his grandmother to take him to the clinic, but the long walk was too much for her aging body. With no other choice, Mohau continued going to school, the sores a constant reminder that something was wrong. Then, just as suddenly as they appeared, they healed on their own.

For a while, everything seemed fine, until the day he collapsed at school. That moment changed everything. It was clear now that his illness was far more serious than anyone had realised.

A vehicle was quickly arranged to rush him to the nearest clinic. After an initial check-up, doctors decided he needed to be transferred to Mafeteng Hospital immediately. There, they diagnosed him with low blood, but something about his condition suggested a deeper issue.

From Mafeteng, he was moved to Queen 'Mamohato Memorial Hospital (QMMH) in Maseru. He stayed there for days, waiting for his mother to return from South Africa. When she finally arrived, she was met with heart-breaking news, his condition was much worse than they had thought. He needed urgent treatment that was not available in Lesotho. His only chance was in Bloemfontein, South Africa.

Standing by his bedside, his mother's heart sank. Mohau was pale and weak, his small body struggling. He had stopped eating, and his body rejected whatever little food he could manage. She knew deep inside, he was running out of time.

The next morning, they set off for Bloemfontein, desperate for help. But as soon as they arrived at the hospital, Mohau's condition took a turn for the worse. He lost consciousness and was rushed to a ward.

Doctors surrounded him, working frantically. His mother waited in the hallway, fear gripping her. Each passing hour felt heavier. A terrifying thought echoed in her mind: He's gone.

Then, a miracle. Her name was called. When she stepped inside, she saw him, alive. Weak but alive.

He was given blood transfusions and medication. By morning, a small but powerful sign



Joalane Ts'upane Cancer survivor shares her treatment journey characterised by loss of hair, pain, bleeding, fever and not being able to eat her favourite food.

of hope, he started eating. Slowly, he regained his strength. Day by day, he got better. Relief washed over them.

But just as hope returned, so did fear. The doctors had a diagnosis, cancer. The word alone sent a chill through her. It felt like a death sentence.

They had arrived in Bloemfontein on December 5, 2021. Now, they were told to prepare for a long stay, at least until January. A new battle had begun.

The fight against cancer

They were not alone in their struggle. The hospital wards were filled with other mothers, each standing by their child's side, all fighting the same battle against cancer.

Through their shared pain, these women formed a powerful bond, a sisterhood of

strength and hope. They comforted one another, prayed together, and held onto the belief that their children would heal.

In January, Mohau was finally discharged, a moment of relief, yet not the end of their journey. Doctors explained that he would need to return to Bloemfontein every two weeks for treatment, along with radiation therapy in Lesotho.

As time went on, the hospital visits became less frequent. The bi-weekly trips turned into monthly check-ups, a sign of progress in Mohau's fight against the disease.

But the journey took a heavy toll on his mother. Constant travel, medical expenses, and the demands of treatment made it impossible for her to hold a stable job. Financial struggles added to the emotional weight she was already



Minister of Health Selibe Mochoroane speaks on US Policy Shifts affecting Lesotho's Health Sector

carrying.

Then, in January this year, during a routine visit to Bloemfontein, the doctor shared life-changing news; Mohau would complete his chemotherapy in March. The end of his treatment was finally in sight.

Tears of joy filled his mother's eyes. A wave of relief and gratitude washed over her. Through every challenge, she had remained strong, never missing a single appointment, never giving up hope. Her love and dedication had carried them through.

A survivor's perspective

For cancer survivor Joalane Ts'upane, Mohau's journey brought back memories of her own battle. Diagnosed with leukemia at just one year and eight months old, she knew the struggles all too well.

"Hair loss, pain, bleeding, fever, missing my favourite foods, and not going to school like my friends, that was my reality," she shared.

Now, as a survivor, she dedicates her life to giving young cancer patients hope.

The bigger picture

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an estimated 400,000 children and adolescents aged 0-19 develop cancer each year. The most common types include leukemia, brain tumors, lymphomas, and solid tumors such as neuroblastoma and Wilms tumor.

Matšepo Ntho, Chairperson of the Childhood Cancer Organisation, revealed that the organisation is currently supporting about 40 children in their fight against cancer.

"They receive all the support they need throughout their battle, and we also assist their caregivers. We help with transport costs to Bloemfontein, provide food or lunch packs, and offer vital information to guide them through the journey," Ntho explained.

She emphasised that seeing a child complete treatment is a deeply fulfilling moment, as not all children survive. She also highlighted the importance of raising awareness, as many parents still struggle to accept that childhood cancer is a real and pressing issue.

"The most common childhood cancer we see is leukemia, and according to our records, boys are more affected, although girls also suffer from it," she added.

The fight against cancer in Lesotho

Dr. Innocent Nuwagira, WHO Representative to Lesotho, noted that in 2022, there were an estimated 20 million new cancer cases globally, with 9.7 million deaths.

"About 1 in 9 men and 1 in 12 women die from cancer. In the African region alone, more than 900,000 new cases and over 580,000 deaths were recorded in 2022. This shows that cancer remains a serious and urgent health challenge across the continent," he stated.

Dr. Nuwagira further explained that between 30 percent and 50 percent of cancer deaths could be prevented by addressing key risk factors such as tobacco use, alcohol consumption, unhealthy diets, lack of physical activity, chronic infections, and exposure to air pollution.

Minister of Health, Selibe Mochoroane, shared that in 2023, Lesotho recorded 1,888 cancer cases, with cervical cancer accounting for 500 of them.

