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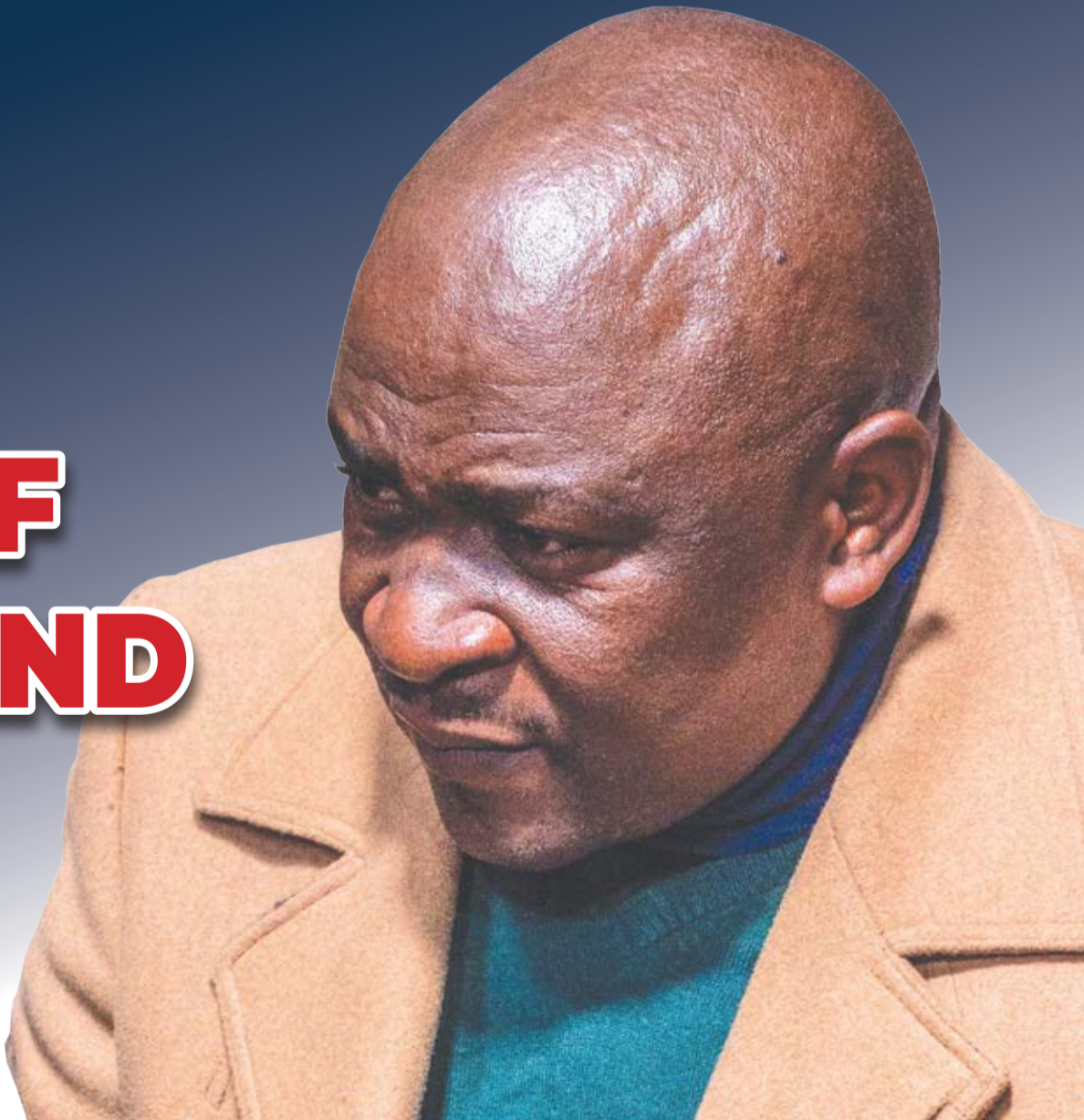
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'125,000 Basotho at risk of illness and death'

Ntsoaki Motaung

A leaked diplomatic cable has revealed that the abrupt termination of a major United States-funded health program in Lesotho is endangering the lives of more than 125,000 people, amid a shrinking health workforce and disrupted care services.

Dated May 23 this year, the confidential cable, authored by a U.S. diplomat at the embassy in Maseru and addressed to the U.S. Department of State, warned of devastating consequences following the cancellation of the Bophelo Bo Botle award, a \$7 million grant under the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

The program, run by the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF), was terminated on February 26 and has not been reinstated.

"The abrupt termination of this award has severely disrupted care delivery and threatens to reverse hard-won gains in controlling Lesotho's HIV epidemic that leaves Lesotho vulnerable at this critical juncture," the cable stated.

The diplomat's memo paints a grim picture. "With a shrinking health workforce, the quality and continuity of care have markedly declined, placing approximately 125,000 adults and children at risk of illness and death."

"Over half of those currently receiving HIV/AIDS treatment in Lesotho will lose access," the cable warned. "This will lead to treatment interruptions, increased new HIV infections, and higher mortality rates."

The program had been delivering services that fell under the "Lifesaving Waiver" announced by the U.S. State Department, which was meant to shield critical health and food assistance programs from the effects of a broad foreign-aid freeze.

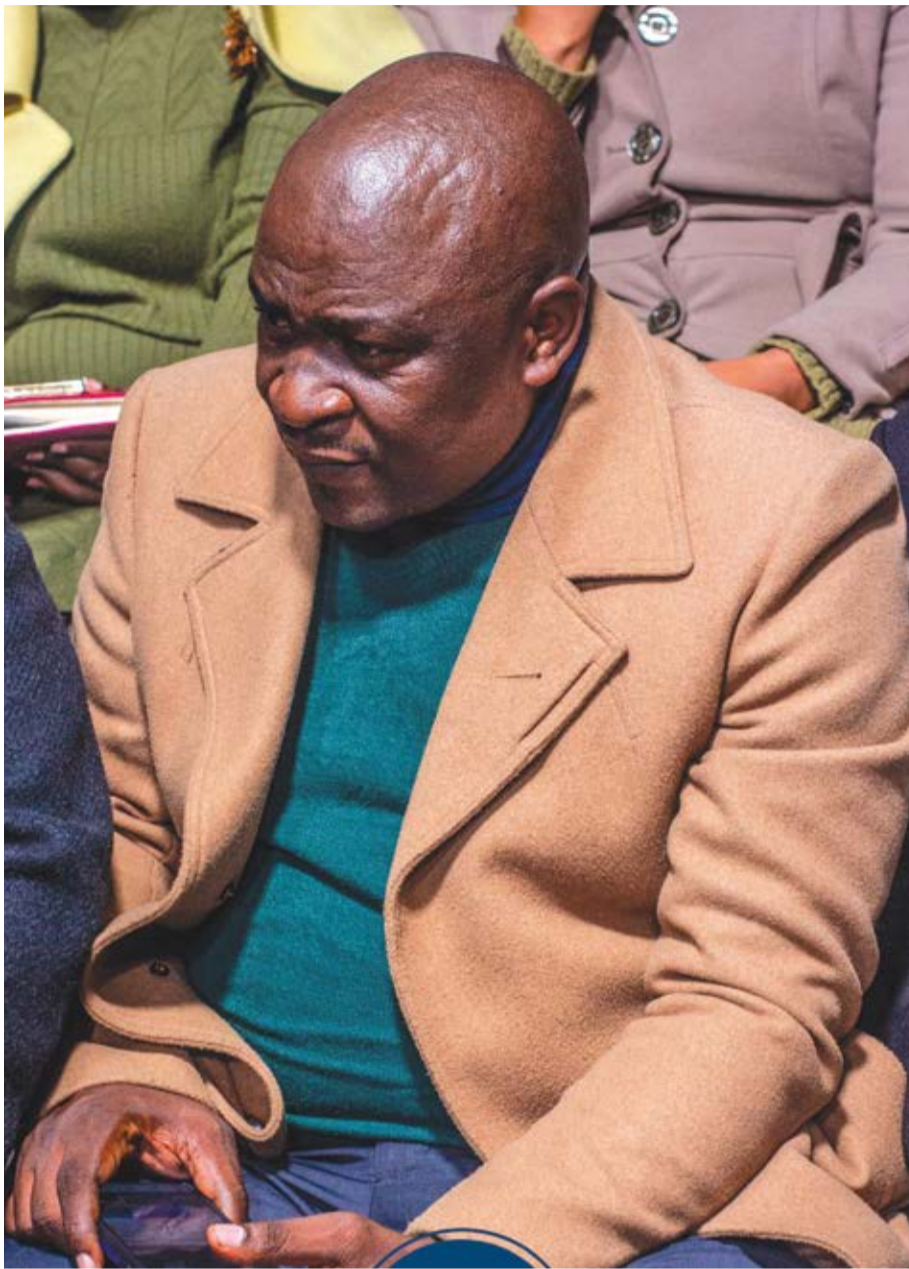
That freeze was triggered by a controversial executive order signed by President Donald Trump earlier this year, ordering a comprehensive review of U.S. foreign aid programs.

While some programs received waivers to continue operations, others, like Bophelo Bo Botle, were discontinued after what the cable described as a " cursory review process," despite clearly meeting the life-saving criteria.

Particularly alarming is the impact on HIV-positive mothers and newborns. One of the cornerstone components of the terminated program was the prevention of mother-to-child transmission, a vital intervention in a country with one of the highest HIV prevalence rates in the world.

The fallout from the funding cut is further exacerbated by a shrinking and overstretched health workforce. The cable notes that the weakened system cannot cope with the surge in demand for care, further compromising the continuity and quality of services.

When contacted for comment, the U.S. Embassy in Maseru declined to confirm or deny



the contents of the leaked cable.

"As a matter of policy, we do not comment on alleged or purportedly leaked diplomatic communications. The U.S. government remains strongly committed to supporting the health and well-being of the Basotho people," the embassy stated.

Speaking to Mother Jones, Catherine Connor, Vice President of Public Policy and Advocacy at EGPAF, confirmed the severity of the fallout.

"While we are still hoping to restart the program, the outlook is not positive," she said. "I think that we're just now entering the phase where we are able to look at the whole picture and say, well, 'we removed this piece of the puzzle, we lost more than we were betting on.'"

"My impression is that when these decisions were made, they were based on what's happening on paper, not in practice," Connor continued. "Now that these decisions are being put into practice, the implications are coming to light."

She added that EGPAF has lost vital front-line presence: "We lost our eyes and ears and

hands on the ground that would have really helped us identify patients that may be falling off care, identify places in the health system where we could try to course correct."

Connor also noted that the Lesotho government lacks the financial and human resources to absorb the fallout or replace the lost services.

On Monday, the government of Lesotho pledged to rehire workers laid off due to U.S. executive orders that resulted in major health funding cuts.

Health Minister Selibe Mochoboroane made the announcement, revealing that 1,347 health workers had initially lost their jobs. Of those, 654 have since been reinstated, but 693 remain unemployed.

"I already have their list in the form of a savingram from the Ministry of Health to the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning," Mochoboroane said. "The two ministries will ensure the remaining people get back to work."

However, this assurance has been met with concern from civil society groups working with key affected populations (KAPs), who

say their staff have been excluded from the rehiring process.

Homohang Letsie, Project Coordinator of the Key Affected Populations Alliance of Lesotho (KAPAL), welcomed the government's efforts but said organisations serving KAPs have not seen any of their staff re-employed.

"Those working with key populations have not returned to work," Letsie said, warning that the gap threatens progress in the fight against HIV/AIDS. "These groups have historically been identified as high-risk for new infections. If they are not serviced well, in spaces where they feel safe and respected, we risk undoing hard-won gains."

She raised alarm over the closure of walk-in centers that had catered specifically to key populations, offering discreet and accessible services, including at night.

"Now that those centers are closed, many clients have likely defaulted on treatment," she lamented. "We cannot confirm this because we're not working anymore, but we have no doubt that's the reality."

Patient files from the closed facilities were transferred to Maseru District Hospital, and clients were advised to seek care there or request a transfer. But according to Letsie, this solution ignores the realities of stigma and discrimination.

"It does not solve the problem," she said. "You're asking people to return to facilities where they were never comfortable, or to services that don't meet their needs."

Lesotho has long grappled with one of the most severe HIV/AIDS epidemics in the world. With an adult prevalence rate of approximately 21.1 percent, the country consistently ranks among the top three globally for HIV infection rates.

An estimated 330,000 Basotho are currently living with HIV, including about 13,000 children. This staggering burden places enormous pressure on the country's already fragile health system, which has been further strained by funding uncertainties and workforce reductions.

Over the past two decades, Lesotho has made commendable progress in its fight against HIV/AIDS. Major investments from global health initiatives such as PEPFAR and the Global Fund have helped scale up access to testing, treatment, and prevention services.

These efforts have translated into tangible gains: more than 90 percent of people living with HIV now know their status, and a similar proportion are on life-saving antiretroviral therapy (ART). Additionally, significant strides have been made in reducing mother-to-child transmission, once a persistent challenge in the country.

However, these gains remain precarious. The health system in Lesotho is marked by chronic under-resourcing, poor infrastructure, and a shortage of trained personnel, particularly in rural areas.

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LUCT lecturer accused of sexual harassment

Palesa Moloinyane

A lecturer at Limkokwing University of Creative Technology (LUCT) is facing serious allegations of sexual harassment, with claims surfacing that the institution has failed to offer adequate support or protection to affected students.

The university has strongly denied tolerating such misconduct.

In a memo issued on Monday, LUCT stated: "Management notes with grave concern assertions circulating on social media (Facebook), which seem to indicate that some students are or have been subjected to prejudice or misconduct by certain unscrupulous staff members."

The memo reiterated that the university has "repeatedly communicated" to the Students Union and through various channels that such acts "absolutely do not have any place at LUCT." It described such behaviour as "abhorrent to LUCT ethos."

LUCT encouraged anyone who has experienced misconduct to report it using the university's formal channels or via its toll-free number, 80022077, assuring that all complaints, including anonymous ones, would receive the "highest level of attention and confidentiality."

One student, Fumane Tsimile, who spoke to Newsday this week, described a harrowing experience involving repeated harassment by a lecturer after she approached him with an academic request.

Tsimile, an upgrading student who enrolled

in the Professional Communication program during the 2023/24 academic year, explained that she had registered late and missed the first test of the semester. Hoping to catch up, she approached the lecturer to request the opportunity to write the test.

"He told me it was not his fault I arrived late," she said. "I kept asking him, pleading for a chance. But he kept asking me what I would give him in return," she continued.

Initially, she thought he was joking. But as the conversation continued, it became clear he was serious and asked her to visit him at his place.

"I ended up promising to give him money, or even offer him transport, like giving him a lift or paying for his bus fare for the week. I just wanted to write the test, that is all I wanted," she said.



Fumane Tsimile

Despite her promises, the lecturer allegedly escalated his demands, asking the student to go to his house and wash his blankets.

"I told him I did not know how to wash them, but I could pay someone else to do it," she recalled. "He refused and said he only wanted me to do it. I still refused, but eventu-

ally, he gave me the test."

After she completed the test, the lecturer reportedly began calling her, accusing her of not taking her school work seriously and threatening that she would fail for not fulfilling his demands of going to his place.

"I was scared, at first, I didn't even know what to do. I eventually told two of my closest lecturers, and I want to believe one of them may have talked to him, because he stopped harassing me for some time," she emphasised.

However, the harassment allegedly resumed in her last semester at school.

"In my final semester, he would order me to buy him lunch using my own money," she said. "I did it because I didn't want to face more threats about failing. For three semesters, I kept failing his modules and had to write supplementary exams." She explained.

She indicated that this time she was afraid that she was going to fail and not graduate like other students she arrived there with; therefore, she decided to buy him what he wanted and do whatever he wanted her to do.

According to her, other students believed that complaints about such incidents have often been ignored or dismissed.

"People said even if I went to the Faculty Manager (FMG), nothing would happen because somehow the lecturer and the FMG are very close and that is what made me stay quiet and not report it to the FMG or even to the Student Service Department (SSD)," she emphasised.

The student also revealed that she is not the only one who has experienced this behaviour. "He's still teaching. I've heard from other girls that he's doing the same thing to them now. It just keeps going because no one's stopping him." Said the student.

Tsimile shared her ordeal on Facebook, detailing the lecturer's threats, which prompted public attention and the university's memo.

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Opposition says Matekane promised prosperity, delivered pandemonium



Thoboloko Ntšonyane

Eight opposition parties have launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Ntsokeane Matekane's government, accusing it of orchestrating a "well-crafted plan" to exploit public resources under the guise of reform.

The attack came during a joint press conference this week, where eight opposition parties, the Democratic Congress (DC), All Basotho Convention (ABC), Basotho Action Party (BAP), Basotho National Party (BNP), Mpolule Political Summit (MPS), Popular Front for Democracy (PFD), Basotho Patriotic Party (BPP), and United Africans Transformation (UAT), addressed journalists.

The parties levelled a wide range of accusations against the government, including rampant corruption, nepotism, poor fiscal planning, suppression of parliamentary processes, and a failure to address skyrocketing youth unemployment.

Matekane's Revolution for Prosperity (RFP), which won power in October 2022 on a platform of meritocracy, clean governance, and economic reform, now stands accused of betraying those promises. According to the 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index, Lesotho ranks 99th out of 180 countries, an

improvement of two points, but opposition parties say this does not reflect the situation on the ground.

They claim RFP MPs and affiliates have enriched themselves at the expense of the public. BNP leader Machesetsa Mofomobe specifically accused the Minister of Agriculture, Thabo Mofosi, of corruption involving farming inputs and nepotism.

"The Prime Minister is a direct beneficiary of the Mines and Minerals Act," Mofomobe claimed, adding that Matekane acquired mining equipment and secured contracts but blocked Basotho-owned company Mohahlula from transporting diamonds. "If you think this man will save Lesotho, you are joking. Those mines are run by white people who are his friends."

DC leader Mathibeli Mokhothu accused the government of actively undermining the National Assembly and the work of oversight bodies such as the Public Accounts Committee (PAC). He cited an incident where the PM allegedly pressured PAC Chairperson Machabane Lemphane-Letsie to delay tabling a corruption report so he could review it first.

The opposition also highlighted allegations of impropriety in the renovation tender for Moshoeshoe I International Airport, reportedly awarded to a company linked to

the Minister of Public Works.

"It is embarrassing that the PM frowns upon parliamentary oversight and uses the courts to stop MPs from probing corruption," Mokhothu said.

Indeed, the Ministry of Public Works and Transport recently withdrew a court application aimed at stopping PAC scrutiny. Similarly, the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) has sought to block PAC from questioning it on corruption and mismanagement, raising further concern among opposition ranks.

The opposition further alleged that individuals close to the RFP leadership received shares in taxpayer-funded firms and accused the executive committee of turning the party into a cash cow.

On the issue of youth unemployment, Mokhothu criticised the government for reacting only after the public outcry over long queues of young applicants vying for positions in the Lesotho Defence Force (LDF). "We will monitor this recruitment closely to ensure there is no nepotism," he said.

Asked what solutions they propose, Mokhothu was tight-lipped. He indicated they did not want the government copying their ideas. "They must take responsibility, they have the funds."

He also questioned the financing of the government's promise to create 70,000 jobs, just three months after the national budget was enacted. "Instead of making announcements, the PM should be reporting progress," he said, while criticising Finance Minister Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane for presenting figures without actionable policy.

The parties also decried the government's failure to announce plans for winter and summer cropping seasons, and slammed poor support for commercial farming, calling for better subsidies and guaranteed markets for farmers.

Public service delivery also came under fire. The opposition highlighted chronic

inefficiencies in issuing national IDs and passports, with reports of citizens sleeping overnight to access services. "Getting an ID or passport in Lesotho is like winning a lottery," they charged.

They said the government has yet to fulfil its salary promises to village health workers, councillors, and chiefs.

"We want Basotho to receive quality services, but this government is failing them. We will remove them," Mokhothu said. MPS leader Remaketsa Sehlabaka and Mofomobe echoed this, declaring they had lost confidence in the Matekane-led administration.

Mofomobe claimed the PM was "unprepared" for governance and was implicated in the issues plaguing LEC, referencing the continued employment of Energy Principal Secretary Tankiso Phapano despite disputes with former Minister Nqosa Mahao.

He also alleged that Phapano moved Small Business offices to Mpilo Hotel, owned by Matekane, paying rent reportedly around M300,000.

Mokhothu went further, alleging that there were discussions about a possible change of government. "We will oust him through a vote of no confidence," he said.

BAP leader Prof Nqosa Mahao accused the government of using closed-door meetings with party leaders to suppress debate on corruption reports in Parliament. "Committees have done their job. These reports must be debated in Parliament," he said.

He decried what he described as the "strategic obstruction" of parliamentary oversight and said the private-sector background of RFP MPs had "created a serious problem."

UAT leader Dr Mahali Phamotse, a former RFP member, said she saw signs of corruption two months into joining the party. "The Prime Minister doesn't govern. Those close to him do. This is a system of rot from the head down."

LEC's court bid short-circuits as judge pulls the plug

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

The High Court has dismissed an urgent application by the Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) board to halt the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) inquiry into alleged mismanagement, questionable remuneration practices, suspensions, and governance issues at the utility.

The LEC board accused the PAC of exceeding its mandate.

Chief Justice Sakoane Sakoane ruled on Monday that the case lacked urgency and struck it from the urgent roll. LEC's legal representative, Attorney Monaheng Rasekoai confirmed the case will now follow the ordinary court roll, joining the queue behind earlier-filed matters.

In their court papers, the LEC board argued that the PAC issued directives conflicting with existing board decisions, constituting an overreach. Chief Justice Sakoane questioned why LEC's acting Corporate Secretary, Dr. Phoka Matete, a lawyer who appeared before the PAC, failed to promptly challenge perceived irregularities. He noted that LEC delayed raising concerns for over a month, undermining the claim of urgency.