Mochoroane announced that the country is currently constructing a cancer treatment centre, which he described as Lesotho's only hope for improved cancer care. The centre is expected to significantly reduce the need to send patients to South Africa for treatment, which currently costs the government M250,000 per patient.

Newsday: Friend to the downtrodden

At *Newsday*, we have always believed that journalism is more than just the business of reporting facts, it is a duty, a commitment to truth, and above all, a responsibility to stand with the people, especially the voiceless and the vulnerable.

In a media landscape where issues of survival are often forgotten as soon as the headlines change, *Newsday* has remained steadfast in highlighting the realities of food insecurity in Lesotho. We have never allowed this crisis to be swept under the rug, and we will continue to ensure that it remains a national priority until every Mosotho has access to sufficient food.

Today, we acknowledge the slight improvement in food security, as recent data from the IPC Acute Food Insecurity Analysis shows that the number of Basotho facing severe hunger has dropped from 403,000 to 335,000.

This is progress, and it reflects the impact of humanitarian assistance and government interventions. However, a decrease in numbers does not mean the crisis is over. The reality is that over a third of the population remains food insecure, and as the lean season approaches, many families will continue to struggle to put food on the table.

This is why *Newsday* will not stop reporting on food insecurity until long-term solutions are implemented. We need more than short-term food relief programs. We need sustainable policies, food subsidies, strengthened agricultural support, improved market access, and economic opportunities that ensure Basotho can provide for themselves. Hunger should not be seasonal, and it should certainly not be accepted as normal.

As *Newsday* continues to shine a light on food insecurity, we are now also turning our spotlight onto another urgent crisis; the worsening water shortages in Mafeteng. Water is life, yet for many in this district, access to clean, reliable water has become an everyday struggle.

Families go days without water, businesses are suffering, and essential services like healthcare are being disrupted. The situation has reached alarming levels, and the silence from those in positions of power is unacceptable.

We refuse to allow this crisis to be ignored. Water is not a privilege; it is a fundamental human right. *Newsday* will be relentless in exposing the full extent of the water shortages in Mafeteng, holding those responsible accountable, and demanding urgent solutions. We will listen to the affected communities, amplify their voices, and push for action. We will not rest until concrete, lasting measures are in place to ensure that no Mosotho has to suffer due to lack of water.

Our commitment to truth and justice has never wavered. When food insecurity gripped the nation, we stood firm in our reporting and ensured that the plight of the hungry was not forgotten. Today, as we take on the battle against water scarcity, our mission remains the same, to be the voice of the people, the defender of the downtrodden, and the watchman standing guard over the interests of the most vulnerable.

To the people of Mafeteng, to every Mosotho struggling to access food and water, know this: *Newsday* stands with you. We will continue to demand answers, challenge complacency, and push for the change that you deserve. You are not alone in this fight. You can sleep peacefully knowing that you have a watchman called *Newsday*, ever vigilant, ever determined, and unwavering in its mission to ensure that justice is served.

Hunger and thirst should never be the fate of a nation blessed with resources, leadership, and potential. *Newsday* will make sure that those in power understand that neglecting the needs of the people is not an option.



Theko Tlebere

COMMON CONCERN

A Critical Analysis of Dr. Lipholo's Advocacy and the Path to Resolving the Basotho Land Issue

Dr. Tšepo Lipholo's recent appeal to the United Nations (UN) regarding Lesotho's long-standing territorial grievances has sparked both hope and controversy. His choice to engage international institutions rather than resort to aggressive confrontation is commendable; however, the political fallout including the suspension of Mr. Japan Mntambo indicates the Lesotho government's reluctance to address this issue openly. Additionally, emerging rumours, including Mr. Japan Mntambo's suspension, suggesting that Israel may be financially supporting Dr. Lipholo's endeavour raise serious concerns. If these allegations prove true, they could introduce a dangerous geopolitical dimension to an otherwise legitimate struggle. Although Dr. Lipholo's core mission focuses on historical justice for the Basotho people, any association with Israel in the current international climate could significantly undermine the credibility of his cause and expose Lesotho to unintended diplomatic consequences.

Dr. Lipholo's mission is based on the historical annexation of Basotho land by colonial forces, leading to generations of displacement and marginalisation. His grievances are legitimate, as thousands of Basotho still face exclusion in territories once part of their ancestral homeland. His appeal to the UN aims to highlight an unresolved colonial injustice. Instead of responding constructively, however, the Lesotho government has opted for punitive measures, including the suspension of a senior official for merely processing a visa. This approach stifles democratic discourse and raises concerns about whether the government is intentionally avoiding the issue of Basotho land rights to preserve political convenience.

The suspension of Mr. Japan Mntambo by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is troubling for several reasons: Suppressing Legitimate Political Expression: Seeking international engagement should not be considered a crime. Rather than punishing those involved in Dr. Lipholo's trip, the government should focus on addressing the core issues he raises. Contradicting Lesotho's Own Diplomatic Stance: Lesotho has a history of supporting self-determination movements, including Palestine and Western Sahara. Overlooking its territorial grievances while advocating for others reflects diplomatic hypocrisy. Missed Opportunity for Constructive Dia-

logue: Instead of viewing Dr. Lipholo's actions as a threat, the government should seize this moment to initiate dialogue with South Africa and international bodies on potential resolutions for the Basotho land issue.

The Israel Funding Allegations: A Cause for Concern

While Dr. Lipholo's mission is noble in principle, rumors that Israel may be financially backing his UN trip cast a troubling shadow over his advocacy. If validated, this could have serious implications for Lesotho's diplomatic relations and the legitimacy of his cause. Lesotho's Strong Pro-Palestine Stance at Risk: Lesotho has long been a vocal supporter of Palestinian self-determination and has historically condemned Israel's actions in Gaza and the West Bank. If the Basotho land question becomes entwined with Israeli geopolitical interests, it could undermine Lesotho's credibility in international diplomacy and damage relationships with allies in Africa and the Global South.