Advocate Thomas Thakalekoala, representing the respondents, argued the urgency was self-created and that the application violated Rule 72. The respondents included the Speaker and Clerk of the Na-



tional Assembly, PAC, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, and Attorney General.

The LEC board sought to prevent its members and staff from appearing before the PAC, which has been probing allegations of corruption and mismanagement. The current Executive Committee (ExCo) is acting as the substantive ExCo is suspended. The PAC questioned the acting ExCo's salaries, which reportedly exceed the 2022 policy for acting personnel, allowing only a 10 percent commission.

Former Board Chairperson Ntsie Mahaphe, now acting Managing Director (MD), receives M170,000 monthly, equivalent to the substantive MD's salary, with most perks except housing allowances.

The PAC criticised his appointment from outside LEC, bypassing internal structures.

The Auditor General's recent disclaimer opinion on LEC's financial records, the worst possible audit outcome, indicated discrepancies between reported and actual financial states.

The LEC board's application sought a court order to declare the PAC's actions unconstitutional between March and June 2024 and to interdict further summonses under Standing Order 108 (2002) of the National Assembly and Section 9 of the Parliamentary Powers and Privileges Act, pending a final ruling.

Chief Justice Sakoane pressed Attor-

ney Rasekoai to justify the urgency, asking what rights were irreparably harmed. Rasekoai argued the PAC overstepped by questioning board remuneration and operational decisions. The Chief Justice countered, "This court cannot direct parliament on its business. The PAC is the master of its procedures."

LEC Board Chairperson Thabo Khasipe, in an affidavit, criticised the PAC's approach as accusatory and unfair, denying board members a chance to respond adequately. He stated, "Interactions have been frequently judgmental, with lengthy pronouncements based on preconceived conclusions. Board members are interrupted seconds into responding to complex questions laden with inaccuracies and accusations." Khasipe argued this damaged the professional reputations of LEC staff.

Dr. Matete objected to Basotho National Party (BNP) Machesetsa Mofomobe, a non-PAC MP, allegedly issuing unlawful instructions to summon the board and suspended members. While Mofomobe serves on the Portfolio Committee on the Prime Minister's Ministries, Standing Orders permit MPs to participate in other committees without voting rights.

Dr. Matete further criticised the PAC's questioning of confidential board decisions, broadcast live, exposing privileged deliberations, and causing reputational harm. PAC Chairperson Machabane Lemphane-Letsie defended the committee's actions, asserting they operate within constitutional bounds. She confirmed summonses were issued to LEC for upcoming hearings.

It remains uncertain whether the LEC board and staff will appear before the PAC on Monday.

Few Basotho involved in illegal mining: Lephema

Ntsoaki Motaung

Contrary to widespread belief, the number of Basotho involved in illegal mining activities in South Africa is significantly lower than often claimed, according to Minister of Local Government, Chieftainship, Home Affairs, and Police, Lebona Lephema.

Speaking on ongoing efforts to combat illegal mining, Lephema emphatically rejected suggestions that large numbers of Basotho are engaged in these operations, describing such claims as “proven wrong.”

“I recently worked with South African Minister of Police, Senzo Mchunu, on an operation in which over 2,000 illegal miners were apprehended. Out of that total, only around 200 were Basotho. That shows there are far fewer Basotho involved than is commonly believed,” he said.

To enhance cooperation and address broader cross-border criminal activity, Lephema announced the formation of a Cross-Border Crime Prevention Forum. The forum brings together communities from both Lesotho and South Africa, particularly those residing near the borders, to jointly tackle not only illegal mining but also persistent stock theft.

The Minister also confirmed his continued close collaboration with his South African counterpart, Mchunu, noting that a bilateral meeting between the two is scheduled to take place soon.



In addition to security matters, Lephema addressed ongoing difficulties faced by Basotho in obtaining Lesotho Exemption Permits (LEPs). He acknowledged the challenges, including widespread scams targeting permit applicants.

“We know Basotho struggle with this process and are often victims of fraud,” he said.

Following discussions at a recent Bi-National Commission (BNC), Lephema and his South African counterparts agreed to explore solutions. One such solution includes establishing dedicated application points both in South

Africa, at consulates, and in Lesotho, where Basotho officers would assist applicants and liaise directly with the South African Department of Home Affairs.

In a further move toward regional integration and economic cooperation, Lephema revealed that a joint Basotho-South African delegation, supported by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), is currently in The Gambia conducting a study on the free movement of people. The study aims to inform future policies that could enhance trade and mobility between the two countries.

Chiefs vow to continue stay-away despite warnings

Thoboloko Ntšonyane

A growing standoff between Lesotho’s subordinate chiefs and the government shows no signs of easing, as defiant chiefs have vowed to continue staying away from work in protest over delayed salary adjustments, despite warnings from the College of Chiefs and Minister of Local Government and Chieftainship, Lebona Lephema.

On 8 June, the Association of Chiefs formally notified the College of Chiefs of their decision to down tools effective 9 June, citing the government’s failure to implement court-ordered salary increases.

At a press conference on Wednesday, the College of Chiefs distanced itself from the strike, stating that while chiefs are justified in their grievances, they cannot legally engage in industrial action. Reading a statement on behalf of the College, Chieftainess ‘Mamolapo Majara said chiefs are public officers, not civil servants, and thus receive emoluments in accordance with the law, not through collective bargaining.

The College acknowledged the legitimacy of the salary concerns but emphasised that the matter is being addressed by the government. The Principal Chiefs expressed solidarity with the protesting chiefs but disapproved of their method of protest.

“It has come to the attention of the Principal Chiefs of Lesotho that the Lesotho Workers Association (LEWA) has announced that chiefs across the country will withdraw their services effective 9 June 2025,” the statement read.

“We, the 22 Principal Chiefs of Lesotho, including those of Likueneng and Thaba-Tšoeu, hereby declare that, in accordance with the



laws governing chieftainship in Lesotho, no chief may affiliate with or be represented by a workers’ union, as stipulated in Section 154(4) of the Constitution.”

The College of Chiefs further urged their subordinates to resume their duties and abandon the stay-away.

However, some chiefs remain unmoved. Chief Setolela Lebona of Nkh’unkh’u said he continues to serve his community, stating: “We are the ears and eyes of the King,” while accusing LEWA of sowing division between chiefs, their senior counterparts in the Senate, and the government.

In Lesotho, chiefs play a vital role in traditional governance, including land allocation, dispute resolution, law enforcement support, and community development, all under the authority of the King and guided by the Chieftainship Act of 1968.

Principal Chief of Tajane, ‘Mako Mohale, said chiefs have endured poor remuneration for over a decade. Last month, chiefs voiced their

frustrations before parliament’s Social Cluster Committee, citing the government’s failure to implement promised salary adjustments, which were supposed to take effect in April 2025. The lowest-ranking chiefs were due to receive an increase from M1,500 to M3,000.

Despite a settlement reached at the Directorate of Dispute Prevention and Resolution (DDPR), implementation has been delayed. LEWA representative Hlalefang Seoaholimo said the association is now pushing for enforcement of the award to ensure the chiefs receive their revised salaries.

When pressed by parliament’s committee to provide a payment timeline, Principal Secretary (PS) Dr ‘Mamphaka Mabesa said cabinet would soon pronounce itself on the matter.

Minister Lebona Lephema also appealed to the chiefs to end their protest, assuring them that the government, in coordination with the College of Chiefs, is working to resolve their grievances and will announce the outcome once the process is complete.

ReNOKA and Aranda partnership to fund landscape restoration

Ntsoaki Motaung

In a bold new initiative that blends culture, commerce, and conservation, ReNOKA, Lesotho’s national movement for integrated catchment management, has partnered with iconic blanket manufacturer Aranda to fund climate-resilient landscape restoration across the country.

Launched recently, the ReNOKA-Aranda Partnership introduces a line of ReNOKA-branded blankets, with 10 percent of all sales revenue dedicated to restoring degraded catchments and supporting local livelihoods.

The collaboration marks a pioneering model of sustainable financing through private sector engagement, aimed at safeguarding Lesotho’s fragile water and land systems, the so-called “water tower” of Southern Africa.

“This blanket means more than warmth, it means hope for communities,” said Palo Mokoailane, Aranda Ambassador, at the launch. “The making of this blanket was one of the best because we know that the proceeds are going back to the communities. Every purchase is a step toward restoration.”

Mario Varrenti, Head of Cooperation at the European Union (EU) in Lesotho, praised the partnership for its practical impact and symbolic value. “Kopano ke matla, the stronger, the better,” Varrenti said. “Very soon, people will buy ReNOKA blankets and know that 10 percent of the purchase supports real, on-the-ground climate action.”

Speaking at the launch, Minister of Natural Resources Mhloimi Moleko highlighted the cultural power of the Basotho blanket and its new role as a tool for environmental change.

“In Basotho culture, the blanket is more than attire, it is a symbol of pride, heritage, and belonging,” Moleko said. “Today, we harness that cultural power to carry a new message, one of environmental responsibility and care.”

Moleko reiterated ReNOKA’s mission as a national response to land degradation, water insecurity, and climate change, urging more businesses to support the initiative. “With ReNOKA, we are building a more resilient Basotho,” he said.



Newsday Business

SLB loans M127 million to support Basotho businesses

Palesa Moloinyane

Standard Lesotho Bank has loaned more than M127 million to Basotho businesses since launching its trade finance products in April 2024. This announcement was made at the launch of the Bank's 2025 trade campaign on Wednesday this week in Maseru.

The Bank says these loans are aimed at helping small, medium, and commercial businesses across Lesotho to grow, create jobs, and keep running smoothly, especially when cash is tight or payments are delayed.

Keketso Makara, Head of Business and Commercial Banking at Standard Lesotho Bank, said that the Trade Finance products are designed to solve a major problem facing Basotho entrepreneurs, the lack of access to finance.

"Access to money is one of the biggest barriers holding back our local businesses," said Makara. "Our Trade Finance solutions are helping to break that barrier and give businesses the support they need to succeed."

He indicated that the bank currently offers three Trade Finance products, each with its own benefits.

First, there is invoice discounting finance, which helps businesses get paid faster. Instead of waiting for customers to pay their invoices, the business can receive the money from the bank upfront. This improves cash flow and helps them continue running without delays.

"This is very useful for businesses that are waiting on payments but still need to pay sala-



Keketso Makara, Head of Business and Commercial Banking at Standard Lesotho Bank

ries, rent, or buy stock," explained Makara.

Second, the bank offers local purchase order finance that gives businesses the money they

need to buy goods or pay suppliers after receiving a verified purchase order. This means they can accept bigger orders without using

up their savings.

"Many Basotho businesses lose out on big orders because they don't have the capital to fulfill them," said Makara. "With this product, they don't have to miss those opportunities."

Finally, there is contract finance that is designed for businesses working on verified contracts, especially in construction and infrastructure. It provides the money needed to complete a job, such as paying workers or buying materials, before the client pays.