Risk of Exploiting Basotho Nationalism for Foreign Interests: The Basotho land issue is sensitive and should be addressed with genuine national interest, not foreign manipulation. If Israel or any other foreign entity is leveraging this cause for its geopolitical gains—potentially to counter South Africa's strong support for Palestine—Lesotho risks finding itself in a precarious position. Strained Relations with South Africa; South Africa has been a staunch critic of Israel's policies and a firm supporter of Palestine. If Dr. Lipholo's advocacy is perceived as being backed by Israeli interests, South Africa may view it as an indirect challenge to its foreign policy stance, leading to tensions between Maseru and Pretoria.

The Threat of Political Destabilisation: Foreign involvement in self-determination struggles often results in long-term instability. If Lesotho permits external powers to influence its domestic issues, it risks being ensnared in a broader geopolitical struggle that could transform a legitimate historical grievance into a manipulated political tool.

To ensure that the Basotho land issue remains a national, rather than geopolitical, struggle, the Lesotho government must take control of the narrative and pursue diplomatic solutions: Establishing a Bilateral Commission with South Africa: Lesotho and South Africa should establish a joint commission to investigate historical claims and explore possible solutions without external interference. This commission should include historians, legal experts, and diplomats from both nations. Engaging SADC and the AU

in Mediation: Rather than seeking assistance from controversial foreign states, Lesotho should engage African institutions such as the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and the African Union (AU) to advocate for regional dialogue on territorial justice.

Strengthening Economic and Cultural Integration: Instead of focusing solely on territorial claims, Lesotho should negotiate special residency and economic rights for Basotho in historically Basotho land within South Africa, ensuring that their cultural and economic needs are safeguarded without provoking diplomatic tensions. Legal Arbitration through the International Court of Justice (ICJ): If negotiations falter, Lesotho could take the matter to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for a legal ruling based on historical treaties and colonial agreements. This path would offer a peaceful, structured resolution to the issue.

Protecting Lesotho's Diplomatic Integrity: The government must ensure that Lesotho's foreign policy remains consistent and independent. Any association with Israeli funding could jeopardize Lesotho's international standing, especially among African nations that support Palestine.

Dr. Lipholo's advocacy is valid and necessary, but the rumours of Israeli funding, if accurate, threaten to compromise the legitimacy of his mission. The Basotho land issue is a national concern that must be resolved by Basotho, for Basotho, without external manipulation. Lesotho's government should recognise that suppressing this discussion will not make the issue disappear. Instead, it should seize the opportunity to engage in diplomatic negotiations, legal arbitration, and economic integration strategies that protect Basotho's rights without inciting unnecessary conflict with South Africa. One lesson from history is clear: self-determination movements must remain independent to maintain credibility. Lesotho should not allow a genuine historical struggle to be manipulated in foreign political games. The future of the Basotho people must be decided in Maseru, Pretoria, and international legal forums—not in Tel Aviv. The Future is NOW!

OP-ED

Why pulses matter and why we celebrate World Pulses Day on February 10

World Pulses Day



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



Abebe Haile-Gabriel and Yurdi Yasmi

Today 733 million people are food insecure. That means one in eleven people are facing hunger across the world. In Africa, that number is one in five. If the current trends continue, 582 million people will still be chronically undernourished by 2030. That is the year by which we aspire to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including SDG 2: Zero Hunger.

Our work at the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) is strategically designed to contribute to the SDGs through better production, better nutrition, a better environment and a better life, leaving no one behind. In these endeavours, pulses offer hope. The sustainable production and consumption of these dried edible seeds of leguminous plants – which include lentils, beans, chickpeas and cowpeas – can help transform our agrifood systems.

In 2022, close to 96 million tonnes of pulses were produced worldwide, with an average global per capita consumption of 7 kg per year. Due to their

environmental and health benefits, pulses are expected to continue gaining importance in both farms and diets. By 2032, global pulse production is forecast to increase to 125 million tonnes, with average global per capita consumption reaching 8.6 kg per year.

Harness the power of pulses

Pulses are an important and generally affordable source of protein. In regions where meat and dairy are not easily accessible, pulses provide communities with much-needed protein. Pulses are low in fat and rich in soluble fibre, vitamins and minerals, which can lower cholesterol and help control blood sugar. They can also help prevent and manage diseases such as diabetes and heart conditions.

What makes pulses remarkable is their unique ability to convert atmospheric nitrogen into natural fertilizer and unlock phosphorous bound in soil, which reduces the need for synthetic fertilizers. As farmers face rising input costs, these natural traits make pulses ideal for sustainable farming.

When integrated into farming systems, pulses promote soil carbon sequestration and help break pest and insect cycles naturally. As cover crops or in intercropping systems, they protect against soil erosion while increasing overall productivity. By diversifying cropping systems with pulses, farmers can more efficiently use natural resources, such as light, water and nutrients, while increasing yields.

10 February is World Pulses Day

In recognition of the significance of pulses for our diet, nutrition, environment and economy, the UN General Assembly proclaimed 10 February as World Pulses Day, endorsing a proposal by Burkina Faso. Since 2018, World Pulses Day has been celebrated globally, providing an opportunity to raise awareness, promote collaboration, leverage innovation and increase investments to make pulses accessible to all.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organisation has been collaborating with member states and partners through

multifaceted approaches in supporting farmers to access high-quality seeds, modern cultivation techniques, sustainable farming practices, and enhanced pulses value-chains, among others.

In Malawi for example, pigeon peas (*Cajanus cajan*) provide a valuable source of protein for local communities. At the same time, its stems can serve as material for sustainable fuel, addressing both food security and energy needs. FAO supports farmers to adopt sustainable practices that restore degraded lands while improving both livelihoods and productivity. In one of our projects supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), we are aiming to reach 150,000 Malawians – half of whom are women.

Beyond Malawi, the programme aims to benefit one million people globally and transform 12 million hectares of drylands. This model is just one example of how pulses help us achieve food security and environmental sustainability.

How to get involved

Together we can contribute to a sustainable food future by incorporating more pulses into our diets and supporting local pulse producers. Farmers can explore intercropping pulses with other crops to enhance soil health and productivity, while policymakers can strengthen support for pulse production and processing.

FAO's [Guide to World Pulses Day 2025](#) offers many ways to get involved, raise awareness and promote long-lasting change – from trying new pulse-based recipes to educating children about healthy diets in schools or bringing people together to celebrate these versatile crops.

As [FAO marks its 80th anniversary](#), we recognize that transforming our agrifood systems requires traditional wisdom and modern innovation – pulses offer both.

On 10 February and throughout the year, let's harness the power of pulses to build more efficient, inclusive, resilient and sustainable agrifood systems and ensure no one goes hungry.

Happy World Pulses Day!

Abebe Haile-Gabriel is the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)'s Assistant Director-General while Yurdi Yasmi is the Regional Representative for Africa and FAO Director of the Plant Production and Protection Division.

Resources:

[Guide to World Pulses Day 2025](#)

Share your thoughts online using the hashtag #WorldPulsesDay

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EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT

The Authority seeks applications from qualified, competent and highly motivated individuals to fill the following position of Assistant Accountant within the Authority. The position is based in **Mohales'Hoek**. It requires good spoken and written Sesotho and English. A brief description of the position is provided below.

1. Assistant Accountant(1)

Key Result Areas:

- Timely, efficient and accurate completion of assigned tasks, including receipting, data entry and some bookkeeping tasks
- Effective communication with other Finance staff
- Adherence to accounting procedures and instructions

Qualifications/Knowledge:

- Technician Accountant or Degree in accounting, or B-Com or related qualification
- Working knowledge of accounting packages

Skills:

- Ability to follow procedures and written and verbal instructions
- Able to use of Microsoft Word and Excel and, preferably, accounting software including SAGE 300
- Able to prioritise tasks

Experience:

- At least one (1) year experience of similar accounting work.

Submission of Applications

All applications must include a fully completed application form, a detailed CV with the names and contact details for three referees, and a covering letter. Application forms may be downloaded from the Authority's website www.laa.org.ls.

Completed application forms, detailed curriculum vitae, and cover letter must be emailed to jobs@laa.org.ls, for the attention of The Director of Corporate Services, Land Administration Authority. For further information please call 22214100

Applications must be received on or before **Friday, 14th February 2025**. All shortlisted applicants will be informed as to the status of their applications (please provide an email address for this purpose). **Applicants who do not hear from the Authority by 28th February 2025 may assume that their applications have not been successful.**



EXTERNAL RECRUITMENT

The Authority seeks applications from qualified, competent, and highly motivated individual to fill the following positions within the organisation. The position is based in **Leribe**. It requires good spoken and written Sesotho and English. A competitive and market-related remuneration package including non-contributory benefits is offered. Brief description of the position is provided below.

1. Customer Services Assistant (1)

Job Scope: The officer has responsibility for assisting Customer Services staff and customers by providing technical and administrative support and information.

Specific Duties and Responsibilities:

- Timely and efficient response to requests of staff and customers for retrieval of documents and information
- Providing courteous and correct information to customers both face-to-face and by telephone
- Accurate and secure record filing
- Effective communication with other Customers Services staff and customers
- Adherence to procedures and instructions

Qualifications/Knowledge:

- Must have a Diploma in Office Administration, Diploma in Public Administration and Certificate in Customer Services or an appropriate discipline preferably related to land or property. Knowledge of office administration procedures

Skills:

- Basic customer communication and service principles
- Basic computer skills
- Ability to follow instructions

Experience:

- At least one (2) years work experience preferably related to customer support or providing information.

Submission of Applications

All applications must include a fully completed application form, a detailed CV with the names and contact details for three referees, and a covering letter. Application forms may be downloaded from the Authority's website www.laa.org.ls.

Completed application forms, detailed curriculum vitae, and cover letter must be emailed to jobs@laa.org.ls, for the attention of The Director of Corporate Services, Land Administration Authority. For further information please call 22214100

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Transafrica Life Insurance Company Ltd

VACANCY

Applications are invited for the position of Chief Executive Officer of Transafrica Life Insurance Co. Ltd. in Maseru.

Qualifications:

- Master's degree in Business Administration or relevant qualification

Experience:

- 5 years in the Insurance industry at a Senior Management Level

Competencies:

- Understand insurance products, markets and regulations
- Ability to identify and capitalise on market trends
- Long-term vision for sustainable growth
- Strong grasp of underwriting, actuarial principles and pricing strategies
- Strong decision-making and problem-solving skills
- Ability to build, lead and inspire high performing teams
- Ability to manage relationships with regulators and clients
- Ability to ensure compliance with laws and regulations

Interested candidates should send their applications along with a CV and certified copies of certificates to gerhard@transafrica-group.co.za or buddy@transafricagroup.co.za before **7th February 2025**.



MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND CHIEFTAINSHIP, POLICE AND HOME AFFAIRS
LERIBE DISTRICT COUNCIL

OPPORTUNITY

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF TEACHING AIDS MATERIAL FOR 'MATHEKO VOCATIONAL YOUTH TRAINING CENTRE

PROJECT NAME: MAINTANANCE AND REPAIR OF YELLOW PLANT AND TIPPER TRUCKS AND INSURANCE COVER FOR YELLOW PLANT, TIPPER TRUCKS AND WORKMAN COMPANSATION

Tenders are invited from suitably qualified companies for the MAINTANANCE AND REPAIR OF YELLOW PLANT AND TIPPER TRUCKS AND PROVISION OF INSURANCE COVER FOR YELLOW PLANT, TIPPER TRUCKS AND WORKMAN COMPENSATION. Tender documents are obtainable from Procurement Office, Leribe District Council from the 13th February 2025 for provision of insurance cover at a non-refundable fee on M2, 000.00, payable at Hlotse Urban Council Accounts office. Site visit for maintenance will be on 13th February 2025 from Department Rural Roads (DRR) offices Hlotse and tenders will be obtained via email same day. Participation fee of M2, 000 is be on or before 17/03/25.

MANDATORY DOCUMENTS

All prospective tenderers must attach to the tender the following documents:

1. Valid traders licence certified at source
2. Valid tax clearance certified at source
3. Refundable bid security of 1% of the bid price (Letter from accredited Financial Institution endorsed with a revenue stamp)
4. Power of attorney

Sealed bids, **Original and four copies of bid documents clearly marked "provision of insurance cover for Leribe district council for Insurance and maintenance and repair of yellow plant and tipper trucks for Leribe District Council for Maintenance"** bearing no identification of the bidder should be deposited at the tender box situated at Hlotse Urban Council.

| ACTIVITY | DATES | DATES |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| ITT ISSUED BOTH | 10/02/2025 | 10/02/2025 |
| DEADLINE FOR CLARIFICATIONS BOTH | 17/03/2025 | 17/03/2025 |
| ITT CLOSING DATE INSURANCE | 24/03/2025 at 10:00 am | |
| ITT CLOSING MAINTANACE | | 25/03/2025 at 10:00am |
| TENDER OPENNING DATE INSURANCE | 24/03/2025 at 12noon | |
| TENDER OPENNING DATE MAIN-TANANCE | | 25/03/2025 at 10:30am |
| EVALUATION AND TENDER AWARD | 26/03/2025 TO 11/04/2025 | 26/03/2025 TO 11/04/2025 |

DISCLAIMER: Leribe District Council also reserves the right to cancel the tenders before submission/opening of tenders, postpone the tender submission/opening date and to accept/reject any or all tenders without assigning any reasons thereof. Leribe District Council is not bound to accept the lowest or any bid. For more information, contact Procurement Unit at the following numbers: +266 62265955, +26662069277, +26663697597



| Fees | 3 Months | 6 Months | 12 Months |
|------|----------|----------|-----------|
|------|----------|----------|-----------|

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|---------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Subscription | M 72.00 | M 156.00 | M 312.00 |
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| Delivery | M 60.00 |
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ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



Echoes of Excellence: A poetic celebration of youth and heritage

Fusi Hlauli

Lesotho is set for an explosive evening of artistic celebration with the launch of Atang B Raliile's debut poetry collection, *Echoes of Excellence*, at Avani Maseru penciled in for May 24.

This event is more than just a book launch; it is a vibrant showcase of Basotho creativity, youth empowerment, and cultural heritage.

Raliile, a rising literary voice from Ha Makhaketsa in Leribe District, has crafted a collection that explores themes of entrepreneurship, community, and resilience.

His journey began at New Millennium Primary School, continued at St. Boniface High School, and has led him to his current endeavors, including founding Blast Empowerment Lesotho, an NGO dedicated to supporting youth through sports and entrepreneurship.

Looking ahead, he plans to pursue a Bachelor's degree in Software Engi-

neering with Multimedia, blending his passion for technology and creativity to drive positive change in his community.

The launch will feature an interactive art tour showcasing young Basotho artists, reflecting the nation's rich artistic landscape. Distinguished guests will include the Honorable Minister of Arts and Culture, Motlatsi Maqelepo, Deputy Prime Minister Madam Nthomeng Majara, and Honorable Member of Parliament for Stadium Area No. 32, Mampho Tjabane, alongside other government officials and prominent artists.

Among the standout poems in *Echoes of Excellence* are *Katiso Tsoho*, a tribute to Joachim Garments' founder, celebrating young entrepreneurship; *DAEMAN*, capturing the essence of