"Over 80 percent of the loans we have issued so far are through Contract Finance," said Makara. "It shows how many Basotho are involved in projects like building schools and roads, and how much support they need to complete them."

Makara also said the bank is offering both secured and unsecured loans, depending on the size and nature of the business.

"These solutions are flexible, whether you are a small business or a contractor working on a government project, we have something for you," he said.

With over M9.2 billion in its lending book as of December 2024, Standard Lesotho Bank is currently the biggest lender in the country. The 2025 Trade Campaign is part of the bank's effort to make more business owners aware of these financial solutions.

"We are proud to be the only bank in Lesotho offering these kinds of innovative products," Makara said. "This is how we live our purpose, Lesotho is our home, and we drive her growth."

Lesotho PostBank opens branch in Mokhotlong



New Lesotho Post Bank branch in Mokhotlong

Seabata Mahao

Lesotho PostBank (LPB) has taken another decisive step toward enhancing financial inclusion by opening a new branch in Mokhotlong, a remote and mountainous district often overlooked by mainstream financial institutions.

The move reinforces the bank's expanding footprint across Lesotho and its mission to serve Basotho in even the most inaccessible parts of the country.

The opening of the Mokhotlong branch marks

the establishment of LPB's 16th brick-and-mortar branch, ensuring that all ten districts of Lesotho now have direct access to the bank's physical services.

This nationwide presence underscores LPB's drive to close the gap between urban and rural access to essential financial services.

Speaking at the official launch ceremony, LPB Managing Director Mokhachane Mopeli emphasised the bank's long-standing vision of reaching underserved communities and transforming the lives of Basotho

through accessible banking.

"LPB was established by the government in 2004 and began operations in 2005 to serve the economically active urban and rural populations who previously lacked reliable access to financial services," said Mopeli.

Since its establishment nearly two decades ago, LPB has grown from a modest savings institution into a full-fledged retail bank that continues to prioritise accessibility.

Its diverse service offerings, including personal loans, mobile and internet banking, mobile money, Visa cards, and debit cards, have been extended to clients throughout Lesotho, including remote mountain regions like Mokhotlong.

The new branch is a strategic addition that addresses the long-standing banking needs of Mokhotlong residents, many of whom previously had to travel long distances to access financial services.

The expansion reflects LPB's belief that geographical location should not be a barrier to financial empowerment.

Mopeli noted the bank's resilience in the face of challenges and its continued commitment to being Lesotho's only wholly locally owned bank.

"We are dedicated to helping businesses grow and encourage you to bank with us to unlock your business's potential," he said.

He further highlighted LPB's guiding values, integrity, accountability, respect, and courtesy, and assured customers of the bank's dedication to trust, innova-

tion, and service excellence.

"Our goal is to improve the quality of life for Basotho through customer-focused financial solutions that drive economic growth," he added.

The significance of the new branch was echoed by community member Mathealira Khatleli, who praised the development as a long-awaited answer to the financial needs of the district. He emphasised the importance of financial education and guidance in helping local entrepreneurs and farmers better manage their income.

"We now wish that all the challenges we face could be addressed as swiftly as this banking support has been, an initiative that strengthens our capacity and stands as a national asset for Lesotho," he concluded.

Prime Minister Sam Matekane, who officially inaugurated the Mokhotlong branch, also lauded LPB's dedication to making banking accessible in hard-to-reach areas.

"To all farmers and business owners, this is your bank. Feel free to come here for loans to grow your businesses. Support the bank that supports you," said Matekane.

As part of the day's events, the Prime Minister also donated three specially adapted vehicles for people with disabilities, a gesture further reinforcing government and institutional efforts to promote inclusive development.

The Mokhotlong branch is expected to significantly ease the financial burden of residents and entrepreneurs in the district, providing them with a secure and reliable banking partner close to home. It also symbolises a broader push by Lesotho Post Bank to empower rural communities and build a more financially inclusive nation.

With each new branch, LPB not only strengthens its physical presence but also deepens its role in fostering economic participation for Basotho in even the most remote corners of the country.



Newsday Health

Ntsoaki Motaung

Lesotho has become the first country in the World Health Organization (WHO) African Region to pilot the Afro Influenza (AFFLU) surveillance platform, an advanced initiative aimed at strengthening national health surveillance systems.

Developed by WHO for the African region, AFFLU is an adaptation of the EMFLU platform used in the Eastern Mediterranean. It is designed to enhance the collection, management, and analysis of both aggregate and case-based data on influenza and other respiratory viruses (ORVs).

This new platform marks a significant milestone in health data management, enabling seamless sharing of epidemiological and virological information, streamlining workflows, and improving data quality at all levels of the health system.

Muza Tendai, Information Systems Specialist at the WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO), emphasised the platform's transformative potential.

"This surveillance platform will strengthen the country's respiratory disease surveillance and allow integration with other systems and datasets. It will offer real-time, advanced data analytics tailored to regional and country-specific needs," said Tendai.

To support the platform's successful implementation, WHO has trained 18 end-users in Lesotho. These individuals will collect and manage real-time data from four selected surveillance sites in and around Maseru. This hands-on training is essential to ensuring accurate data collection and effective platform usage.

Dr. Lieketseng Petlane, speaking on behalf

Lesotho leads Africa in flu data innovation



of the Director General of Health Services at the Ministry of Health, expressed deep appreciation for Lesotho's selection as the pilot country.

"The Ministry of Health is deeply grateful and honoured that Lesotho is considered and supported to pilot this vital surveillance

and diagnostic platform. COVID-19 taught us hard lessons and exposed gaps in our health system, particularly in diagnostics and timely response. This initiative will help close those gaps by strengthening surveillance, building human resource capacity, and boosting the resilience of our integrated

health system," Dr. Petlane stated.

The AFFLU platform is expected to have a profound impact on Lesotho's health surveillance system.

Malefane Thamae, Maseru District Surveillance Officer, highlighted the benefits of this development.

"This will help us in the early detection of an outbreak, hence improved Rapid Response to affected areas. It will provide our office with rapid access to countermeasures, such as the provision of appropriate vaccines," Thamae explained.

According to WHO, Lesotho's pioneering efforts in piloting the AFFLU surveillance platform underscore the country's commitment to advancing its health infrastructure. By leveraging this innovative technology, Lesotho is poised to enhance its capacity to respond to respiratory diseases, ultimately improving public health outcomes for its citizens.

"As the pilot program progresses, the insights gained from Lesotho's experience will be invaluable for other African nations looking to adopt similar surveillance tools."

"The AFFLU platform not only represents a significant technological advancement but also a promising development for improved health surveillance and response across the continent," WHO stated.

Government addresses growing youth mental health concerns

Ntsoaki Motaung

The government is ramping up efforts to provide psychological support for the nation's youth through a dual approach that combines livelihood programs with accessible counseling services.

This comes amid growing concerns over the mental well-being of young people, particularly in relation to substance abuse.

Minister of Gender, Youth, and Social Development, Pitso Lesaoana, affirmed the government's commitment to implementing initiatives that address the psychological challenges faced by young people.

"The government is committed to ensuring that youth have access to livelihood programs that shield them from psychological distress," Lesaoana stated.

Through its social development department, the Ministry has deployed social workers and auxiliary social workers across all ten districts and various councils to provide counseling and support services.

Lesaoana also revealed ongoing discussions with the Ministry of Education and Training to integrate mental health support services directly into schools.

"We have already engaged with the Ministry of Education and Training to explore ways of placing social workers and auxiliary social workers in schools so that children can receive support from an early age," he explained.

A central focus of the government's inter-



vention is combating the rising tide of drug abuse, which Lesaoana identified as a leading cause of mental illness among youth.

In a related initiative, Lesaoana announced the construction of a multi-purpose center aimed at supporting women experiencing depression due to Gender-Based Violence (GBV). The center will also offer skills training and educational opportunities for their children, acknowledging that many of the women will bring their children with them.

Prime Minister Samuel Matekane echoed these concerns, expressing alarm at the visible impact of substance abuse on the streets.

"I have personally witnessed young people abusing alcohol during the night and early in the morning," Matekane said. "We do not want that kind of youth."

He emphasised the urgent need for intervention, stressing that the future of the country's leadership depends on supporting young people to overcome substance abuse.

Meanwhile, Minister of Health Selibe

Mochoboroane raised further alarm over the widespread drug abuse in the country, calling for the revival of the Blue Cross Society of Lesotho's rehabilitation center in Thaba-Bosiu. The center was shut down several years ago due to prolonged funding disagreements with the Ministry of Health.

Since the closure of the Blue Cross Center, Lesotho has had no dedicated rehabilitation facility for individuals struggling with drug and alcohol addiction. Neither government institutions nor private or faith-based healthcare providers currently offer such services on a national scale.

Mochoboroane highlighted the growing strain substance abuse places on the country's overstretched healthcare system, particularly institutions like the Mochomi Mental Hospital, where a significant number of patients are admitted due to substance-related issues.

He also expressed concern over the increasing rates of drug abuse among high school and university students, key segments of Lesotho's future workforce and leadership.

"Due to the high rate of drug abuse among youth," he said, "the Ministry has prioritised the revival of the Blue Cross rehabilitation center."

Mochoboroane further revealed that he had personally visited the Thaba-Bosiu site to assess what is required to restore the center's operations.

Stop downplaying a serious problem, Minister Lephema

Minister Lebona Lephema's recent statement downplaying the number of Basotho involved in illegal mining in South Africa may have been intended to defend national dignity, but it risks deflecting attention from a crisis we cannot afford to ignore.

Yes, the minister is correct that, during a recent joint operation with South African authorities, only 200 out of 2,000 illegal miners apprehended were Basotho. On the surface, this sounds reassuring. But viewed against the broader demographic and socio-economic context, this figure should alarm us, not pacify us.

Let's break it down. Lesotho has a population of just over 2 million. Now compare that to the combined populations of South Africa, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Malawi, and Zambia, totaling well over 200 million. Lesotho does not even constitute one percent of that regional population. And yet Basotho made up 10 percent of the illegal miners caught in this operation.

That is ten times more than we should expect if we were looking at this proportionally. That should worry us deeply.

Instead of using the 200 figure to dismiss "widespread belief," the minister should confront the uncomfortable truth that Lesotho's youth are increasingly desperate, driven to high-risk survival tactics like illegal mining, often in appalling conditions, because of unemployment, poverty, and lack of opportunity at home.

If anything, the numbers should be a wake-up call, not a reason for comfort.

Lephema's announcement of the Cross-Border Crime Prevention Forum is commendable, and efforts to facilitate Lesotho Exemption Permits and address scams are necessary. But those initiatives must go hand-in-hand with honest national reflection and policies that address the root causes, especially youth unemployment, limited land access, and poor rural livelihoods.

Downplaying the data might score short-term political points, but it undermines the gravity of the situation and delays meaningful action. We do not need defensive optimism. We need bold leadership that acknowledges the scale of the problem and mobilises all sectors of society to fix it.

If 10 percent of regional illegal miners are Basotho, in a region where we are barely 1 percent of the population, that is not "less than expected," it's a national emergency. Let us stop sugar-coating the truth and start doing something about it.