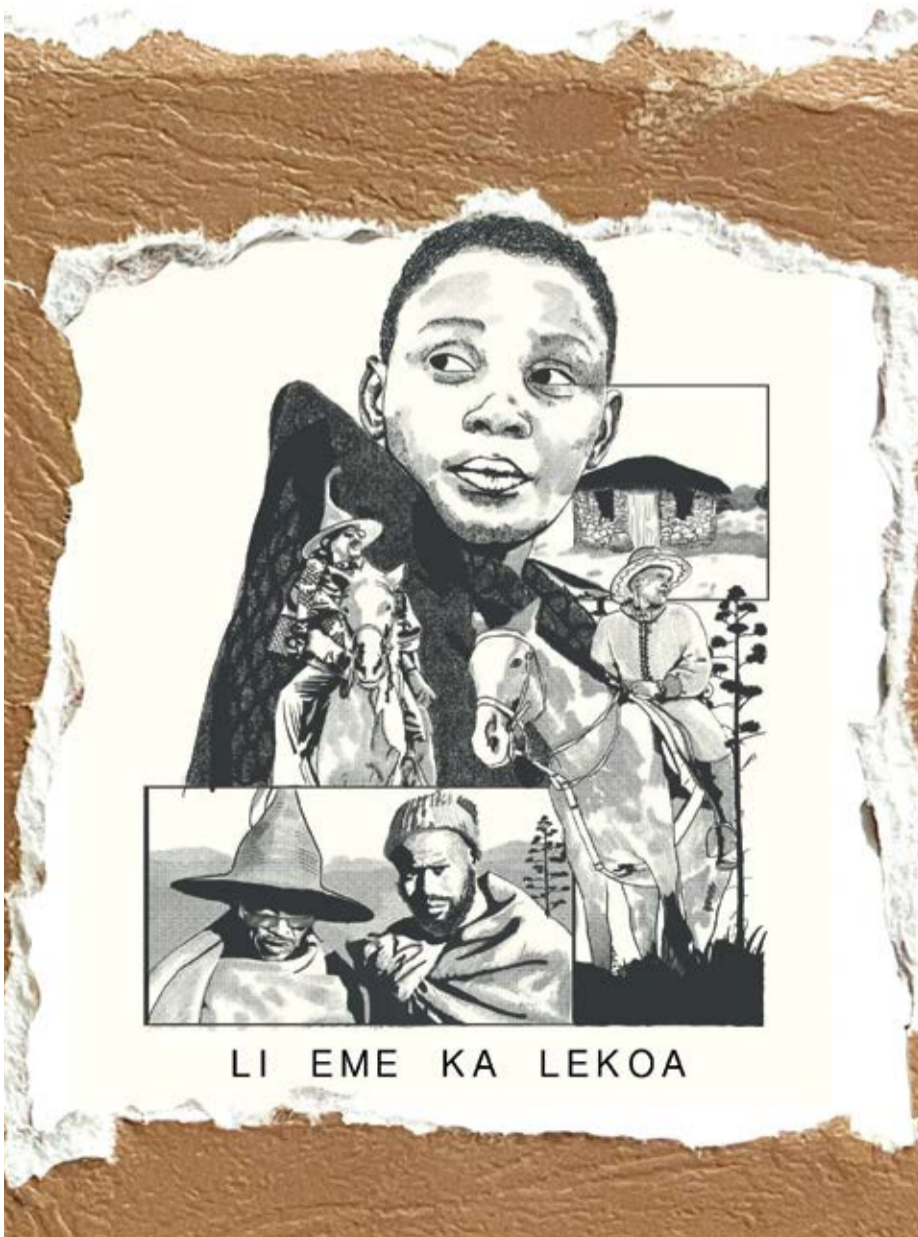
youth gatherings and community connection; and *Ntate Stunna*, a message of hope and perseverance for the "black child" and beyond.

The event will be adorned in regal purple and gold, symbolizing nobility, creativity, and achievement. Attendees will have the opportunity to engage with the author in an interactive Q&A session, gaining insight into his creative process and future projects.

While *Echoes of Excellence* marks Raliile's poetry debut, he has hinted at upcoming works, including a novel and writings on political themes. His influences include Jerry Oa Mofokeng's *I AM MAN* and Steve Biko's *I Write What I Like*, reflecting his passion for social commentary and personal empowerment.

Tickets will soon be available via the M-Pesa app, ensuring easy access to this unforgettable evening celebrating art, literature, and the vibrant spirit of Lesotho.

Award-winning "Li Eme Ka Lekoa" film commences national tour



LI EME KA LEKOA

Staff Reporter

"Li Eme Ka Lekoa", a local film whose production was spearheaded by GEM Institute, has garnered international recognition by winning an official award at the Love Peace and Freedom Film Festival 2025 in Mexico.

Following this remarkable milestone, which has cemented Lesotho's growing influence in the international film community, and highlighted the nation's creative brilliance, the film is set for national screening around the country starting from February 15 in Botha Bothe district at Soofia International School.

The next screening will be at Assumption High School in Berea district on February 22. Quthing district will be the next stop on February 28 at Ref's Restaurant, before Mohale's Hoek (St. Stephen's High School) wraps up the first phase of the screenings on March 1.

The public has therefore been encouraged to come out in numbers to support and celebrate the movie, as the national screenings are specifically aimed at offering them a unique opportunity to experience the cinematic brilliance of the film firsthand.

"To celebrate this achievement, Li Eme Ka Lekoa will be screened across Lesotho's districts from February 15 to March 1, 2025, with distribution handled by Mokhabebe," GEM said this week.

Reflecting on the achievement of the movie, GEM Institute described

the prestigious recognition as not only honouring the film's artistic excellence but also marking a historic moment for Lesotho's emerging film industry.

"Winning this award is a victory not just for the film, but for every Mosotho storyteller, filmmaker, and artist," said Mpho Letima, Country Director of GEM Institute.

"This achievement is a stepping stone for Lesotho's creative industry, and we are excited to share this film with our people."

Produced under the Wish For My Daughter Series Film, *Li Eme Ka Lekoa* showcases the rich cultural heritage and storytelling traditions of the Basotho people.

According to its synopsis, the film tells the compelling story of a daughter who, upon her father's death, faces the traditional barrier of being unable to inherit his chieftainship.

The film delves into the impact of traditional practices on contemporary life in the region, provoking critical reflection on the place of women in leadership roles.

The film, which has captivated audiences with its powerful narrative and cultural depth, serves as a national treasure that inspires dialogue about evolving societal roles and gender dynamics within Basotho culture.

The tickets are available via WhatsApp at Ticketbox Quick shop on the following mobile number: 5796 1061.



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SPORTS

Why Setsoto Stadium renovation and revamping stalled

government was actively working to resolve the situation.

"I have directed the relevant ministers, including the Minister of Sports and the Minister of Finance, to address this matter urgently. I expect regular updates on the progress of Setsoto Stadium's renovation," Matekane stated.

Built in 1992, Setsoto Stadium is a crucial sporting hub in the country, primarily hosting football matches. With a capacity of 20,000, it serves as the home ground for the Lesotho national football team. The stadium underwent renovations in 2010–2011 but has since fallen into disrepair, forcing the national team to play home fixtures abroad.

In the last quarter of 2024, the country hosted several games abroad, highlighting a pattern of missed opportunities to play at home.

In October, Likuena traveled to Gabon for matchday three of the 2025 AFCON on October 7. They played away against Gabon in Franceville on October 11. Just four days later, on October 15, Likuena hosted Gabon in Durban, South Africa. At the same time, Mehalalitoe participated in the COSAFA Women's Cup in Port Elizabeth.

In November, Likuena played the second leg of the first round of the CHAN qualifiers away during the first weekend of the month.

Later, in the third week, they played their matchday five home fixture against the Central African Republic in South Africa, followed by the final 2024 AFCON qualifier away in Morocco.

December saw the Under-17 Boys and Girls teams participating in the COSAFA Youth Cup in eSwatini. During the third

week of the month, Likuena again participated in the CHAN qualifiers.

With no visible work at Setsoto Stadium, it remains uncertain when the facility will be restored for international matches, despite government assurances.

In his open letter, Mohapi had also mentioned that the lack of investment in sports is further highlighted by the paltry M6 million annual budget allocated to the Lesotho Sports and Recreation Commission (LSRC), which is expected to fund over 30 national federations.

He said this amount was laughably insufficient to support participation in continental and international sporting events, let alone develop domestic facilities.

The Economic Drain of Playing Abroad

Beyond the humiliation of playing home matches in foreign stadiums, the economic cost is staggering.

LeFA alone, according to Mohapi, has spent over M14 million renting stadiums in South Africa. Supporters, many of whom struggle to make ends meet, have also borne the brunt of this crisis, traveling at their own expense to cheer for Likuena and Mehalalitoe in South African venues.

He said one vendor, a fruit seller in Maseru, has spent over M10,000 on travel and match tickets to follow the teams.

Mohapi further pointed out the irony of the situation: "The government spends millions trying to recover funds lost to corruption, while at the same time, it willingly allows millions to flow out of the country due to its own incompetence."

Bocheletsane cycling classic returns bigger

Seabata Mahao

The Bocheletsane Cycling Classic is gearing up for its third annual edition scheduled for March 16, with the organisers promising a bigger and better event.

Known for promoting sports development, healthy living, and sports tourism in Lesotho, the annual cycling tournament is expected to attract an even larger audience this year.

The Federation of Cycling Lesotho (FCL) officially announced the return of the event earlier this week, with the sponsorship for the event significantly increased since its inception in 2020.

Initially funded with M65 000, the Sam Matekane Foundation (SMF) has boosted sponsorship to M200 000—the same amount as in the 2024 edition.

Speaking to Newsday, FCL's public relations officer Malefane Morie noted that prize money details are yet to be disclosed, pending final decisions by the technical teams.

This year, the Bocheletsane Cycling Classic will feature multiple race categories, catering to both elite and amateur cyclists.

The cycling categories will include freestyle, which is open to all age groups who love cycling; pump track, which includes various categories such as elite riders, boys and girls under 17, and youth under 14 years.

The road race, which is also the main event, will encompass the route from Maseru all the

way to Mantšonyane for elite riders. The amateurs race will start from Likalaneng to Mantšonyane, while the youth and elders race will be around Mantšonyane area.

Morie stated that registration is still open but no official cyclists have been registered yet due to two upcoming cycling events prior to the Bocheletsane race

These are Individual Time Trial Competition scheduled for February 9, and Lifestyle Cycling Club Event on February 15, which will be celebrating the birthdays of two prominent riders. Both events will take place at By-pass Road in Maseru.

Incepted in 2020, the Bocheletsane Cy-

cling Classic started with just 30 local riders, but now in its third year, the 2024 edition is seeing a major improvement, with over 50 participants, including international cyclists from Botswana, Zimbabwe, and South Africa.

This year, the FCL is looking forward to an even bigger event, further solidifying the tournament's status as a key sports tourism attraction. The event is also boosting local businesses, increasing demand for restaurants, lodging, and other services.

With registration still open, both professional and amateur cyclists are encouraged to sign up for what is anticipated to be one of Lesotho's most prestigious sporting events.

Mehalalitoe back in action

Kananelo Mokhele

The Lesotho Women's National Team, Mehalalitoe, will resume training on Monday, February 10, 2025, in preparation for their upcoming international fixtures.

Mehalalitoe will face South Africa's Banyana Banyana, the reigning African champions, in two international friendly matches later this month.

The first match will take place on February 22, 2025, in Johannesburg, South Africa, with the two teams meeting again just a few days later on Tuesday, February 25.

These friendly matches are part of South Africa's preparations for the 2025 Women's Africa Cup of Nations (WAFCON), which will be held in Morocco from July 5–26, 2025.

Banyana Banyana's coach, Dr. Desiree Ellis, has expressed her intention to use these games as an opportunity to expand her pool of players ahead of the prestigious tournament.