More worrying than the numbers, however, are the horrific stories emerging from the mines, stories that cut far deeper than statistics ever could. Families across Lesotho have reported cases where young men left home for South Africa with the hope of earning a living through illegal mining, only to return as shadows of their former selves, or not return at all. The tragedy is not just in those who are confirmed dead, but also in those who came back alive but broken. Many of these men return psychologically shattered, traumatised by what they have experienced in the darkness beneath the earth. They isolate themselves, fall into silence, and withdraw from society and their families.

Some turn to substance abuse, while others simply disappear again, unable to reconcile with the horrors they encountered.

These are not just isolated incidents. Communities speak in whispers about sons who no longer speak, husbands who no longer sleep, and fathers who no longer function. The trauma is so deep it erodes the very fabric of family life.

One cannot begin to imagine what really happens in the pitch-black tunnels of those illegal mines. These are places entirely outside the reach of law or humanity. If above ground, where we have sunlight, the rule of law, and some degree of accountability, there are daily reports of corruption, violence, and crime, then what monstrous acts are taking place in the depths of the earth, where desperation reigns and no one is watching?

This is not just a criminal issue, it is a humanitarian crisis. It reflects the failure of our society to provide alternatives, to build safety nets, and to give our people reasons to stay above ground and hope.



NO COMMENT



Theko Tlebere

Common Concern

Beyond Brain Drain: Reclaiming Return Migration Through Brain Circulation in Lesotho

In global development discourse, the migration of skilled professionals from developing countries has long been characterised as a crisis of brain drain. Recently, return migration has been proposed as a potential solution. However, as a researcher studying the mobility of Basotho health professionals, I advocate for a more nuanced and inclusive concept: brain circulation.

Unlike return migration, which narrowly focuses on the physical act of returning home, brain circulation encompasses a broader spectrum of possibilities: short- or long-term returns, virtual engagements, skills exchange, policy advising, and cross-border innovation partnerships. It acknowledges that talent mobility in the 21st century is fluid, networked, and non-linear, enabling individuals who remain abroad to contribute meaningfully to national development.

Lesotho's health system faces systemic challenges, including workforce shortages, inadequate infrastructure, and a disproportionate burden of communicable diseases such as HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis. In this context, the knowledge and expertise of Basotho health professionals abroad, particularly in high-income countries like the UK, South Africa, and the US, constitute a critical yet underutilised resource.

My PhD research on brain drain and brain circulation has revealed that many Basotho professionals are not disconnected from their homeland; rather, they seek structured and

meaningful opportunities to engage. Some wish to return permanently, while others prefer short-term missions or remote collaboration. Brain circulation facilitates the utilisation of all these pathways.

Lesotho has made commendable strides with the adoption of the National Diaspora Policy (2021), which recognises the development potential of the Basotho diaspora. However, implementation, particularly in the health sector, remains insufficient. Many returnees face bureaucratic delays, inadequate reintegration support, or are overlooked despite possessing years of international experience.

Meanwhile, skilled professionals abroad often lack clear avenues to contribute, even when willing. Brain circulation policies must address this gap by facilitating seamless returns, enabling remote contributions, and incentivising ongoing connections.

As I continue with my research, I want to make a few mind-boggling suggestions on how brain circulation can be a word that resonates well with migration terms. The first idea is to establish a National Brain Circulation Framework for Health; this framework should include credential recognition systems, diaspora health volunteer programs, and funding for knowledge-transfer missions coordinated through the Ministry of Health and its partners.

Another suggestion is to create a Basotho Health Diaspora Portal; An interactive platform for health professionals in Lesotho and abroad to register, collaborate, and access engagement opportunities, including clinical, academic, and

advisory roles. And lastly, Lesotho needs to develop Incentive-Based Reintegration Schemes. With good research and policies, these may encompass flexible contracts for returnees, financial incentives for rural service, and partnerships with development agencies to provide re-entry packages.

The concept of brain circulation urges us to shift from binary thinking, framing professionals as either "lost" to migration or "recovered" through return. It positions them as mobile agents of change contributing at various points in a continuum of movement, connection, and engagement.

By adopting this perspective, Lesotho can leverage its diaspora not merely as a nostalgic community abroad but as a strategic resource within global knowledge and care systems. Their impact can be significant whether they return, consult, teach remotely, or invest in innovation if the state facilitates it. The brain drain discourse is not solely concerned with who departs but also with establishing systems that are appealing for return or that professionals do not feel compelled to leave behind.

About the Author: Theko Tlebere is a PhD candidate in Theoretical Economics (National Development) at Peking University. His research investigates the dynamics of brain drain and brain circulation among Basotho health professionals, emphasising migration governance and human capital.



How people with disabilities will create a more accessible world for us all

Rethabile Mathealira-Molapo



In a world that is rolling back on the value of diversity and inclusion, one of the most powerful yet often overlooked drivers of innovation and equity is the lived experience of people with disabilities. Historically marginalised and misunderstood, people with disabilities have long fought for equal access: not just to buildings and public spaces, but to education, employment, healthcare, digital spaces, and public life.

Yet it is precisely this fight that has led to some of the most transformative changes in society. As we look to the future, it is evident that people with disabilities will not merely benefit from a more accessible world, they will be key architects of it. And in doing so, they will design a world that is better for everyone.

The lived experiences of people with disabilities are a fuel for innovation. When we take a look at it, accessibility is often mistaken for charity or accommodation. But at its core, accessibility is about design: designing systems, structures, and environments that anticipate human difference rather than reacting to it. People with disabilities, by necessity, have become expert problem-solvers. Their daily lives require them to adapt, innovate, and create solutions where systems fail. This lived

experience gives them a unique vantage point to redesign the world for broader inclusion.

When we look at the invention of the typewriter, the telephone, and even text messaging, these are technologies that originated to assist people with disabilities but became mainstream tools. Ramps were initially designed for wheelchair users, but now they benefit people pushing baby strollers, shoppers with shopping trolleys, delivery workers wheeling large consignments into buildings, people dragging wheeled luggage, and more. Closed captioning aids on videos not only benefit people with hearing disabilities, but also language learners and people watching videos in noisy environments. In each case, an accommodation born from disability advocacy created ripple effects that improved life for everyone.

We cannot afford a world without accessibility: Everyone will potentially, at some point, experience disability, through age, injury, illness, or circumstance. Disability is not the exception, it is part of the full vari-

ety of the human experience. A society that plans only for the able-bodied is a society that is planning to fail its future self. Accessible spaces benefit everyone. Clear signage helps non-readers, the elderly, and people with low vision. Flexible learning environments serve children with disabilities and unlock creativity for all students.

Disability liberation not only serves the disabled. It builds a society where activities and experiences are easier, freer, and more enjoyable for us all.

Looking at disability as a lens for justice, people with disabilities bring an essential ethical lens to conversations about justice and equity. Because disability intersects with every other identity: gender, class, age, sexuality, it magnifies systemic gaps and challenges. Disability not only has physical, sensory, intellectual/developmental, mental/behavioural and neurological elements, but it is also a social experience shaped by policies, attitudes, and environments, which makes the views of people with disabilities pertinent to shaping policies for everyone. As disability activists often say, "Disability is not the problem; inaccessibility is." This framing shifts responsibility from the individual to the collective, from fixing people to fixing systems.

By viewing society through a disability lens, we are compelled to ask deeper questions about power, fairness, and design. Why do we judge leadership by physical stature and charisma of a person rather than their substance or vision? Why do our schools exclude different learning styles? Why do public services assume everyone can stand in long lines? Or why do we measure productivity through the quantity of performance and not the value of contribution?

When people with disabilities lead, they challenge these assumptions and expose the systemic ableism embedded in our world. And in doing so, they offer alternative visions rooted in empathy, flexibility, and a shared humanity.

When it comes to technological innovation, people with disabilities are the vanguard. Globally, people with disabilities are not just passive users of assistive technology, they are increasingly its creators and innovators. In the digital age, where everything from banking to education is online, accessible design is non-negotiable. And those with disabilities are at the forefront of this evolution. Take, for example, voice-controlled interfaces like Siri, Alexa, and Google Assistant, which began as accessibility tools and are now ubiquitous and used by everyone. Screen readers, text-to-speech programs, and adaptive keyboards continue to improve usability for all kinds of users, including people

with temporary impairments or situational limitations.

In the Western world, people with disabilities are entering tech fields in greater numbers, bringing their insights to product development, user experience, and artificial intelligence. Their lived reality pushes technology to meet real-world challenges, not abstract or idealised users, but diverse and multifaceted individuals. When designers consult people with disabilities from the start, rather than as an afterthought, the result is not only more inclusive products but also more human-centred design. Accessibility becomes a default, benefiting everyone, not something extra added for the benefit of people with disabilities.

Looking at leadership and participation, people with disabilities redefine both. Leadership has long been associated with certain traits: assertiveness, speed, extroversion, and being physically commanding, which can exclude those with disabilities. But as society reconsiders what leadership looks like, people with disabilities bring added value. Their leadership often emphasises collaboration, deep listening, belonging, and resilience, all qualities increasingly recognised as essential in a complex, interdependent world.

In politics, disabled leaders advocate for policies that reflect lived realities. In education, there is more to be done for students with disabilities and scholars to expand academic discourse around inclusion and disability justice. In the arts, disabled creatives are breaking stereotypes and reshaping cultural narratives. Their visibility challenges the notion that only certain types of bodies or minds are worthy of influence or authority. By broadening our understanding of what leadership and participation mean, people with disabilities are not only opening doors for themselves, they are holding them open for others.

Therefore, to realise this accessible world, we must move beyond tokenism and actively centre the voices, expertise, and leadership of people with disabilities. It also means investing in education, employment, and healthcare systems that do not penalise disability but support flourishing. It means enforcing accessibility standards not as compliance, but as justice. And it means shifting cultural narratives from disregard or inspiration to partnership and equality. If we listen, if we follow their lead, and if we commit to accessibility as a shared value, we will not only create a better world for people with disabilities. We will create a better world for all of us. This means more than inviting them to the table, it means co-designing the table, co-writing the rules, and sharing power.



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations

Call for Applications: HASTEN business incubation programme now open for youth-led enterprises from in Lesotho, Rwanda and Sierra Leone

HASTEN business incubation programme is now accepting applications from youth-led enterprises in Lesotho, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. This unique opportunity supports the next generation of food systems entrepreneurs and enterprises committed to building sustainable, inclusive and resilient agrifood systems.

What is HASTEN business incubation programme?

HASTEN—Harnessing SDG-based Agrifood System Transformation through the Empowerment of the Next Generation of Agrifood Leadership in Africa— is an FAO project under the Flexible Voluntary Contribution (FVC), operating in Lesotho, Rwanda and Sierra Leone. It aims to:

- promote capacity development in transdisciplinary systems thinking for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) interlinkages,
- foster multistakeholder collaboration by strengthening public-private-academic partnerships for inclusive governance,
- and support agripreneurship and youth empowerment by scaling eco-inclusive business models that contribute to the SDGs and generate employment.