Mehalalitoe's squad to face Banyana Banyana:



- Bokang Ntsane (LDF Ladies FC)
- 'Mantiti Tholoane (LDF Ladies FC)
- Moseme Khashane (Lijabatho Ladies FC)
- Matšelisio Makeke (Lijabatho Ladies FC)
- Ntebohelong Ramatsoku (Lijabatho Ladies FC)
- Mpho Molefe (Kick4Life Women FC)
- 'Maseriti Molotsi (LDF Ladies FC)
- Nthabeleng Makhabane (LDF Ladies FC)
- Rapelang Makhetha (LDF Ladies FC)
- 'Mating Monokoane (Berea Ladies FC)
- Ituemeleng Molotsi (Berea Ladies FC)
- 'Makhotso Moalosi (Berea Ladies FC)
- Phuzile Molefe (LDF Ladies FC)
- Reitumetse Namane (Kick4Life Women FC)
- Karabelo Mabeleng (Lijabatho Ladies FC)
- 'Makose Sehloho (Lijabatho Ladies FC)
- Noliwe Ndaba (LMPS Ladies FC)
- Mpho Mali (LMPS Ladies FC)
- Nthabeleng Potsane (Nsingizini Hotspurs Ladies FC)
- Lerato Shoaepane (Berea Ladies FC)

- Head Coach: Shalane Lehohla
- Assistant Coach: 'Makabo Keba
- Goalkeeper Coach: Leuta Makhoa
- Team Manager: Maphoka Ramokoatsi
- Kit Manager: Fumane Matsie

- Players:**
- Nketsetseng Chaole (Bokamoso Ladies FC)
 - Mamakhabane Makibinyan (LDF Ladies FC)
 - Reitumetse Tuoane (Kick4Life Women FC)
 - Thato Mapepesa (LDF Ladies FC)
 - Tšoanelo Leboka (LDF Ladies FC)

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Why Setsoto Stadium renovation and revamping stalled



Setsoto Stadium field view. photo cred, supplied

Seabata Mahao and Tebalo Lebajoa

For five long years, Setsoto Stadium has remained in a state of disrepair, if not worse, after being banned from hosting international matches by FIFA and CAF.

Successive governments have dangled promises of refurbishment, yet the country's lone national stadium still stands as a crumbling monument to neglect and inefficiency.

Most recently, the Ministry of Sports, Tourism, and Culture assured the public that the long-overdue renovation would commence in January this year.

That date has come and gone, and still, no work has begun. The Ministry now scrambles to explain yet another delay, citing bureaucratic red tape and international banking processes as the latest excuses.

Speaking to Newsday Sports this week, the newly appointed Director of Sports, Thabo Tsiki, stated that the Min-

istry was currently awaiting confirmation from the contractor's bank in Belgium after issuing a letter of credit.

Tsiki explained that this letter of credit serves as a guarantee that the contractor will receive payment upon completing the project.

The initial expectation was for the contractor, under the company Adel Grass, to be on-site and begin work by the end of January. However, progress has been slow due to delays in international correspondence, according to Tsiki.

"The total cost of refurbishing the stadium is approximately M85 million, with M7 million allocated specifically for the artificial turf installation by Adel Grass. The Ministry's plan is to allow Adel Grass to complete the turf installation before another company begins construction on dressing rooms and other facilities identified by FIFA," Tsiki explained.

However, this is the same rhetoric

Basotho have been fed for years, plans, contracts, and budget allocations that never materialise into actual renovations.

Millions wasted as Lesotho plays 'home' matches abroad

The consequences of government inertia have been dire.

Setsoto Stadium was officially banned in 2021, forcing the Lesotho Football Association (LeFA) to host the national team's matches outside the country, at great financial cost.

The association has haemorrhaged millions renting stadiums in South Africa and paying for security to accommodate fixtures for World Cup qualifiers, AFCON qualifiers, and CHAN competitions.

LeFA's Secretary General, Mokhosi Mohapi, has been vocal about the government's failure, blaming it for blocking access to crucial FIFA funding.

In a scathing open letter to the government in October last year, Mohapi outlined how the stalled renovations have robbed Lesotho's football development programs of crucial investment.

"As a result, projects such as the Under-20 Girls National Team, the Under-15 Boys and Girls National Academy, and the construction of two technical centers in Maseru's Hoek and Leribe have been shelved," he lamented.

Mohapi also highlighted how political leaders have turned sports development into a talking point during elections but failed to deliver once in power.

"In 2022, every major political party promised in their manifestos that Setsoto Stadium would be revamped. Two years later, Likwena is still playing home games on foreign soil," he stated.

In late 2024, Minister of Sports Motlatse Maqelepo announced that the installation of the new artificial turf at Setsoto Stadium would commence immediately after Lesotho's Independence celebrations on October 4. Maqelepo stated that the project would involve both international and local contractors, with the latter responsible for infrastructure repairs, including toilets, seating, and other essential upgrades.

"We have hired a consulting company to assist in appointing contractors for critical fixes such as electricity and sanitation," Maqelepo said at a media briefing in Maseru.

While he could not provide a definitive timeline, he expressed optimism that if work began in October, the entire project could be completed by January or February 2025. He acknowledged that Setsoto Stadium was outdated compared to international standards but emphasised that the priority was to make it functional again for hosting games.

However, as of now, no visible progress has been made. Not a single construction vehicle has been seen on-site, raising concerns about further delays.

Prime Minister Samuel Ntsokoane Matekane has also addressed the issue, acknowledging the long-standing challenges surrounding the stadium's renovation. Speaking at the Vodacom Premier League (VPL) end-of-year awards in July 2024, Matekane stressed that the



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