The business incubation component of HASTEN is an initiative to empower youth-led enterprises and entrepreneurs to drive agrifood system transformation.

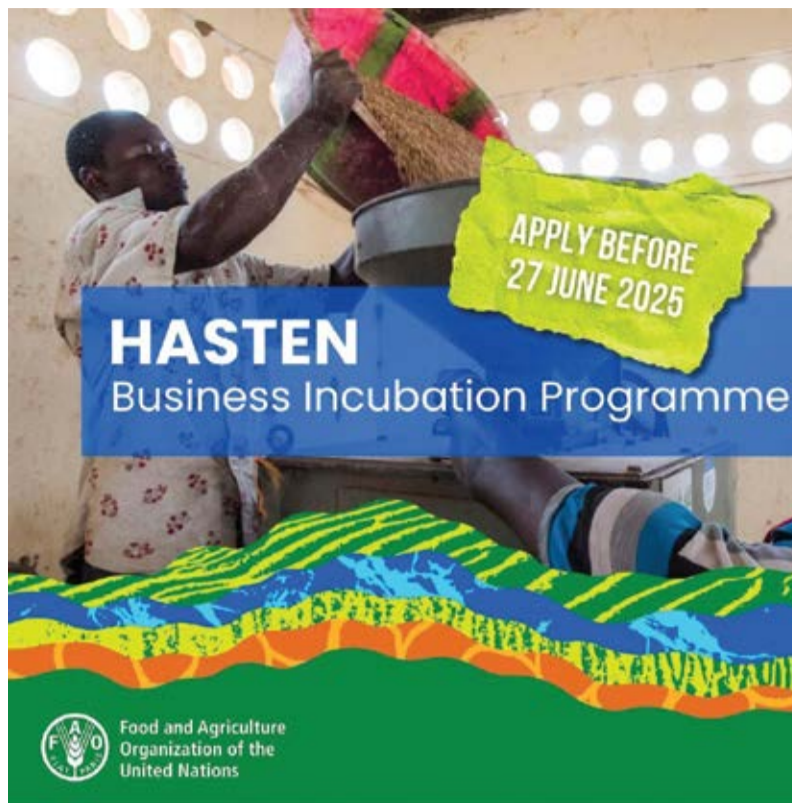
With a strong focus on youth and women-led, eco-inclusive and green startups, the programme supports small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that show high potential to contribute to making agrifood systems more sustainable, inclusive, efficient and resilient — and ultimately contributing to better production, better nutrition, a better environment, and a better life, leaving no one behind.

The programme is being implemented by the FAO Office of Sustainable Development Goals, with the technical support of SEED. And collaboration from FAO Country Office in Lesotho.

Who should apply?

The programme specifically targets SMEs and startups that meet the following criteria:

- Legally registered in Lesotho, Rwanda or Sierra Leone
- Operational for 1–3 years
- Led by entrepreneurs aged 18 to 35
- Demonstrate a clear contribution to sustainable agrifood systems transformation



- Fully comply with FAO integrity standards and are not involved in any UN prohibited or unethical practices

We are especially looking for:

Resilience boosting startups that enhance the resilience of agrifood systems to climate change, and other systemic shocks and stressors, through sustainable agricultural practices and climate-smart innovations.

Safe and nutritious food enterprises that produce or enhance access to healthy, nutritious, safe and affordable food, support food quality and safety standards and increase public awareness around nutrition and healthy diet choices.

Inclusive business models that promote value chain and livelihood opportunities for smallholder farmers, women and youth.

Programme benefits

Selected enterprises (8–10 per country) will participate in a 5-day, in-person incubation workshop, designed to strengthen sustainable business practices and support the growth of eco-inclusive and socially driven agripreneurship models. They will receive tailored guidance to develop sustainable business plans and financial strategies, utilizing interactive workbooks and hands-on tools, facilitated by international and national coaches.

The final day of each workshop includes an ecosystem event, where participants will pitch their business models and connect with stakeholders from the public and private sectors, academia, and development organizations, opening doors to future collaboration and increased visibility in the startup ecosystem.

In addition, three enterprises per country will be selected for tailored follow-up support focused on scaling their operations and building strategic partnerships.

How to Apply and What to Expect

1. Read full details on the eligibility, exclusion and selection criteria on the [HASTEN webpage](#).
2. Fill in the [application form](#) by 27 June 2025.
3. Shortlisted applicants will be contacted and will be invited to present their business virtually before final selections are made.
4. Incubation workshops will be held in each country from September – October 2025, with follow-up support for selected enterprises taking place in October- November 2025.

LESOTHO BANK REPO

VEHICLE

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JUNE

26
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FROM 14:00

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24 JUNE AT 14:00

Commercial & Non Runners

'21 Atlas Copco Power Roc T50 Drill Machine
'06 Power Star VX 2628b 6x4 SWB 6m3 Mix
Hamm 3520 Padfoot Roller

'12 VW Golf Cabriolet 1.4 TSi
'05 Nissan Primera

Runners

'24 JAC T9 2.0 CTi Lux D/Cab
'24 Toyota Hilux 2.4 Gd-6 Rb Raier D/Cab
'23 Haval Jolion 1.5T Super Luxury DCT
2x '19 Toyota Landcruisers 76 4.2D S/W
'19 Mercedes Benz GLC Coupe 300d 4matic
'19 Toyota Corolla 1.2t XS CVT
'18 Nissan Hardbody Np300 2.5 TDi Hi-Rider D/Cab

'18 Toyota Corolla 1.8 Prestige
'17 Toyota Hilux 2.4 Gd-6 SRX 4x4 D/Cab
'14 Mercedes Benz ML 350 Bluetec
'14 Mercedes-Benz C180
'12 Toyota Corolla 1.3 Impact
'11 Porsche Cayene Diesel Tiptronic 3.0 V6
BMW 1 Series

Viewing Day: 20 - 24 June from 09:00 - 16:00 | Assets located at: Plot Nr. 12281-319 Florida Industrial Ha Hoohlo Maseru

Register & Bid Online: live.lescorauctions.com

Enquiries: +266 627 83610

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



GOVERNMENT OF LESOTHO
THE JUDICIARY

TENDER NOTICE

TENDER NUMBER 3 OF 2025/2026

Tenders are hereby invited from both local and international consultancy firms. Local firms must be registered with the Building Design Services of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, while international firms must be duly registered with the relevant authorities in their respective countries. Interested firms are requested to submit separate technical and financial proposals for the feasibility study of the proposed Southern Region Court Complex in Mphahle's Hoek.

A consulting firm, consortium, or joint venture is invited to tender for the following services:

- I. Geotechnical Investigation
 - II. Land Survey (Cadastral and Topographical)
 - III. Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA)
- A preference margin shall be granted in accordance with the Lesotho Procurement Act 2023.

NB: All potential Consultants are advised to note that consulting companies to Lesotho Government, are expected to be in compliance with their tax obligations.

Consultants must attach **valid copies of Tax Clearance and Trader's License** to their bids, certified at the Source.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference and related documents will be available for collection from Monday, 02nd June 2025, between 9:00 to 15:00hrs from **Procurement Unit High Court** at a non-refundable cost of M3 000.00 payable at the Accounts office, Ground floor High Court building.

MANDATORY SITE VISIT

The Mandatory site visit will be conducted on Wednesday, 11th June 2025. All Bidders are expected to assemble in **Mphahle's Hoek**, outside the magistrate court premises at 11:30 a.m.

DATE AND TIME FOR SUBMISSIONS

The submission of 1 **original** and 4 **additional copies** of each proposal bids in the sealed envelopes separately marked **Technical and Financial Proposals Bids** for the

Feasibility Study for the Proposed Southern Region Court Complex in Mphahle's Hoek, and which shall be put in one sealed envelope must be deposited in the tender box which will be placed at 1st Floor of High Court building, outside procurement office by **Friday 27th June 2025** on or before **12:00hrs**. Tenders will be opened on the same day of submission at **12:15hrs** in the presence of bidders or their representatives who choose to attend.

Evaluation criteria

The points to be given under each of the evaluation criteria are as shown in the table below.

The minimum technical score required to have the financial proposal opened is **70%**.

The following evaluation criteria shall be observed.

SELECTION CRITERIA	MAXIMUM POINTS	POINTS AWARDED	REMARKS
Nationality Status	5		
Key Staff	20		
Company Experience	20		
Methodology	30		
Bid Amount Competitiveness	5		
TOTAL	80		

Table1: Evaluation Criteria

The Government of Lesotho reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the bids.

For any Further inquiries, please contact:

E-mail: napomatsolo9@gmail.com or jamesakabk@gmail.com;



**Multi - Nodal
Development Consultants**

100 QOQOLOSING STREET, MASERU WEST,
MASERU, PO. Box 456, Maseru, 100. Lesotho
Email: admin@multinodal.co.ls

PUBLIC NOTICE

Khutsong Memorial Gardens, Thuathe, Berea, Lesotho

In accordance with the Environment Act of 2008, Khutsong commissioned Multinodal Development Consultant to develop an Environmental Social Impact Assessment and Environmental Management Plan for the above-mentioned project.

The proposed project will involve land acquisition, planning and construction, within Thuathe within Berea district. Khutsong Memorial Gardens is a proposed private cemetery dedicated to offering a peaceful and dignified final resting place for loved ones. Located on 33000 sqm of beautifully landscaped grounds, we propose provide a range of burial options, including traditional burials, green burials, cremation niches, and tailored memorial services. The facility aims to maximise space utilising by not only offering traditional gravesites, but also memorial niches for storing ashes of loved ones. Our mission is to create a serene and respectful environment where families can mourn, reflect, and celebrate the lives of those who have passed.

The detailed description of the project and its anticipated impacts are presented in the ESIA report. While the proposed Environmental and Social measures that shall be adopted to manage the identified impacts are presented in the Environmental management Plan. Copies of the ESIA and EMP are available, for public review and comment at:

**EIA Section
Department of Environment
6th Post Office Building, Kingsway Street
Ministry of Tourism, Environment and Culture
Maseru, Lesotho**

Electronic copies of the documents are also available online on
www.tourism.gov.ls/

If you wish to comment on this proposed Private Cemetery project. Please do so within 28 days, from the **25th May 2025**.

Comments should be submitted via email: mndctikoloho@gmail.com or Short Text Message +26662909145



Government of Lesotho
MINISTRY OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Tender Notice

INVITATION TO TENDER REF: MNR/EQP/F/2025/2026

Supply and Installation of Office Equipment, Non Office Equipment and Office Furniture

1. INTRODUCTION

The ministry of Natural Resources through its departments; Administration, Mining, Rural Water Supply, Water Affairs and Commissioner of Water Invites sealed tenders from eligible bidders for the supply of office Equipment and Office Furniture.

2. Tender Issuance and Submission

The tender is issued on the 12 June 2025, and closes on the 23 July 2025 at 10:00am. The MNR therefore invites competent bidders to bid for this tender.

Tender documents are available at the Department of Rural Water Supply (Procurement Unit) at **non-refundable fee of M500.00 (five hundred Maloti) from Thursday, 12 June, until Wednesday 16 July 2025**. Tender document is payable in cash at the **Ministry of Ministry of Natural Resources (DRWS) Accounts office**, Railway Station next to WASCO Offices. Receipt issued by Accounts, must be produced to the DRWS Procurement Unit for collection of Tender documents.

Bid responses from competent bid-

ders must be submitted as follows:

one (1) original and four (4) hard copies to the Ministry's Tender Box situated next to the Ministerial Boardroom Bokamoso Business suite 2nd floor, Orpen Road, Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru, **not later than 10:00am, 23 July 2025**. **The bid response must be in a sealed envelope bearing no identification of bidder marked "Supply of Office Equipment, Non Office Equipment and Office Furniture REF: MNR/EQP/F/2025/2026"**.

All tenders will be opened on Wednesday 23 July, 2025 at 10:30am at the Ministry of Natural Resources Ministerial Boardroom Bokamoso Business Suite 2nd floor, Orpen Road, Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru.

3. CLARIFICATIONS

All requests for clarifications and queries on this tender must be addressed in writing to the Procurement Manager, Ministry of Natural Resources Bokamoso Business Suite 2nd floor, Orpen Road, Opposite Centre for Accounting Studies Maseru 100 no later than **12:00 noon, 16 July, 2025**. Tel: **27325160**.



Kingdom of Lesotho
Ministry of Health

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

FEASIBILITY STUDIES FOR THE CONSTRUCTION, UPGRADING, AND RENOVATION OF FOUR (4) HEALTH FACILITIES IN RURAL LESOTHO.

RFP/QCBS/MOH/2025/26-06

First Date of Issue: 06-06-2025

1. Introduction

The Ministry of Health, on behalf of the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho, invites qualified, experienced, and reputable consulting firms or consortia to submit technical and financial proposals for conducting feasibility studies for the following health facilities:

- a. Construction of a New Health Centre at Senqunyane, Berea District
- b. Construction of a New Health Centre at Ketane, Mphahle's Hoek District
- c. Upgrading of an Existing Health Post to a Health Centre at Qabane, Mphahle's Hoek District
- d. Upgrading of an Existing Health Post to a Filter Clinic at Qalabane, Mafeteng District

These feasibility studies are aimed at informing infrastructure investments that support Lesotho's national health development goals, improve access to primary health care, and contribute to the realization of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

5. Scope of Work

The assignment involves:

- Technical, environmental, and economic viability assessments;
- Health service demand analysis and infrastructure planning;
- Environmental and Social Impact Screening (ESIA);
- Development of site-specific investment plans and implementation frameworks.

6. Eligibility Criteria

This RFP is open to national and international consulting firms or joint ventures that meet the following criteria:

- At least 10 years of experience in conducting multidisciplinary feasibility studies in the health or social infrastructure sector;
- A proven record of delivering at least three (3) comparable assignments in similar rural or developing contexts;

- Demonstrated financial stability, qualified personnel, and the ability to work in remotely located and topographically challenging environments.
- Local participation is encouraged, and preference will be given to consortia that include Lesotho-based experts or firms.

7. Enquiries & Further Information

Clarifications may be requested in writing by email to the following addresses no later than **7th July, 2025: satbhssles@gmail.com cc:motsukunyanemolise@gmail.com**.

8. Selection Criteria

- Selection Method: Quality and Cost-Based Selection (QCBS) and only bidders whose technical proposal has scored 70% and above will be invited for Financial Proposal Opening.
- Proposal Format: Technical & Financial Proposals to be submitted in separate sealed envelopes. Technical Proposal 4 hard copies & 1 soft copy in Flash Disk (Word documents Converted to PDF).
- Proposal Document Fee: M3,000.00 (non-refundable), payable at 1st Floor Accounts Unit at Ministry of Health.
- Submission Deadline: **15th July 2025 at 11:00hour (Lesotho Time)**.
- Submission Venue: Ministry of Health Procurement Office, Maseru.

9. Proposal Submission

All proposals must be written in English and properly completed. Proposals must be hand delivered to the address below. Proposals submitted via email will not be considered.

**Attention: Procurement Manager
Ministry of Health, Corner Constitutional and
Linare Road
Maseru, Lesotho**

The Ministry of Health reserves the right to accept or reject any proposals without obligation to award the contract.

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Record labels or independence?

... Navigating Lesotho's music industry crossroads



Chris Theko

In Lesotho's growing but still largely under-resourced music scene, artists face a pivotal decision: to sign with a record label or build a career independently.

The choice carries major implications for creative freedom, revenue ownership, and long-term sustainability. While the rise of digital distribution platforms has shifted the power dynamics in favour of artists globally, the lure of a record deal remains strong in Lesotho, where infrastructure is limited and access to professional networks is scarce.

Historically, record labels have provided financial backing, production resources, and crucial access to media, promoters, and audiences. In a market like Lesotho's, with few studios and even fewer promotional

platforms, this support can be life-changing.

The late Malome Vector's success through South Africa's Ambitiouz Entertainment is a telling example. With the label's support, his music reached audiences well beyond Lesotho's borders, earning regional airplay and acclaim.

However, this kind of success often comes with strings attached. In South Africa, artists like Emtee and Amanda Black have spoken publicly about contract disputes and a lack of financial transparency within major labels. Many have shared experiences of being locked into restrictive agreements that compromised their creative control and limited their income.

Local Maseru-based producer T-Mech weighed in, saying, "Most young artists don't know how to read contracts. They just

want to record and tour. But later they realise they don't own their music. The music business involves more than just recording a song, there are contracts and agreements most artists don't understand."

Indeed, the digital revolution has democratised music distribution. Platforms like YouTube, Spotify, and Apple Music allow artists to reach global audiences without label backing. Affordable services like DistroKid and TuneCore make it possible to access royalties and track listener data independently.

Yet, despite these tools, many emerging artists still opt for label deals. Unfortunately, they often enter these agreements with excitement rather than understanding, a trend recently highlighted by developments at Ntate Stunna's Penya Play and Sannere's

Mets'oaka Group. Both artists discovered the harsh realities of running a record label.

In late 2024, Penya Play parted ways with artist Cheez Beezy, producer DeeJayZaca, and in-house videographer Mpho Tau. While details were initially unclear, subsequent statements revealed contractual conflicts as the root of the fallout.

In January 2025, Sannere launched Mets'oaka Group, a move welcomed by fans. The label brought together notable names like Phoka Ea Boroa, Litsepe, Qhomane, Teddy DJ, videographer Teho, and producer Flash Cortez, and was managed by Moeketsi Pius Kebise.

But things soon turned turbulent. Kebise resigned, citing conflict with the label's ownership. Before him, Flash Cortez had exited, and this week, Teho followed suit for similar reasons. Unconfirmed reports suggest Qhomane may also have left the label.

Artists like Leomile and Kommanda Obbs have shown that independence is viable. Leomile, with her distinct fusion of Sesotho storytelling and modern instrumentation, has built a niche audience while preserving her creative identity. These examples suggest that, with strategic branding and consistency, independent artists can sustain meaningful careers.

To further understand the local landscape, we spoke to Sir Schaba of YME Tunes, who emphasised that, "A lot of our artists don't understand the work of a record label. For most, it's just about the clout of being signed, without understanding the responsibilities that come with it."

He added, "The biggest challenge is that the market is very limited. Even with thousands of followers, it's difficult to track audience locations and engagement. That's where record labels come in—they have the resources and connections. We still need them, especially in our context."

However, he cautioned against artists becoming label owners, saying, "A label is a separate entity that should operate independently. But many artist-owners struggle to separate themselves from the label's operations. Everyone wants to be the top dog, so they tend to focus on themselves instead of nurturing the other artists in the stable."

T-Mech echoed this sentiment, noting that, "Labels offer support, but often restrict freedom. Independent artists who are willing to invest in quality production and marketing can succeed on their own terms."

Lesotho's music industry still contends with structural limitations: a small domestic market, limited media platforms, few live venues, and minimal government support. These realities make record labels, especially those based in South Africa, attractive to many Basotho artists seeking broader exposure.

A hybrid approach may offer a viable path forward. Distribution deals, licensing agreements, and freelance management can allow artists to retain rights while accessing professional resources. Education remains key. Music workshops, industry unions, and legal training could empower artists to make informed decisions.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution. For some Basotho musicians, signing with a label might be the boost they need. For others, independence offers the freedom to build a lasting, authentic brand. What matters most is informed decision-making, strategic planning, and a clear understanding of the trade-offs.

In Lesotho's evolving music scene, the future belongs to those who can navigate both opportunity and risk with equal parts ambition and caution.

Telling Lesotho's compelling tourism story on the international stage



Staff Reporter

When Tsela Tours and Adventures stepped onto the buzzing grounds of KARIBU-KILIFAIR 2025 in Arusha, Tanzania earlier this month, it was not just another trade event, it was a milestone.

For the Maseru-based tour operator, this was a chance to tell Lesotho's tourism story on a continental stage, one that brought together over 500 exhibitors from across 15 countries and hundreds of semi-hosted international buyers.

Held from June 6 to 8 at the Magereza Grounds, the KARIBU-KILIFAIR is East Africa's premier tourism and travel fair.

It is where deals are made, partnerships are born, and the pulse of the African tourism industry beats the loudest. Among the throngs of seasoned operators, luxury safari lodges, and vibrant cultural showcases, stood Tsela Tours, a proudly Basotho company with a vision.

For Kemang Leluma, Tsela Tour's Managing Director and founder, this was not merely an exhibition but an experience to savour.

"As a first-time participant representing Tsela Tours and Adventure from Lesotho, the Karibu-KiliFair was an extraordinary, enlightening experience. The energy on the ground was palpable, brimming with purposeful interactions, professional displays, and warm regional hospitality," Leluma told Newsday.

He described the fair as an affirmation of shared purpose among African operators, an invitation for Southern Africa to integrate more visibly into the East African travel circuits.

"Being surrounded by fellow African operators from across the continent highlighted a shared sense of purpose: to elevate Africa's tourism story collectively. For a Southern African operator, it was an affirming and inspiring environment that made Tsela Tours feel welcomed and seen."

What Leluma carried with him to Tanzania was more than promotional material, it was a compelling pitch for Lesotho. Often overlooked in the shadow of its regional giants, the Mountain Kingdom offers experiences rarely found elsewhere

on the continent.

"Our snow and alpine environments are a rare phenomenon in Africa offering winter holidays unlike anything available in Africa."

He also highlighted the richness of Lesotho's cultural authenticity, from the traditional homesteads and Basotho blanket to the mokorotlo hat and vibrant highland festivals like the Maletsunyane Braai Festival.

These, he believes, are Lesotho's key assets in attracting East African and international travelers looking for something "unexpected, adventurous, and deeply African."

Beyond networking and showcasing, Leluma described the fair as a kind of live masterclass in tourism business development.

From high-level workshops to candid conversations on the exhibition floor, valuable insights emerged that Tsela Tours intends to embed into its business strategy going forward.

"Karibu-KiliFair served as a masterclass in tourism business development, and

several takeaways are directly applicable to Tsela Tours' future strategy,"

Among those, Leluma emphasised the non-negotiable importance of visual storytelling. He believes that Lesotho's beauty must be captured with high-quality images, immersive digital content, and even virtual reality.

"Product diversification" is also critical, with the future pointing toward curated experiences like cultural storytelling tours, wellness retreats, skiing adventures, and culinary trails.

He stressed the need to intensify B2B networking efforts by building on relationships forged not only at KARIBU-KILIFAIR, but also at other regional trade shows such as WTM Africa in Cape Town and Africa's Travel Indaba in Durban.

However, the fair also held up a mirror to Lesotho's current shortcomings in tourism branding and infrastructure.

"Lesotho needs a cohesive national brand visually and verbally... including uniforms, merchandise, and slogans like 'Kingdom in the Sky,' supported by powerful imagery and storytelling," Leluma urged.

He added that developing bookable, bundled experiences and improving supporting infrastructure, from roads and signage to digital access, is essential to keeping the visitor experience seamless and satisfying.

Tsela Tours' participation did not occur in isolation. The initiative was supported by the Lesotho Tourism Development Corporation (LTDC), the body mandated with developing and promoting tourism in the Kingdom.

LTDC's acting Public Relations Manager, Molapo Matela, welcomed the move: "This is a step in the right direction, as the initiative jells with LTDC objectives of promoting the country's tourism industry and fostering international partnerships."

He described East Africa as a strategic frontier for Lesotho's tourism aspirations and highlighted the need to diversify the origin of tourists visiting the country.

"We believe this is a golden opportunity to tap into the East African market and explore how we can attract this segment to increase the diversity of foreign tourists visiting Lesotho."

For LTDC, the presence of local operators at international platforms like KARIBU-KILIFAIR represents more than individual business growth; it is about reshaping the image of Lesotho's tourism sector. It sends a message that Lesotho has high-calibre, globally competitive operators capable of delivering quality, authentic experiences.

"Tsela Tours' presence at such fairs contributes to building a positive, professional image of Lesotho's tourism industry, depicting that the country has capable, high-quality local operators," said Matela.

The broader strategic value, he added, lies in attracting partnerships, generating endorsements, and creating a ripple effect that can benefit other local businesses.

Founded in 2016, Tsela Tours and Adventures has steadily grown into one of Lesotho's most respected tourism operators. With a commitment to showcasing Lesotho's culture and natural wonders, the company has become a go-to choice for tourists seeking authenticity and adventure in the highlands.

Leluma remains optimistic that from visual marketing to cross-border partnerships, the fair has broadened his outlook and sharpened Tsela's competitive edge. He believes that what Tsela, and by extension, Lesotho, brings to the table is unique and increasingly in demand.

Likuena disappoints again

Seabata Mahao

Lesotho's national football team, Likuena, has made another early exit from the COSAFA Cup, bowing out of the 2025 edition during the group stages after a mixed but ultimately disappointing campaign.

Likuena opened their Group B run on a positive note, edging Malawi 1-0 in a promising start that sparked hopes of a repeat of their impressive 2023 performance, when they finished as runners-up.

However, those hopes were short-lived, as the team went on to suffer two heavy defeats in their remaining fixtures, bringing their tournament journey to a premature end.

Last Sunday, Likuena were humbled 4-0 by Angola in a lopsided affair that exposed serious defensive frailties. Just two days later, they endured another bruising defeat, this time a 3-0 loss to Namibia, sealing their fate.

Both matches were played in Bloemfontein, South Africa, the host city for this year's tournament.

Likuena ultimately finished third in Group B, collecting just three points from their lone victory. Angola and Namibia advanced as the top two sides, while Malawi joined Lesotho in bowing out early.

Group B had been widely regarded as one of the more open and evenly matched groups in the tournament, without any standout favourite, making Lesotho's early exit all the more frustrating for fans and football officials alike.

This latest elimination continues a concerning trend for Likuena, who also failed to progress past the group



Likuena in action against Namibia in the on-going COSAFA tournament

stage in 2024, a year after their impressive 2023 run. It reinforces the perception of inconsistency and highlights the rebuilding phase the national team is currently navigating.

Head coach Lesley Notši had taken a developmental approach to the tournament, naming a youthful squad largely made up of players from the domestic league. He maintained that the experience gained by the young players would be vital in the long run.

"This is a learning experience for them. We will go back, assess ourselves, and work on correcting our mistakes," Notši said in his post-match press conference.

The coach acknowledged that the team had significant shortcomings, particularly in defence and finishing.

"Our major downfall was failing to defend properly from the back," he admitted. "In a tournament like this, winning matches is crucial as it gives you a better chance of progressing to the next round."

Despite the setbacks, Notši praised the commitment of his players and expressed optimism for their future.

"The boys worked hard and showed their capabilities, proving that they won't go down without a fight," he added, emphasising the importance of international exposure for younger players.

With the COSAFA Cup now over for Lesotho, all eyes turn to their remaining three fixtures in the 2026 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers, scheduled for September and November 2025. These matches offer another crucial opportunity for Likuena's young squad to develop and compete against stronger opposition.

Malephane sets vision to rebuild LSRC

Karabo Ramathe

Newly elected Lesotho Sport and Recreation Commission (LSRC) President Baba Malephane has pledged to rebuild and revitalise the institution to better serve the development of sport across the country.

Malephane, who also leads the Federation of Judo, Lesotho, was voted into office at the LSRC Annual General Meeting (AGM) held last week. In his acceptance remarks, he emphasised a clear vision to restructure and reposition the commission as a dynamic force for national sporting progress.

"We are ready to return LSRC to its former glory. This is not just my victory, but a victory for sport in Lesotho," he declared.

His vision centres on reforming leadership practices, overhauling outdated policies, and ensuring equitable support for all sporting codes.

Malephane expressed gratitude to the delegates who entrusted him with the mandate and promised to work closely with all federations to rebuild confidence in the commission.

"We often fall short of our goals because those in leadership lack the right skills and dedication. We took on these roles voluntarily, and now it is our responsibility to deliver," he said, criticising the historical tendency of appointing leaders based on favouritism rather than merit.

In outlining his rebuilding strategy, Malephane committed to conducting consultations with each national federation to gain first-hand insight into their unique challenges. He stressed that strong gov-



Newly elected LSRC President Baba Malephane

ernance and accountability would be central to the LSRC's new direction.

"Federations must take full responsibility for their daily operations. We will support them with not only the tools they need but also by building solid governance structures," he added.

A key part of his reform agenda includes reviewing existing policies and designing frameworks that reflect the current needs of sport and recreation in Lesotho. This, he noted, would ensure that development efforts are relevant and sustainable.

Malephane also promised to advocate for more equitable distribution of financial and material resources, particularly for smaller or less popular sporting codes that often get overlooked. His message was clear: no sport will be left behind.

He closed his address with a passionate call for unity, saying that collective vision, mutual accountability, and collaborative spirit are critical to restoring LSRC's credibility and driving transformation.

On his part, outgoing LSRC President Litsitso Motšeremeli officially handed over the organisation's constitution to Malephane, marking the formal transition of leadership. Motšeremeli reflected on his term with pride and urged the new executive to continue upholding the values of the Commission.

"I am proud of the progress we have made, and I urge the new leadership to uphold the LSRC Constitution and Act," he said.

Established in 2002 through the Lesotho Sport and Recreation Act, the LSRC is tasked with coordinating and regulating sport and recreation activities to promote inclusive access, national unity, and socio-economic development.

The AGM concluded with the election of a new executive committee, featuring Kamohelo Hlomisi as vice president, Refiloe Maphallela as vice secretary, Malineo Makhang as treasurer, and Advocate Jobo Raswoko as public relations officer.

Another key development is the recent appointment of Realeboha Segoete as Chief Executive Officer. His role will be instrumental in implementing the new strategic direction under Malephane's leadership.



Mohapi ready for fresh Bantu challenge

Seabata Mahao

Back-to-back league title-winning coach, Motheo Mohapi, will have full authority over player signings, squad selection, and appointment of his technical team at his new home, Bantu Football Club.

Mohapi, who has been appointed as head coach of the Mafeteng club on a two-year contract with an option to renew, recently resigned from his successful two-year spell at rivals, Lioli FC, where he won two consecutive Vodacom Premier League (VPL) titles with the Teyateyaneng outfit.

At Bantu, Mohapi takes over from Charles Manda, who departed after just six months in charge. Despite winning the People's Cup in April, Bantu finished fourth in the league, well below their traditional expectations.

A retired Lieutenant Colonel, Mohapi is a respected figure in Lesotho football. He has represented the national team as both player and coach and led top-tier clubs including LDF FC and Lioli.

His crowning achievement was guiding Lioli to back-to-back league titles, showcasing his strategic leadership and deep football knowledge.

Mohapi's coaching qualifications include a Degree in Sports Science and a Football Scientific A License from the University of Leipzig in Germany, a Degree in Physical Education from China, and multiple coaching licenses from CAF and UEFA-accredited institutions. He is also a certified CAF coach educator.

Bantu president John Leuta introduced Mohapi at a press event, confirming that he would have a free hand in squad management as many player contracts are set to expire.

"We have given him a blank cheque which he has the final say on who joins or leaves the team. We will not impose people on his technical team either. He will decide who works with him," Leuta said.

The move underscores Bantu's ambition to return to dominance and sends a strong message to rivals, including Mohapi's former club, Lioli. It also reflects the growing competition among clubs for top local coaching talent.

Leuta acknowledged that poor performanc-



es in recent seasons had reduced fan engagement and affected sponsor relationships. He appealed to supporters to be patient with the new coaching project.

"Let us give the coach time to compete. We made this decision early because time is not on our side," he said. "Even those under contract could be released if they are not part of his plans. That is the kind of authority we've entrusted him with."

Bantu vice-president for technical affairs, Leoasha Mahase, noted the instability that has plagued the club's coaching department. Last season, coach James Madidilane left mid-season for Lijabatho, leading to Manda's short-term appointment.

"We did not do well as a team. Every season the mandate is clear: win every cup and compete for the league title," Mahase said. "We failed to meet that mandate. Now, we want to build a stable, long-term project."

He praised Mohapi's success at Lioli, especially his ability to integrate young players with experienced ones, a quality Bantu sees as key to its future.

"For years, we didn't have a development structure and it hurt us," Mahase said. "We do not want a coach who gives us results for three seasons and leaves the club in disarray. We want continuity."

Mohapi has already named former Lesotho international Bokang Mothoana as his assistant and is in talks with current technical staff members to determine who will remain.

Meanwhile, Lioli has appointed South African coach Bongani Maseko, who holds a CAF A License and has coached across various league levels. He began work on June 11 and will debut at the TJ Nthane Foundation tournament this Sunday at Bambatha Tšita Sports Arena.

Other clubs have also made changes. Matlama, last season's runners-up, parted ways with coach Halemakale Mahlaha at the end of May.

Linare released Molebatsi Mothobi and named Molise Ntlatlapa and Ghanaian Michael Armoh as interim coaches.



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